ROOTS 5

# PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

tearfund

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## 2nd edition

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Go to learn.tearfund.org/impact to download this book and find further resources on project cycle management.

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# ROOTS 5
# PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide explains what good project cycle management (PCM) looks like and gives practical tools and examples for applying PCM principles in each phase of the project cycle. This guide follows the different phases in the project cycle: understanding the situation, project design, approval and governance, preparation, implementation and monitoring, evaluation and closing the project. The guide will provide tools to use in each phase, with examples of how to apply them, using a scenario that we have adapted from a real-life project.

This guide is for people working for local grassroots organisations doing emergency relief and development work. It is useful for anyone working on a project, including project managers and field staff. The principles in the guide can also be used by leaders as they manage and develop their organisation. You can use this guide as a reference point for specific PCM issues, or as a general training manual in project cycle management.

> *ROOTS 5 is an amazing tool which helped shape my understanding of the life of a project. I was introduced to it in grad school and was intrigued by how detailed yet simple it was. It is a comprehensive tool which allows room for contextualisation and adaptation. I continue to refer to it and allow it to guide me as I write and review projects.*
>
> Marc-Romyr Antoine, Haiti

### Why this updated edition?

The original version of this guide was published in 2003 and continues to be a widely used resource on PCM. However, since it was written, the global humanitarian and development community has continued to advance its thinking and tools around PCM. This guide builds on the strength of the original version but incorporates the thinking and learning of the last decade. This new guide will better help users successfully design, implement and learn from their projects, giving appropriate attention to the phases of the project cycle and topics that were not previously included. Specifically, this new version includes additional sections on Theory of Change, financial aspects of project management, risk, and monitoring and evaluation. Also, a fictional project scenario has been developed based on Tearfund's experience to illustrate principles throughout the guide.

## How to use this guide

### Key to icons

Throughout the guide we use various icons to help you quickly identify different content:


Tool


Project scenario example


Checklist


Decision point


Risk


## Project scenario

Throughout the guide, we will refer to a project scenario, which is fictional but based on Tearfund's experience of projects. We use many of the project management tools shown in this guide to develop examples drawn from this scenario to help you learn about project cycle management. In a real project you would not expect to use all of the tools: you will select the best ones for your context and purpose.

The project scenario is set in a country where development has come to a standstill, and years of progress have been reversed. Women in parts of the country have lost their livelihoods due to conflict and generational poverty. A local organisation with good knowledge and experience of working in this community, including strong relationships with community leaders, wants to respond to the crisis. The guide illustrates the steps the organisation would need to take to design and implement a project.

Photographs of worked examples from the project scenario throughout the guide give ideas of how to use these tools with communities in practice. For many tools you simply need paper and pens, and the photos have been designed and taken specially to illustrate what many of the tools would look like in a workshop setting. It is important to keep a record of your work at all times and take photos of work created in a workshop setting. Some donors will require you to submit a typed-up version of the tools. We hope that the photos bring the examples to life for you.

## Contents page and list of diagrams

The guide has been designed to be read either from cover to cover as a step-by-step guide to running a project, or as a reference book you can use to find the information you need for a certain project phase. The contents page and the list of diagrams are helpful places to quickly find specific content that you are looking for.

# QUICK OVERVIEW

**Introduction** – page 1

Here you will be introduced to some key, overarching principles of project management, which need to be applied throughout the project cycle, for example 'decision points' and the 'triple constraint'.

**Phase 1: Understanding the situation** – page 9

Before designing a project, we need to have a good understanding of the situation and the context. First we gather information using a range of data collection tools, including focus groups, surveys and observations. It is important to identify the stakeholders involved. Next, we need to analyse the data gathered so that it can inform our decision-making. We can do this using tools such as a problem tree.

**Phase 2: Project design** – page 47

This section focuses on how to use two key project design tools – Theory of Change and logframe – to ensure that your project meets the needs identified during your problem analysis. At this stage, it is also essential to consider the project budget and risk, as they will influence the scope of your project.

**Phase 3: Approval and governance** – page 83

The approval and governance stage focuses on ensuring that the necessary agreements are in place before you begin the detailed preparations for your project. This includes: securing funding, deciding how the project will be governed, and agreeing roles and responsibilities.

**Phase 4: Preparation** – page 91

You will have already begun some of the planning for your project, but in this section of the guide you will learn about the detailed plans that need to be in place for your project to begin. This includes: scope and time planning, financial planning, logistics and M&E planning.

**Phase 5: Implementing and monitoring** – page 107

This is the point in your project when the plans become a reality and the activities take place. Monitoring is included in this section because there are several elements that need to be kept track of during implementation, including the project indicators, finances and identified risks.

**Phase 6: Evaluation** – page 123

To find out if we have made a positive contribution to change, we must evaluate our work. This section focuses on when and how to commission evaluations, how to develop a good terms of reference document (ToR), what to include in an evaluation report and how to share the findings.

**Phase 7: Project closure** – page 133

When the activities and evaluation are complete it can be easy to think that all the work is done. However, some activities need to be done during closure, including capturing learning for the future, communicating with beneficiaries and celebrating success.

# CONTENTS

# GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| **accountability** | explaining decisions and actions, and demonstrating progress to stakeholders |
| **activity** | a specific piece of work carried out to achieve outputs |
| **advocacy** | influencing the decisions, policies and practices of decision-makers, to address causes of poverty |
| **assessment** | collecting and analysing information to improve design, learning and implementation |
| **assumption** | a condition that needs to be met if a project is to be successful |
| **attribution** | the extent to which an observed change is the result of a specific activity |
| **baseline** | data gathered at the beginning of a project so that change can be measured |
| **beneficiary** | an individual, group or organisation that benefits from a project (see project participant) |
| **concept note** | a brief summary of an idea for a project |
| **context** | the environment in which a strategy, project or programme takes place that may prevent or facilitate change |
| **coverage** | the extent to which people groups are included in a project and receive support |
| **data collection** | gathering information in a systematic way |
| **design** | a phase in project cycle management that sets out what the project intends to achieve and how it will do this |
| **donor** | an organisation, individual or trust that gives money for a project |
| **effectiveness** | the extent to which a project achieves its aims |
| **efficiency** | making the best use of resources to deliver required results |
| **endline survey** | a survey done at the end of a project to compare with baseline data and assess change |
| **engagement** | the participation of stakeholders in a project or programme |
| **evaluation** | an assessment that identifies, reflects upon and judges the worth of what has been done |
| **evidence** | information that can be used to support or counter a statement or proposal |
| **impact** | (relating to project impact) long-term changes, both positive and negative, that a project contributes to |
| **impact evaluation** | a study done after a project is completed to assess impact |
| **logframe** | (logical framework) a table summarising a project's design based on the logic of the project |
| **mapping (tool)** | drawing a map to tell a story |
| **milestone** | a point part way through a project where you can assess progress |
| **monitoring** | an ongoing process of measuring progress |
| **monitoring and evaluation plan** | (M&E plan) a table that builds on a project's logframe, detailing M&E requirements for each indicator |

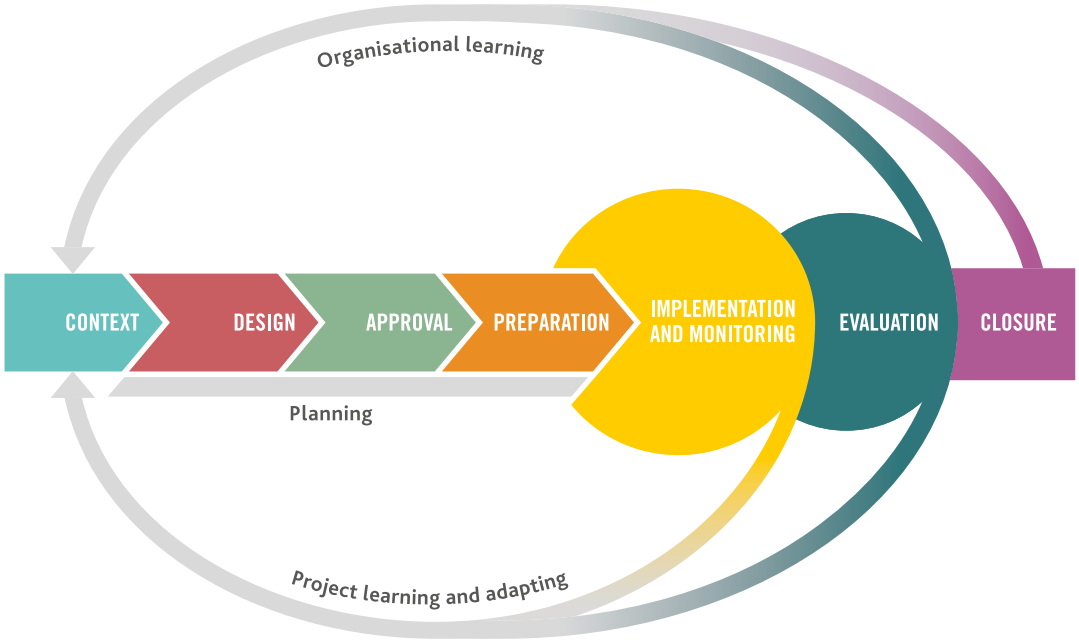
| | |
|---|---|
| **needs assessment** | the process of identifying and understanding people's needs |
| **outcome** | a change that happens during or soon after activities, which may be influenced by other factors |
| **output** | what a project actually produces, coming from completed activities |
| **precondition** | key steps needed for a project to achieve impact |
| **problem analysis** | a process used to understand problems and their causes (often conducted with a problem tree) |
| **programme** | a set of linked projects managed to meet specific objectives |
| **project** | a self-contained set of activities to achieve defined objectives within a fixed timeframe and budget |
| **project cycle** | all of the phases from the beginning to the end of a project |
| **project cycle management** | (PCM) the process of planning and managing project resources to deliver specific outcomes |
| **project participant** | an individual, group or organisation that benefits from a project (see beneficiary) |
| **quality standards** | specific requirements or principles established by an organisation, network or alliance that a project must follow |
| **research** | studying materials and sources to establish facts and reach new conclusions |
| **results** | the effects of a project, which can be intended or unintended, positive or negative |
| **review** | an occasional assessment of project progress |
| **safeguarding** | protecting children and vulnerable adults from all forms of harm and abuse |
| **sample** | a subset of a population that is studied in order to draw conclusions about the population as a whole |
| **sampling** | the process of selecting a sample |
| **stakeholder** | a person or group involved in, affected by, or influencing a project |
| **strategy** | a direction or process to achieve an organisation's aims |
| **sustainability** | the degree to which the benefits of a project continue after funding has been withdrawn |
| **terms of reference** | (ToR) a document outlining what is expected of a person's or an organisation's piece of work |
| **Theory of Change** | an explanation of how and why proposed action will lead to positive change |
| **transparency** | open communication and decision-making |
| **triangulation** | collecting data on a particular topic from at least three different sources and comparing the results |

# DIAGRAMS AND PROJECT SCENARIO EXAMPLES

# INTRODUCTION
# PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

**Projects pass through a series of phases, which together make up the project cycle. These phases are captured in diagram 1.**

Diagram 1 **Project cycle phases**




**By the end of this section you will be able to:**

- explain the benefits of good project cycle management
- draw a simple project cycle including key **decision points**
- analyse how issues or problems in your project affect the triple constraint of cost, time and scope
- explain the importance of participation in project cycle management.

# What is a project?

A project is a self-contained set of activities to achieve defined objectives within a fixed timeframe and budget. A project cycle is all of the phases from the beginning to the end of a project: from context to closure. Project cycle management is the process of planning and managing project resources to deliver specific outcomes.

# Why is it called a project cycle?

It is a cycle because the phases lead into each other and often have to be repeated during the course of the project. So, for instance, while you are monitoring how a project is being implemented, you may realise that changes have happened that mean your activities are no longer addressing the community's most urgent needs. So you will need to go back to your initial problem analysis in the next project phase, redesign the project, and implement and monitor new activities. What you learn as the project develops may mean that you need to make further changes.

Different organisations might use slightly different words for these phases (for example, the approval and governance phase is sometimes called set-up or initiation) but most organisations follow these broad phases.

**The benefits of good project cycle management**

Organisations that have good project cycle management (PCM) are good at designing, planning, implementing and learning from their work. In turn, work that is well planned and incorporates learning is much more likely to be successful and lead to lasting change. Good PCM will help you to grow the reputation of your organisation and the funding you are able to raise. Ultimately, good PCM allows your organisation to have a greater impact: your work will benefit more people more effectively for longer.

# Cross-cutting topics

We will now introduce four cross-cutting topics that need to be kept in mind throughout the whole project cycle. The four topics are:

- decision points
- the triple constraint
- participation
- quality standards.

## Decision points

Decision points will be placed at key points in a project cycle, most commonly between the different phases of a project. When the project reaches a decision point, this is an opportunity for the project team to reflect, and make sure they have completed all the necessary activities before moving to the next phase.

Sometimes, approval to move through a decision point might come from outside the project team. This might include:

- an internal panel giving a project manager permission to complete a proposal to try and win external funding or to release internal funding
- an organisation approving internal funding for a data collection and analysis stage
- a donor releasing further funding for the project once certain milestones have been reached
- a senior member of staff realising that a project is no longer reflecting the strategic objectives of the organisation, and bringing it to a close.

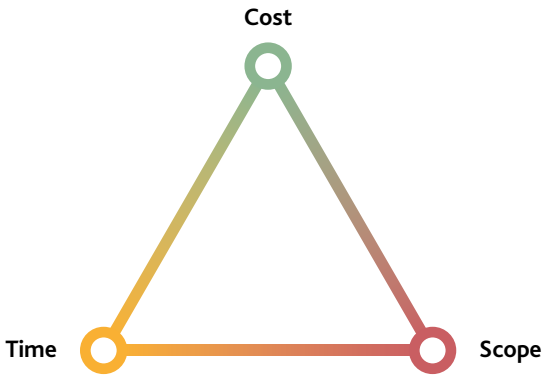
We will discuss these approval structures further in the approval and governance phase on page 84.

## The triple constraint

A common idea in project cycle management is the triple constraint, which refers to 'cost', 'time' and 'scope'. A constraint is something that sets limits or boundaries on how the project develops. So in project cycle management, the constraints are:

- how much money is allocated (cost)
- how long the project should take (time)
- what the project intends to deliver and the work needed to do this (scope).

Diagram 2 **The triple constraint**




Project management can be thought of as balancing these three constraints. It is important to be clear on the scope your project is intending to achieve, any time constraints or deadlines you have to work to, and the budget you have available to spend. All three need to be considered in parallel, and not by separate people or teams, as each of the constraints affect each other. In this way, when your project is having difficulties, you know which your most important constraint is, and where you might be able to make changes to bring your project back on track.

For example:

- If a project is running over time, more money might be added to employ extra staff.
- If a project is running over budget, the scope might have to be reduced.
- If a project has not used all its budget, and has not achieved the full scope, more time might be allowed to complete it.

## The importance of participation

In emergency relief and development work, it is essential that the people we seek to serve are fully involved and participate in the project. For example, someone can participate by:

- being involved in the design of the project
- meaningfully taking part in the decision-making process
- contributing materials, money or labour
- providing information relevant to local needs
- answering questions in a survey
- helping to evaluate the project's impact.

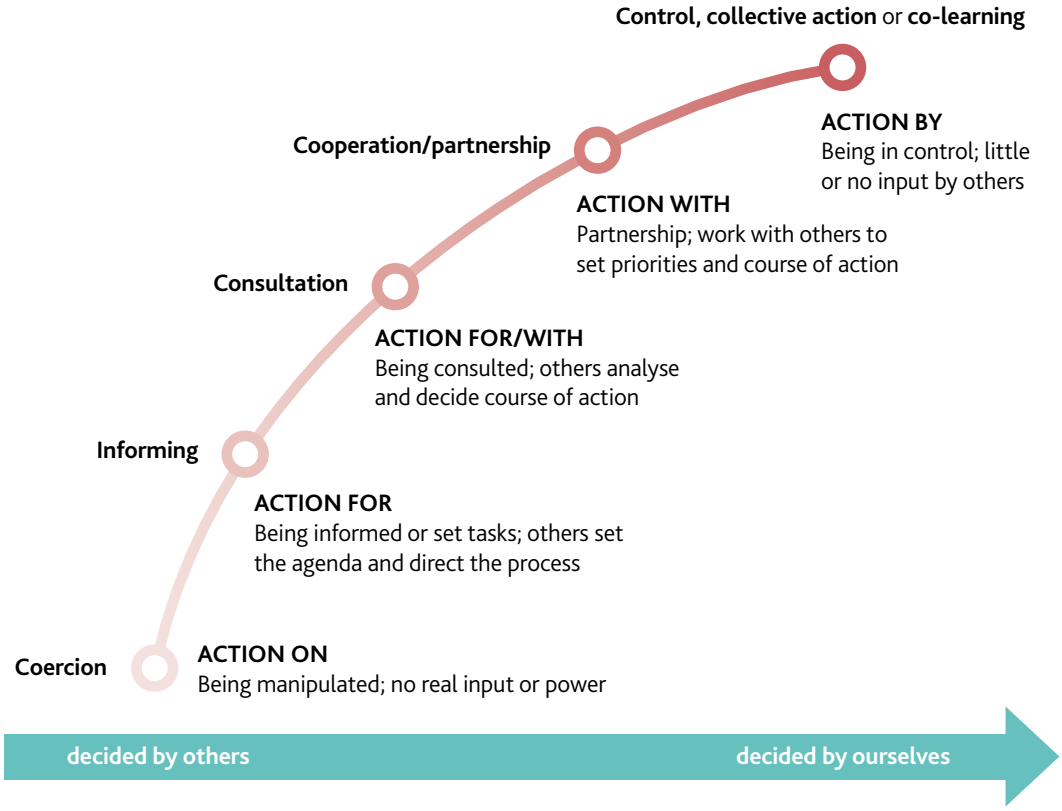
For participation to be meaningful and beneficial, it is important that people are involved throughout the project cycle, and not merely seen as sources of information during the design phase. Be sure to include those who are often hidden or need extra support to participate. This may require you to provide additional, intentional support to encourage and build the capacity of marginalised people to participate – such as people with disabilities.

### Benefits of meaningful participation

- Participants feel ownership of the project and so are more likely to support actions that will make it a success. (We might call this improved effectiveness.)
- People working on the project have a better understanding of what people really need and the project is better designed to respond to these needs. (This is also called relevance.)
- The project is more likely to be good quality, stay within budget and finish on time if we draw on local skills and local knowledge. (This is sometimes called efficiency.)
- People are committed to maintaining the benefits of the project after outside support has stopped. (This is often called sustainability.)
- Participants develop skills and confidence so they become actively engaged in their own development. (This may be called empowerment.)
- Stakeholders are given information and the power to make decisions. (This is also known as improved transparency and accountability.)
- The needs, interests and abilities of all stakeholders can be considered. (This is also known as inclusion.)

Diagram 3 on the next page outlines the different levels of participation.

Diagram 3 **Different levels of participation**




The higher up the diagram an organisation moves, the greater the level of participation. Organisations need to decide what level of participation is best. Different levels of participation will be appropriate for different stakeholders, in different phases of the project cycle and in different contexts. For example, in the early days of an emergency response following an earthquake, people must be consulted about their needs, but might not have the time, resources or networks to manage a collective plan. In another example, we might want to mobilise women to work with local government officials to ensure their area gets clean water and toilets. The women will be taking control and organising collective action. Local officials might cooperate with them and other members of the community might be consulted. It might also be necessary to inform central government ministries about the work.

## Tearfund Quality Standards

Tearfund has identified a set of corporate Quality Standards in support of our vision and the delivery of our strategy. The eight standards summarise all of the relevant external and internal accountability and quality standards, codes, guidelines and principles to which we are committed, including the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). They exist to save time and ensure quality, meaning that new partners and staff can quickly get up to speed with Tearfund's expectations and commitments to quality simply by familiarising themselves with these standards. You might consider drafting a similar set of guidelines or adopting these. Quality must be considered in parallel with the triple constraints of cost, time and scope.

At the end of each phase in this guide we include a checklist for the project team to make sure that the Quality Standards are integrated throughout the project. If the team are using these Quality Standards, they should go through the checklist before moving on to the next project phase.

## Tearfund Quality Standards

### BEHAVIOURS

We expect the highest standards of behaviour across all of our work. We stand against all forms of exploitation, abuse, fraud, bribery and any other behaviour that is incompatible with our values. We strive to transfer power to the people we serve; to transform our own, our partners' and communities' attitudes and practices on inclusion, conflict sensitivity, accountability, gender and learning.

### IMPARTIALITY AND TARGETING

We are committed to impartiality, providing assistance to the most vulnerable without regard for race, religion, ethnicity, ability, age, gender, sexuality or nationality. We target our work on the basis of need alone while remaining sensitive to conflict dynamics, and pro-actively work to support those who would otherwise be marginalised or excluded, in particular children, the elderly and those living with disability.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to ensuring that all our work is based upon effective communication with, participation of and feedback from the communities we serve. It is important that all interventions are transparent and based upon continuous learning. We also hold ourselves accountable to our partners, donors, supporters and colleagues, and to all those with whom we relate and interact.

### GENDER

In all our programmes we actively seek to challenge gender inequality, harmful beliefs and practices, and work towards gender justice. We are committed to progressing gender equality, the restoration of relationships between men and women, boys and girls, and ensuring their equal value, participation, and decision-making in all aspects of life.

### EMPOWERMENT

We are committed to community-led and participatory approaches to development and humanitarian response for sustainable impact that is based on root cause analysis. We encourage participation from all members of a community, and strive to support beneficiaries to have control over their own development at all levels, from local development activities through to local, national and regional advocacy.

### RESILIENCE

We are committed to helping people understand, reduce and manage the risks they face as well as to address the drivers of vulnerability. This includes supporting people and communities in developing resilient livelihoods, strengthening social cohesion, improving access to services, stewarding environmental resources, reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change.

### PROTECTION

We are committed to restoring relationships and building safe and secure communities. We seek to prioritise the protection of all – especially children and the most marginalised and vulnerable adults – from physical, social and psychological harm. We will take steps to assess risks, including conflict dynamics, to avoid any adverse effects of our work that might expose people to danger or lead to abuse. We believe that community members are the best actors in their own protection and will support their actions to stay safe, find security and restore dignity.

### TECHNICAL QUALITY

We are committed to the high technical quality of all of our work, and the work of partners, through meeting relevant national and international standards aligned with communities' own priorities. We will continuously learn to improve and identify and replicate good practice that is demonstrated to have relevant and positive impact.

**RECAP**

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of project cycle management and you are now ready to explore each phase of the project cycle in more depth.**

**You should now be able to:**

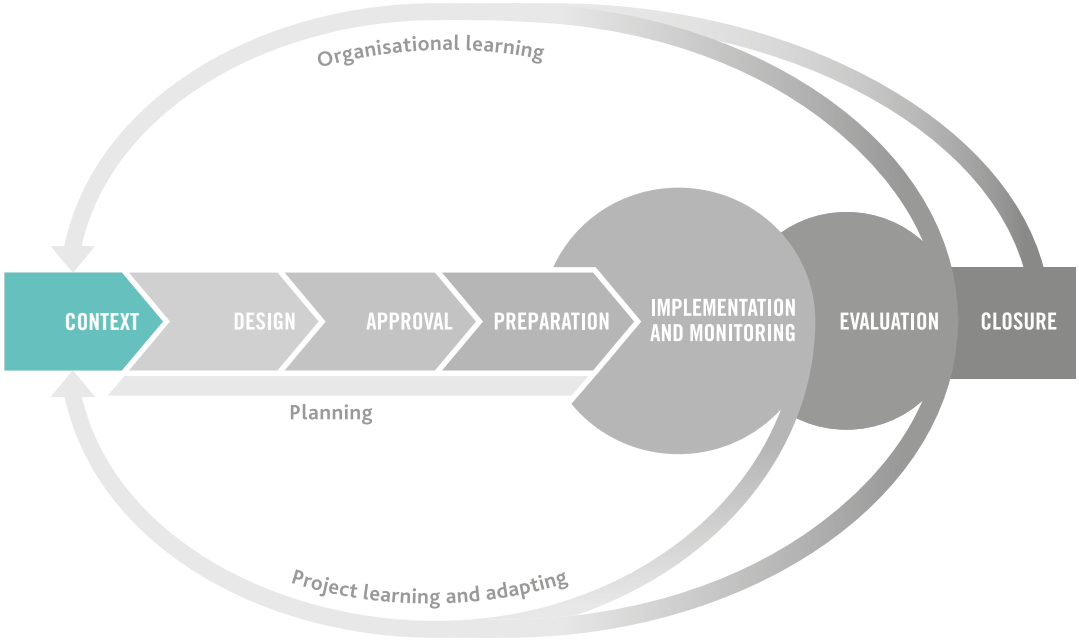
- explain the benefits of good project cycle management
- draw a simple project cycle including key decision points
- analyse how issues or problems in your project affect the triple constraint of cost, time and scope
- explain the importance of participation in project cycle management.

**REFLECT**

1. Think about some of your own projects.
   a. Which phase of the project cycle are/were these projects in?
   b. Can you think of times when you have had to balance the triple constraints?
2. Think about a time when your projects have involved different participants.
   a. Consider how people were involved, how inclusive the project was and where that type of participation is on the curve in diagram 3 in the introduction (page 5).
   b. Do you think this level of participation was helpful at that time for that project?
      – Why or why not?
      – Could you have done anything differently?

# PHASE 1
# UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

**You are currently here in the project cycle:**




**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- explain the importance of understanding a situation before you design a project
- explain the difference between primary and secondary data
- compare and contrast tools and methods used for collecting and analysing data
- select and use appropriate tools and methods to collect data in a particular situation
- analyse data in different ways according to the information you need to know.

## 1.1 Why do we need to understand the situation?

We may already have ideas about what the problems and needs of the local community are. However, it is important that we don't design projects based on these preconceived ideas, or jump to solutions before we have really understood a situation. We need to ask communities what their problems, needs, resources, talents and skills are, and to understand the wider context. It is important to do this each time we are starting a new project even if we have worked with a community for a long time, as the context is always changing. This deep understanding will enable us to use our time and resources wisely, and to design projects that meet the real needs of the community, build on what is working well already and bring about positive change. Talking to communities also starts the process of participation and engages them in the project from the early stages. Start thinking about how you will fund the project and do not raise community expectations if you are not sure it will be possible to get funding.

**Project scenario example:** For example, in our project scenario (introduced on page iv) we already knew that women were struggling to recover from conflict and experiencing poverty. However, we needed to understand the root causes of these issues, and the women's wishes and hopes for the future, in order to design the most helpful project.

To understand a situation properly, we need to collect data from different sources and analyse it to turn it into useful information. 'Analyse' means examining the information carefully and methodically so that we can explain and interpret what's really happening. 'Data' might include conversations with community members, statistics about poverty levels, and lists of community issues, for example. It is important to take an inclusive approach to data collection because the information we gather will help to determine the project design.

This section will introduce you to a variety of tools that are used to collect data and analyse the local situation and problems. You would not expect to use all the tools included in this guide in one project: instead, you will select the ones best suited to your context and what it is you want to find out. It is often best to use a few tools that complement each other so try using different combinations and see what works best for you.

We talk about assessment and analysis coming at the start of the project cycle, but in reality they happen throughout the project. You will use these tools at the problem analysis stage, when you start to implement the project, and again when you are monitoring and evaluating the project. The tools presented in this section are your toolkit for the whole project cycle.

## 1.2 Factors we need to know more about

The factors to be considered in our information-gathering will depend on the context and the type of work we might do.

**PESTLE** is a useful acronym to help us remember what areas of community life we should be interested in when we are collecting information. PESTLE stands for:

- **P**olitical
- **E**conomic
- **S**ocial
- **T**echnological
- **L**egal
- **E**nvironmental

However, it is important that we decide which areas of concern are most important for our project. Some examples of areas we might want to know about (including the PESTLE areas – for more detail see page 41) are listed in the table below, with some examples of questions we might want answered:

**PESTLE Example questions**

| Areas for consideration | Example questions |
|---|---|
| | • Who has power locally and nationally, formally and informally?<br>• Do people with power play any role in community life?<br>• Is the impact of people with power positive or negative?<br>• What are the priorities of local decision-makers?<br>• Are community members engaged in a democratic process?<br>• Who is left out of community decision-making processes?<br>• When are the next elections? If soon, are they likely to be peaceful?<br>• What policies are in place and how effective are they? |
| | • How do people support themselves and their families?<br>• What types of income generation and employment opportunities exist?<br>• Who does which type of work?<br>• Is the economy growing?<br>• Do people have access to financial services?<br>• Do people have access to markets?<br>• Have prices at the market changed and by how much? |
| | • Who normally takes on which roles in households? Men, women, boys, girls, grandparents?<br>• Do boys and girls go to school?<br>• Who works outside the home?<br>• How many people live in a household and how are they related?<br>• How are people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups viewed in the community?<br>• Is culture and religion separated or the same thing? |
| | • What is the main source of power in the community?<br>• Do people have electricity?<br>• Do people use the internet?<br>• How do people communicate?<br>• How many households have a phone? Mobile or landline?<br>• Do households use phones for mobile payments? |
| | • How do community members settle disputes?<br>• Do people have access to legal institutions?<br>• What are the relevant laws, policies and conventions that relate to the project issue? |
| | • What is the climate like?<br>• Is the climate changing?<br>• What is the weather like at this time of year?<br>• What is the soil condition?<br>• Where do people get water from?<br>• Is the area prone to natural hazards?<br>• Do community members have equal access to resources? |

**Other factors we need to know more about**

| Areas for consideration | Example questions | Where to find more information in the guide |
|---|---|---|
| | • Who might be interested in or threatened by your project?<br>• Who might be able to implement different activities?<br>• Who might you need to talk to or work with?<br>• Who is respected, and influential, locally?<br>• Whose voice is not heard?<br>• Are people with disabilities and other marginalised groups included in community activities and decision-making? | See stakeholder analysis tools on page 43 and pages 75–79 |
| | • What are the existing structures in the community?<br>• Are there any existing networks or groups?<br>• Are there any existing networks or groups, for example local churches?<br>• Do people ever work together for change?<br>• Do community members socialise together?<br>• What resources does the community have? | See capacity analysis tool on page 35 |
| | • What problems do people say they have?<br>• What problems can you see?<br>• What problems do experts see?<br>• What are the main causes of the problems?<br>• What are the formal and informal ways of addressing issues in the community?<br>• How would beneficiaries like the needs to be addressed? | See problem tree on page 33 |
| | • What are the main types and causes of the conflict?<br>• Who are the different people involved?<br>• What are the power dynamics in the conflict? | See conflict analysis tool on page 41 |
| | • What happened and when?<br>• Who has been affected? Which people and where do they live?<br>• How have they been affected?<br>• What are the immediate needs?<br>• What are the local capacities (skills, knowledge, ideas)? | See rapid data collection on page 29 |

## 1.3 Collecting information

Once we have a better idea of the 'areas' we need to know more about, we can start to collect accurate, reliable and sufficient data. To do this, we can speak directly with members of the community, individually or in groups. We can also visit to see what is happening and use sources such as existing research. We need to think about where we will get data on each of the areas we are interested in, and choose the best tools for each data source, area of interest, person or group.

The decision about how much data is sufficient depends on the context. In the first hours and days of an emergency relief setting it might be good enough to use a few tools to get a rough idea of the situation, and refine our understanding as time passes.

# Who and where do we get data from?

There are two main types of data: primary and secondary. Primary data is collected directly from the community by you and your team. Secondary data is information already available, including: books, academic research papers, assessments carried out by other organisations, government publications/ statistics, internet and media.

## Primary data

When it comes to primary data, it is important to collect data from as many different relevant people as possible. People will experience situations differently depending on factors such as their age, gender, ability, ethnicity, social status or wealth so you will need to get as many opinions as possible and compare the results to get a full picture of a situation. You won't be able to contact everyone so think about how you are going to choose people to speak to. You might want to choose specific people because they have specialist knowledge or select a random sample. Make sure you include people who are sometimes left out, such as people who are elderly, or people with disabilities, those who are ill or those who are marginalised or more vulnerable.

Triangulation involves collecting data on a particular topic from at least three different sources or using three different methods and comparing the results. The hope is that at least two sources agree, giving you more confidence in your findings. This is a powerful but easy way of checking your data. For example, if community leaders say the distribution of stalls in the market place is fair, but female market traders say they do not get good stalls, you could go and observe the layout of the stalls for yourself.

It is important to disaggregate your data. 'Disaggregate' means to specify how your data relates to people of different gender, age, ability, ethnic group etc. For example, if we are collecting data on incomes in the community featured in our project scenario, we might want to divide that into men and women, and into different age ranges to see how our project can address different parts of the community.

Before you start collecting data, consider who is going to be on the data collection team:

- Will you need people who speak different languages?
- Do you have both men and women?
- Do you need specialist knowledge in a technical area?

It is important that you collect enough data to allow you to analyse it and make decisions about project design, but avoid collecting data that isn't going to be used, or overwhelming communities with assessments that are too long or complex. What is considered enough will depend on your context.

## Secondary data

Secondary data is cheap to use, so is often the best starting point. It is important to consider how trustworthy data sources are. This will help you to know if your information is misleading or biased or if it can be relied upon. You may want to consider these questions:

- Are the facts accurate?
- Are the facts supported by evidence?
- Is the information up to date?
- Why is the organisation providing the information?
- Can the source be trusted?

For more information on how to gather secondary data you can refer to the Light Wheel toolkit, which has a chapter titled 'Facilitator's guide to gathering secondary data'. See Further reading (page 149) for details.

## Inclusive data collection

The way we set up and run focus groups, surveys and interviews makes a huge difference to the data we can gather. We want to ensure that communities are fairly and accurately represented in our context analysis, and a big part of this is ensuring we have prioritised inclusion and diversity. As you think about collecting data, use the checklist below to ensure you take into account the needs of individuals and groups that you are working with.

**Inclusive data collection checklist**

- ☐ Seek to include a diverse and representative group of people when collecting data in your data collection.
- ☐ Make extra efforts to encourage the participation of marginalised groups and to build their confidence to participate, as it may be a new experience.
- ☐ Focus groups, interviews and surveys need to be accessible to all participants. Your location and venue should be accessible so that people with disabilities are able to attend and participate.
- ☐ Adapt communication methods where needed (for example by using written communication and ensuring people speak clearly and slowly), and conduct separate interviews with individuals who find it difficult to participate in group discussions.
- ☐ Ensure people are able to give verbal (spoken) consent to participate if they are not able to give written consent.
- ☐ Create a representative data collection team. Ideally, people with disabilities and both male and female facilitators will be involved. Including facilitators with a disability in the team helps you find out more about the situation of people with disabilities, how to support the data collection team to engage with people with disabilities, and how to raise awareness and challenge negative perceptions of people with disabilities. Including female facilitators helps you find out more about the situation of women.
- ☐ When you include certain people who are vulnerable and/or marginalised and not normally heard, make sure it does not put them at risk or reinforce perceptions of difference.
- ☐ People collecting the data should speak the local language or at least have a good translator so that information is not lost.

## How do we collect primary data?

There are two types of primary data we might collect:

- **Quantitative** data is data that can be analysed in numerical form, such as numbers, frequencies, rates or proportions. It is quick and easy to collect from a large number of people, and if the results are statistically significant, they can be applied to the wider population. However, quantitative approaches are sometimes criticised for their inflexibility.
- **Qualitative** data tends to reflect perceptions, opinions, emotions and observations. It can help you to build an in-depth picture of the context and how a problem affects a person or community. Qualitative data does not have statistical significance and so the findings cannot be applied to the wider population. However, the findings can provide deeper explanation and understanding of why a situation is the way it is.

It is generally best to collect some of each type of data in order to get a complete understanding of the situation. Different tools, methods and approaches can be used to collect data and you should select those best suited to your context, your participants, your resources and the information you need. The table below shows some useful tools. These might be combined: for example, we might use a sorting exercise during a focus group discussion.

| Data collection tools | Can this tool be used for qualitative data collection? | Can this tool be used for quantitative data collection? |
|---|---|---|
| Surveys | ✓ | ✓ |
| Interviews | ✓ | ✓ |
| Focus groups | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observing | ✓ | |
| Mapping and drawing | ✓ | |
| Timelines | ✓ | |
| Daily and seasonal calendars | ✓ | |
| Ranking and sorting exercises | ✓ | ✓ |

In this section of the guide we use some of these tools to develop examples, using our project scenario. This is to help your learning. We are not trying to suggest that you should use all of the tools in every project. Do the minimum assessment required to give you the information you need.

# Sampling

We often want to get a sense of what the community as a whole thinks and so it is important to get a sample that represents as many people as possible. Taking a sample is like trying a small amount of the rice that you are cooking to check if all of the rice is cooked – looking at a small amount to decide about a much larger amount. When choosing a sampling approach we need to consider how best to represent the whole population through our sample. We should also take into account the cost of doing a survey with a large enough sample of the community.

### NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

You deliberately select the type of people you think will either represent the community well or will tell you the most about the situation. These might be the people most affected by the key issues within the community or perhaps the people with the problems that might be hardest to tackle, such as the most vulnerable people. You should interview at least 30 individuals. Because you are choosing the sample, members of the community do not have an equal chance (probability) of being chosen or represented but this approach can still give a good indication of the wider population. This is most practical for small communities.

### PROBABILITY SAMPLING

In probability sampling, the sample is not hand-picked. Instead, the people interviewed are chosen at random from population records using calculations based on statistics. Different members of the community have an equal chance (probability) of being chosen or represented. The advantage over other types of sampling is that it is not possible that the sample could have been chosen in a biased way. Because the size of the sample is likely to be quite large, this can take a lot of time and may not be a practical approach for small communities. For example, for a community of 250 households, you would need to survey about 150 households. This approach becomes more practical when looking at a larger population size – the sample size for a population of 10,000 would be about 370. The table below illustrates the sample size that would be needed for different population sizes. See Further reading (page 149) for a link to an online calculator you can use to work out the sample size you would need for any community size.

| Community size | Sample size |
|---|---|
| 250 | 150 |
| 500 | 220 |
| 1,000 | 275 |
| 10,000 | 370 |
| 100,000 | 380 |
| 1,000,000 | 385 |

## Asking the right questions

The questions we ask make a difference to the data we can gather. Asking the wrong kind of questions will limit what we discover. One important thing is to avoid closed questions where people can answer only yes or no. For example, 'Do you think the village needs a new market area?' Instead, try to use open-ended questions that allow the person replying to give more information, such as, 'What do you think works well in the market at the moment?' Also, avoid leading questions, such as, 'Don't you think that women should only work in the home?'

Listen carefully, and explore people's answers. Be flexible and ready to ask unprepared questions if someone says something interesting. Keep in mind what others have said already and listen for common responses, or conflicting opinions.

## Data collection tools

### Surveys

Surveys are used to collect data from many people fairly quickly, giving a wide range of data. Surveys can provide qualitative or quantitative data, which can be analysed to draw general conclusions about a wider community if a suitable sample of people is chosen.

#### Survey practicalities

A survey is fairly easy to do, but it is very important to get the design of it right. A survey often has a standard form to fill in, based on a set of questions. Questions should be simple with a limited number of possible answers. The number of questions should be enough to give a suitable amount of data, but not so many that people lose interest while filling it in. Try to ensure that the survey will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete. The form must be well laid out and easy to complete. It may take time to design a survey and analyse its findings, but increasingly smartphones or tablets are used to collect the data, and technology can then do some of the basic analysis very quickly.

Consider who would be the best person to carry out the survey. Although it is possible for communities to use a survey on themselves, you may find that people are less willing to be open with a neighbour than with someone from outside the community. It is a good idea to include data collectors of various ages, both male and female, so people taking part can speak to people of the same age. (Data collectors are sometimes called enumerators.)

Ideally you will conduct the survey before group discussions or interviews, to help you develop the questions and facilitate the conversations. You should consider the times of the day and year when the people you want to speak to will be available.

Before any survey, it is essential to test the survey questions and to train the data collectors properly, as they will be asking the questions and capturing the data. Data collectors need to understand:

- what the questions mean and what they are trying to find out
- how to capture and record data accurately
- how to carry out a survey in an ethical manner which follows best practice.

### Survey checklist

**Before you start:**

- ☐ Introduce yourselves.
- ☐ Ask permission to ask some questions.
- ☐ Explain what the purpose of the survey is, who it is being done for and what will be done with the results.
- ☐ Explain that participants will not be paid.
- ☐ Explain how the results of the survey will be shared with the individual, household or community.
- ☐ Say how long (approximately) it will take to complete the survey.
- ☐ Tell the person/people that any information they give you will be kept in confidence and that their identity will not be revealed to anyone. (You need to make sure that you have processes in place to protect the survey data and ensure it is confidential.)
- ☐ Tell them that they do not have to answer a question if they don't want to and that they can end the survey at any stage.
- ☐ Explain that some of the questions may involve issues that are sensitive or private, and that the responses to these questions can be very useful in understanding the priorities within a community. Remind them that they do not have to answer these questions if they don't want to.

**During the survey:**

- ☐ Let the person/people answering the survey see both the questionnaire and your notes if they want to, especially if you are using a smartphone or tablet.
- ☐ Avoid using questions that suggest that one answer is correct or better, and encourage people to be open and honest in their responses. Reassure them that no one will be offended if they give negative answers.
- ☐ At the end of the survey, thank the person you have interviewed and give them the chance to add anything and to ask you questions.

## Interviews

Interviews can allow you to gain a deep understanding of people's experiences and opinions. Interviewees are often chosen because they can provide a particular insight into an aspect of the situation. These are called key informants and can include important figures in the community, such as village chiefs, community leaders, teachers and religious leaders. You might also want to conduct individual interviews with potential project participants. This would usually be for sensitive topics, or when time is short. Think about the gender of your interviewer and interviewee: it may be appropriate to ensure men interview men, and women interview women. Make sure that your decision to interview certain people who are vulnerable, marginalised and not normally heard does not put them at risk or reinforce perceptions of difference.

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Structured interviews use exactly the same questions, in the same order, each time. Semi-structured interviews are often best as they have a checklist of questions or points to cover, to make sure nothing is missed, but the interviewer also has the freedom to explore any interesting answers in more depth.

Semi-structured interviews should take 45 to 60 minutes. However, this may vary from one group to another depending on their needs. Interviews should be done in a safe open space. Seek consent to do the interview, to take notes, do any recording and to use the information for the purpose you have explained. If you are interviewing children they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, or chaperon. Start with a general conversation about the area and context, and allow the person you are interviewing to raise problems when they are ready to. When they do, sensitively ask for a little more information to identify needs and how people are currently coping with the problems. Be aware that people might not want to tell you things that are very personal: for example, if they cope with a food shortage by sending their children to beg on the streets.

## Focus groups

A focus group discussion brings together a group of people to talk about a particular topic. It helps us to understand the problems they face and the needs they have. It enables people with different views to discuss their differences, challenge assumptions and possibly reach an understanding together of the needs of the community. By exploring issues together from the start, communities can begin to own the project themselves.

The recommended size for a focus group is between 6 and 12 people. This gives everyone a chance to speak and makes chats between individuals less likely. It is important to be aware of the kinds of people you have in the group and how they might affect how people interact. For example, poorer members of the community may not speak honestly about problems in their community if the community leader is also present. Women may not feel comfortable to speak out in front of men. It is often better to have separate groups for similar groups of people: for example, separate men's and women's groups, and separate groups for young people. Be aware that more time will be needed for the discussion if you are using a translator.

Set out the rules before you start, so that the conversation will stay focused, and encourage everyone to contribute in a productive, supportive way. To make sure everyone gets a chance to speak, you can use an object, such as a ball, which is passed around the group and signals that only the person holding the object has permission to speak. Another idea is to give everyone three to five pebbles. Every time they raise a point they have to 'pay in' a pebble.

For every focus group, you will need a facilitator whose role is to ask questions, keep the discussion focused and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. You will also need someone else to make notes of the discussion. At the end the facilitator can sum up the main points and check for accuracy. Allow about 90 minutes for a focus group discussion.

The choice of questions for discussion is important, so use the same guidelines given in the interviews section above (such as avoiding leading questions).

### Practical and ethical considerations for interviews and focus group discussions

**As you prepare:**

- Make sure the interview or discussion takes place in a comfortable environment, where conversations cannot be overheard.
- Refer back to the inclusive data collection checklist (on page 14) to help you think about the venue, format of your discussion and other factors that will influence who will be able to attend.
- Try to give people something to eat and drink. However, be careful this is not perceived as payback for their time.
- You will need to think about how you will record people's answers so that you can analyse the information later. Taking notes can disrupt the flow of conversation so consider recording the interview and listening back or having another person to take notes. Always ask permission for this

first. Be aware that some people might be uncomfortable with being recorded, and it takes at least twice as long to transcribe an interview as it does to record it.

- If you're using a translator, take some time to chat with them before the first interview. Ask them to translate exactly what is being said and not to shorten, summarise or 'improve' answers.
- If you are travelling to a community to gather information, it might be useful to arrange focus group discussions and interviews before you arrive.
- Before starting, seek consent to have the discussion and make sure people understand how the information they give will be used and shared.
- If taking photos would help, then please ask the participants before doing so. If they are not comfortable with the idea, then don't take photos. Ensure that formal verbal or written consent is given before using participants' responses or photographs.
- If children are involved, they must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or chaperon.

**When you start:**

- Thank people for coming, and make sure you show that you value their time.
- Explain that everyone's perspective is important and needs to be respected by the group.
- Avoid judging the answers people give, either directly or indirectly, through your tone of voice or body language.
- Make sure you understand answers, and ask if you are not sure.
- Some people like to please the interviewer by giving the answer they think you want to hear. In some cultures it is rude to disagree, or say something that might be perceived as criticism. Or people might give the answer they think will bring in most support or resources. Try to explain to participants why it is important for you to hear what they really think.

### **Project scenario example:** Focus groups

In this exercise, focus groups were set up to help the project team learn more about attitudes to selling. Separate groups of both sellers and customers were invited to take part. In each group, participants were given a number of cards with statements written on them and were asked to say which ones they agreed with.

**Female sellers agreed with these statements:**

- It is easier for men to store stock
- I'd rather have a stall in the centre of the market
- Customers often ask for credit

**Female sellers disagreed with these statements:**

- Women shouldn't sell from shops
- I keep all of the money I make

**Male sellers agreed with these statements:**

- There are things that men should sell and women shouldn't sell
- Women shouldn't sell from shops
- It is easier for men to store stock
- I'd rather have a stall in the centre of the market
- Customers often ask for credit

**Male sellers disagreed with these statements:**

- I keep all of the money I make

**Female customers agreed with these statements:**

- I'd rather buy from a stall in the centre of the market
- I prefer shops that offer credit

**Female customers disagreed with these statements:**

- I'd rather buy from a man than from a women
- There are things that men should sell and things that women should sell

**Male customers agreed with these statements:**

- I'd rather buy from a man than from a woman
- I'd rather buy from a stall in the centre of the market
- I prefer shops that offer credit

**Some customers agreed and some customers disagreed with the statement below:**

- I would buy from a person with a disability

The facilitator of the focus group then generated a discussion to find out why people voted as they did and noted down the answers to analyse after the focus group.

## Observing

One of the simplest and most effective ways to understand a community and a situation is to observe it. This can be as simple as looking out for things that confirm or contradict the information you have been told. For example, if you have been told that harvests are poor, but you can see sacks of grain for sale in the market, you might want to find out more.

Just you being there, as an observer, may affect the behaviour of the people you are observing. You should explain what you are doing and why. Sometimes it is best for the observer to be from the community, so they are less likely to affect the way people react.

One structured way to observe is to walk through the community in a line, often called a 'transect walk'. This can give you a good picture of the reality of the local surroundings, instead of being shown the best or worst bits. You can plan the route on a map before the visit so that it covers all relevant areas.

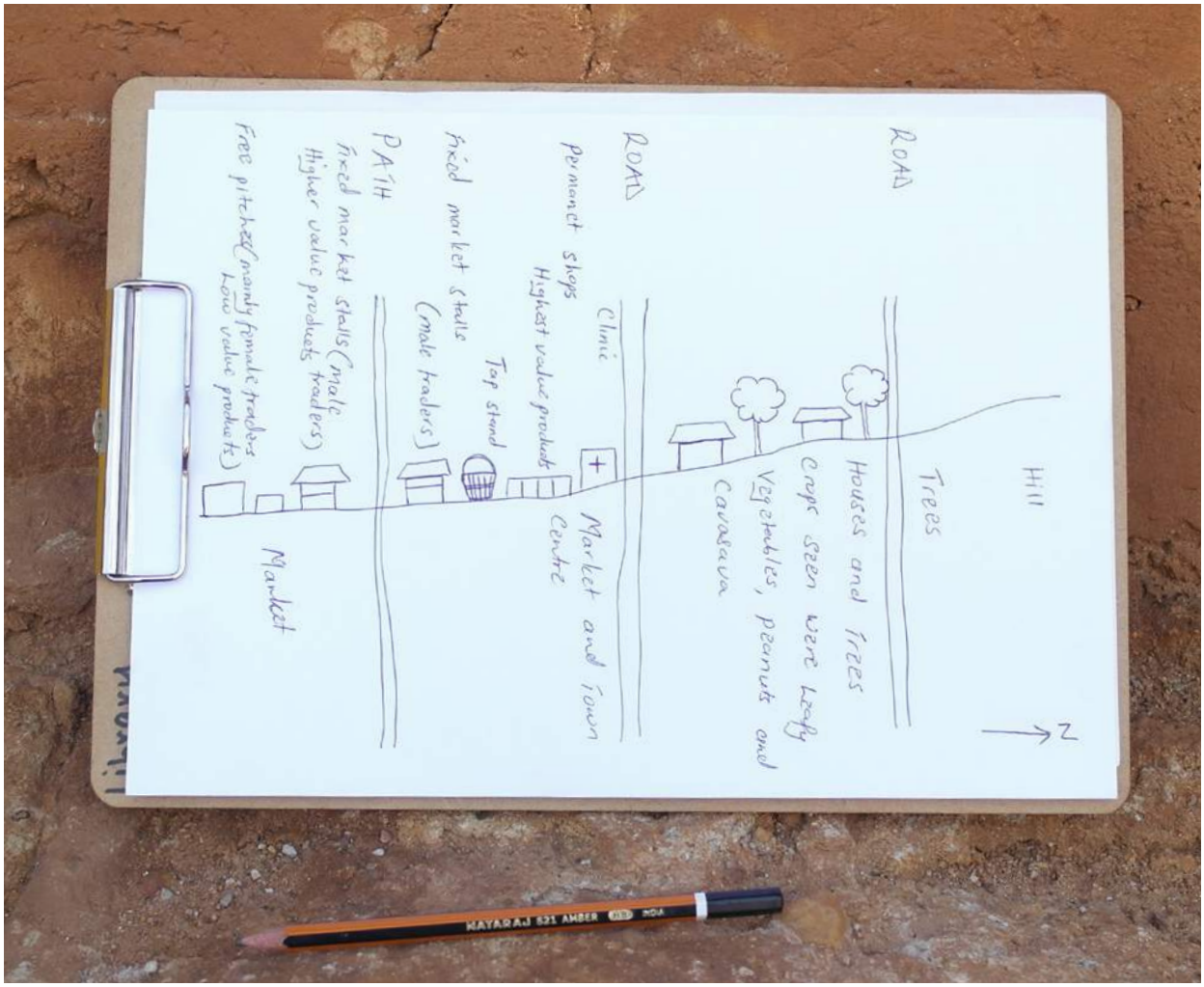
Walk through the community with key informants, observing, listening and asking. Make a careful note of whatever is relevant, eg the soils, agriculture, water sources and activities. Photographs, video or drawings are also useful ways to record what you see. Checklists are useful for recording observations, and making sure all relevant points are covered.

A transect walk is a useful method to use early on in an assessment, as it will reveal issues and areas that you want to find out more about. As with other ways of collecting data, it is important to check your findings and discuss them with the community so that your own biases don't affect how you interpret what you see.

### **Project scenario example:** Transect walk

Diagram 4 below shows a transect walk through the project area. You can see how the market changes as you pass through it, with the more permanent stalls and shops run by men stocking higher value produce. You can also see how the landscape changes as you cross the road and it becomes more residential, with houses and crops. As you head up the hill, there is only the occasional tree.

Diagram 4 **Transect walk**




## Mapping and drawing

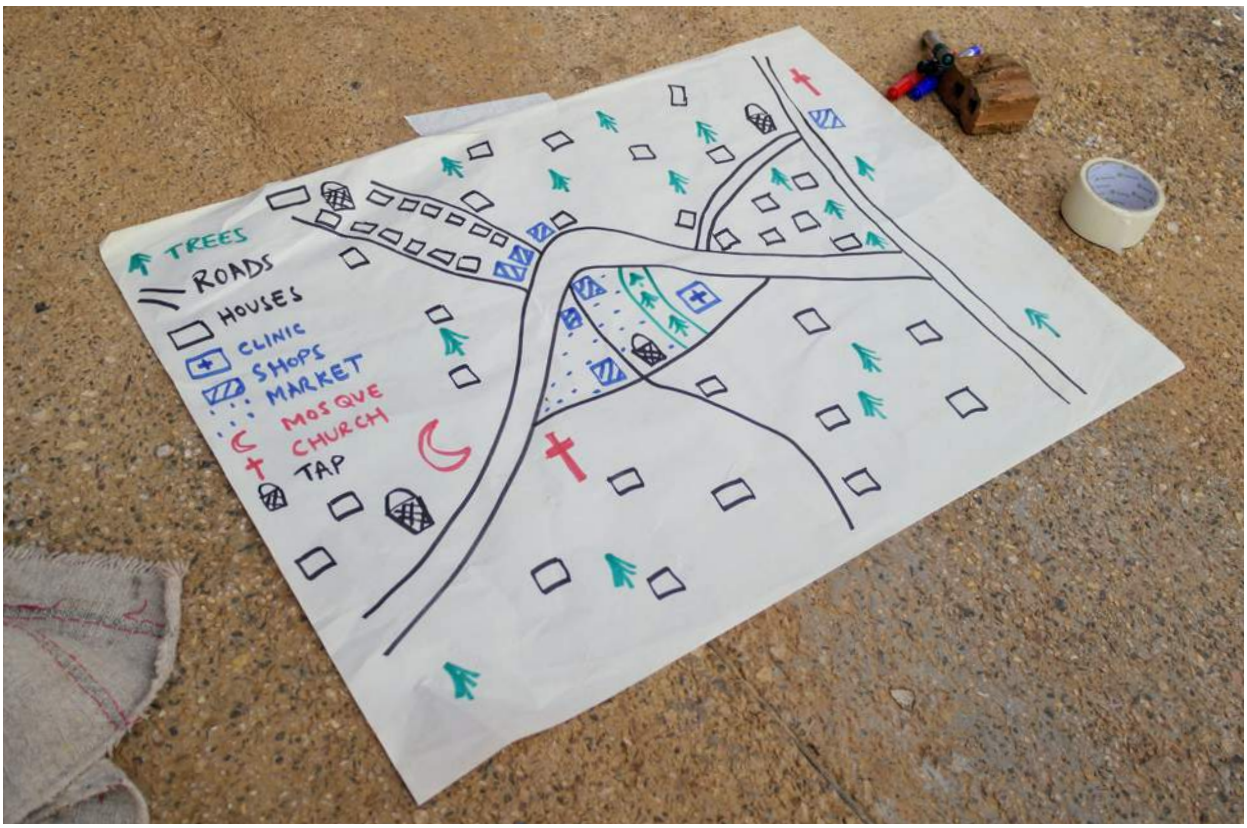
Community members draw a map of their community to tell their story together. They can draw either on paper or outside on the ground, using whatever resources are available. They are encouraged to include what they feel is important to them and their community. The map might show the natural and physical resources in the area – forests, rivers, roads, houses, wells. It might show important people and organisations. Getting people to draw their impression of their own community can be a great technique for working with an illiterate community or when there are language barriers. Get people into groups of about six people, ask them to draw the situation and then invite them to explain what is going on. Giving people the chance to draw in this way helps them feel engaged and valued, and can help reveal the situation as it actually is, or bring to light hidden or unspoken issues.

## **Project scenario example:** Mapping

Diagrams 5 and 6 below show the market and wider project area.

Diagram 5 **Market area as drawn by women**


Diagram 6 **Wider project area as drawn by men**



### Analysing the maps

Once the map has been drawn, encourage discussion by asking questions such as:

- How did you decide what to include? What was left out?
- What did you give most attention to? Which are the most important parts?
- What was difficult to show?
- Did you disagree about anything in your discussion?
- What can we learn from the map about local needs?

As the group are talking, ask yourself, 'How does the community's perception compare with what I have seen and heard already?' You might want to take notes or record the discussions (see 'Survey practicalities', page 17).

So you can better understand the issues facing different groups within the community, the groups should work separately. A map by young people may show very different information compared to the map by older women. A map by women with disabilities may show different information again.

Questions for discussion could include:

- What differences are there between the maps?
- Why are there differences?
- How does the information from each map help to make a more complete picture of the community?

This tool could be combined with walking and observing using a community map as the guide for the walk.

**Project scenario example:** In the example from the project scenario, the maps drawn by men and women were different in a few ways. Men tended to leave off the taps, as they are not involved in collecting water. Women drew the taps as further away than they actually are, possibly because of the effort involved in walking back with the water. Women with difficulties walking commented that they took longer than others to get to the taps. Women didn't include bars or mosques on their maps, because they didn't go into these. The maps were therefore useful in finding out about the different roles people of different genders play.

## Timelines

Working with a community to build a timeline helps us understand how things in the past have led to, and continue to influence, the present. It can help to reveal hidden factors that may not be immediately obvious, such as political events, ecological change, disease or population trends.

Timelines can also be used to show the history of local disasters or can show us changes or trends in the type, frequency or intensity of natural hazards, helping communities prepare for the risk of future disasters.

The process of creating a timeline can be a good way to involve people. Agree how many years your timeline will cover and draw a horizontal line on a large piece of paper with the years along it. Ask community members to discuss key events and write or draw them on the timeline.

You can find out how a community's experience and feelings about their situation have changed over the years by asking, 'What is life like now?', 'What was it like two years ago?', 'What was it like ten years ago?', 'Do you feel more or less happy now?' and following up with the question, 'Why?' This will help you understand how people's well-being and happiness has changed and what events people think have caused this.

## Daily and seasonal calendars

Daily calendars can be used to show how people spend their day, which can reveal needs and capacities (skills, knowledge, ideas and resources). For example, a calendar might show how much time water collection takes each day, which might indicate a need for a closer water supply.

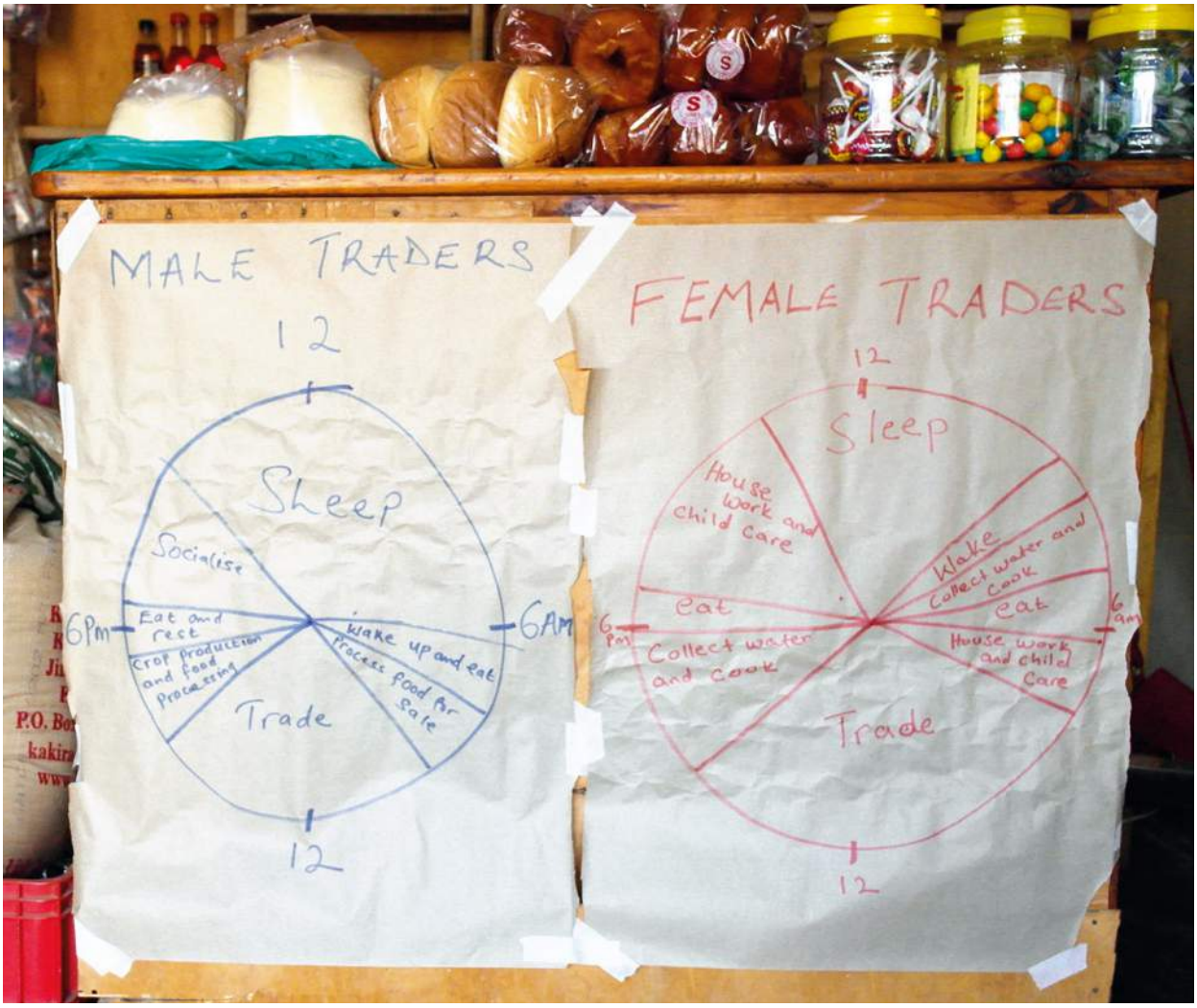
It can be interesting to compare calendars drawn by men and women, boys and girls. In one situation boys were doing better at school than girls, which was being used as an argument for not sending girls to school. But the daily calendars showed that girls spent their time after school doing housework, while boys spent it studying, and boys got more sleep each night than girls.

Daily calendars can be written as a list of activities, or drawn on a circle like a clock face (see example in diagram 7 below). Ask participants to describe a typical day, listing all the activities they do, and the time taken for each.

### **Project scenario example:** Calendars

Diagram 7 shows daily calendars drawn by male and female traders. You can see that men and women currently give the same amount of time to trading, but men have more time to produce and prepare goods for sale, allowing them to trade in higher value produce such as peanut butter. Men also have more rest and social time than women. This again reveals gender roles and values. It also helps us to understand the busiest times in the day for men and women. This helps us to consider when we might schedule project activities and what we may need to put in place to enable the project participants to attend project activities.

Diagram 7 **Daily calendars drawn by male and female traders**



Seasonal calendars show the activities people engage in throughout the year. They might reveal months when food is harvested, and months when it is in short supply. Seasonal calendars help to identify which activities are most affected by seasonal variation. They could also show which are the safer seasons of the year when agriculture and other livelihoods activities should happen.

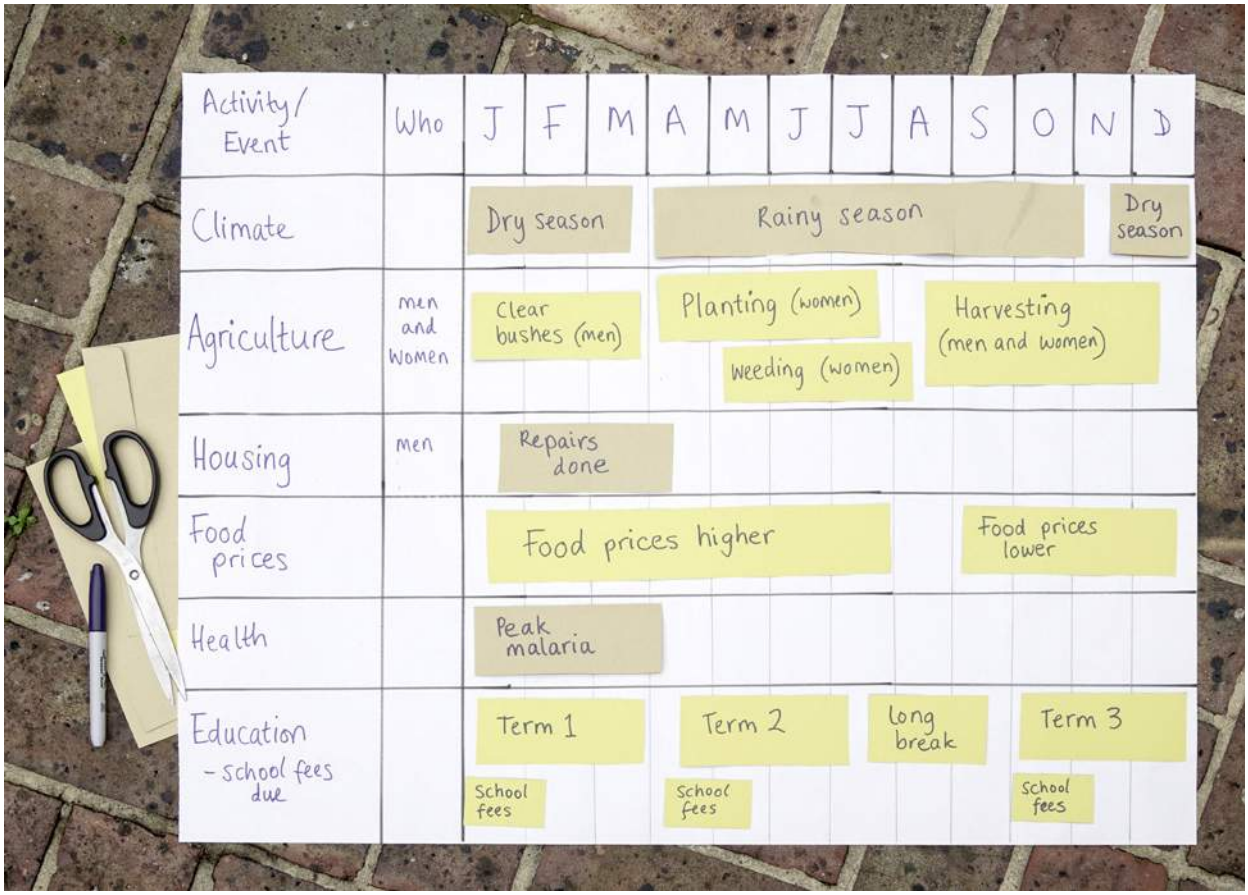
Seasonal calendars can be drawn as a series of lines across paper. One row shows calendar months and the other rows show important activities or events such as climate, agriculture, housing, food prices, health and education. This list should be decided with the community. You should also note which activities are carried out by men and which by women.

It is often best to start with a calendar of a typical year, and then discuss recent changes to this pattern.

### **Project scenario example:** Seasonal calendar

Diagram 8 below shows a seasonal calendar drawn by the community. This information will help in planning the best time for project activities with the community. For example, access may be restricted during the rainy season and it may be best to avoid project activities when the community are busy planting or harvesting crops.

Diagram 8 **Seasonal calendar**



## Ranking and sorting exercises

There are several techniques that ask people to rank, sort or arrange items. This can help you find out which issues or items they prioritise. Some of these techniques include:

### Making piles with small items (proportional piling)

Give participants a number of pebbles or seeds and ask them to divide them into smaller piles, with each pile representing a different category. Giving people physical objects to move around can focus a discussion and might involve those who don't usually like saying much.

**Project scenario example:** Ranking and sorting

In the example in diagram 9 below, women were asked what they normally sell in the market.

This question was asked as there had been a suggestion that women tend to sell low-value items and men tend to sell higher value items, which could impact on their income. Also it had been suggested that men had more time to produce and process goods for sale than women did.

Diagram 9 **Pebble poll (proportional piling)**

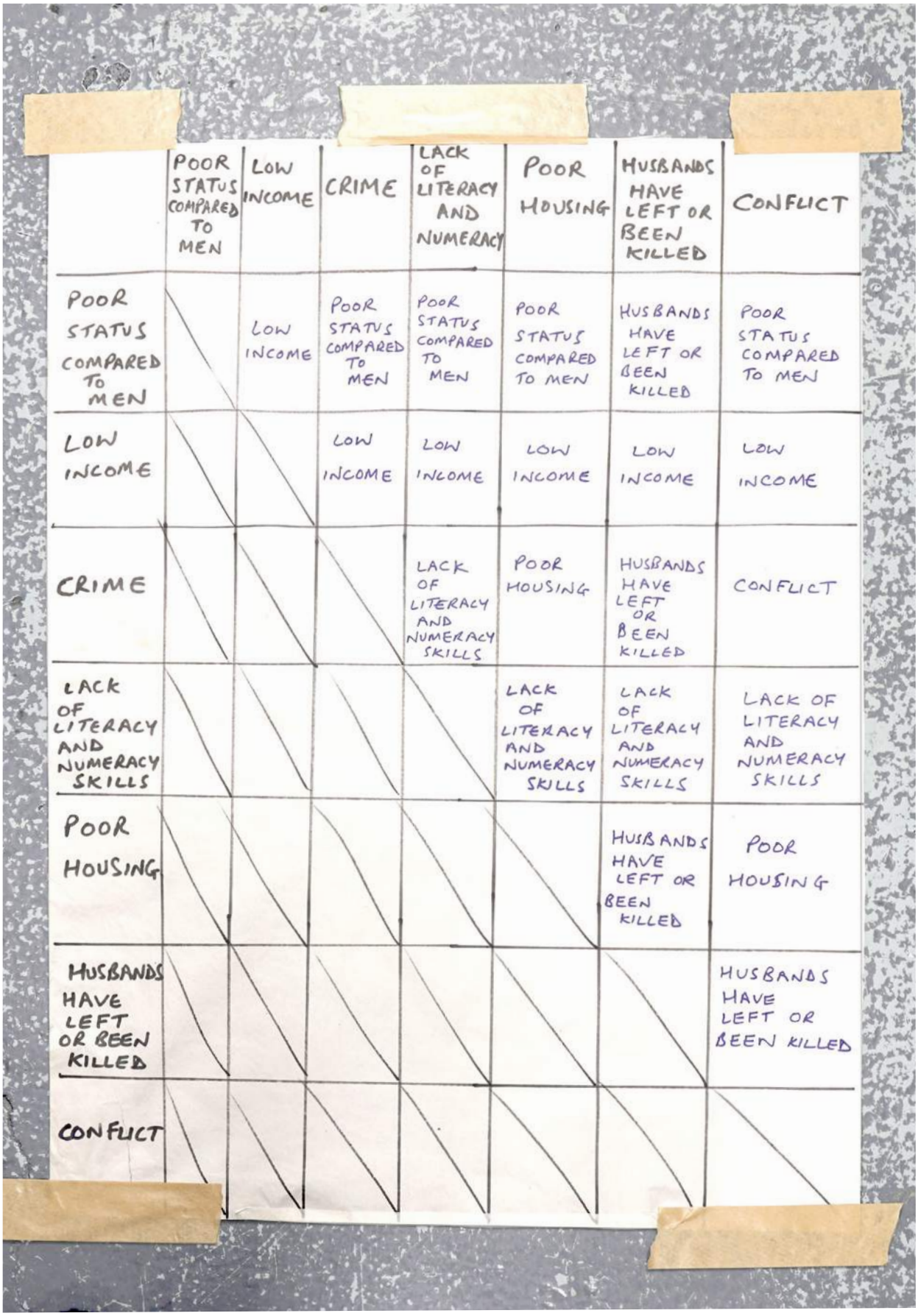

### This or that? (pairwise ranking)

This is a useful technique to help people prioritise issues or decide the importance of different options. The tool compares two options at a time, and asks participants which they prefer, or which is most important. The answers help to decide on overall preferences and importance.

**Project scenario example:** This or that?

The results in diagram 10 on the next page are taken from a pairwise ranking exercise with women aged 25 to 40.

Diagram 10 **Pairwise ranking**



Participants were first asked to identify the biggest problems affecting women in that area. They were then asked to compare two issues at a time and state which was the most difficult. This was repeated for all possible pairs of problems. For example, women were asked whether having a low income was more difficult than having a low level of literacy and numeracy. The women selected 'low income' out of the two options and low income was written in the box where the two issues meet. This was repeated for all possible combinations of issues. The crossed out boxes in the diagram are to avoid the same pairs being compared twice.

The problems that appear most often in the table are the problems the women find most difficult. You can use colours to help visualise which option is chosen most. In order, these are:

- Low income 6 votes
- Poor status compared with men 4 votes
- Lack of literacy and numeracy skills 4 votes
- Husbands have left or been killed 4 votes
- Poor housing 2 votes
- Conflict 1 vote
- Crime 0 votes

## Rapid data collection

Normally data collection should take place over a period of weeks. If time is limited, such as in an emergency situation, you will want to start implementing the project as quickly as possible. Therefore, your data collection will focus mainly on identifying immediate life-saving needs.

During sudden crises it's important to act quickly. But it is always possible to speak to some affected people. Given time constraints, only a few interviews may be possible, so interviewees must be selected carefully.

- Stage 1: Identify areas most affected, using secondary data and key informants.
- Stage 2: Identify the most vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities.
- Stage 3: Use random sampling to select key individual and group informants.

Each of these three stages can be done in less than an hour, though the more time you give to this process, the more accurate your data will be.

If a large-scale emergency happens, a situation analysis should be completed within two days. This provides an initial assessment of the scope and severity of the emergency, and an initial understanding of the required response. Within 14 days a Multi-cluster/sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) should take place. This is a process for collecting and analysing information on vulnerable populations and their needs.

Many of the tools and methods for primary data collection are as useful in emergency relief settings as they are in development. However, emergency relief organisations have also developed specific tools which can be used to assess needs quickly in emergencies. Several of these take the form of checklists. See the *Sphere Handbook* in Further reading (page 149) for more information.

## Digital data collection

There are advantages and disadvantages of using digital tools to help with data collection:

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|
| • timeliness: analysis can be done automatically<br>• accuracy: less risk of errors in data analysis<br>• information management: data collected and stored in the digital tool<br>• audit trail: data has a time, date and location of where it was recorded, and can be verified<br>• consistency: the same questions can be easily updated across many different locations<br>• visibility: the data is accessible immediately in various locations<br>• share the work/get support: as data is visible more quickly it can be used more quickly to generate support for the work | • up-front cost: you may need to buy smartphones or tablets to collect the data<br>• training: you may need to train the data collectors on how to use the technology<br>• security: as phones and/or tablets are normally used, the security risk increases to the data collectors, the equipment and the data itself<br>• impact of technical failure: could mean you are unable to collect data or lose data<br>• access to the internet: if you are in a remote location, you may struggle to upload the data |

## The Light Wheel

The Light Wheel is a participatory tool that can help you adopt a holistic approach during your data collection. It can be used to gather information at every stage of the project cycle, from needs assessment and baseline data to midline and end-of-project evaluation.

The Light Wheel is made up of nine interconnecting 'spokes' which, at Tearfund, we believe have an influence over an individual or community's ability to live well and flourish. By considering each spoke during your data collection process, a holistic view can be taken that brings together physical, social, economic and spiritual well-being. We believe that positive change in each of the nine spokes is the key to unlocking whole-life transformation.

As well as providing a framework to think about whole-life transformation, the Light Wheel toolkit contains a range of data collection tools, including focus group discussion questions, household survey questions, and observation questions, for each of the nine spokes. These can be used throughout the project cycle to measure and assess holistic change over time. For more details see Appendix 3 (page 142).

## 1.4 Analysing the situation

Once you have gathered enough data about the issues and broader context, this data needs to be analysed to convert it into useful information that you can use to make decisions. Deciding when you have enough data will depend on your context, the complexity of the problems you are trying to address and how great the needs are. For example, in an emergency situation, you need to act fast enough to save lives, and so you might design a project even with gaps in your data. You may fill these gaps, and adapt your project, during delivery.

In the project cycle, analysis is the stage that comes after assessment. In reality, the two stages overlap and inform each other. For example:

- You might go back and collect some more data if your analysis reveals an area needing further study, or some inconsistencies.
- Focus groups are often used to collect data and then analyse it along with the participants.
- Some of the tools above can be used to collect data but can also be used as analysis tools. For example, pairwise ranking ('This or that?') can be used to collect data if asking questions such as which food people prefer, but also for analysis if you are asking participants to prioritise needs.

Different types of analysis need different tools. Some example tools are shown in the table below. The section below the table explains these different types of analysis. Each section explains why we would carry out that type of analysis, and what it might tell us. Some of the possible tools and techniques for doing the analysis are included in each section. These tools can be used flexibly and to complement one another.

| Type of analysis | Example tools |
|---|---|
| Problem (cause and effect) analysis | • Problem tree<br>• Force field analysis |
| Capacity and resources | • Capacity analysis (based on resources)<br>• Appreciative enquiry |
| Situation or context analysis | • Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT)<br>• PESTLE<br>• Political economy analysis<br>• Conflict analysis<br>• Market assessment |

# Problem analysis

Problem analysis helps to identify the key problems and then investigate the underlying issues and immediate causes that contribute to this problem.

## Problem tree

A problem tree provides a way to work out and see the causes and effects of a problem and identify factors that may need to be addressed or considered so that the problem can be solved.

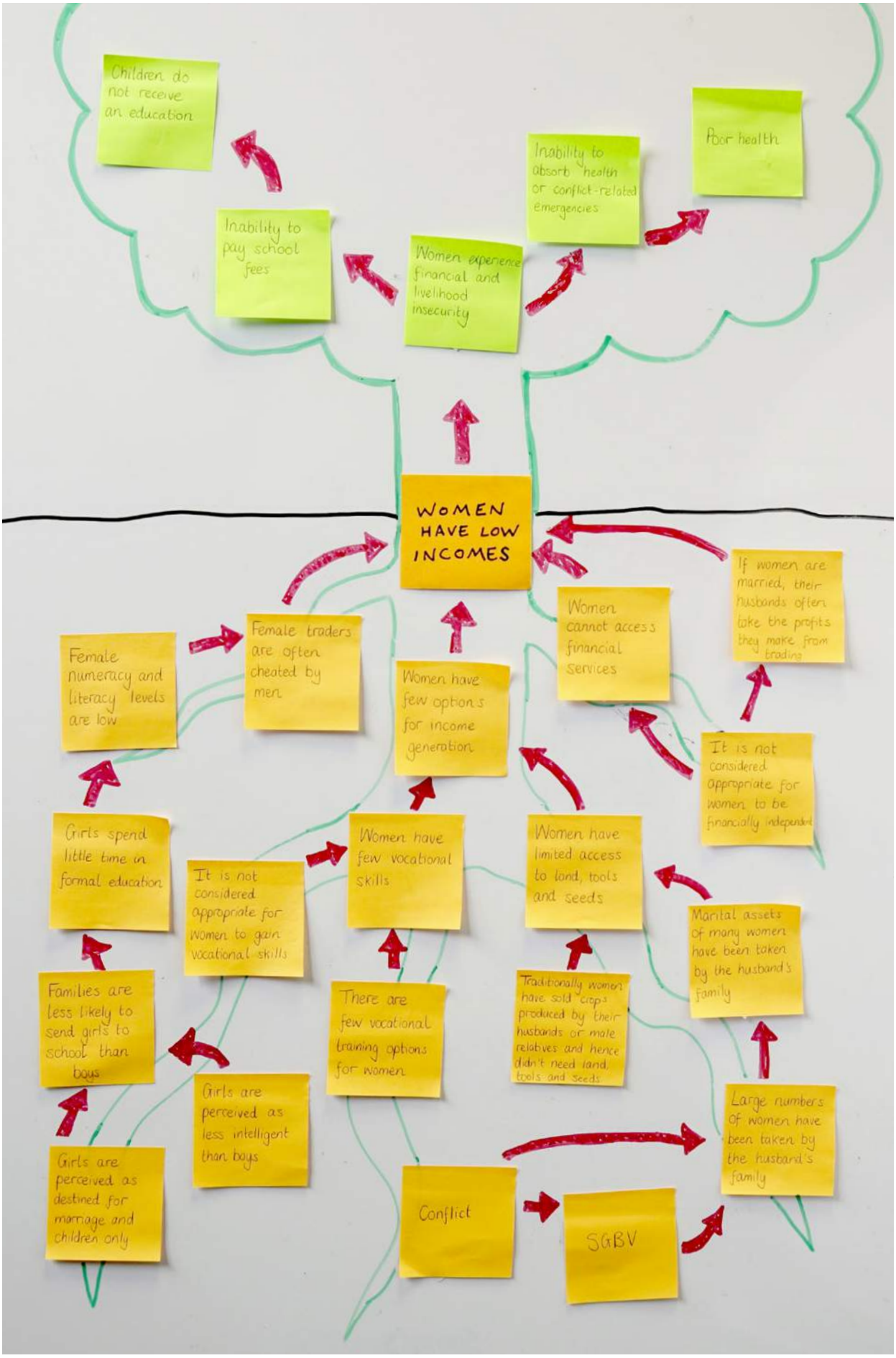
It is a good idea to create problem trees with various stakeholders who can help analyse the existing situation from different perspectives.

1. The first stage is to identify the main problem or central issue and summarise it in a few words on the trunk of your tree. It is important to identify existing problems, not possible, imagined or future ones. If there is no agreement on the central issue, then decide on one temporarily and begin the analysis, but return at a later stage to investigate the other options.
2. Next, ask yourselves what the causes of this core problem are and write them on sticky notes or cards. Once you think you have all the immediate causes of the problem, try and identify some of the underlying causes. Dig deeper with your questions: 'What causes that?', and then 'What causes that?', and so 'What causes that?'
3. Now start adding your cards/sticky notes onto the roots of the tree. Order them so that the notes/cards with the immediate causes are closest to the problem/trunk of the tree, and the underlying causes are further down the roots. Like real roots, they divide and divide again as you identify further causes. You can play around with the order as you see different connections.
4. Then fill the branches of your tree with the effects and consequences of the central problem. Ask yourself, 'What is happening as a result of the problem?', and 'What does that lead to?', and so 'What does that lead to?' Often the same issue will appear as both a cause and a consequence: this is fine because it starts to show cycles. Once a problem tree has been completed, you should work up the roots and branches and check that there are logical connections between different causes and effects. If you identify any gaps in logic, add in a new card. You should be able to 'read' a completed problem tree from the bottom up, from the root causes to the central problem, and then from the central problem to the effects. You can say '[root cause] leads to [secondary cause], leads to [most significant cause], leads to [central issue], leads to [consequence], leads to [consequence], which leads to…'

### **Project scenario example:** Problem tree

From our data collection activities we have found that the biggest problem affecting women in the community is having a low income. This is therefore the central problem written on the trunk of our problem tree in diagram 11 on the next page. The causes and consequences of this problem are written on the roots and branches of the tree based on our findings from the data collection.

Diagram 11 **Problem tree**



## Solutions tree

A problem tree like the one on page 33 can be turned into a solutions tree, which is the next stage in deciding how the problems can be solved. Make sure the cards show final situations you would like to see, and not actions you are going to take. For example, 'Female traders are often cheated by men' changes to 'Female traders are treated fairly by men'.

### Turning problem statements into solution statements

Here are three problem statements from our project scenario problem tree:

1. Women cannot access financial services.
2. There are few vocational training options for women.
3. It is not considered appropriate for women to be financially independent.

When converting these into solution statements, the first problem was rewritten into the solution statement: 'Women have access to financial services.'

The second problem statement was rewritten into the solution statement: 'Women without basic vocational skills can access training.'

The third problem statement was rewritten into a solution statement: 'Changes in gender norms.'

This process is repeated for all problem statements in the problem tree to form a solutions tree.

## Force field analysis

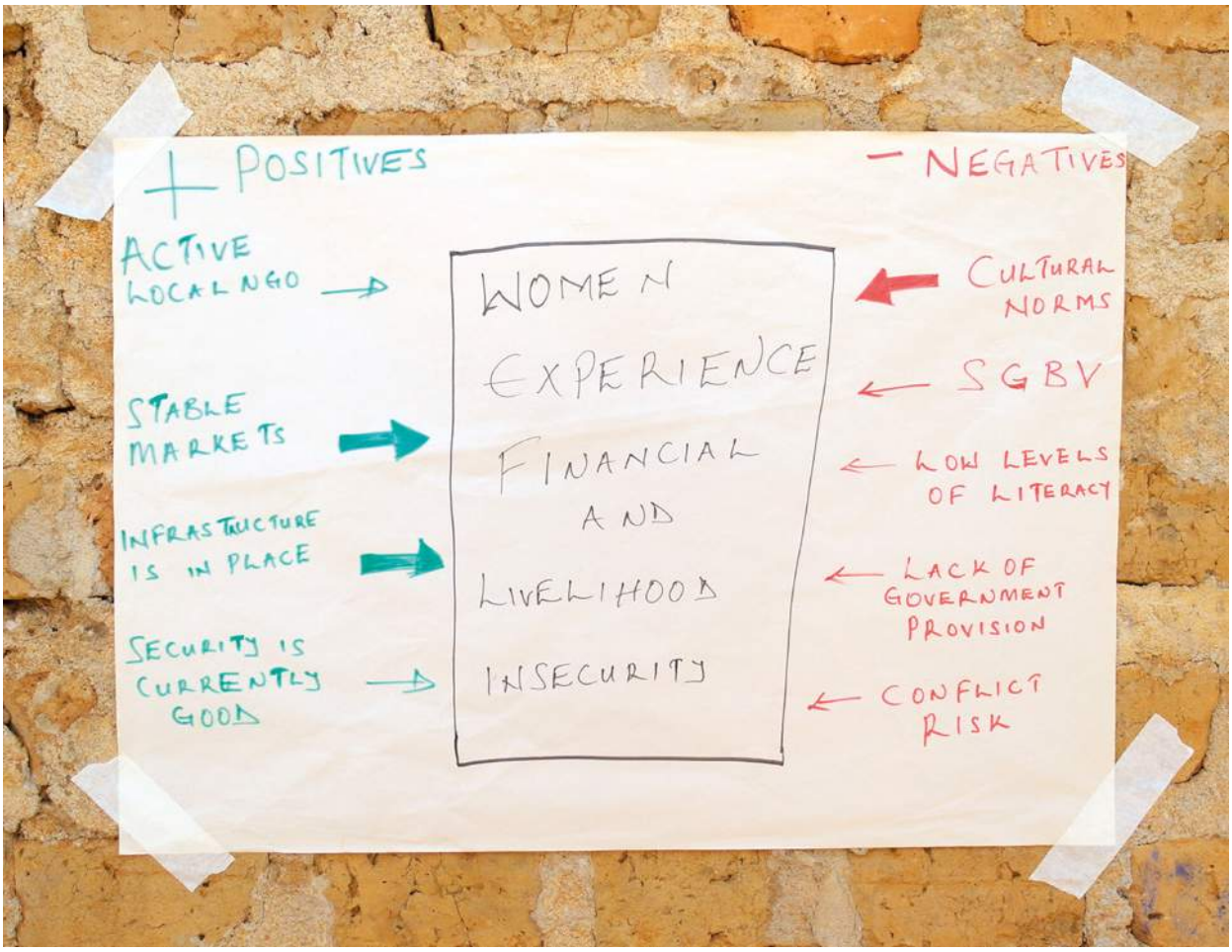
You may find that a problem tree presents quite a simple cause-and-effect view of the situation, which might not always be the most appropriate approach. A force field analysis is an alternative to a problem tree that can allow you to think in a more flexible way about the different influences on a situation. This way of thinking can help you to understand how different causes and effects are linked and which factors you may want to influence to bring about positive change.

Driving forces are those that push a situation in a particular direction. These can be represented with a positive arrow (+). Restraining forces either block progress or create obstacles, and are demonstrated with a negative arrow (-). You can use different sized arrows to indicate the strength of a particular factor, and consider which forces or influences you would need to increase or decrease to achieve your goals.

As with a problem tree, a diagram like this can help explain your analysis of the situation to others. Don't forget to check with the community that you have understood things correctly.

**Project scenario example:** Force field analysis

Diagram 12 **Force field analysis**




## Capacity analysis

When we are understanding a situation we can get very involved with assessing and analysing problems and needs. We tend to then look at ways of solving these problems. However, it is important to remember that all communities, even in very difficult situations, have abilities, talents and resources. We need to assess these capacities and resources too.

Problem analysis might discourage a community, and might draw their attention to problems that hadn't really bothered them before. The word 'problem' itself has many negative associations. This can stop people recognising opportunities and dreaming big for the future.

Capacity analysis looks for community strengths and resources and identifies opportunities to build on and reinforce these. This can be a much more positive experience for the community. When the skills, knowledge and expertise of people in the community are matched with the right resources, the community can be empowered to address their own problems and bring about positive change.

In practice, it is common to use both problem-based approaches and approaches that look at the strengths and resources of the community when you are assessing a situation.

## Community capacity analysis

A capacity analysis uncovers the capabilities and resources that are already available in the community.

You could consider the following types of resources when doing your capacity analysis:

- **Human** resources enable people to make use of their other resources. They include skills, knowledge, ability to work and good health.
- **Social** resources are based on relationships and include organisations and groups within the community, political structures and informal networks.
- **Natural** resources form the local environment and include land, trees, water, air, climate and minerals.
- **Physical** resources are man-made, such as buildings, transport, water supply and sanitation services, energy sources and telecommunications.
- **Economic** resources are things that people can use to sustain their livelihoods, such as money and savings, grain stores, livestock, tools and equipment.
- **Spiritual** resources include faith, scripture, guidance and prayer.

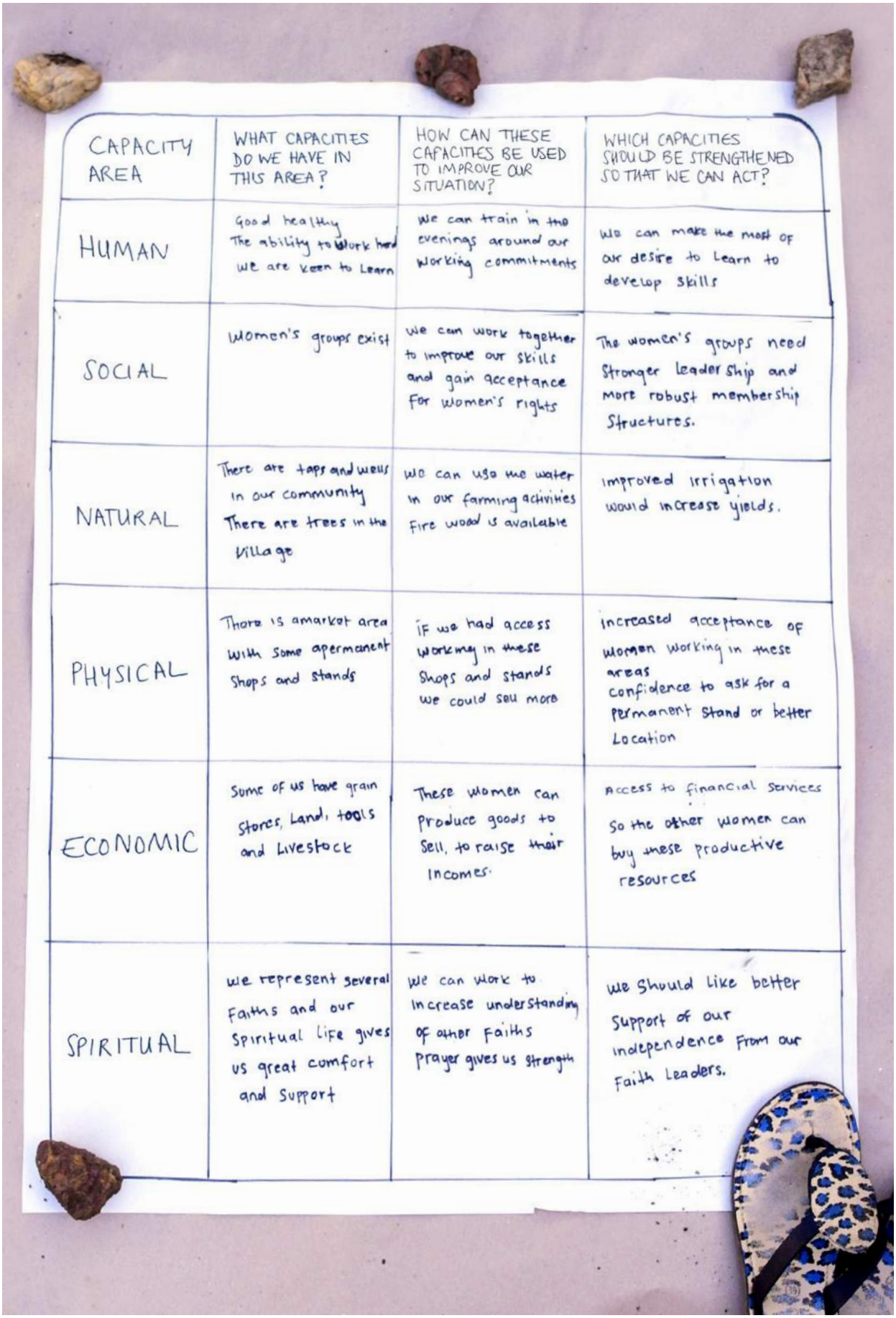
You can help community members to identify their capacities by using techniques that encourage people to take part, such as interviews, focus groups and drawing pictures. Remember to ask a range of community members, as different people have different perspectives.

Why not write the capacities onto a large piece of paper and ask community members to identify how they could be used to address the problems identified during the situation analysis? Then ask community members to think about which capacities should be strengthened so that they can start to address their most urgent problems themselves.

### **Project scenario example:** Capacity analysis

Diagram 13 on the next page shows the results of a capacity analysis carried out with women from the target community.

Diagram 13 **Capacity analysis**



| CAPACITY AREA | WHAT CAPACITIES DO WE HAVE IN THIS AREA? | HOW CAN THESE CAPACITIES BE USED TO IMPROVE OUR SITUATION? | WHICH CAPACITIES SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED SO THAT WE CAN ACT? |
|---|---|---|---|
| HUMAN | Good healthy<br>The ability to work hard<br>We are keen to Learn | We can train in the evenings around our working commitments | We can make the most of our desire to Learn to develop skills |
| SOCIAL | Women's groups exist | We can work together to improve our skills and gain acceptance for women's rights | The women's groups need stronger leadership and more robust membership structures. |
| NATURAL | There are taps and wells in our community<br>There are trees in the village | We can use the water in our farming activities<br>Fire wood is available | Improved irrigation would increase yields. |
| PHYSICAL | There is a market area with some apermanent shops and stands | IF we had access working in these shops and stands we could sell more | Increased acceptance of women working in these areas<br>confidence to ask for a permanent stand or better Location |
| ECONOMIC | Some of us have grain stores, Land, tools and Livestock | These women can produce goods to sell, to raise their incomes. | Access to financial services<br>So the other women can buy these productive resources |
| SPIRITUAL | We represent several Faiths and our Spiritual life gives us great comfort and support | We can work to increase understanding of other Faiths<br>Prayer gives us strength | We should like better Support of our independence From our Faith Leaders. |

### Appreciative enquiry

Appreciative enquiry is a technique that encourages people to think positively by asking them questions that will help them see their community's current strengths, abilities and resources and the progress they have already made, to encourage them to go further.

You can think in this way by asking yourself these questions:

- **Delight:** What is going really well? What are people happy with?
- **Dream:** What would we love to see happening in the future? How can we make the project bigger or broader so it has more impact?
- **Design:** How can we get from where we are now to where we want to be in the future?

## Situation or context analysis

### SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)

SWOT analysis is useful for considering the strengths and weaknesses of a community or organisation, and for identifying opportunities and threats that might prevent change. This can help you think about the best actions to help that group make the most of their opportunities and prepare for threats that could undermine the project's success.

A SWOT analysis could be done as an exercise with the community, or once you have spent time gathering information from the community, using the tools explained above.

It can be useful to see your SWOT analysis by dividing your paper into four quarters.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| Begin in the first quarter by writing down all the **strengths** of the community. You may want to ask:<br>• What is the community already doing well?<br>• What resources are available?<br>• Which individuals, groups and organisations are already involved in bringing about change? | Then think about the **weaknesses** of the community:<br>• What do the community need?<br>• What resources are lacking?<br>• Which people are being affected the most? |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Next, start thinking about the potential **opportunities** in the situation which, if realised, could help to bring about positive change:<br>• Which individuals could you engage with?<br>• Which resources may the community be able to ask the local government for? | Finally, what **threats** could prevent positive change?<br>• Which individuals may resist change?<br>• What external issues could prevent change, eg environmental factors, political events, cultural factors? |

**A very useful follow-up analysis to SWOT is what is called a BEEM framework.**

This encourages you to think:

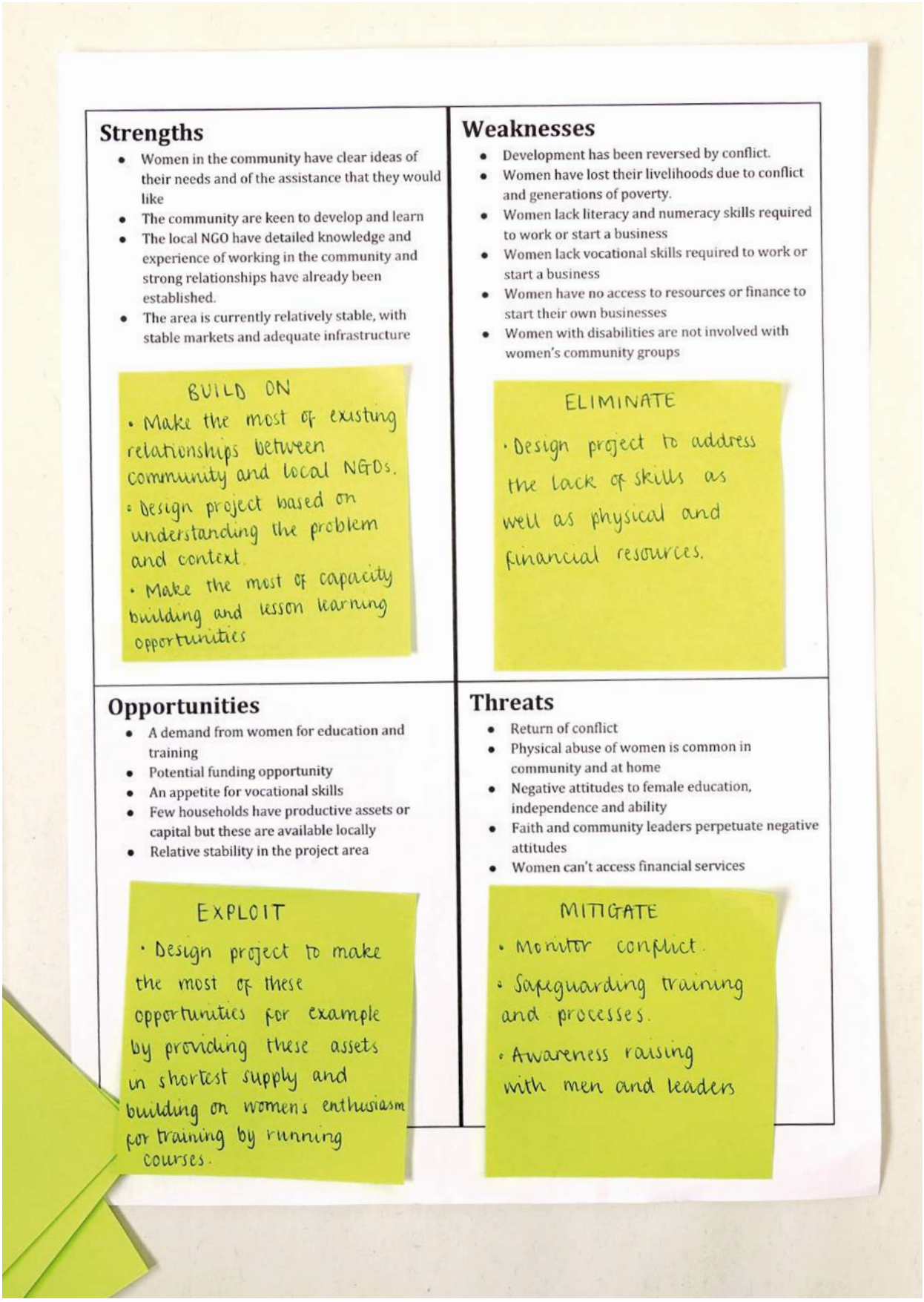
- How can you **build** on the strengths?
- How can you **eliminate** (remove) weaknesses?
- How can you **exploit** (make the most of) opportunities?
- How can you **mitigate** (reduce the negative effects of) threats?

The results of your SWOT analysis can be analysed further using other tools so that your understanding goes deeper. For example, one of the weaknesses revealed could become the central problem in a problem tree. The opportunities and threats could become influences in a force field analysis.

## **Project scenario example:** SWOT/BEEM analysis

Diagram 14 below shows a SWOT/BEEM analysis conducted as part of the project scenario.

Diagram 14 **SWOT/BEEM analysis**



## PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental)

As already mentioned on page 10, PESTLE is a useful acronym to help us remember what areas of community life we should be interested in when we are collecting information. PESTLE analysis builds on the data collected under each of the PESTLE headings to identify opportunities and threats we might face (related to the **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **L**egal and **E**nvironmental context). We can then consider how to build on the opportunities and reduce the negative effects of the threats.

SWOT and PESTLE are similar tools, but PESTLE looks at the wider context while SWOT is more focused on your target community, the main problems affecting them and your project ideas.

## Political economy analysis

Political economy analysis involves looking at the main political and economic institutions, processes and actors in your context, and analysing their strengths, weaknesses and behaviours. It is linked to stakeholder analysis (which is described in more detail on page 43), as it helps to identify the power and interests of elite groups and think about how this feeds into and impacts the change we want to bring about.

At the project level it involves identifying:

- main actors (eg Ministry of Finance, government representatives, service providers, other NGOs)
- existing legislation and policy (national and local law, employment policies etc)
- ways of thinking and working (decision-making process, appointment of officials, power dynamics)
- values and core beliefs (eg cultural beliefs, religion, social norms)
- weaknesses in local systems, institutions and government that contribute to a particular problem
- wider political and economic changes that might affect your project and the context in which you are working.

### Why is this important?

Political economy analysis allows you to address these factors explicitly in your project design. You can then choose whether you want to address, or work around, the context, ensuring that your project aims are politically feasible, and mapping out the change you wish to achieve. For more guidance on how to do this, please refer to the further reading page (page 149).

## Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis is about understanding the dynamics within countries, regions, communities and households: what is tearing people apart, and what is bringing people together?

Conflict can be open and obvious, or more subtle and hidden. If our project is in an area that is prone to violent conflict or where there are underlying tensions, it is important that we look at the wider picture, as there is a risk that our interventions could make things worse. It's necessary to ask questions, such as:

- What is the conflict about?
- Who is involved?
- What is driving the conflict situation now, both for better and for worse?
- Are there any obstacles hindering progress towards a peaceful resolution that need to be overcome? Are there things preventing the situation from getting worse that could be supported?

We may choose to work 'on' conflict, or 'in' conflict. In some situations our programming will be structured around deliberately addressing the drivers of the conflict, and working for peaceful outcomes. In others our project will be structured more around mitigating the effects of conflict, focusing on provision of basic needs, including health care, shelter and food security. Even when mitigating the effects of conflict it is important for us to think about how we can act in a way that will not exacerbate existing divisions and tensions. A good example of this in the context of a refugee camp, where a project might be providing aid only to internally displaced people (IDPs) even though the wider geographic area is also in need. A sense of favouritism or preferential treatment of certain people groups could strain relationships between IDPs and the host population.

Conflict analysis is the process of identifying the issues that are causing and driving the conflict, so that you can better understand the context. When planning projects in a conflict context you need to go one step further and carry out a conflict sensitivity assessment, which will help inform and shape the way you act, with the aim of mapping out how the proposed intervention is likely to interact with conflict drivers and causes of tension. Carrying out conflict sensitivity assessments is a key process in ensuring that our actions are 'conflict-sensitive' and that we do not accidentally cause harm.

To put this into practice, please refer to Appendix 4, where you'll find a range of tools, instructions on how to carry this out, and recommendations of key things to think about when doing both conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity assessments.

## Market assessment

In today's economy, people's livelihoods depend significantly on markets. Markets are the main way that people buy food and items they need to fulfil basic needs. Because markets play a central role in people's lives, they should be taken into account when assessing the needs of an affected population and evaluating how best to address those needs.

Environment-related disasters can severely affect markets. They can have a strong negative impact on people's capacity to access the food and items they need for their lives and livelihoods. Therefore, markets should be assessed to determine how their functionality affects people's access to essential items and to understand how to support markets to help people to recover.

### Cash and voucher assistance

Market information helps to determine how to assist communities affected by disaster, including helping to work out if cash and voucher assistance would be a suitable response. Cash and vouchers can be used to fulfil basic needs and they improve affected communities' sense of dignity. Cash and voucher assistance reinvigorates markets and boosts the local economy.

The first step to understand if cash and voucher assistance can be implemented is to see if markets are functional and if the affected community can access them. To determine if cash and voucher assistance is feasible, refer to the cash and voucher assistance feasibility checklist and decision tree (see Appendix 5). When you run your market assessment, the most appropriate data collection tools to use are market surveys, focus groups, seasonal calendars and market maps. Refer to the Guide for Protection and Programme Quality Toolbox (see Further reading, page 149) to minimise protection risks for beneficiaries and assure quality programmes.

# Stakeholder analysis – identifying stakeholders

'Stakeholders' are all the people who will be affected by your project, as well as the people who will influence your project's success. They can be individuals, groups, communities or institutions.

It is vital to identify your stakeholders at the start of your project, and understand the nature of their roles, interests and relationships with one another. This will help you to design and plan your project to consider the needs, aims and influence of those it will come into contact with and help you include the right people in your decision-making. It will also help you to anticipate the power dynamics that might be at play between different stakeholders and reduce some potential negative impacts on your project.

A stakeholder analysis should be done at the start of the project and reviewed throughout the project cycle to check that the needs and opinions of the stakeholders are being adequately addressed and that stakeholders with influence are being properly engaged.

There are three stages in a stakeholder analysis, namely:

- Identify stakeholders (discussed here).
- Consider the power and interests of stakeholders (discussed on page 74).
- Consider how stakeholders might have an impact on the project and how you might need to manage them (discussed on page 79).

**The first stage of stakeholder analysis is to identify your stakeholders.** At times a community may have different interests and influence over a project, and it may be necessary to break them down into smaller 'sub-groups' according to things like age, gender, status, wealth and ethnicity. Try and identify stakeholders in the following categories, bearing in mind that some stakeholders might belong in more than one category:

- **Users:** project participants or beneficiaries who will directly benefit from the products or services your project provides
- **Governance stakeholders:** people who care about how the project is run, including donors and senior staff in your organisation
- **Providers or suppliers:** people who are going to participate in the work of the project including staff and partners
- **Influencers:** people who can change the direction of the project such as government officials or the media
- **Dependants:** people who want something from the project other than the planned changes – for example, other projects depend on one of the outputs
- **Sustainers:** people who will ensure the benefits of your project continue after you have finished your work.

Once you have identified your stakeholders, decide who you will invite to participate in the design phase. Be sure to invite a good mix of stakeholders and be ensure to include vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities and women.

## Decision point

Deciding that you have enough information to be able to start designing your project is an important decision point. You can use the Quality Standards checklist on the next page to help to decide if you are ready to move to the design phase.

**Quality Standards checklist**

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for context phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Before carrying out assessments, do staff fully understand the values of the organisation in order to reflect them in their interactions with communities – showing dignity and respect, and acting with compassion and sensitivity?<br>☐ Do staff know what types of conduct are unacceptable? |
|  | ☐ Will you explain in your community meetings your commitment to impartiality (providing assistance without regard for race, religion, ability, age, gender, sexuality or nationality) and the importance of targeting the most vulnerable?<br>☐ Will the assessment include an analysis of the different ways in which people have been made vulnerable as a result of the problem you are addressing?<br>☐ Will you agree with the community the criteria for identifying those who are most vulnerable? |
|  | ☐ Will you get the consent of the community to carry out the assessment?<br>☐ Will you be open with the community about your organisation, your programme, and the purpose of the assessment?<br>☐ Will you ensure the full participation of all groups within the community in the assessment, including those who are less visible, for example those with disabilities?<br>☐ Will you invite the community to ask questions, ensuring that the assessment is a two-way conversation? |
|  | ☐ Will you gain an understanding of the existing roles of men and women – their daily schedules and workloads, and the common attitudes towards men and towards women?<br>☐ Will your assessment gather the perspectives of women, men, boys and girls (including those with disabilities) through separate focus group discussions?<br>☐ Will your assessment identify the ways in which vulnerability has increased for men and women as a result of the problem you are addressing? |
|  | ☐ When doing assessments, will you assess capacities as well as vulnerabilities?<br>☐ Will you check how approaches can be made sustainable after the funding stops? Will it be possible to adapt them to meet other needs that your project is not designed to meet?<br>☐ Will you find out what government services are in place or planned and think through how to support them where appropriate? |
|  | ☐ Will your assessment identify the root causes of vulnerability: whether official policy, cultural traditions, climate change, other factors?<br>☐ Did you consider carrying out an environmental impact assessment? |
|  | ☐ Will you consult the communities to identify the threats to them, and their vulnerabilities and negative coping strategies? |
|  | ☐ Do you have a clear understanding of your areas of specialism and technical strengths as an organisation and will this guide the questions asked in your assessments?<br>☐ Will you refer to the Sphere handbook and other relevant standards and codes of good practice to help identify the questions to ask?<br>☐ Will you gain a clear understanding of the priorities expressed by the community and see which areas you have the technical experience and capacity to support? |

**RECAP**

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of understanding a context by gathering and analysing data.**

**You should now be able to:**

- explain the importance of understanding a situation before you design a project
- explain the difference between primary and secondary data
- compare and contrast tools and methods used for gathering and analysing data
- select and use appropriate tools and methods to collect data in a particular context
- analyse data in different ways according to the information you need to know.

Once you have understood the context, identified the problem(s) and analysed your stakeholders, you are now ready to move on to the design of your project. Remember that the assessment and analysis processes can overlap. You might get to the end of your analysis and realise you need to do more assessment. For example:

- Your analysis might show you an issue or need that needs more exploration.
- Stakeholder analysis might show you another stakeholder you need to collect data from.

**REFLECT**

1. How will you make sure you collect and analyse enough data to make design decisions, but avoid collecting data that isn't going to be used, or assessments that are too long?
2. Which tools and methods are you going to use to collect and analyse data, and why have you chosen them?
3. How will you know when you have enough data to start designing your project?

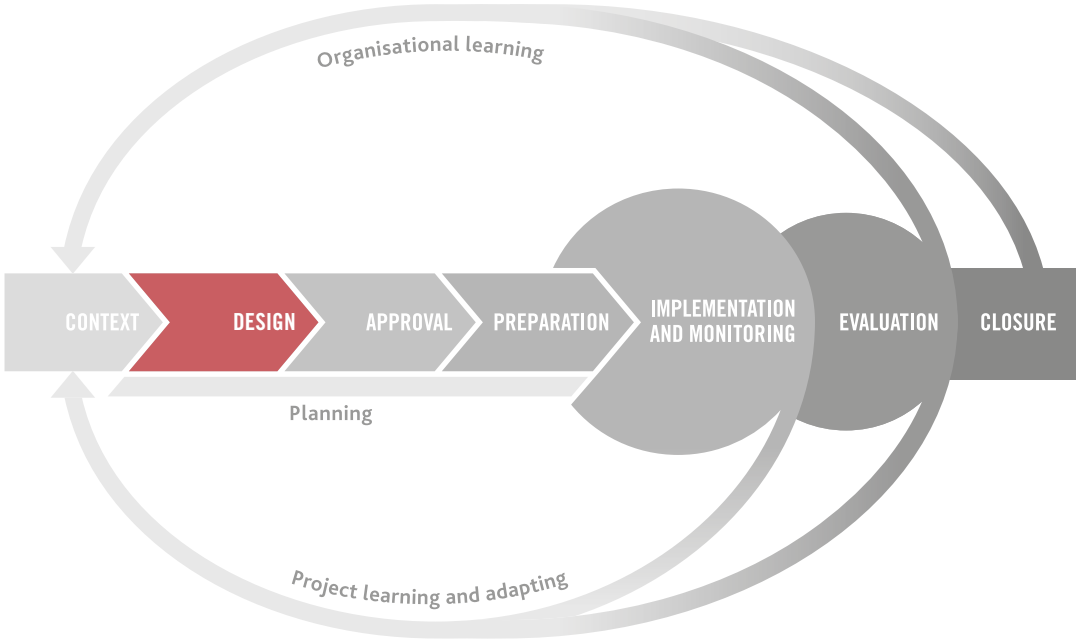
**PRACTISE**

1. Use the problem tree tool to analyse a problem in your community.
2. Present your analysis to others and ask for their feedback.
3. Explain how you found using the tool – what were the strengths and weaknesses? Would you adapt it?
4. Pick another tool presented in this phase and repeat steps 1–3.

# PHASE 2
# PROJECT DESIGN



**You are currently here in the project cycle:**




**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- explain the importance of good project design
- compare and contrast the use of Theory of Change and logframe
- follow the six stages to develop a Theory of Change
- follow the stages to produce a logframe matrix
- develop a simple project budget
- identify and assess project risks
- analyse your stakeholders.

## 2.1 Purpose and importance of good project design

A good project depends on good design. Get the design wrong and the project will not meet its goals, no matter how well it is implemented and monitored. Good design is built on the data collected and analysed during the previous phase of the project cycle, and sets out a clear understanding of what the project intends to achieve and how it is going to do this.

Good project design encourages people to participate and collaborate. You will have identified your stakeholders by this stage in your project, and this will help you to decide on the most important stakeholders to involve in the design process. Some of the tools used to design projects are quite technical, but this shouldn't stop you involving project participants in design. It is very important to include vulnerable and marginalised groups in the design phase. They can contribute to the thinking process and the overall project design, which project staff can then capture using the tools explained below.

When it comes to the details of the design, it is essential for project staff and finance staff to work together. A budget outline should be developed during the design phase as an important part of the overall design. You will need to know what the project will cost so you know whether you can get funding for it. A budget cannot be developed separately from the logframe. If possible, consider a project design workshop where relevant staff and other stakeholders come together to work through the design.

## 2.2 Introduction to design tools and approaches

The two main approaches used to help design development and emergency relief projects are Theory of Change and Logical Framework Analysis (logframe). Both are flexible approaches that can be used to design a project, showing the changes you want to influence, which activities will help create these changes and in what order. Both processes will produce a visual summary of the project design, which is also useful to explain the project to outsiders quickly. Both approaches also include your assumptions about the wider factors that need to be in place for change to happen as you expect it to.

While there are some similarities between the logframe and Theory of Change approaches, they are designed to show slightly different things, and so they work well used together.

- A Theory of Change looks at how change happens and how you can influence this change.
- A logframe shows step by step how your activities will deliver results, and how these will lead to changes at different levels.

Often projects will first construct a Theory of Change and then use this thinking to guide the development of a logframe. Alternatively, a logframe can be developed from a problem/solutions tree.

The table below summarises some of the main differences between a Theory of Change and a logframe:

| Theory of Change | Logframe |
|---|---|
| Gives the big picture of how change happens in that context | Gives a detailed description of the project |
| Flexible – one box can lead to multiple boxes, and cycles in the process can be shown easily | Linear – cycles for feedback within the process are not shown |
| Includes assumptions based on beliefs about how change happens | Includes assumptions at project level |
| Used for reflection, learning and evaluation, as well as for design | Used for obtaining donors' approval for projects, and in monitoring and reporting, as well as for design |



# 2.3 Theory of Change

## Introduction to Theory of Change

Theory of Change is actually a very simple idea. It basically explains how you think changes happen in the community where you intend to work, and how your actions might influence those changes. The focus is on the changes that might come about as a result of your efforts, and how you might influence change.

A Theory of Change process is also a way to clarify your assumptions about how and why change happens and communicate them to others. We all have assumptions or 'blind spots' based on our perspectives and experiences. Often this thinking remains in our heads as we assume others see the situation as we do. The Theory of Change helps you consider and explain the assumptions that lie behind your reasoning and shows why you think your activities will lead to the outcomes you want.

> *Essentially, a Theory of Change is what it says on the tin: a theory (a system of ideas intended to explain something) about how change happens, and how we – through our organisation or programme – intend to work to influence these changes.*
>
> *The focus is on what will change for whom as a result of our efforts, NOT on what we will do or achieve.*
>
> From *Bond's Theory of Change Essentials* by Maureen O'Flynn

### The benefits of a Theory of Change

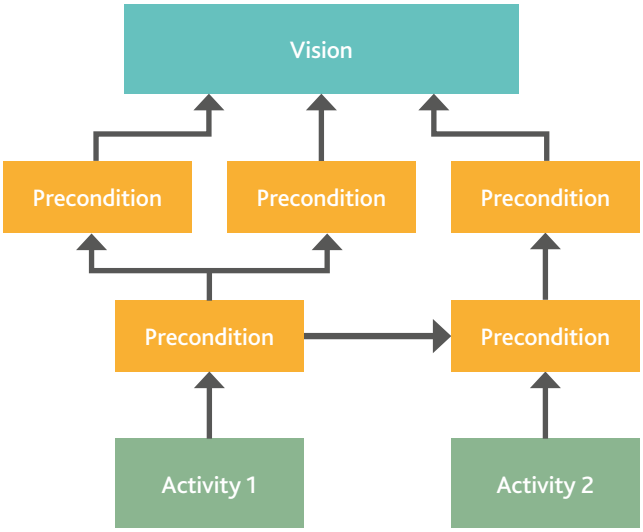
Theory of Change brings into the open your beliefs about how change happens. This means others can see your logic and contribute to it. This shared process leads to a shared understanding, which has many benefits including:

- creating space for other worldviews and broader perspectives
- opening up your logic to scrutiny so it can be challenged and refined
- better proposals and therefore a better chance of getting funding
- revealing misunderstandings, which leads to improved coordination
- showing what is important to monitor
- learning what works and why through regular review, which leads to constant improvement
- a common foundation leading to better consistency and transfer of knowledge during staff changes
- making it easier to explain your project to others.

## What does a Theory of Change look like?

The term 'Theory of Change' can be used to describe a process of thinking through a series of stages. It can also be used to describe the final result of that thinking process. The final result is often a diagram or chart with a written explanation to support it. Whatever the final product looks like, the thinking required to produce the diagram is just as important. There is no set template for a Theory of Change diagram so these diagrams look very different from organisation to organisation.

Diagram 15 **Example of a Theory of Change diagram**



# How to develop a Theory of Change

Organisations develop Theory of Change processes in different ways. Here we present one method with six basic stages:

STAGE 1 Define the vision

STAGE 2 Define the key steps needed to achieve the vision (preconditions)

STAGE 3 Identify activities that will cause the greatest change

STAGE 4 Show cause and effect

STAGE 5 Identify the role you can play

STAGE 6 Consider your assumptions

It is always better to develop a Theory of Change by engaging a wide range of people – including project staff, project participants and any other key stakeholders. People feel a greater commitment to things they have helped to create and have a greater sense of ownership. Refer back to your stakeholder analysis to make sure you are engaging with those who have the most influence on your project. However it is not necessary or efficient to involve everyone. A group of between four and ten people representing the key stakeholders works best.

You can develop a Theory of Change either in a workshop or by talking to people individually. Workshops are more efficient and tend to be the most common approach. They need to be facilitated so everyone feels able to contribute, regardless of their status.

## STAGE 1 Define the vision

The process of developing a Theory of Change should begin with a description of the project's vision (also called goal or impact). This is the long-term overall change that your project is working towards. If your project is part of a programme there might be several projects all contributing to the same vision.

This vision or 'impact statement' should be realistic, short and clear. It is best to have just one sentence. The impact statement should be based on your context analysis. It is usually the opposite of your problem statement. The vision should also be agreed by all the stakeholders, especially the project participants.

**Project scenario example:** For example, the project scenario uses the following vision: 'Women in project area have strengthened socio-economic security and greater empowerment.'

When thinking about the vision it is useful to consider what is realistic for your project. Your project does not have to be able to deliver the vision on its own, but it needs to bring about changes that will contribute to this vision.

## STAGE 2 Define the key steps (preconditions)

Next, work backwards from your vision to consider what key changes need to be created so that this vision can become real. Think big and think about how change happens in this community. Look beyond your own project to consider all the factors working towards or preventing change.

To do this, it can help to think in terms of 'preconditions'. Preconditions are the key changes that need to take place in order for our vision to be realised. In order to do this, look back at your problem analysis to select the most important factors that need to change. These are not your activities. They are the higher-level changes or outcomes that need to happen before your vision can be achieved.

Identifying these key changes is perhaps the most important part of the Theory of Change process. Too often, we jump from activities to impact without thinking through the actual changes that need to take

place in between. Preconditions are therefore all the separate changes in the situation that will lead to the final vision. These stepping stones are likely to include improvements in people's knowledge, skills, attitudes, thinking and behaviour so that they can make better choices for themselves.

It is useful to write the preconditions on separate pieces of paper so that they can be moved around to develop a sequence of what needs to happen first.

**Project scenario example:** Define the project's key steps (preconditions)

For the project scenario, the following key steps (preconditions) were identified as stepping stones throughout the process:

- 'Women in the project area have higher, more sustainable incomes'
- 'Women have income-generating opportunities'
- 'Women have good literacy and numeracy skills'
- 'Women have vocational skills'
- 'Women have access to tools, resources, land and seeds'
- 'Women have access to financial services'
- 'Women without basic numeracy and literacy skills can access training'
- 'Changes in gender norms'
- 'Women without basic vocational skills can access training'
- 'Women participate equally in financial decision-making'
- 'A supportive environment for women to gain earning power and share decision-making'.

## STAGE 3 Identify activities that will cause the greatest change

Think about your project's activities.

- Who are you going to work with?
- What are you going to do to deliver short-term change?
- How will these short-term changes bring about longer-term changes?

It is important that you have worked through the previous stages and only start considering which activities will be needed once you have established the vision and the preconditions. Take each precondition in turn and think about if and how your project could achieve it. This may include describing:

- the activities you will carry out
- what will make activities particularly successful
- how users will need to engage with your project if it is going to work.

At this stage, you do not need to include every activity that the project will implement. Here we are just interested in the key activities needed to help create each precondition. Often more than one key activity will be required to bring about each precondition.

**Project scenario example:** The project team decided that the best way to create the preconditions relating to vocational skills was to run workshops.

## STAGE 4 Show cause and effect

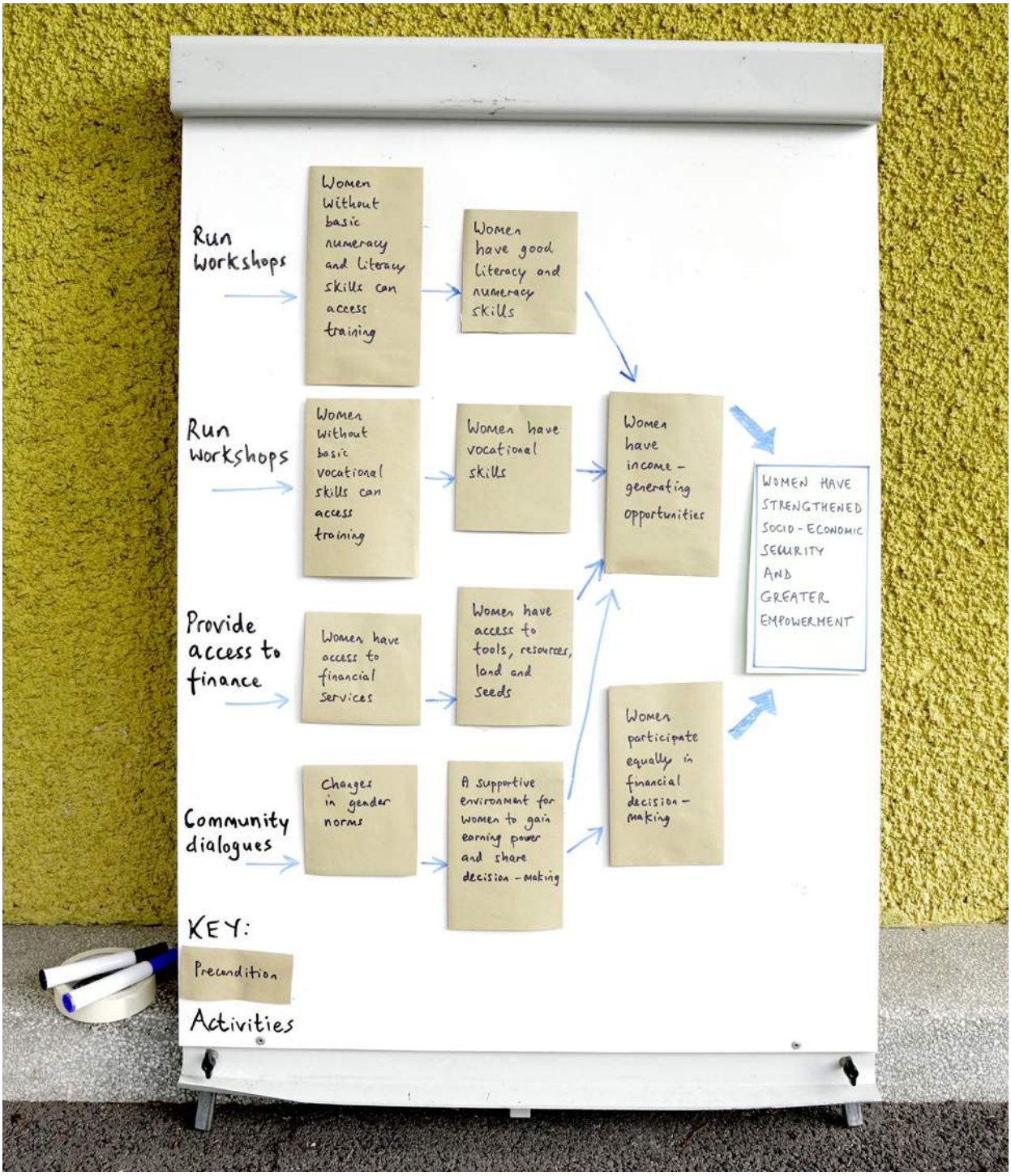
Arrows show which activities lead to which preconditions, which preconditions lead to which other preconditions, and which preconditions lead to the vision. These arrows showing cause and effect should reflect the complexity of how change could happen. However, if the number of arrows is making

the Theory of Change diagram difficult to follow, you should consider removing some of the less important arrows from the diagram. It is always better to have a clear and simple diagram rather than one with lots of messy overlapping arrows.

## **Project scenario example:** Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for the project scenario is now looking like that shown in diagram 16 below.

Diagram 16 **Theory of Change**



## STAGE 5 Identify the role you can play

You may have identified lots of different areas that need to change. You now need to consider your organisational capacity and choose in which pathway you can contribute to the greatest positive change. The questions below can help to make this decision:

- Which areas of change can you influence?
- Which preconditions can you affect?
- Which areas of change are not possible for you to influence?
- What is possible given the time and resources you have?

Think about your organisation's vision, mission, influence, skills, experience, resources and relationships when answering these questions. Then highlight on your diagram the pathway that you are going to influence. You will need to find other organisations to address the other pathways in your diagram in order to see your vision fulfilled.

**Project scenario example:** In the project scenario, the organisation decided that they had the skills, resources and experience to help create the preconditions relating to income-generation opportunities and vocational, literacy and numeracy skills. They could also look for other organisations to partner with who are more specialised in helping women to access financial services and helping to change gender norms.

## STAGE 6 Think about the assumptions you are making

Assumptions in a Theory of Change explain your thinking about how change happens in that context. Assumptions explain your logic in terms of how the different elements of the Theory of Change interact. You need to think about the assumptions specific to each change pathway.

One way of showing assumptions is to write them on the arrows. Each arrow shows an assumption. For example, an arrow from a key activity to a precondition means that the project assumes that by doing this key activity then this precondition will be created.

Another way is to include all the assumptions in a box.

### Project scenario example

For the Theory of Change on page 53, these are the assumptions that have been identified:

- parallel project is successful at transforming gender relations
- parallel project is successful at enabling women to access finance
- context remains peaceful
- workshops lead to an increase in knowledge and a change in practice
- markets are stable enough to accommodate new businesses.

Key assumptions should be explained in a written description of the diagram and list of assumptions. When explaining a key assumption do not simply repeat the text already in the diagram but explain why and how change will happen. Bringing key stakeholders together to examine and discuss the assumptions is an important stage in the Theory of Change process. Sometimes this will lead to disagreement. This is very healthy, because when disagreements are resolved your project's Theory of Change becomes stronger. For each assumption you should consider if evidence exists to show that it holds true, such as learning from previous projects or academic research.

**Tips on the Theory of Change process**

- Keep it simple! It is unwise to be over-ambitious when first using Theory of Change so pick a small-scale project to begin with.
- In workshops, use separate sticky notes for each precondition and key activity. Participants can start by writing their own then come together to create a general Theory of Change.
- Get your group talking as much as possible. Only start agreeing specific preconditions and activities once everyone has had a chance to speak.
- Circulate the draft Theory of Change to as many people as possible. This will help build consensus and support.
- Your Theory of Change will never be perfect. Don't worry too much about specific wording and specific links. The main aim is to produce something that everyone broadly agrees with and supports.
- A Theory of Change should be reviewed frequently. You can make further alterations to reflect what you learn during the project.

Your Theory of Change design is now complete. However, you will want to monitor it as you implement the project, to make sure that change does actually happen in the way you have assumed it will. If not, you might need to revise your designs and plans.

# 2.4 Logframes

## Introduction to logframes

A logical framework approach is a way of thinking through the logic of a project. It is a series of stages that can include some of the analysis tools and methods already discussed in this guide. It helps you to design a project that clearly links your activities to the changes you want to see and encourages you to show what your assumptions are.

The logical framework matrix, or 'logframe', is the result of the logical framework approach. It is a visual summary of your project, which can be shared to explain what you intend to do and why. It also explains how you will measure the changes your work will deliver, and the sources of information you will use to do this measurement.

### Benefits of logframes

Logframes are useful because they:

- help people to think in an organised and logical way
- help identify weaknesses in project design
- ensure the key things to be measured (indicators) are identified from the start of the project so that monitoring and evaluation are easier
- ensure that people involved in the project use the same terms
- help people to summarise a project design on a few sides of paper. This helps them to communicate their ideas simply with others.

The logframe is used throughout the project cycle:

- **Design:** the logframe captures a visual summary of the logical design of a project or programme and makes assumptions clear, showing the outputs, outcomes and impact the activities are aiming to achieve
- **Approval and governance:** a logframe is required by many donors as part of a grant application
- **Preparation:** conducting detailed planning of each of the activities set out in the logframe
- **Implementation:** doing the activities set out in the logframe
- **Monitoring:** the logframe contains indicators that enable you to monitor whether your project is on track by measuring results achieved against what was expected (targets) at regular milestones, and to take action where required
- **Evaluation:** the logframe can help evaluate the success of projects and ensure greater accountability.

However, the logframe does have limitations:

- Logframes can be too rigid for projects involving less visible changes, such as advocacy projects. Logframes work best for projects that lead to visible changes and simple 'if… then' logic.
- Project management can become rigid unless the logframe is treated like a living document, which can be adjusted as the context changes or more is learnt about it.
- Since the approach builds on analysing a problem, it might not be viewed as appropriate in cultures where people do not openly discuss problems.
- It can be confusing when different donors use different terms in the logframe, and different formats and templates.
- The approach itself can be very difficult to understand in some cultures.
- Logframes infer that projects are linear when we know that they are not.

It's important to remember that the logframe isn't meant to show every detail of the project. It is an overview. Details can be given in other documents, such as the proposal, budget and schedule, which are discussed in later sections. Also remember that the logframe is the final result of an approach, and the approach is at least as important as the logframe you produce.

## What does a logframe look like?

The simplest logframe is a table of four rows and four columns like this:

| | Statements | Indicators | Means of verification (how you will check) | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Impact** | | | | |
| **Outcome** | | | | |
| **Outputs** | | | | |
| **Activities** | | | | |

As discussed, different organisations use different terms for the components of the logframe, and unfortunately most donors will insist on organisations using their specific version in any projects they fund. Remember that the logic in all these different versions is the same: it is just the terminology and templates that change. The section below will explain the terms used in the table or matrix above.

**Statements column:** The statements column outlines what the project hopes to achieve and how. It sets out a clear logic linking the activities you plan to carry out to immediate results (outputs) and then longer-term changes (outcomes). This is called a results chain.

A logframe uses specific terms to refer to each level of change:

- **Impact** (or goal or overall objective)
  The impact refers to the overall change our project is contributing to, but cannot achieve on its own. It is usually related to improved health, quality of life, livelihoods etc.
- **Outcome(s)** (or purpose or specific objective)
  The outcome is the specific change that we want the project to make that will contribute to achieving the impact. Some logframes will have more than one outcome, but some donors allow only one.
- **Outputs** (or results)
  The outputs are the results we want to see from our activities, which together lead to the outcome(s).
- **Activities**
  The activities are the tasks we will carry out to achieve the outputs.

**Indicators column:** Indicators enable us to measure how a project is performing against the changes it is aiming to make. So indicators play an important part in monitoring and evaluation.

**Means of verification column:** In the means of verification column you add how you will measure your indicators, for example a household survey or an attendance list.

**Assumptions column:** Assumptions refer to the conditions that could affect the progress, success or long-term sustainability of the project. These will be external factors that cannot be controlled or that we choose not to control. These could include climate change, price changes and government policies. Assumptions should be stated as positive factors that we need to assume are true for the project to work.

Occasionally logframes include risks as well as, or instead of, assumptions in this column. It is generally clearer to just include assumptions in the logframe, and relate them to risks in a risk register (discussed in Section 4.7, page 102). Risks and assumptions are like two sides of the same coin. For example, we might assume that participants will be able to attend the workshops we run, but there is a risk that conflict could re-occur and they wouldn't be able to travel.

# How to complete a logframe

Project staff should complete the logframe matrix, but they shouldn't do it on their own. Engaging with partners and project participants in the design of your logframe is good practice. The best logframes are ones where stakeholders have had the chance to be involved and that use an approach that encourages people to participate. This will ensure that the experience and opinions of relevant partners, stakeholders and project participants are considered and create shared understanding of the key components of the project and the results to be delivered.

Following on from the completed context analysis and the 'big picture' thinking used to create the Theory of Change, there are three stages to completing a logframe:

STAGE 1 **Statements:** top down – complete the 'statements' column

STAGE 2 **Assumptions:** bottom up – then think about the assumptions

STAGE 3 **Indicators and verification:** work across – take each row at a time and identify the indicators (what you will measure) and means of verification (how you will measure) for each objective.

By completing the logframe this way, we avoid getting too involved in the detail before the project structure has been developed. The best way to construct a logframe is to use a method everyone in the group is comfortable with, and that allows changes to be made easily as new ideas are generated. This might mean using a pencil, writing ideas on sticky notes, using a whiteboard or connecting a laptop to a projector.

## STAGE 1 Statements – work down the statements column

### Writing statements

Give a brief statement of the objectives at each of the four levels: impact, outcome, outputs and activities. This will build on from the work you have already completed. There are two ways to approach this, either using a Theory of Change or using a problem/solutions tree:

#### USING A THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change should be created before the logframe because a Theory of Change shows the high-level change that the project is seeking to make. The logframe is where you become more specific about the particular project.

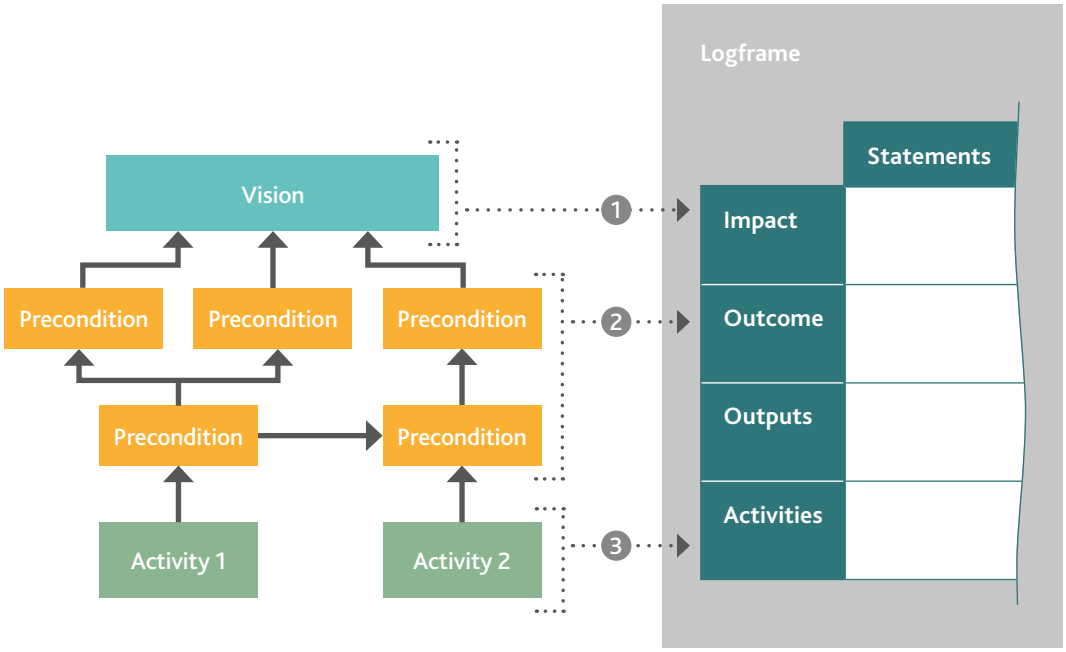
To create a logframe based on your Theory of Change, first focus on the pathway where you decided your organisation could have most influence. In our project scenario this was the pathway that contributed to women having strengthened socio-economic security and greater empowerment by increasing their income-generating opportunities through providing literacy, numeracy and vocational training. The next step is to look at each element of your chosen pathway and make it more specific to your project.

The vision statement in your Theory of Change becomes the impact statement in your logframe (see arrow 1 on the next page) but may be made more specific to your project, for example by adding in locations and target groups.

The preconditions from your selected pathway in your Theory of Change become your outcomes (see arrow 2 on the next page) and the activities in your Theory of Change (from your selected pathway) become the activities in your logframe (see arrow 3 on the next page) – again, you may need to make them more specific to your project.

The benefit of using your Theory of Change to create the objectives column of your logframe is that the logic of how your statements fit together will make sense. This is because you have already done a lot of thinking about how your activities achieve the outputs, how the outputs contribute to the outcomes and how the outcomes contribute to the overall impact.

Diagram 17 **How you can map your Theory of Change onto your logframe**



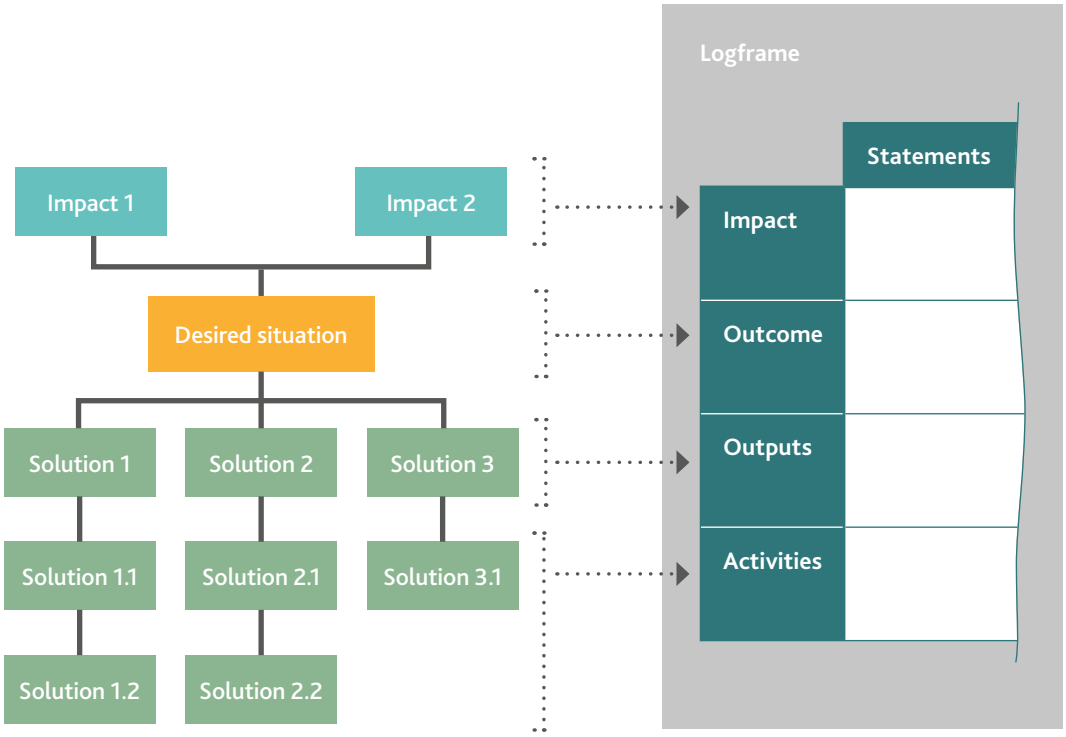

## USING A SOLUTIONS TREE

Look at the solutions tree you produced during the analysis stage (see problem analysis in Section 1.4, page 31) as this will help you decide on your outcomes, outputs and activities.

- The main aim in the solutions tree (which started out as your core problem on the trunk of the tree) will usually become the **outcome**, or sometimes the impact, of your project.
- Look at the solutions that branch out from the main aim on the tree trunk. Check that the solutions at one level will lead to solutions at the next level. For example: 'Girls are perceived as intelligent' and 'Girls are perceived to have a role beyond marriage and children' would be conditions that would combine and probably be sufficient to ensure that 'Families are equally likely to send boys and girls to school.'
- Decide what you can work on. Which objectives are achievable, likely to get funding, and within the purpose and skills of your organisation? These become your **outputs**.
- Decide on the **activities** needed to produce these outputs.

Diagram 18 on the next page illustrates how you can map your solutions tree onto your logframe.

Diagram 18 **How you can map your solutions tree onto your logframe**




## Completing column one (Statements)

We're going to work down the statements column using the project scenario example.

### IMPACT

Starting at the top, consider the overall impact of the project. The impact is usually beyond the control of your project but is something you are contributing to. The impact statement should be brief and will usually use a word that describes the impact as though it has already happened, such as 'improved', 'strengthened', 'increased', 'reversed' or 'reduced'.

**Project scenario example:** 'Women in project area have strengthened socio-economic security and greater empowerment.'

### OUTCOME(S)

What overall change in behaviour, institutions or social conditions are you trying to achieve? This is the outcome of the project. Your outcome should be clear and brief, and ideally will often use a verb (a 'doing' word) expressed as though the outcome has already happened, such as 'improved', 'strengthened' or 'increased'. It must be an end situation and not a description of what you will do, and so you should avoid statements such as 'to help/support/assist/prepare/deliver…' An outcome should not describe how it will be achieved, and so should avoid phrases like 'X will be improved by doing Y' and 'We will do Y to improve X'. The project has some control over whether or not the outcomes are achieved, but not complete control.

Usually one outcome is enough, but occasionally two or three will be used.

**Project scenario example:** 'Women in three named areas have income-generating opportunities.'

### OUTPUTS

Outputs are the specific results needed to achieve the outcome of the project. There are usually several outputs for each outcome. It should be within the power of the project team to achieve the outputs during the project timeline. Each output should be worded as the result of a number of activities, and where possible it should say which groups of people will benefit.

**Project scenario example:** 'Women in three named areas have improved literacy and numeracy skills.'

### ACTIVITIES

List the main activities, which are needed to achieve these outputs. There may be several for each output. Statements should be brief and use lots of action words.

**Project scenario example:** 'Deliver literacy and numeracy workshops.'

There is no need to include every little task that falls under these activities (such as 'produce handouts', 'book venue' etc). These details will be developed during the preparation phase.

Once you have finished the full column of statements, check that the logic makes sense. A good way to do this is to work up the boxes asking 'Why?' So, we do this activity. Why? To have this output. We can also work down the boxes asking 'How?' We want to achieve this outcome. How? By delivering these outputs.

Diagram 19 **'Why… how' logic logframe**

| | Statements | Indicators | Means of verification (how you will check) | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impact | HOW | | | |
| Outcome | WHY HOW | | | |
| Outputs | WHY HOW | | | |
| Activities | WHY | | | |

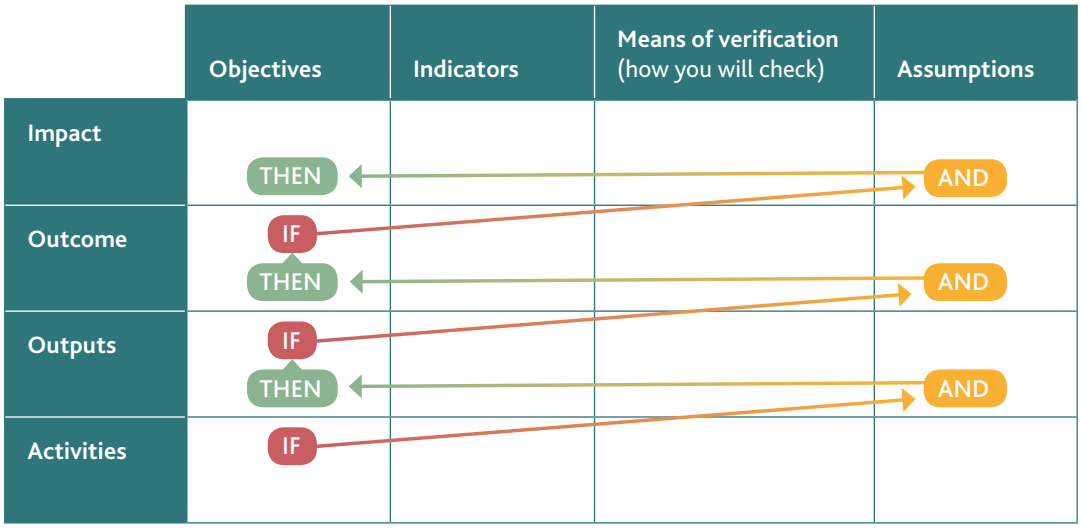
## STAGE 2 Bottom-up assumptions – work up the assumptions column

Assumptions relate to external factors outside your control which could affect the success of your project or prevent work from progressing. These may be climatic, political or economic, for example. Assumptions are closely related to risks, and should be specific to each cause-and-effect link in the logframe.

**Project scenario example:** For example, if the literacy workshop above was being held in an area with frequent curfews and outbursts of conflict there might be a risk that participants wouldn't be able to attend the course. An assumption linking the activity 'Deliver literacy and numeracy workshops' to the output 'Women in three named areas have improved literacy and numeracy skills' would be that the security situation doesn't prevent the participants from attending the course.

Reflecting up from the bottom of your logframe, consider how, if each assumption is true, it will be possible to move to the next stage of the project. This is often thought of as the 'if… then' logic and is shown in the diagram below.

Diagram 20 **'If… then' logic logframe**




**Project scenario example:** If we 'Deliver literacy and numeracy workshops' and 'The security situation doesn't prevent the participants from attending the workshop', then 'Women in three named areas have improved literacy and numeracy skills'.

## STAGE 3 Indicators and verification

Take each row at a time and identify the indicators (what you will measure) and means of verification (how you will measure) for each objective.

### Indicators

As discussed, indicators are measures that show progress towards achieving objectives. They answer the question: 'How do we know whether or not what we planned is happening, or has happened?' Indicators help us to monitor and evaluate the project. They tell us if the project plans need adjusting. They help us to learn lessons from a project.

Logframes sometimes call indicators 'Objectively Verifiable Indicators'. The term 'objectively' is used because indicators should not depend on the point of view of the person measuring them. It should not matter who measures them: the same result should be reached. So it is better to measure attendance at a meeting by counting the number of people there, rather than to ask two people to grade attendance on a scale of very poor, poor, adequate, good or very good. One person might think attendance is very good while another might think it is only adequate. This would depend on their past experience of meetings and their own expectations of how many people might attend this one.

#### SETTING GOOD INDICATORS

It's important to write good indicators that actually measure the level of change they are intended to measure.

Where possible, consult the project participants and the people who are going to be collecting the data.

Indicators should be **CREAM**:

- **Clear:** Indicators should be precise and easy to understand.
- **Relevant:** Is the indicator measuring the change it is meant to be measuring?
- **Economic:** Can the indicators be measured with reasonable cost and effort?
- **Adequate:** Does the indicator provide sufficient information on performance?
- **Monitorable:** Can the indicator be easily monitored? Is it open to independent validation?

Bad indicators are usually missing one of the elements of 'CREAM'. Some organisations have produced 'indicator banks', which can be consulted to find suitable indicators for different types of project (for example Tearfund Indikit: https://tearfund.indikit.net).

### TYPES OF INDICATORS

There are many different types of indicators to consider. Try to be creative and use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative indicators to make sure that the objectives can be measured effectively.

- **Quantitative indicators** can be analysed in numbers. This might include: how often things happen, number of people involved or affected, growth rates or uptake (for example, school enrolment, visits to clinic, adoption of new seed varieties).
- **Qualitative indicators** measure things that cannot be counted, such as: satisfaction, opinions, decision-making ability, changes in attitude.

Sometimes things are too hard to measure directly, because it would be expensive, inappropriate or just too difficult to do so. In these cases, we can use what we call proxy indicators. These are indirect measures that can stand in for the thing we would like to measure. For example, the WHO definition of health is 'a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. It is very difficult to measure a complete sense of well-being, and so mortality (death) and morbidity (illness) measures are often used as proxy indicators to measure health.

It can be useful to break down your indicators so that they focus on specific vulnerable groups to ensure that they are benefiting from the project on an equal basis with other project participants. For example, you may have a general indicator that is 'the number of people attending the training session' and then an indicator focused on people with disabilities such as 'number of people with disabilities attending the training session'.

### BASELINES, TARGETS AND MILESTONES

The target sets out what level of change we want to achieve at the end of the project. We might set targets at particular points in the project (often called milestones) to help us measure progress towards our final targets.

At the start of a project, we will often measure the baseline level of an indicator, to know what the value is before we start work. This is especially important when we have targets relating to a percentage change in something.

### DIFFERENT WAYS OF PRESENTING INDICATORS

Sometimes the target and target date are included in the indicator statement. For example: 'By the end of month six, 500 participants will achieve a pass mark of 70 per cent or higher in the literacy exam.' At other times, targets are in separate boxes. Most donors prefer indicators to be simple statements of what is to be measured, and provide extra boxes for the target, date, milestones. For example:

- Indicator = number of participants passing the end of course exam (with a mark of 70 per cent or higher)
- Target = 500 participants
- Date = end of month six

Depending on the type of change or activity, we might choose to express quantitative indicators as 'number of' or 'percentage of'. 'Number of' makes sense when we want to count how many of something is delivered: for example, how many workshops we deliver. 'Percentage of' is good when we want to know how far our project has reached, for example the percentage of women in the area who are now able to read.

### Indicator advice

If you get stuck, move on to look at the 'means of verification' column. Thinking about what information you need, and how to get it, may help to define what the indicator should be.

If you come up with a long list of possible indicators, try to narrow it down to the essential ones and make sure that they are verifiable.

## Means of verification

The means of verification are the sources of data we will use to measure the indicator. What information will you need, and how and from where can data be gathered? Will project staff or others need to keep records, or can they get the data from somewhere else? Consider the cost implications, if any, and build this into the project budget. Don't exclude anecdotal evidence (eg views expressed by project beneficiaries, etc) if this is the most appropriate source of information, but remember to collect a variety of evidence to ensure that it is trustworthy.

Look back to Section 1.3 for more information on data collection. The methods and sources used for your initial assessments can also be used for monitoring.

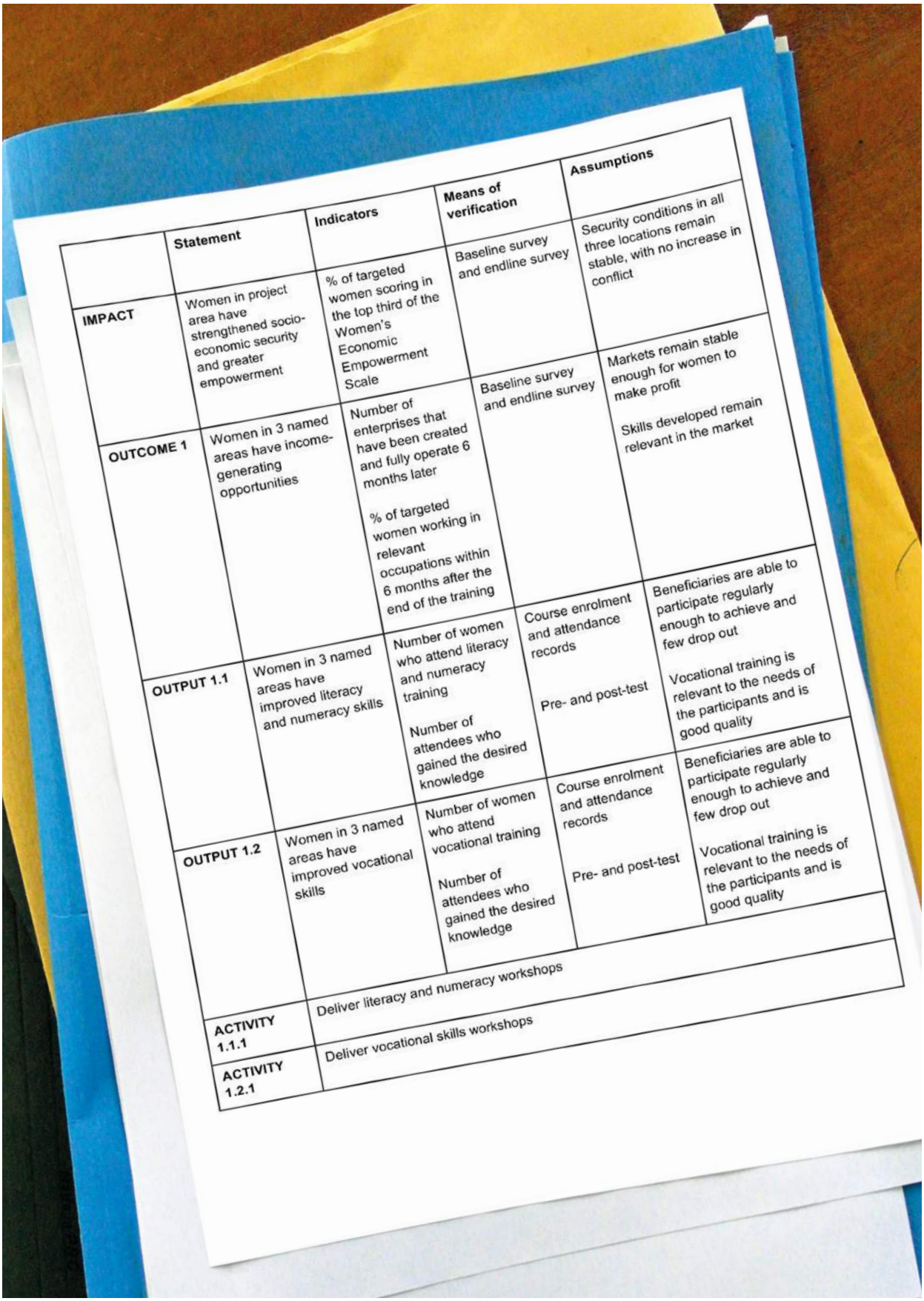
### Checklist for assessing your logframe

- ☐ Is the logframe consistent with the Theory of Change?
- ☐ Is the logic clear?
- ☐ Do the impact indicators measure long-term goals the project contributes to?
- ☐ Do the outcome indicators measure what will change and who will benefit?
- ☐ Do the output indicators measure the services or results that will be delivered by the project?
- ☐ Are the activities clearly defined?
- ☐ Are all indicators relevant to the level of objective where they appear?
- ☐ Are all indicators clearly defined and measurable?
- ☐ Are the targets and milestones realistic and achievable?
- ☐ Are means of verification clear and based on reliable data sources?
- ☐ Are qualitative indicators used where appropriate?

## Project scenario example

Diagram 21 below shows the completed logframe for the project scenario.

Diagram 21 **Completed logframe**



| | Statement | Indicators | Means of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IMPACT | Women in project area have strengthened socio-economic security and greater empowerment | % of targeted women scoring in the top third of the Women's Economic Empowerment Scale | Baseline survey and endline survey | Security conditions in all three locations remain stable, with no increase in conflict |
| OUTCOME 1 | Women in 3 named areas have income-generating opportunities | Number of enterprises that have been created and fully operate 6 months later<br><br>% of targeted women working in relevant occupations within 6 months after the end of the training | Baseline survey and endline survey | Markets remain stable enough for women to make profit<br><br>Skills developed remain relevant in the market |
| OUTPUT 1.1 | Women in 3 named areas have improved literacy and numeracy skills | Number of women who attend literacy and numeracy training<br><br>Number of attendees who gained the desired knowledge | Course enrolment and attendance records<br><br>Pre- and post-test | Beneficiaries are able to participate regularly enough to achieve and few drop out<br><br>Vocational training is relevant to the needs of the participants and is good quality |
| OUTPUT 1.2 | Women in 3 named areas have improved vocational skills | Number of women who attend vocational training<br><br>Number of attendees who gained the desired knowledge | Course enrolment and attendance records<br><br>Pre- and post-test | Beneficiaries are able to participate regularly enough to achieve and few drop out<br><br>Vocational training is relevant to the needs of the participants and is good quality |
| ACTIVITY 1.1.1 | Deliver literacy and numeracy workshops | | | |
| ACTIVITY 1.2.1 | Deliver vocational skills workshops | | | |

## 2.5 Project budget

Coming up with a realistic project budget is a key part of the project design process. When you are designing your project, you need to know how much it will cost to implement your project activities. That way, you will know how much money you need to raise or make available for the project, to make it a success. Also, you will want to achieve the maximum impact at the lowest cost, so in designing your project activities, you need to look at their cost and consider whether there are other, more cost-effective ways to achieve your project objectives.

Many funders have rules about which costs they will cover. Some will set limits on the staff costs, equipment, and indirect or support costs they will cover. So it is important for you to consider the full cost of the project, not just the cost of the activities, and plan how you will cover any costs the donor will not pay for.

In your budget, you will need to consider the following costs:

- **Human resources (staff):** Budget for the staff needed to implement the project, including new staff members you will need to hire for the project, and time that existing staff members are likely to spend on the project, including support staff.
- **Travel and transport:** Budget for the costs involved in transporting staff and resources to and from the project sites. Include the cost of vehicles, fuel and vehicle maintenance.
- **Equipment, supplies and support costs:** Budget for the costs it will take to run and support the project, such as office rent, utilities, stationery, and equipment you will need to deliver the project, such as computers, vehicles. For costs that can be shared between other projects, such as your head office costs, you need to include a reasonable percentage of those costs.
- **Project activities:** Budget for the cost of implementing the activities, such as goods or services to be made available to beneficiaries or the value of cash grants or vouchers, venue hire for training, printing costs for publications.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting expenditure:** Budget for the cost of doing all the surveys you are planning, for example a baseline and endline, as well as all the costs you will incur by doing all your other ongoing monitoring activities. If you are planning to undertake an evaluation, the costs for this should also be included.
- **Exchange rate and inflation (a general increase in prices):** If your project will not start for some time, or if it will run over multiple years, you may also need to budget for the cost of inflation, considering how the cost of things such as rent and staff salaries might go up. If you are receiving funding from another country, you may also need to think about the impact that exchange rate fluctuations might have on your budget.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** Budget for reasonable accommodation costs – the costs needed to enable the participation of people with disabilities in project activities. For example, travel costs for a project participant who cannot walk to attend a community meeting, or costs for converting project documents into accessible formats.

It is also worth bearing currencies in mind when designing your budget, to assist you when you come to the project funding stage later on. Donors might insist on the budget being written in the currency they work in. However, for project management purposes, it is best to budget in the currency that the project will be spending in. In an ideal world, the donor would agree the budget in that currency and so cover the cost of exchange rate fluctuations, but donors are not always keen on this and prefer your project to bear this risk. One way to manage this is to look at rates over the last few years and pick a higher or lower rate that is likely to protect you from losing money because of changes to the exchange rate. Remember that if you are receiving funds from your donor in a different currency from the one you use day to day, you will need to show the exchange rate that you have used in your calculations.

There are different ways you can develop a budget, and the most appropriate will depend on the type of project you are designing.

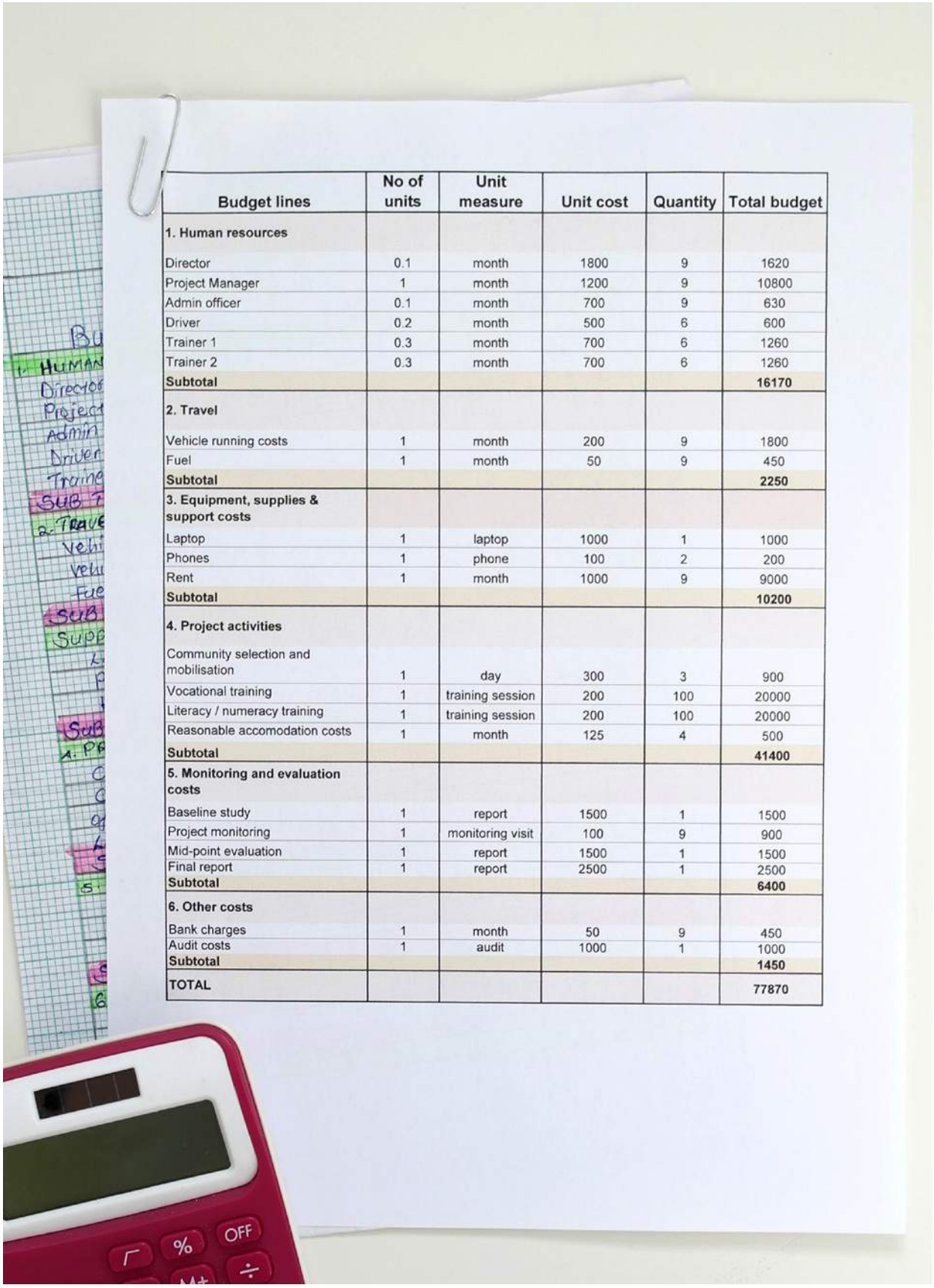
- **Top-down:** This is when the total cost of the project is estimated by experts, or assigned by the organisation or a donor. The budget will then use experience from previous projects to break this amount down into the costs for the various different types of spending listed on page 66.
- **Bottom-up:** You may find it helpful to develop an activity-based budget. This estimates all of your expenses (including staffing and overheads) by project output or activity, in line with the logframe. This is more complex than some types of budget, but can be a helpful way to measure the full cost of each activity and to persuade donors to fund the full amount.

The project manager/design team, logistics and finance staff should work on the budget and project design together at the same time. The budget and the rest of the project design need to fit together. For example, if you write down the costs of your activities and realise you don't have enough money, you might go back to your logframe and set your targets lower. It is very important that the supply chain and logistics staff are involved from the early stages of the project management cycle process. This allows the logistics staff to get high-level budget quotes to provide the first outline of available market quality, costs and delivery times for key resources and equipment needed in the project. This approach puts less strain from the start on the triple constraints of cost, time and scope.

## **Project scenario example:** Budget

Diagram 22 below shows the budget for the project scenario. See how it is divided into cost categories (eg human resources and travel) with a more detailed breakdown (budget lines).

Diagram 22 **Budget**



| Budget lines | No of units | Unit measure | Unit cost | Quantity | Total budget |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Human resources** | | | | | |
| Director | 0.1 | month | 1800 | 9 | 1620 |
| Project Manager | 1 | month | 1200 | 9 | 10800 |
| Admin officer | 0.1 | month | 700 | 9 | 630 |
| Driver | 0.2 | month | 500 | 6 | 600 |
| Trainer 1 | 0.3 | month | 700 | 6 | 1260 |
| Trainer 2 | 0.3 | month | 700 | 6 | 1260 |
| **Subtotal** | | | | | **16170** |
| **2. Travel** | | | | | |
| Vehicle running costs | 1 | month | 200 | 9 | 1800 |
| Fuel | 1 | month | 50 | 9 | 450 |
| **Subtotal** | | | | | **2250** |
| **3. Equipment, supplies & support costs** | | | | | |
| Laptop | 1 | laptop | 1000 | 1 | 1000 |
| Phones | 1 | phone | 100 | 2 | 200 |
| Rent | 1 | month | 1000 | 9 | 9000 |
| **Subtotal** | | | | | **10200** |
| **4. Project activities** | | | | | |
| Community selection and mobilisation | 1 | day | 300 | 3 | 900 |
| Vocational training | 1 | training session | 200 | 100 | 20000 |
| Literacy / numeracy training | 1 | training session | 200 | 100 | 20000 |
| Reasonable accomodation costs | 1 | month | 125 | 4 | 500 |
| **Subtotal** | | | | | **41400** |
| **5. Monitoring and evaluation costs** | | | | | |
| Baseline study | 1 | report | 1500 | 1 | 1500 |
| Project monitoring | 1 | monitoring visit | 100 | 9 | 900 |
| Mid-point evaluation | 1 | report | 1500 | 1 | 1500 |
| Final report | 1 | report | 2500 | 1 | 2500 |
| **Subtotal** | | | | | **6400** |
| **6. Other costs** | | | | | |
| Bank charges | 1 | month | 50 | 9 | 450 |
| Audit costs | 1 | audit | 1000 | 1 | 1000 |
| **Subtotal** | | | | | **1450** |
| **TOTAL** | | | | | **77870** |

# 2.6 Risk

Risks are events that might affect the achievement of project objectives if they happen. Risks exist for any project, and it is important to think through what they could be and what needs to be done to manage them, so that either they don't happen or, if they do happen, their effects are minimised.

Risks are managed in four stages: identification, assessment, response planning, and monitoring. As we are discussing project design, we will look at identification, assessment, and response planning. Monitoring will be dealt with in Section 5.4 (page 113).

## Identification

During the context phase you will have already begun analysing risks. During the design phase this becomes more formal and you will identify and record risks that might affect the delivery of project activities. Other risks will become apparent when you start to identify assumptions.

In order to make sure you have identified all risks it is useful to think through risk categories. Some commonly used categories, with some example areas for each category:

- safeguarding risk – eg averting the risk of harm to project participants or the environment
- reputational risk (loss of trust) – eg corruption
- financial risk – eg exchange rates, inflation
- organisational risk – eg change in goals and priorities, can't recruit or keep key staff
- political risk – eg war, change of government
- environmental risk – eg natural hazard, changes in weather patterns
- security risk – eg theft, unable to get access to project sites.

You may notice that the categories above are similar to the PESTLE categories. It may be helpful to refer back to your PESTLE analysis when identifying risks.

When identifying risks we shouldn't only think of categories of risk, or risk areas. We need to be as specific about each particular risk as possible. We need to be specific because this helps us to assess risk better and come up with appropriate response plans to reduce the effect of risks on the project.

One way of making sure you are specific is to identify risks in three parts:

- the risk event or situation itself
- the cause of the risk (if possible to identify)
- the impact of the risk on the project.

**Project scenario example:** In the case of the literacy workshop, there is a risk that insecurity will get worse as a result of ongoing tension in the country. The impact of the risk on the project is that it would prevent participants travelling to the course and prevent them from learning what they need to develop literacy skills.

## Assessment

It is important to assess the risks you have identified, as this helps you to prioritise risk response activities (see next section). This is usually based on two criteria:

- **Probability** = how likely is it that this risk will happen?
- **Impact** = how much will it affect our ability to achieve our objectives if it does happen?

A risk matrix can be helpful for comparing assessed risks. This helps identify the priority risks.

A simple risk matrix, comparing risks according to their impact and the probability that they will actually happen, is shown below. Some organisations might use a grid with more squares to show more levels of probability and impact, and/or they may use different numbers to assess impact and the likelihood of risks happening, eg 1–5 to express unlikely to likely, where 1 is the least likely and 5 is the most likely, instead of using the words low/medium/high. It is good practice for your organisation to have developed definitions or examples of what the different levels of impact and probability mean so that everyone uses the levels in the same way.

### Project scenario example

If we consider our literacy workshop risk, this might be considered to have a low probability and a medium impact – see diagram 23.

The grid below is colour coded. This helps determine which risks are a priority for action. Those that fall in the red will be highest priority and the decision about how to respond may need to be made by a senior manager in your organisation. Those that fall in the green will be lowest priority and decisions about how to respond can usually be made by the project manager.

Diagram 23 **Project risk**

| | | PROBABILITY | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Medium | High |
| IMPACT | High | | | |
| | Medium | Insecurity will worsen, which will prevent participants travelling to the workshop | | |
| | Low | | | |

## Risk response planning

Risk response planning sets out how you will respond to risks. This happens in the design phase to ensure that risks can be reduced to a level that your organisation is willing to accept. There are four main ways to respond to risk that you can consider:

- **Accept:** Decide that the probability/impact of the risk is small enough that you can accept the risk, and do nothing more than monitor it.
- **Avoid:** Don't do a risky activity or part of an activity. For example, if the risk of stealing from vehicles is high in one part of a refugee camp, you might decide not to carry out a distribution in that area.

- **Mitigate:** Take measures to reduce the probability of a risk happening, or the impact if it does. To continue with the refugee camp example, you might reduce the probability by only working there in the middle of the day when the camp is busy and well lit, or reduce the impact by making sure you don't carry money or valuables during distributions.
- **Transfer:** Pass the risk on to someone else with greater capacity to deal with it. In the refugee camp example, you could employ a local company to do the distribution, or take out insurance to protect your assets, resources and staff.

Acceptance (option one above) is usually used for risks that have a low potential impact and a low probability of occurring. For other risks a response is usually needed to reduce the probability or impact of the risk. It is important to assess the risks before and after the risk responses are taken. The risk that remains after you have taken action to respond is sometimes called the residual risk.

## Project scenario example

The project scenario risk assessment is shown in diagram 24 below.

The team identified risks 1, 2 and 3. They assessed these risks and placed them on the matrix.

Diagram 24 **Risk assessment: risk starting points**

| | | PROBABILITY | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Medium | High |
| IMPACT | High | | Risk 2 (starting point) | Risk 3 (starting point) |
| | Medium | | | |
| | Low | Risk 1 (starting point) | | |

Risk 1 was considered to have low impact and low probability, placing it in the green part of the matrix. When it comes to planning how to respond to this risk, the team decide it can be accepted.

Risk 2 starts off in the red part of the matrix. The team take action to reduce the potential impact of this from high to low. The residual risk 2 now falls in the green part of the matrix.

Risk 3 starts off in the red part of the matrix. The team take action to reduce the potential impact of this risk from high to medium, but are unable to reduce the probability. The residual risk 3 is still in the red area of the matrix and risk 3 must be passed up to a senior manager to decide what should be done.

Diagram 25 **Risk assessment: risk end points**

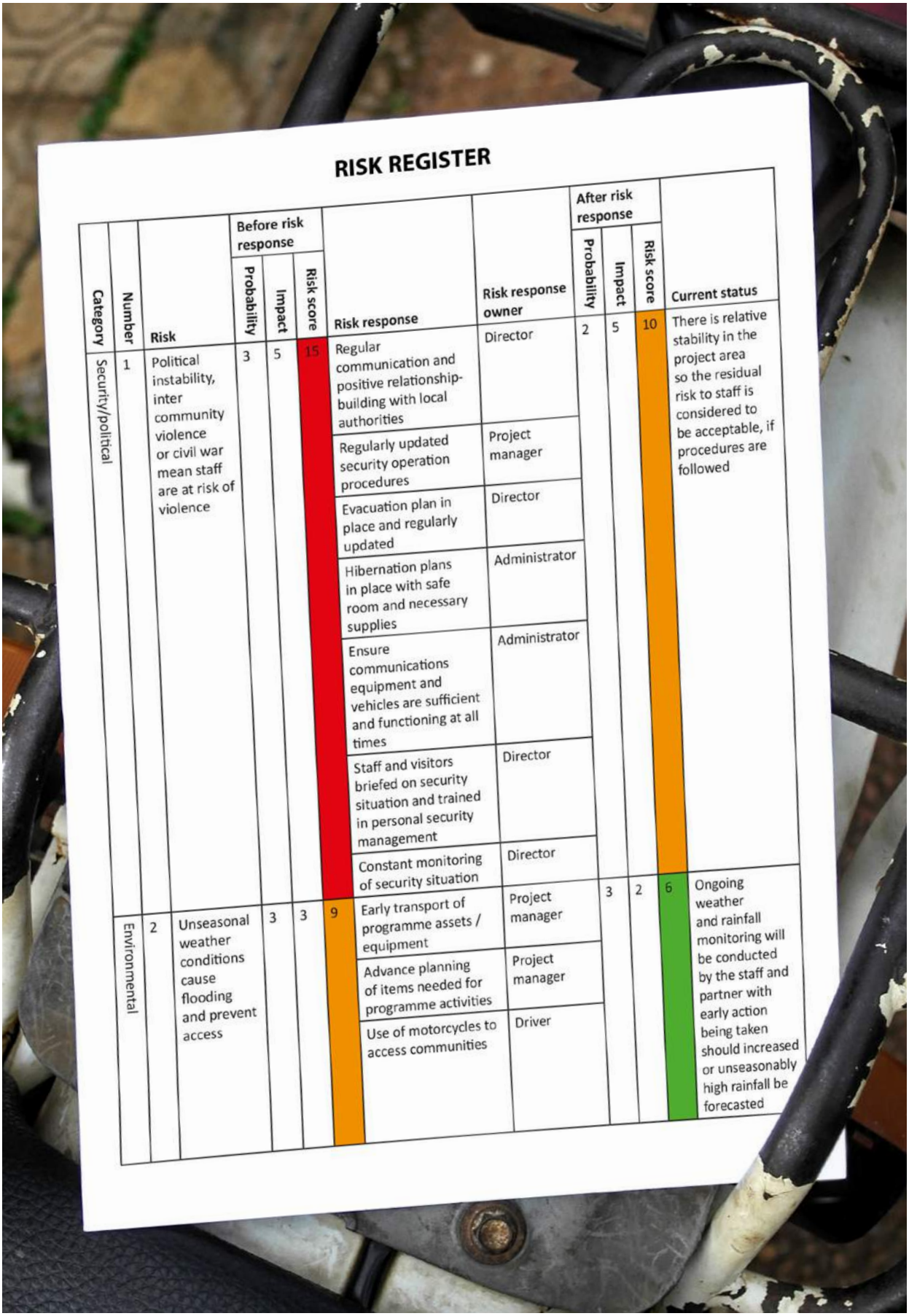
| | | PROBABILITY | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Low** | **Medium** | **High** |
| IMPACT | **High** | | Risk 2<br>(starting point) | Risk 3<br>(starting point) |
| | **Medium** | | | Residual risk 3<br>(end point) |
| | **Low** | Risk 1<br>(starting point)<br>Residual risk 1<br>(end point) | Residual risk 2<br>(end point) | |

## **Project scenario example:** Risk register

A risk register is a useful way of documenting and prioritising risks. Risks can be scored by multiplying the probability of risk occurring by the impact of the risk.

The numbers in this table come from the organisation rating impact and probability on a scale of 1–5, with one being very low and 5 being very high. An example from the project scenario is shown in diagram 26 on the next page.

Diagram 26 **Risk register**



## RISK REGISTER

| Category | Number | Risk | Before risk response | | | Risk response | Risk response owner | After risk response | | | Current status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Probability | Impact | Risk score | | | Probability | Impact | Risk score | |
| Security/political | 1 | Political instability, inter community violence or civil war mean staff are at risk of violence | 3 | 5 | 15 | Regular communication and positive relationship-building with local authorities | Director | 2 | 5 | 10 | There is relative stability in the project area so the residual risk to staff is considered to be acceptable, if procedures are followed |
| | | | | | | Regularly updated security operation procedures | Project manager | | | | |
| | | | | | | Evacuation plan in place and regularly updated | Director | | | | |
| | | | | | | Hibernation plans in place with safe room and necessary supplies | Administrator | | | | |
| | | | | | | Ensure communications equipment and vehicles are sufficient and functioning at all times | Administrator | | | | |
| | | | | | | Staff and visitors briefed on security situation and trained in personal security management | Director | | | | |
| | | | | | | Constant monitoring of security situation | Director | | | | |
| Environmental | 2 | Unseasonal weather conditions cause flooding and prevent access | 3 | 3 | 9 | Early transport of programme assets / equipment | Project manager | 3 | 2 | 6 | Ongoing weather and rainfall monitoring will be conducted by the staff and partner with early action being taken should increased or unseasonably high rainfall be forecasted |
| | | | | | | Advance planning of items needed for programme activities | Project manager | | | | |
| | | | | | | Use of motorcycles to access communities | Driver | | | | |

A project might set up controls to help mitigate some risks. For example, there is a risk that project funds and resources might be misused by project staff, meaning they are not available for project work. Examples of controls to mitigate this risk might be:

- separation of duties, eg the person who places an order cannot also approve the spend
- requiring two signatures on cheques
- sign-in/sign-out sheets for laptops and radios
- log books to check vehicle mileage against petrol purchased.

It is important to get the number and level of controls correct. Too few and the project is exposed to risks. Too many and they take too much time, reduce efficiency and encourage staff to find ways around them.

Please note that while most risks will be identified and assessed and response plans will be written during the project design phase, it is important to continue to identify any new risks during the whole life of the project. The risk register is a good place to capture these risks during the project lifecycle.

## 'Do no harm' and safeguarding

'Do no harm' means that the project actions should not cause injury or injustice to people. Safeguarding means protecting children and vulnerable adults from all forms of harm or abuse.

Your project design should always uphold the principle of 'do no harm' and the need to safeguard project participants, the wider community and the environment, for example by putting in place policies and practices to prevent child abuse and making sure that communities know what types of behaviour are unacceptable from project staff and how to make a complaint. Your design needs to consider any potential negative impacts your project might have, and build in ways to reduce these risks. This includes being aware of the role you might play, or be seen to play, in a conflict setting.

**Project scenario example:** If women are enrolled in literacy classes, this may mean they have less time for household chores, which may provoke further violence from their husbands and male relatives. Therefore the project needs to think about how to reduce this risk. In order to address this risk the project has decided to partner with another organisation who will work with the husbands and male relatives to challenge social norms around gender.

# 2.7 Stakeholder analysis – influence and involvement

In the context phase on page 43 we conducted the first step of a stakeholder analysis – analysing our stakeholders in order to include a wide range of stakeholders in the design phase. Now the project design is clearer, we can assess the stakeholders' power and interest in the project and determine how to manage them.

The second stage of your stakeholder analysis is to **consider the stakeholders' power over and interest in the project**.

- **Power** is the influence that stakeholders have over the project. They might be able to support your work, or might have the power to block what you are trying to do.
- **Interest** is how much the project goals align with the stakeholders' interests.

While your project participants are highly interested in the project, they may have limited power over the project's success. At the same time, there will be other stakeholders, such as local and national government, who are in a position of power to influence the success of the project, even though they are not the target beneficiaries.

Go through your list of stakeholders and think about how much power they have and what interests they have in the project. There are two ways to show this information visually:

1. **A Venn diagram** (see diagram 28). Draw a circle in the middle of your paper and label it with the beneficiary group you are targeting. Draw other circles for the other stakeholders. The size of each circle represents the power and influence of that stakeholder, and the distance from the central circle shows how interested the stakeholder is in the project.
2. **A stakeholder table.** Stakeholders can be written into one of four boxes according to their power and interest. Diagram 27 below shows a template for the table.

Diagram 27 **A stakeholder table template**

| | | Interest: Low | Interest: High |
|---|---|---|---|
| Power: High | | **Box C**<br>Stakeholders with high power to influence the project, but who have a low interest in the project. | **Box A**<br>Stakeholders with a high interest in the project, who also have power to influence its success or failure. It is important to develop good working relationships with these stakeholders to ensure adequate support for the project. |
| Power: Low | | **Box D**<br>Stakeholders of low priority who may need limited monitoring. | **Box B**<br>Stakeholders with a high interest in the project, but with low power to influence. They need special initiatives to ensure their interests are protected. |

**Project scenario example:** Stakeholder analysis tools

Diagrams 28 and 29 on the next page show examples of a Venn diagram and stakeholder table for the project scenario.

Diagram 28 **Venn diagram for the project scenario**

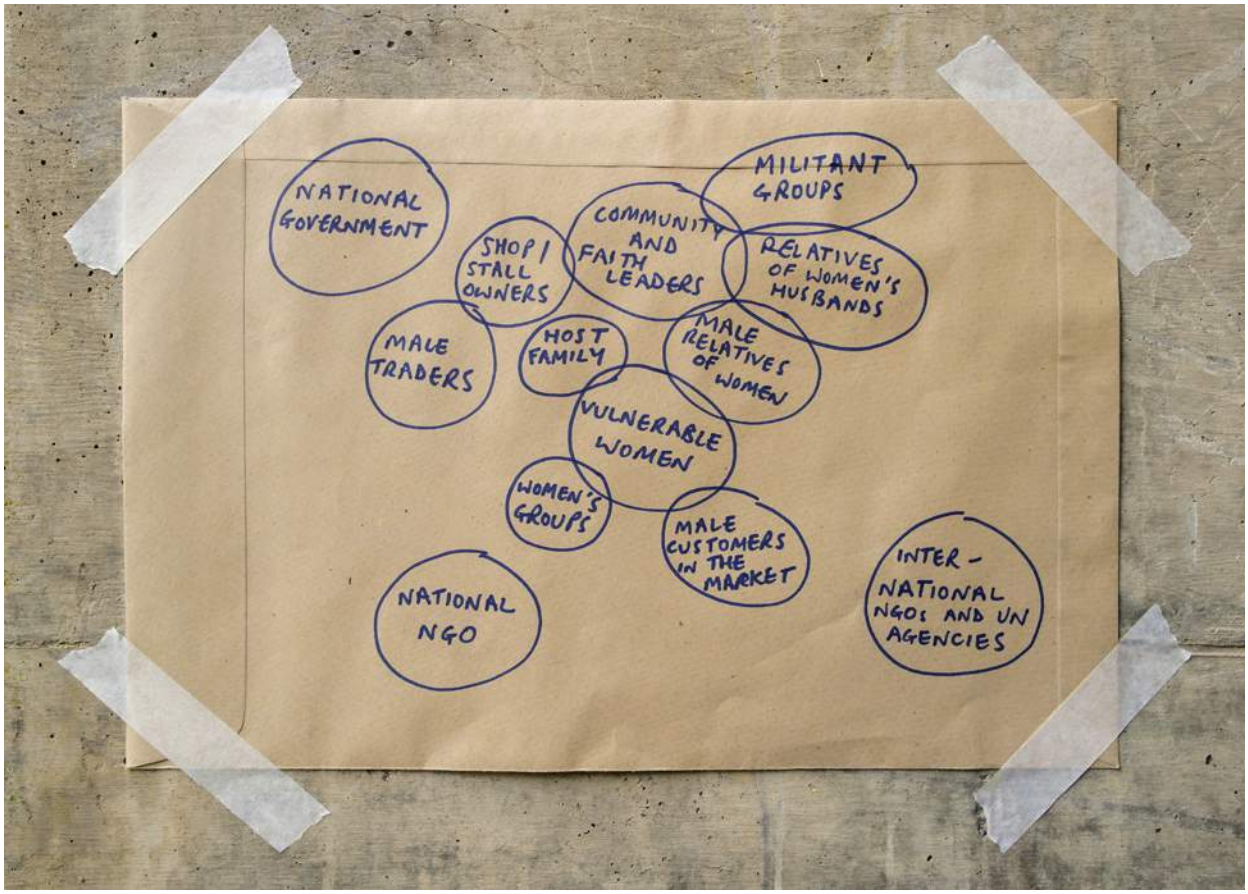
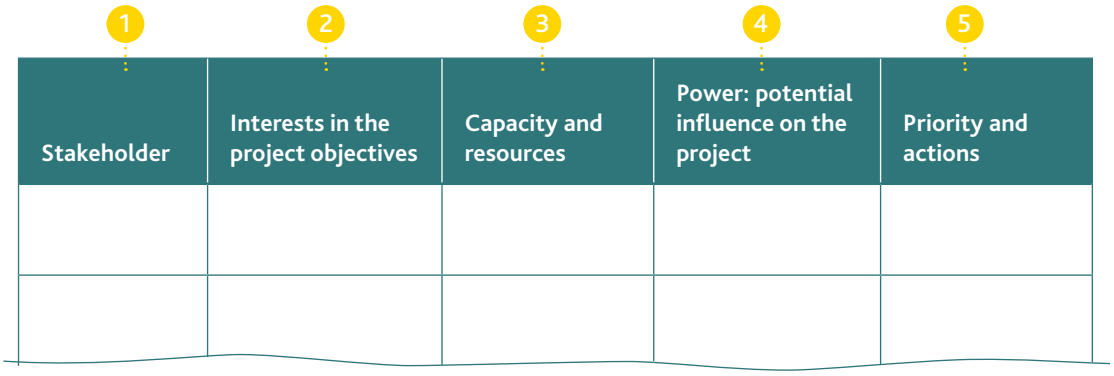



Diagram 29 **Stakeholder table for the project scenario**

The final stage is to consider how stakeholders should be managed.

This is done using a stakeholder matrix, like that shown in diagram 30 below.

Diagram 30 **Stakeholder matrix**




Column 1 Write the names of stakeholder groups in the first column.

Column 2 Write down what each stakeholder group cares about in relation to the project and its objectives.

Column 3 Write down the capacity (skills, knowledge, ideas) and resources of each stakeholder.

Column 4 Write down the likely influence for each stakeholder. You could use symbols as follows:

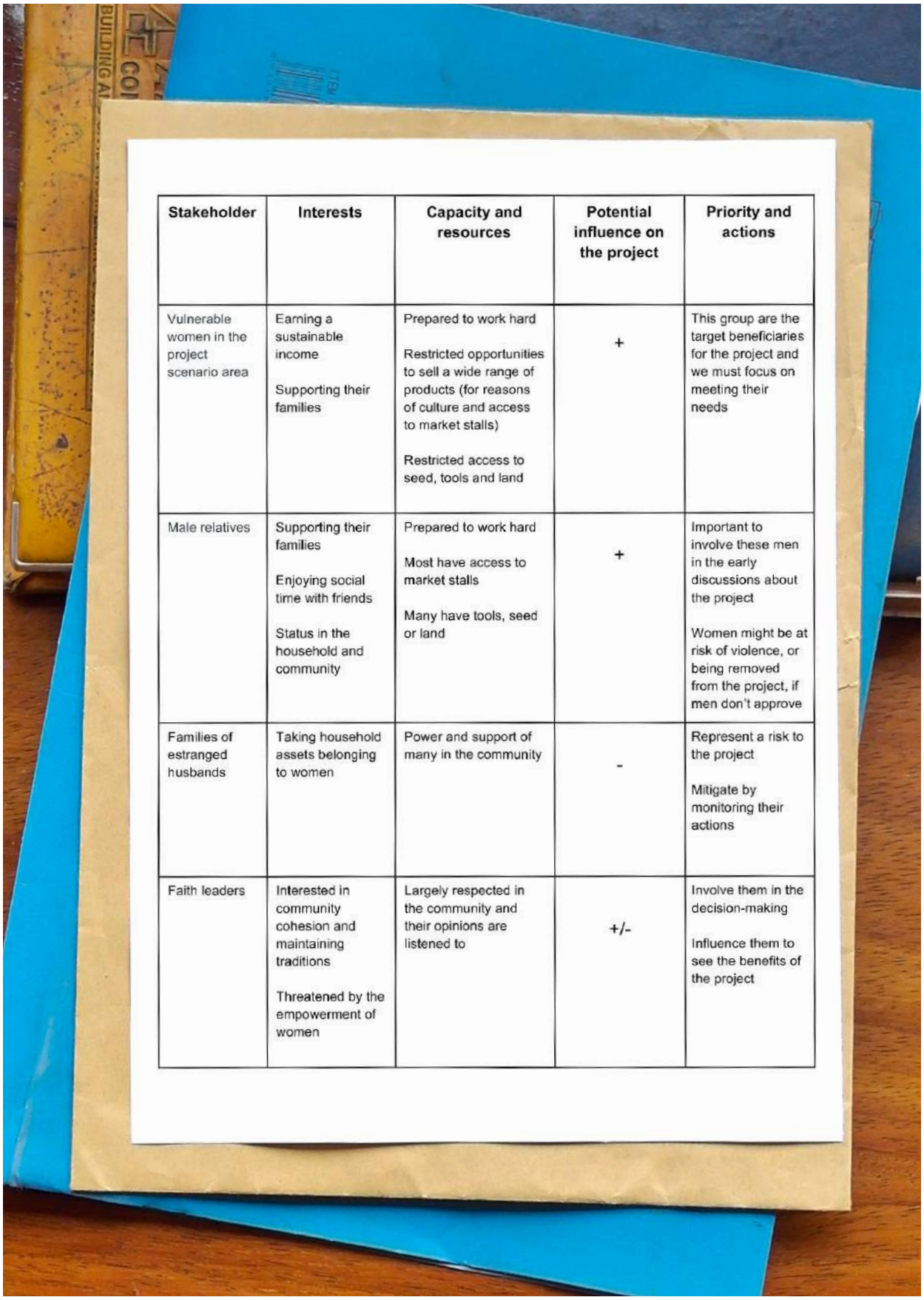
- **+** Potential positive influence
- **–** Potential negative influence
- **+/–** Possible positive and negative influence
- **?** Uncertain

Column 5 Consider some potential steps you might take to meet your stakeholders' needs and interests. If they have high influence, encourage them to give their support and help achieve success or avoid conflict.

## **Project scenario example:** Stakeholder analysis

An example stakeholder matrix for the project scenario is shown in diagram 31 below.

Diagram 31 **Stakeholder matrix example**



| Stakeholder | Interests | Capacity and resources | Potential influence on the project | Priority and actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vulnerable women in the project scenario area | Earning a sustainable income<br><br>Supporting their families | Prepared to work hard<br><br>Restricted opportunities to sell a wide range of products (for reasons of culture and access to market stalls)<br><br>Restricted access to seed, tools and land | + | This group are the target beneficiaries for the project and we must focus on meeting their needs |
| Male relatives | Supporting their families<br><br>Enjoying social time with friends<br><br>Status in the household and community | Prepared to work hard<br><br>Most have access to market stalls<br><br>Many have tools, seed or land | + | Important to involve these men in the early discussions about the project<br><br>Women might be at risk of violence, or being removed from the project, if men don't approve |
| Families of estranged husbands | Taking household assets belonging to women | Power and support of many in the community | - | Represent a risk to the project<br><br>Mitigate by monitoring their actions |
| Faith leaders | Interested in community cohesion and maintaining traditions<br><br>Threatened by the empowerment of women | Largely respected in the community and their opinions are listened to | +/- | Involve them in the decision-making<br><br>Influence them to see the benefits of the project |

A stakeholder analysis is useful to help you decide how you should involve different stakeholders in each phase of the project cycle. You could use a table like the one in diagram 32 below. The columns represent the different levels of participation and the rows represent the phases of the project cycle.

Diagram 32 **Stakeholder participation table**

| | | Level of participation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Coercion | Informing | Consultation | Cooperation/ partnership | Control |
| Project phase | Context | | | | | |
| | Design | | | | | |
| | Approval and governance | | | | | |
| | Preparation | | | | | |
| | Implementation and monitoring | | | | | |
| | Evaluation | | | | | |
| | Closure | | | | | |

Take each of your stakeholder groups and think about the extent to which they should participate in each phase of the project cycle. See diagram 3 (page 5) to remind yourself of the different levels of participation.

- How much interest and power do they have?
- What knowledge or capabilities do they have?
- Is there a way that you can involve them in the project which helps to increase their interest or power?

When the table is completed, think about how you might make sure your stakeholders actually get involved. For example, if you think a women's group should be consulted during the preparation phase, consider how this might happen. You might decide to hold a special meeting, or to attend one of the women's meetings. It is important to consider your options so that you can ensure those who you think should participate in the project respond to your invitation. You should also consider if those taking part might need training or whether you might need to talk through their roles and responsibilities in the project so they can participate effectively.

It is important to keep revising this table. During the project cycle we might find that stakeholders who we thought should participate to a great extent are actually not interested in taking part. Or we might find that to be responsive to how the project is going, we want to encourage some stakeholders to get more involved.

# Designing to close well

It is important to decide on how the project will end or transition during the design phase, so that the project activities and approach can work towards the transition and this can be clearly communicated to the project participants. See Section 7.2 (page 134) in the closure phase for different types of end-of-project transition.

## Decision point

You have now reached another decision point for your project. You have to decide if the way you have designed your project means that it will achieve its goals and meet people's needs. You also need to decide if you are able to manage the risks sufficiently to be able to continue. Once again, use the Quality Standards checklist below to help to determine if you are ready to move to the next project phase. If so, you will be ready to move on to the next phase of the project cycle, to get it approved and funded.

**Quality Standards checklist**

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for design phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Are you identifying types of staff misconduct, such as fraud and discrimination, that could be risk areas during the lifecycle of the project?<br>☐ Have you set aside time and money to carry out refresher and induction training on staff conduct? |
|  | ☐ Have you considered the amount of funding or materials available for distribution in comparison to the level of need, so that meaningful assistance is provided to those who have been targeted, and the assistance is not spread too thin?<br>☐ Have time and funds been set aside for ongoing community consultations?<br>☐ Have the beneficiary selection criteria been agreed with the community and communicated to staff and to the community so that everyone knows what to expect?<br>☐ Are you using actual household size to determine the level of assistance provided to different targeted families, rather than relying on an average household figure?<br>☐ Are you using a multidimensional vulnerability scoring approach, taking into account different types of vulnerability, to ensure that the most vulnerable get selected? |
|  | ☐ Do you have structures in place to invite ongoing participation from the community, such as beneficiary committees, public meetings, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and consultation with representative groups – such as disabled person's organisations – which are truly representative of the community as a whole and include vulnerable groups that might traditionally be overlooked?<br>☐ Have you agreed with the community the best ways of making this information available (eg information boards, leaflets, public meetings) so that all groups within the community have access to it?<br>☐ Have you gained the consent of the community to carry out the project, including signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the community council where appropriate?<br>☐ Have you set aside a budget line for accountability, to cover staff and associated costs?<br>☐ Have you set aside a budget for accountability training for the rest of the team and planned the training? |

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for design phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Have you designed individual project activities in a way that is appropriate to the target group of men or of women – in light of their daily routines, livelihood activities, domestic duties etc?<br>☐ Has the project been designed to enhance the safety of women and children, eg in relation to the physical location of project services or the time of day that meetings are held?<br>☐ Are your indicators gender-sensitive? |
|  | ☐ Does the design of the project increase the capacities identified in the communities?<br>☐ If relevant, are you promoting skills and/or livelihoods development or other sustainable coping mechanisms?<br>☐ If relevant, are you supporting and/or empowering the community to advocate to change unhelpful policies and practices? |
|  | ☐ Does the planned response prioritise building social capital?<br>☐ Will you carry out a risk assessment?<br>☐ Does the planned response take into account the risk of a disaster occurring?<br>☐ Does the project design prioritise environmental and economic sustainability?<br>☐ Is the project designed to address long-term vulnerabilities?<br>☐ Did you budget for an environmental impact assessment? |
|  | ☐ Have you developed your project design in a way that avoids causing harm to the community members?<br>☐ Have you considered developing your project design in a way that reduces existing threats of harm to the community members, reduces their vulnerability to harm and increases their capacity to protect themselves?<br>☐ Have you ensured that your project is conflict-sensitive (see conflict sensitivity assessment on page 144)?<br>☐ Will you identify and analyse the potential risk of any kind of harm to beneficiaries and project staff during the lifecycle of the project? |
|  | ☐ Do the project staff have the technical support needed to guide project implementation – whether through advisors, consultants, or qualified staff on the ground?<br>☐ Have you referred to the Sphere handbook when including technical minimum standards and indicators in the project design?<br>☐ Is any other agency meeting or planning to meet identified needs? |

## RECAP

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of a logical project design and you have learnt how to use two design approaches and related tools.**

**You should now be able to:**

- explain the importance of good project design for a current project
- compare and contrast the use of Theory of Change and logframe
- follow the six stages to develop a Theory of Change
- follow the three stages to produce a logframe matrix
- develop a simple project budget
- identify and assess project risks.

## REFLECT

1. Take a look at your project design for a current project.
   a. Are the activities you have chosen the best way to reach your project goals?
   b. Are there clear logical links between the work you intend to do and the changes you want to see?
   c. Have you made your assumptions clear in your logframe and/or Theory of Change?
2. What can you do to make sure your project participants, and other relevant stakeholders, are properly involved in the design process?
3. Are the risks you have identified appropriate for the type of project you want to carry out?
4. Are you working in partnership with finance and logistics staff to create the budget?

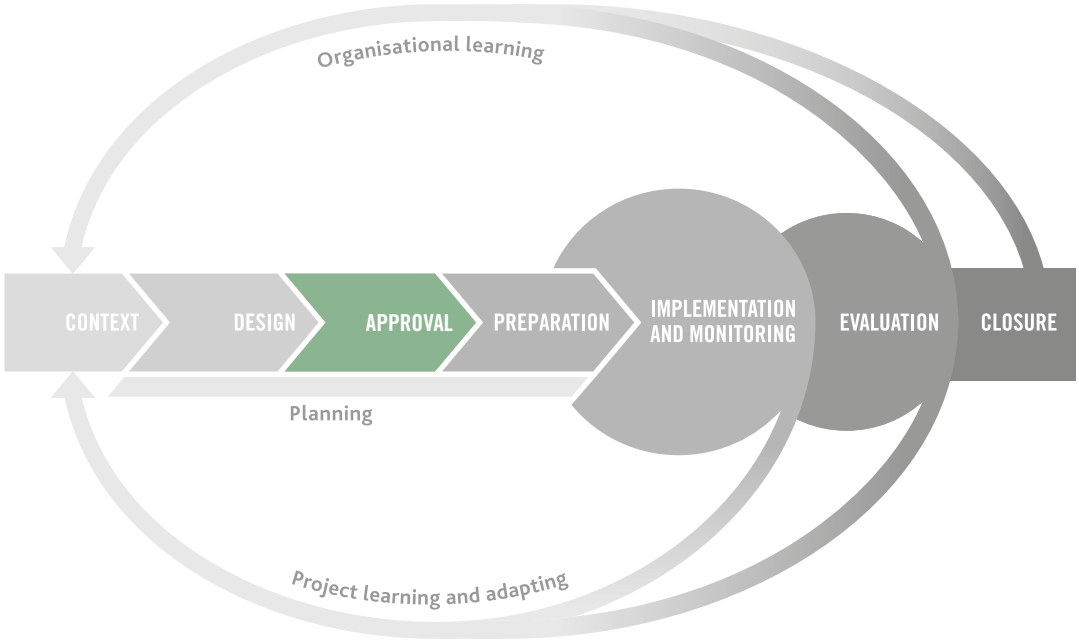
## PRACTISE

1. Practise creating a Theory of Change for a new project and then practise mapping this onto a logframe.
2. Practise writing a risk register for a current or new project you are working on.
3. Practise completing a stakeholder analysis for a current or new project you are working on.

# PHASE 3
# APPROVAL AND GOVERNANCE



**You are currently here in the project cycle:**




**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- recall the importance of this phase for approving, funding, governing and launching projects
- discuss what you need to consider when you look for internal and external funding and when you write a project proposal
- explain the different possibilities for project governance
- explain how agreed limits and a RASCI matrix are used to improve accountability and decision-making.

Approval and governance is the project phase in which the following happens:

- The project is approved.
- You get internal or external funding for the project confirmed.
- You agree the way the project is going to be managed and governed, and how decisions will be made and approved throughout the project.
- All stakeholders agree to an outline of what is going to be done and who is going to do it.



## 3.1 Project approval

Before a project team can begin activities and spend resources, the project needs to be approved and funding needs to be found. Approval and funding represent important decision points for the project.

Before you put in a proposal, it is important to consider the following:

- whether the funding opportunity is a good fit for your organisation
- whether it would actually make you less effective by engaging you in projects/activities that:
  - do not match your overall strategy and mission
  - push you beyond your organisational capacity and strengths
  - do not produce the results you hope for.

This is particularly important because donors may only fund part of your project, and expect you to get the rest of the funding from other sources. This means you will not be able to use resources from other sources for other projects that might actually have a greater impact.

You might need internal approval from someone senior in your organisation to make sure that the project will meet your wider organisational goals. You may need to check that they are happy for you to approach a particular donor. You will then normally send a proposal to a donor to request funding for your project.

## 3.2 Project funding

You will not be able to implement your project unless you can get funding for it. Often this funding will come from an outside organisation, a donor. In an ideal world we would design a project to address a need and then try and get funding for it. Even though approval follows design, when designing your project you may need to consider not only how to engage with the problem you are trying to address but also how you are going to get the project funded. Remember that, as time passes, you may need to 'refresh' your context analysis to ensure the situation hasn't changed significantly, and that your project is still addressing the needs of the people you are trying to help.

Donors will have their own agenda and requirements and you will need to show how you and your project will meet these.

### Compliance

Donors expect organisations to meet certain requirements on issues such as reporting, safeguarding, tracking and giving evidence of how project money is spent. Together, these expectations are often called compliance. It's important that you decide whether your organisation can meet these requirements and do an assessment of your organisation to check this is the case.

# Application process

Making funding applications to donors can take a long time so make sure the donor you are applying to funds the type of work you want to do, in the area where you want to work, and for organisations like yours. This should help you to select which donors are most suitable for your project and most likely to fund it.

Some donors, usually trusts and foundations, accept an application at any time of the year. The application process usually consists of a single stage.

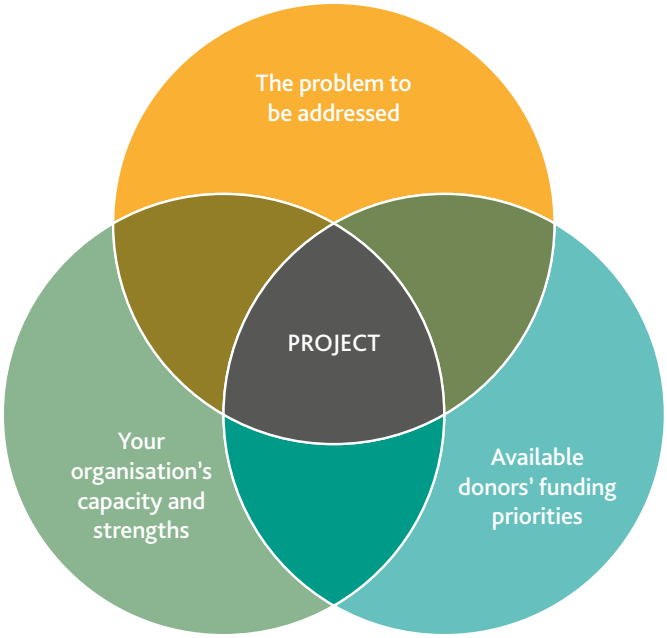
Government donors will usually issue a 'call for proposals'. This means that for a specific period of time they will invite organisations to submit proposals for funding, usually proposals that match particular government strategic aims (eg food security). Government donors will sometimes use a two-stage application process: invite brief proposals called concept notes first, and then invite just a small number of applicants to submit a full proposal, including a full logframe and budget.

Donors differ in the questions they ask, and the outputs they want to see, but they will all expect strong design. Be careful not to promise more than you can deliver. As the grant agreement will give a timeframe within which the project must be completed, it is important that you don't promise too much and that you can deliver everything within that timeframe.

It is sensible to check the donor's template for particular tools (such as the logframe or budget) from the beginning, and keep thinking of the donor template as you use these tools, as this will help you meet the donor's criteria. Government donors also will often have their own indicators that they will require you to use in your logframe.

If you decide to seek donor funding, bear in mind that it takes time and effort to make an application. Also, make sure you understand how donor payments will be made in stages and consider whether your organisation has the necessary money to fund the first part of the project before the donor makes their first payment.

Diagram 33 **How to decide whether to apply for donor funding**



# 3.3 Project governance

Project governance refers to how the project is going to be managed, controlled and supported. Having what is called a governance structure means deciding on responsibilities for different tasks (who is going to do them) and accountabilities (who needs to check that they are done, to the right quality). Agreed limits might also be set to make it clear which decisions the project manager is allowed to make alone and which need approval from someone more senior in the project organisation or the donor.

## Governance and management structures

The right governance and management structure for a project will depend on how large, complex and important it is.



### Project manager

In the simplest projects, the project manager might do all the day-to-day work of the project, as well as being responsible for managing it. In larger projects the project manager might only be responsible for overall management, while a project team and/or outside suppliers do the actual project activities.

The main responsibilities of the project manager are to:

- manage the triple constraint of cost, time and scope
- manage risk
- manage stakeholders.

### Steering group

It is best practice to appoint people with more authority than the project manager to provide oversight, accountability and support. At a minimum you should have one person who can represent the view of your organisation and has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the organisation. In a larger project what works best is a steering group made up of people who represent different points of view.

The main responsibilities of the steering group are to:

- ensure that the project matches the priorities of the organisation
- reassure the organisation that the project is being managed well
- make decisions about funding for the project (if internal funds are being used)
- decide when a project is ready to proceed through the decision points
- approve changes during implementation
- manage the risk of the project for the organisation
- keep the project manager accountable for managing the triple constraint of cost, time and scope.

### Who should be on a steering group?

A range of views should be included on the steering group. The list below outlines the views that could be included for more complex projects. It may be that one person can represent more than one of the viewpoints listed below:

- an organisational viewpoint, usually from a senior leader in your organisation (this is a minimum requirement for all projects)
- a beneficiary viewpoint

- a finance viewpoint
- a risk management viewpoint
- a logistics viewpoint
- technical viewpoint from experts relevant to the project themes
- funding viewpoint – if the project is institutionally funded, someone who is managing the grant and the relationship with the donor.

The steering group needs to have sufficient power in the organisation to manage the project risks and take decisions on the project.

## Agreed limits

It is helpful for everyone involved if the steering group decides on agreed limits in the approval and governance phase. (These are often referred to as project tolerances.) This means agreeing which decisions the project manager can make independently about the project, and which ones the steering group should make. The agreed limits ensure that decisions about the project are made at the correct level within the organisation.

Limits can be set for many project areas, but are commonly used for the triple constraint of cost, time and scope as well as risk. A project manager can make decisions that fall within the agreed limits but not those that fall outside. Here are a couple of examples:

- The steering group might agree that the project manager can spend up to 5 per cent under or over the cost of the project. If monitoring shows that the project manager is on track to spend 7 per cent over the limit, he or she will need to raise this issue with the steering group.
- The project is 12 months long and has a 10 per cent limit agreed for time. The activities are behind schedule by two months. As this is more than a 10 per cent difference the project manager will need to take this issue to the steering group.

## RASCI matrix

The project approval and governance phase is the best time to develop a RASCI matrix: this is the tool you will use to agree project governance and management, as well as roles and responsibilities for doing the project work, and the project communications. A RASCI matrix sets out who is responsible and accountable for various tasks, who needs to be consulted and who needs to be informed.

**RASCI** stands for:

- **Responsible** = the person or people who do the task.
- **Accountable** = the person who makes sure the task is done well. This should only ever be one person.
- **Supporting** = people who provide support to the person responsible for the task.
- **Consulted** = people who need to be given information about the project or task and who also need to be asked for their opinions (two-way communication).
- **Informed** = people who need to be given information about the project or task (one-way communication).

An extract of a sample RASCI matrix is shown on the next page.

| Task | Responsible | Accountable | Supporting | Consulted | Informed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Drafting the project plan | Project manager | Project manager | M&E officer | Project team members | Project sponsor |
| Reporting to donor | Project manager | Project sponsor | M&E officer | Project team members | Donor |



## Decision point

Your project has passed through several important approval and funding decision points during this phase. Once approval and funding are in place, you are ready to start the detailed preparation. It is important to get approval from the steering committee before moving to the preparation phase and more money, time and resources are invested. You can also use the Quality Standards checklist below to help to decide if you are ready to move to the next project phase.

**Quality Standards checklist**

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for approval and governance phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Are clear procedures in place to investigate allegations of unacceptable conduct by project staff? |
|  | ☐ Do staff know what to do if community members point out that the wrong people have been included in or excluded from any part of the project? |
|  | ☐ Have tasks related to beneficiary accountability been included in the job descriptions of design, monitoring and evaluation (DME) staff, field staff and project staff? |
|  | ☐ Is there a good overall balance of men and women on the team?<br>☐ Are community committees or structures that will be overseeing the project going to include both men and women (including those with disabilities)?<br>☐ Will community committees or structures overseeing the project ensure meaningful participation? |
|  | ☐ Is there agreement between community members and the project team that the communities are expected to participate in the project throughout its lifecycle? |
|  | ☐ Are you working with local churches and other faith groups where they exist, to strengthen and support their role in the community and the project? |

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for approval and governance phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Will you ensure that your staff have at least a basic understanding of what is needed to ensure the protection of all, especially children and the most marginalised and vulnerable adults, from physical, social and psychological harm? |
|  | ☐ Have arrangements been put in place to ensure quality control when working with contractors?<br>☐ Have you put arrangements in place to coordinate with other stakeholders working in the same locations, for example local government, other NGOs, churches? |



**RECAP**

**In this phase, you have learnt that the approval and governance phase provides guidance to help you decide whether or not a project should go ahead, and how the project is going to be managed and funded.**

**You should now be able to:**

- recall the importance of the approval and governance phase for approving, funding, governing and launching projects
- discuss what you need to consider when you look for internal and external funding and when you write a project proposal
- explain the different possibilities for project governance
- explain how agreed limits and a RASCI matrix are used to improve accountability and decision-making.

**REFLECT**

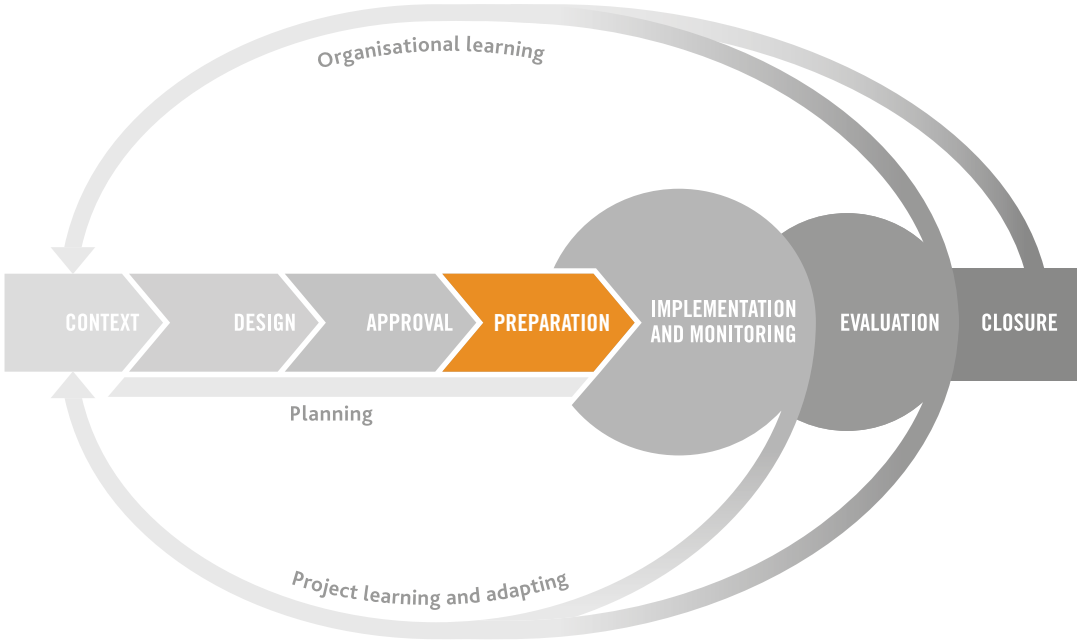
1. How is your project (going to be) funded?
   a. Is this funding enough for what you want to achieve?
   b. Does it fit your organisation's ability to comply with standards required by donors?
2. Does your project have a clear governance structure with agreed limits and clear responsibilities, showing who is accountable for what?
   a. If not, how will improving these things improve the management of your project?

**PRACTISE**

Create a RASCI matrix for a current or new project that you are working on and practise using it to check the progress of tasks. What do you like about the tool? What do you dislike about the tool?

# PHASE 4
# PREPARATION

**You are currently here in the project cycle:**






**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- explain key elements of preparation to include scope and time planning, financial planning, people-related planning, supply chain planning, and monitoring and evaluation planning
- develop planning tools including a work breakdown structure, network diagram, critical path, Gantt chart, cash-flow forecast, communication plan, and M&E plan
- explain the importance of iterative planning, particularly in emergency or conflict settings.

## 4.1 Introduction to preparation

Once you have designed your project, and have secured the funding for it to go ahead, you will need to prepare to implement the project. Many of the tools presented in this phase may need to be completed earlier in the project cycle if required by the donor or steering group. However, each of the tools presented in this phase requires time and investment to complete, so if possible it is best to wait until full approval has been given before preparing the detailed plans. If there has been a lapse of time between the design of the project and when it is due to start, you will need to update your project design and budget to take account of changes that may have happened since you first did this work. You will also need to hire and train any new staff members that are needed to implement the project, and procure the resources (such as computers or vehicles) you need to deliver the project. It can be very helpful to hold a project opening workshop with the project team to make sure your project design is still up to date, and to plan out your activities and how you will deliver and monitor them.

Below we will discuss some tools that are useful for helping you plan to prepare for the implementation of your project, including the schedule or Gantt chart, M&E plan, staff work plans and expenditure forecasts. (You may already have developed some of these tools as part of your funding proposal, as explained above. If so, you will probably need to update them.)

## 4.2 Scope and time planning

A key part of preparation is understanding exactly what your project is going to do (the scope) and estimating how long it will take to reach your goals. The table below shows five stages that can help you decide on the scope and length of your project and then develop a schedule or Gantt chart. All of these stages are explained in more detail in the table below.

| Stage | Process | Why do we do this? | Tool |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Defining the scope | Work out all the activities the project will involve | Work breakdown structure |
| 2 | Ordering the activities | Put activities into the order in which they must be completed | Network diagram |
| 3 | Estimating activity costs | Work out the money, people and equipment you have available | (No specific tool) |
| 4 | Estimating activity length | Work out how long each activity will take | Critical path |
| 5 | Schedule development | Develop a written plan for when each activity will be completed | Gantt chart |

## STAGE 1 Defining the scope

The scope of the project has two components:

- the outputs the project will deliver
- the work needed to deliver these outputs.

Project management tools produced during the design, and approval and governance phases tend to contain an outline of the project outputs and activities but little about the work needed to deliver these. Ideally the scope will have been agreed with stakeholders, and put in writing in a proposal and project charter, but this will not give enough detail for the team to be able to implement the project.

The aim of defining the scope of the project is to produce a list of all the activities the project must complete. This list must include those activities needed to deliver the project's outputs (the direct work) and all those activities needed to manage the project and its staff and resources (the indirect work).

The main tool used to define the scope is the **work breakdown structure**. This gives more detail (a breakdown) about the work you will do. The amount of detail needed will depend on how complex the project is, and how experienced the team doing the work are. The first level of breakdown is called a work package. Some of the work packages might correspond to outputs in the logframe and others to indirect work areas such as logistics.

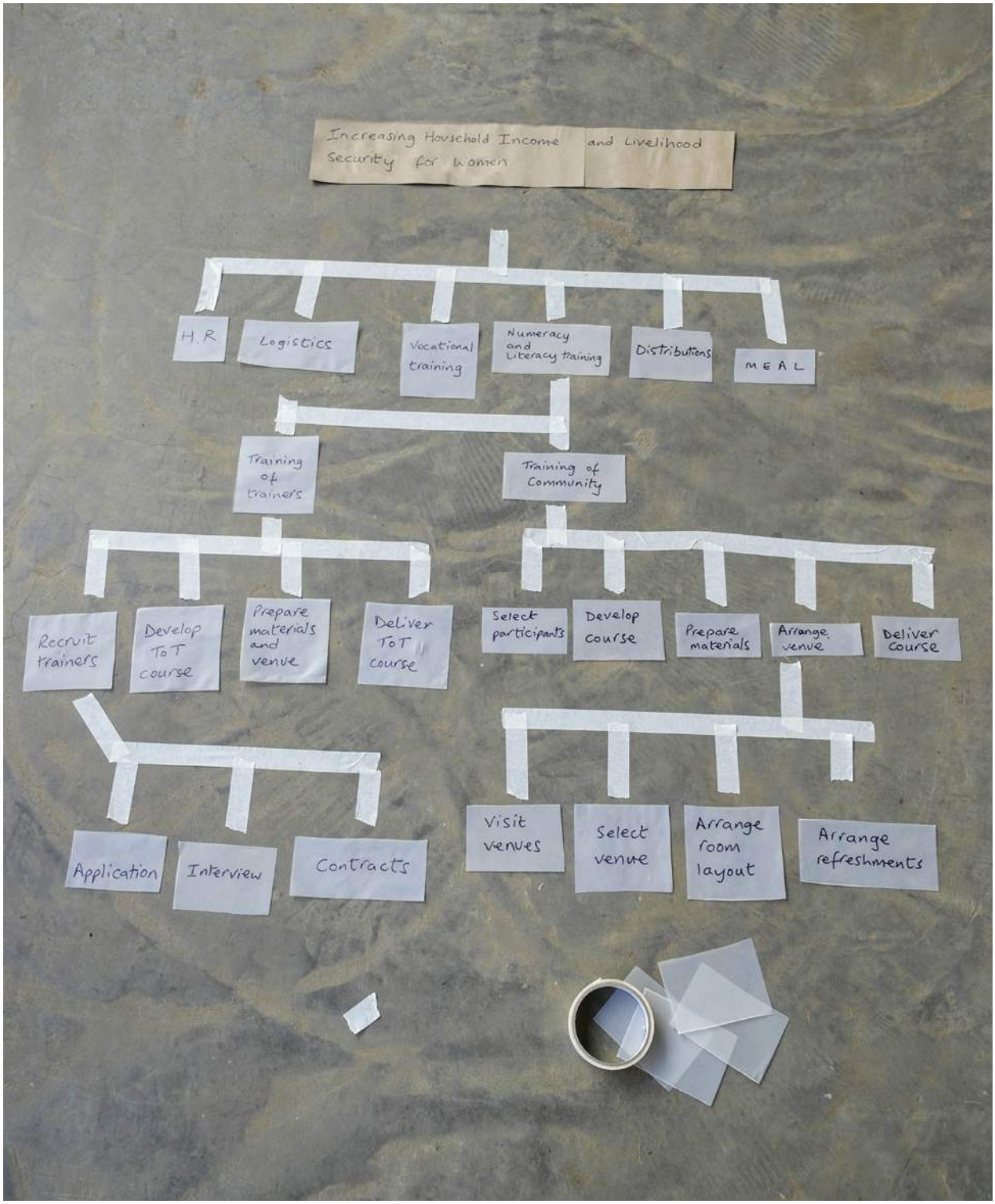
It is important to involve stakeholders in producing the work breakdown structure, especially those who will actually be doing the work, to make sure no part of the work is missed.

Work breakdown structures can be written as a diagram or as a list. Both are just as good, and the project team can use whichever they find most helpful.

## Project scenario example

A work breakdown structure diagram for the project scenario is shown in diagram 34 below, followed by a work breakdown structure list. To keep it simple and easy to understand, only one of the work packages has been given in detail and not all tasks are included.

Diagram 34 **Work breakdown structure**



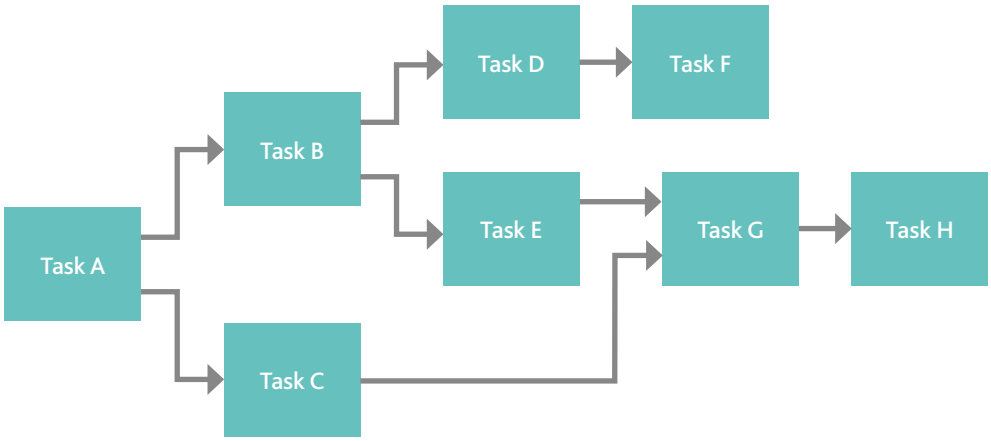
Work breakdown structure list:

1 Increasing household income and livelihood security for women in the project scenario
- 2.1 HR
- 2.2 Logistics
- 2.3 Vocational training
- 2.4 Numeracy and literacy training
  - 2.4.1 Training of trainers
    - 2.4.1.1 Recruit trainers
      - 2.4.1.1.1 Application
      - 2.4.1.1.2 Interview
      - 2.4.1.1.3 Contracts
    - 2.4.1.2 Develop Training of Trainers course
    - 2.4.1.3 Prepare materials and venue
    - 2.4.1.4 Deliver Training of Trainers course
  - 2.4.2 Training of community
- 2.5 Distributions
- 2.6 MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning)

## STAGE 2 Ordering the activities

Once you have the full list of project activities, with the right amount of detail for the project, you need to start putting your activities into the right order (sequencing). A network diagram is used to show how different activities depend on and relate to each other. It shows activities that can be completed at any time, and those that must follow on from another activity.

Diagram 35 **Network diagram example**

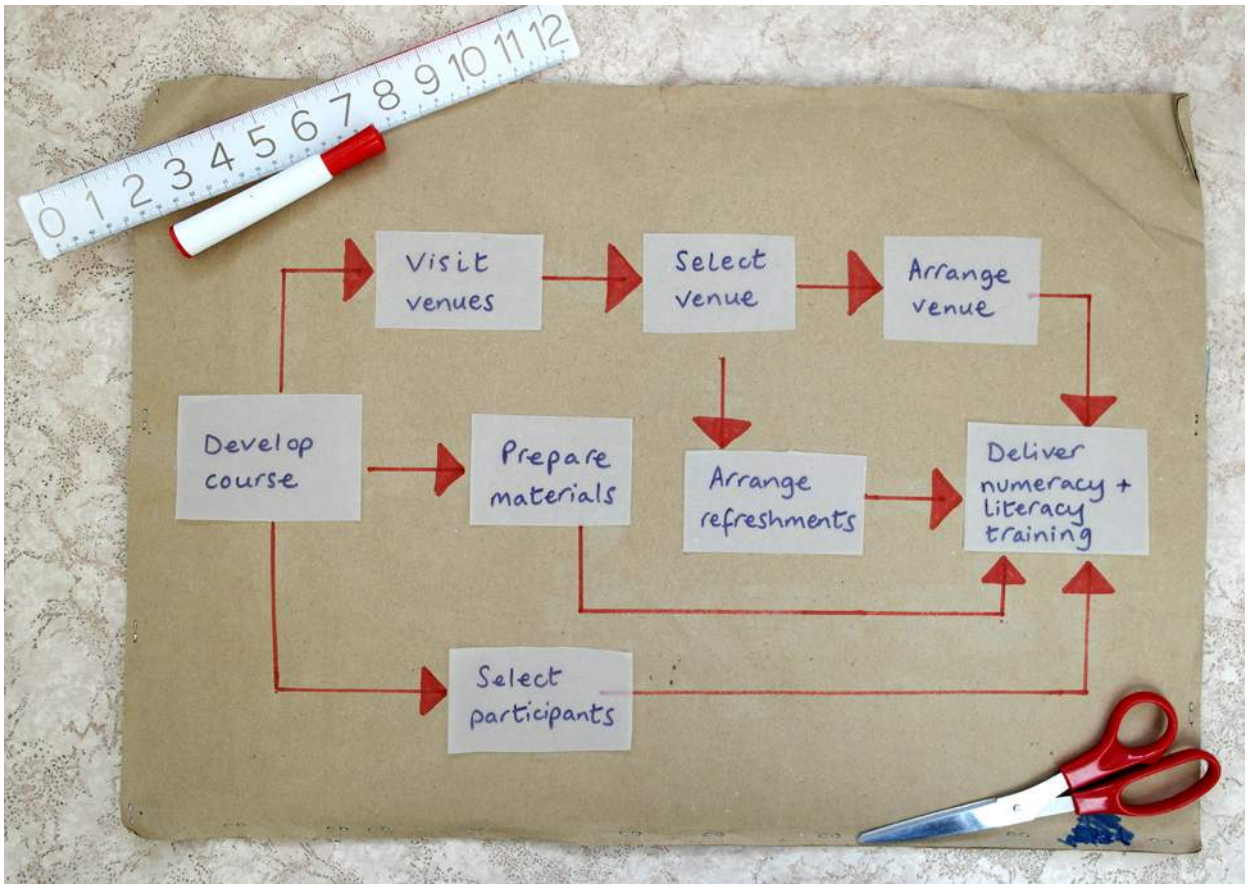



Tasks B and C are independent of each other: they can be completed in any order, or at the same time. However, Task D is dependent on Task B being completed first.

## Project scenario example

Diagram 36 shows a network diagram for a section of the project scenario.

Diagram 36 **Network diagram**




PREPARATION

### STAGE 3 Estimating activity costs

There is no specific tool for this, but it is important to estimate the resources you have available before you start to estimate how long a task might take.

For example, the task 'dig hole' might take a person three days. If two people are available, the task might take less time, but it wouldn't necessarily take half the time. If a mechanical digger was available, the task might only take a couple of hours.

### STAGE 4 Estimating activity length

Once you know what resources you have, you can estimate the time needed for each task and add it to the network diagram (see diagram 37 on the next page).

You are now ready to work out the critical path, which refers to the smallest number of days in which you can complete a project or activity. To work out your critical path, add together the days needed for each route from start to end in your network diagram. The longest pathway is called your 'critical pathway'. For example, in the project scenario example on the next page, the critical path, shown with thick arrows, is the longest route through the diagram: it takes 20 days to develop the course and 10 days to prepare the materials and 20 days to deliver the course, a total of 50 days. In contrast, it only takes a total of 43.5 days to develop the course, visit and arrange the venue and then deliver the training, and only a total of 43 days to develop the course, then select participants and then deliver the

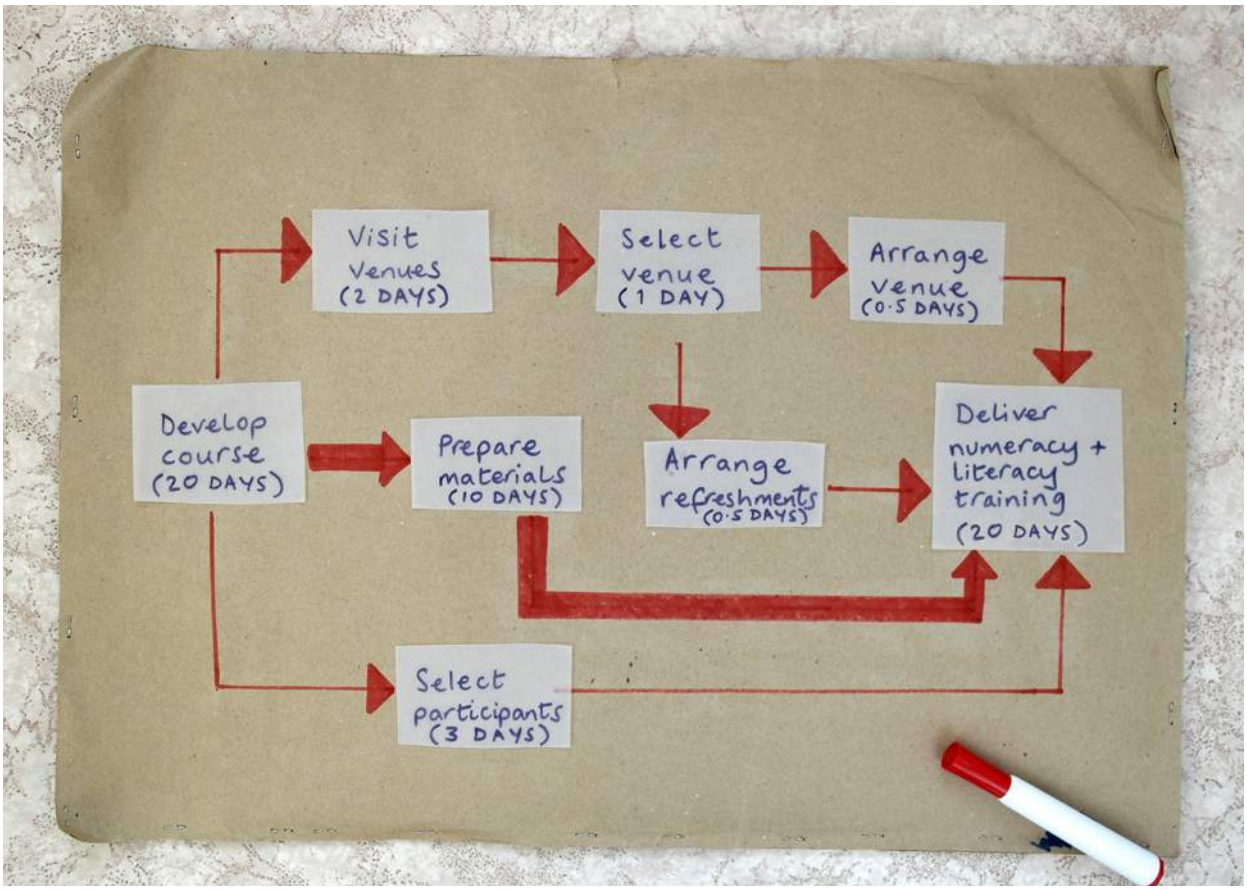
training. There are 57 days of work in total, but after the course has been developed, some of the tasks can be completed at the same time. The critical path is the minimum time the activity will take, which in this case in 50 days (developing the course, preparing the materials and delivering the training). If there are delays on your critical path, it will delay the whole project or activity.

You will probably have estimated the overall length of your project before it was approved. If you have funding from a donor, this will be for a specific timescale. Make sure that the critical path is less than the total length of time that was approved for your project. If the critical path you estimate is more than the total length of time allowed for your project, you might need to cut some activities or add in extra resources to speed up activities.

### Project scenario example

Diagram 37 shows a network diagram with a critical path for a section of the project scenario. You can see that the critical path for this activity is 50 days long.

Diagram 37 **Network diagram critical path**




PREPARATION

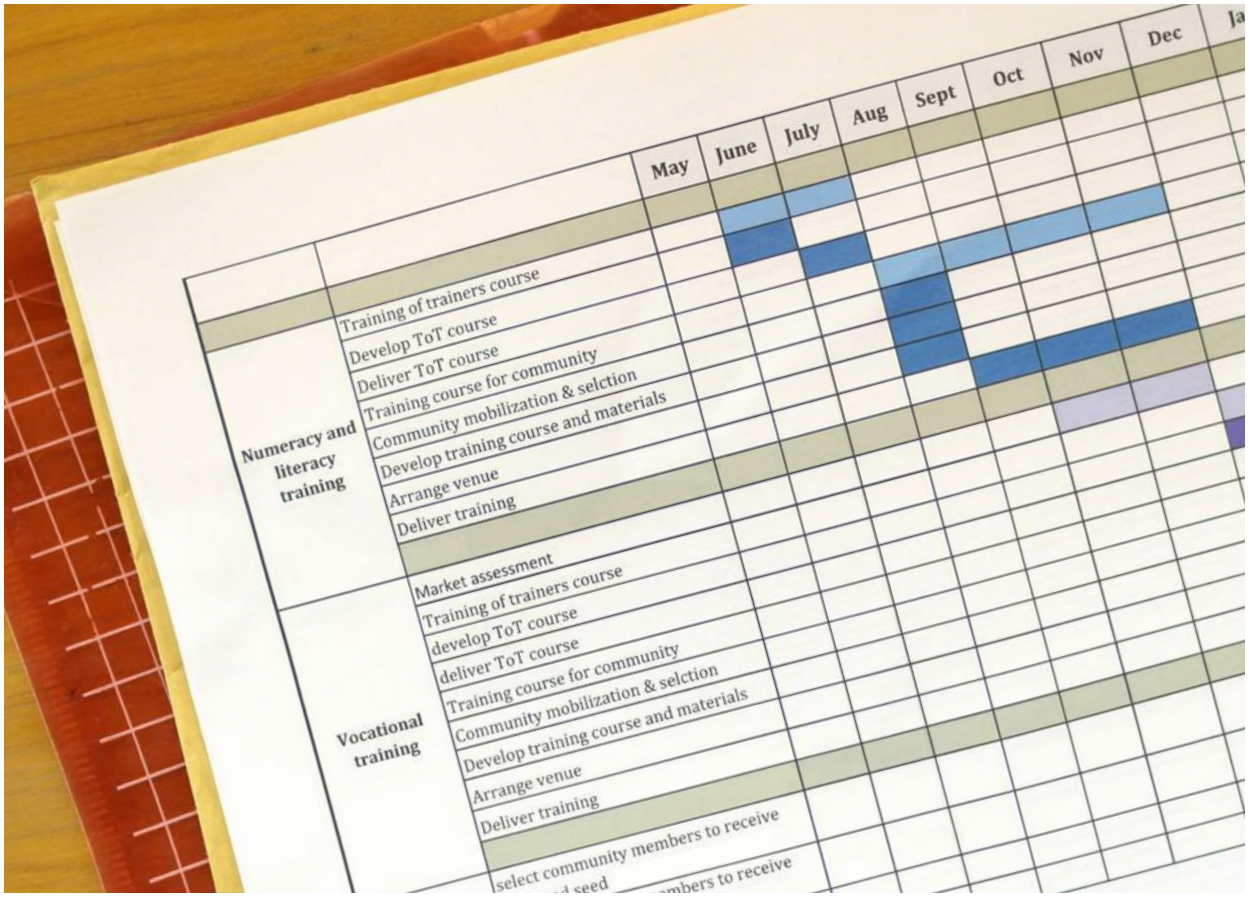
## STAGE 5 Schedule development

Once you have mapped out your network diagram for the entire project, you can transfer the information onto a schedule. The schedule provides a timeline of when the project activities will take place. The most common format for the schedule is a Gantt chart. The purpose of the schedule is to make sure that the project can be delivered in the planned timeframe, to ensure that activities happen in the right order, and to plan around key events such as a rainy season. The schedule will also help you plan out your budget, your cash flow (how much money will be entering and leaving the bank account) and expenditure forecasts, and your staff plans. Once you start to implement the project, the schedule is also a good monitoring tool for checking whether the project is on track.

### Project scenario example

Diagram 38 below is an extract from the Gantt chart for our project scenario. The diagram only shows the activities related to the literacy and numeracy training, but the full Gantt chart will have all activities included. This is a long project so the chart is divided into months. If your project lasts between three and six months, it would be helpful for your Gantt chart to be divided into weeks instead. It's also helpful to include things such as the rainy season or long holidays. So, as you work your way down your list of activities/tasks, you can avoid planning things during those important dates.

Diagram 38 **Gantt chart**




## 4.3 Financial planning

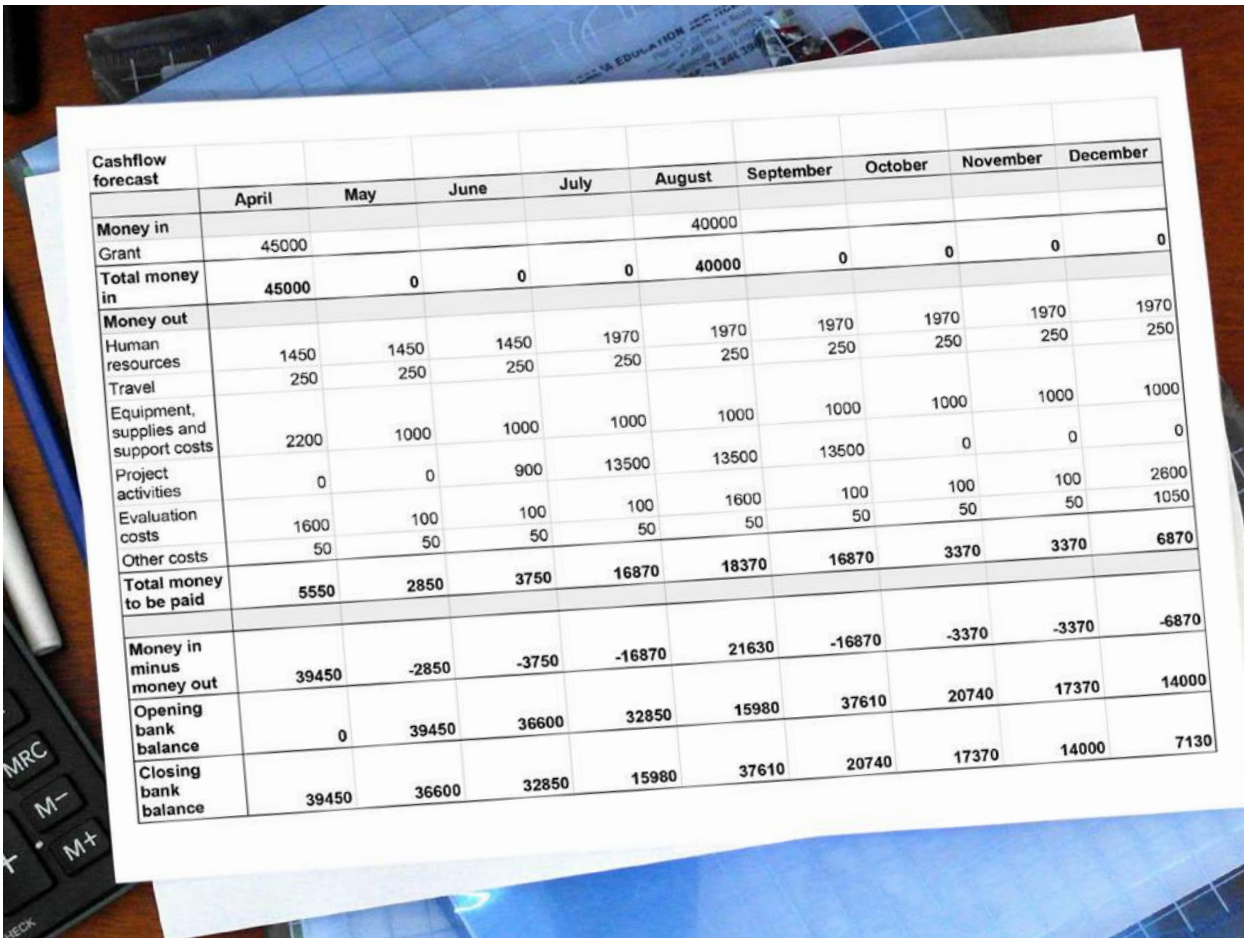
As part of your preparation for implementing the project, you will want to plan how much money you will need to spend each month to deliver the project. This is called an expenditure forecast. You will also need to make sure that you have enough money coming in to cover your expenses each month. This is called a cash-flow forecast. It is common for small organisations to have very tight cash flow. If you do not have large reserves to act as a safety net in case there are sudden drops or delays in income or sudden increases in expenditure, it is important to make sure that your donors pay you in advance for project expenditure. You should plan to track your actual income and expenditure against the cash-flow forecast and expenditure forecast on a monthly basis. This way you will know in advance when you might be short of money, and can take steps to help this situation. This might include spreading large costs over several months or arranging an overdraft (an amount of money that a customer with a bank account is temporarily allowed to owe to the bank).

To complete a cash-flow forecast you can use a template like the one below. Calculate how much money you will receive and when you will receive it and add this information to the 'Total money in' row. Donors often provide funds in instalments, rather than all the funds right at the start. Next, for each budget line calculate how much you will spend each month. The closing bank balance will be the amount of money you will have left in the bank at the end of the month. If this number is negative then you have a cash flow problem and you will either need to negotiate an earlier payment from the donor or think through how you will pay for activities in advance. If cash flow is particularly tight you may find it helpful to make a weekly cash-flow forecast.

### Project scenario example

Diagram 39 below shows the cash-flow forecast for the project scenario.

Diagram 39 **Cash-flow forecast**



| Cashflow forecast | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Money in** | | | | | 40000 | | | | |
| Grant | 45000 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total money in** | **45000** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **40000** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| **Money out** | | | | | | | | | |
| Human resources | 1450 | 1450 | 1450 | 1970 | 1970 | 1970 | 1970 | 1970 | 1970 |
| Travel | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| Equipment, supplies and support costs | 2200 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| Project activities | 0 | 0 | 900 | 13500 | 13500 | 13500 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Evaluation costs | 1600 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 1600 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 2600 |
| Other costs | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 1050 |
| **Total money to be paid** | **5550** | **2850** | **3750** | **16870** | **18370** | **16870** | **3370** | **3370** | **6870** |
| **Money in minus money out** | **39450** | **-2850** | **-3750** | **-16870** | **21630** | **-16870** | **-3370** | **-3370** | **-6870** |
| **Opening bank balance** | **0** | **39450** | **36600** | **32850** | **15980** | **37610** | **20740** | **17370** | **14000** |
| **Closing bank balance** | **39450** | **36600** | **32850** | **15980** | **37610** | **20740** | **17370** | **14000** | **7130** |

## 4.4 People-related plans

During the preparation phase it is useful to develop plans that are about project staff and other project stakeholders. These include communication plans, which can be based on the RASCI matrix developed during the approval and governance phase (see Section 3.3, page 86).

The communication plan sets out who you will communicate with, how, when and about what. It might be laid out like the example in the table on the next page.

| Communication | Purpose/Why | Audience | Who | How | How often |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project update: budget monitoring, schedule and completion of activities | To update the project board and ask for a decision if agreed limits are likely to be exceeded | Project board | Project manager | Email with full report and updated plan attached | Weekly |
| Project launch | To tell all stakeholders that the project is starting | All project stakeholders | Project manager | Notice in local paper<br>Posters on community buildings | Once |

Other plans related to staff might include:

- **Recruitment plans** to ensure that the project has enough staff, with the right skills, to carry out project activities. Recruitment plans might include job descriptions, which set out the skills and experience someone would need to do that role and the tasks the person will be expected to do.
- **Staff work plans.** The overall schedule can be broken down into individual staff work plans. This will help staff to know what they are supposed to be doing each month to deliver the project. It will also help you make sure that the project plan is realistic in terms of what individual staff members can deliver each month, and that their time is well used. For example, it might make sure they do not have too many tasks one month and nothing to do the next month. Work plans help you plan working hours and holidays.

If there are human resources staff (the staff who look after recruitment) they might be able to support and advise the project manager on people-related planning.



## 4.5 Supply chain planning

Supply chain management refers to the things you need to do to get (procure) resources, the logistics you will need to consider to transport and store them, and how to manage resources. Supply chain planning is extremely important. To ensure that there is no delay in being able to implement the project activities, it is critical that the resources needed are available in good time. You cannot plan to buy (procure) resources at the same time as you undertake the activities – they need to be available in advance.

It is therefore important to plan carefully when and how you buy goods and services, to make sure that the process is fair and that the supplier you choose gives the best value for money. The documentation of supply chain processes needs to be filed for transparency and compliance purposes in line with your donors' organisational policies and checked accordingly in line with your organisational standards. If you have to pay large sums for goods or services, there may be so-called competition rules that apply (for example the minimum number of quotes that you should obtain), but even for small sums it is good practice to get a number of quotes and technical proposals, and consider which offers the best value. You should draw up a plan with all the goods or services you need, the process you will use to buy them, and the timescale involved.

Logistics plans will include plans for transporting resources from where they are bought to where they are needed and plans for storing them. This will include the amount of resources that should be kept in stock, and your plans for keeping track of your stock and for storing it properly.

Assets are items of equipment bought with project resources (for example, laptops). Different organisations and donors will have different definitions of assets, but most definitions relate to the value and age of the item. It is important to agree the definition of assets at the start of a project,

plan to monitor assets (who has them, are they working well etc) and agree what happens to them at the end of the project. Many donors will expect assets to be returned to the donor. You may need to hold an Asset Register listing the resources purchased by project funds. The list should show date of purchase, description of the item, who is responsible for it and where it is.

In some organisations, logistics staff will be responsible for the activities in this section, but the project manager will need to liaise closely with them to ensure the plans fit the project needs.

## 4.6 M&E plan

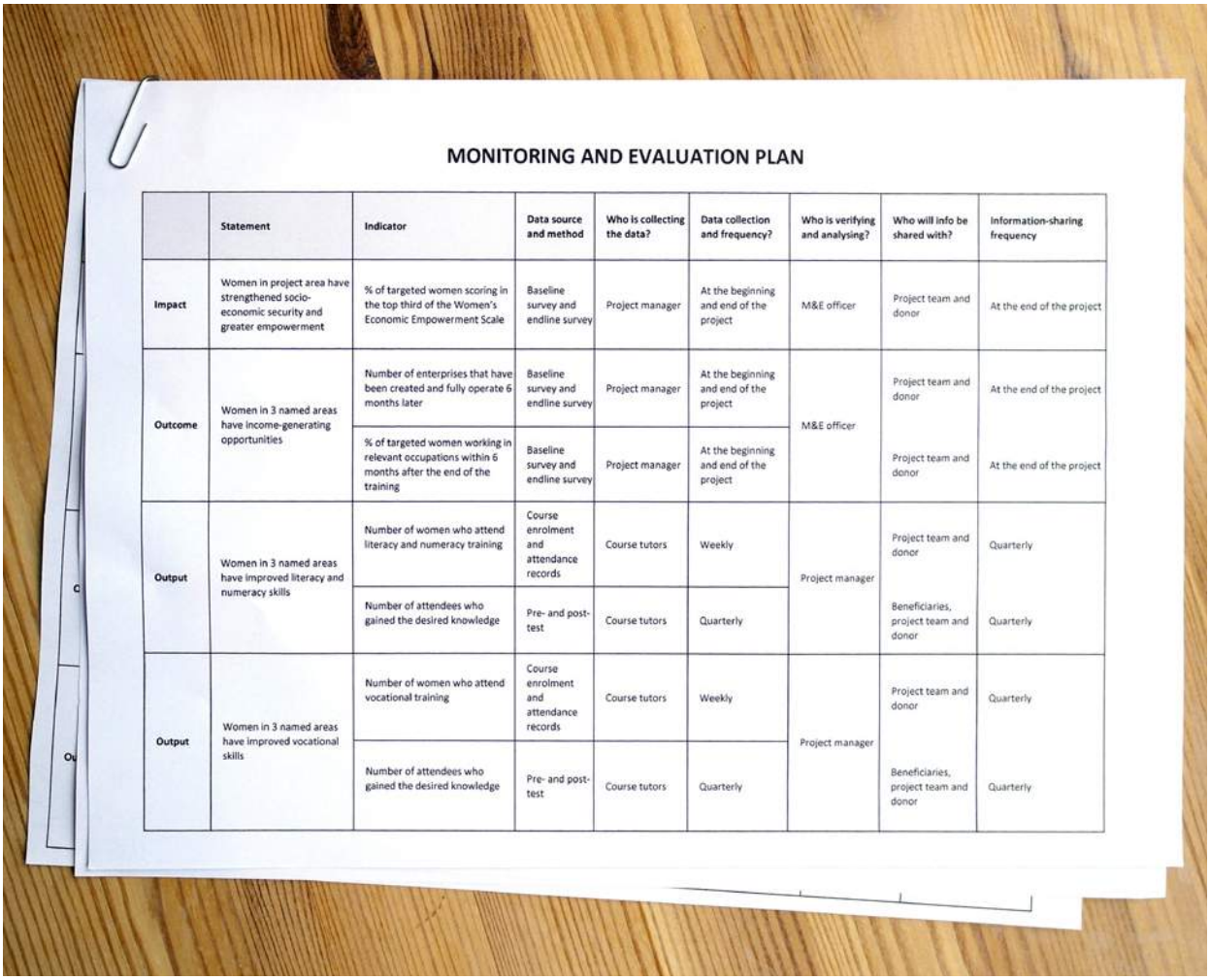
Another really important tool to develop during the preparation phase is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan. The M&E plan helps you to track and assess the results of the project throughout its life. Your M&E plan takes the indicators from the logframe and plans out how they are going to be measured, how frequently, and by whom. You can also include extra indicators that are not in the logframe.

The M&E plan will help staff to know what data they need to be gathering, how often, who is going to examine the data and how, and how this analysis will be used to improve the project and to report to donors and other stakeholders.

### Project scenario example

The M&E plan developed for the project scenario is in diagram 40 below.

Diagram 40 **M&E plan**



MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

| | Statement | Indicator | Data source and method | Who is collecting the data? | Data collection and frequency? | Who is verifying and analysing? | Who will info be shared with? | Information-sharing frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impact | Women in project area have strengthened socio-economic security and greater empowerment | % of targeted women scoring in the top third of the Women's Economic Empowerment Scale | Baseline survey and endline survey | Project manager | At the beginning and end of the project | M&E officer | Project team and donor | At the end of the project |
| Outcome | Women in 3 named areas have income-generating opportunities | Number of enterprises that have been created and fully operate 6 months later | Baseline survey and endline survey | Project manager | At the beginning and end of the project | M&E officer | Project team and donor | At the end of the project |
| | | % of targeted women working in relevant occupations within 6 months after the end of the training | Baseline survey and endline survey | Project manager | At the beginning and end of the project | | Project team and donor | At the end of the project |
| Output | Women in 3 named areas have improved literacy and numeracy skills | Number of women who attend literacy and numeracy training | Course enrolment and attendance records | Course tutors | Weekly | Project manager | Project team and donor | Quarterly |
| | | Number of attendees who gained the desired knowledge | Pre- and post-test | Course tutors | Quarterly | | Beneficiaries, project team and donor | Quarterly |
| Output | Women in 3 named areas have improved vocational skills | Number of women who attend vocational training | Course enrolment and attendance records | Course tutors | Weekly | Project manager | Project team and donor | Quarterly |
| | | Number of attendees who gained the desired knowledge | Pre- and post-test | Course tutors | Quarterly | | Beneficiaries, project team and donor | Quarterly |

Linked to the M&E plan, you might also consider using:

- a log (or diary) where you record lessons learnt throughout the project
- an indicator tracker table showing each indicator, target and the project progress to date.

These tools are explained in more detail in Section 5.

## 4.7 Risk response planning

In Section 2.6 (page 69) we discussed the first three stages in risk management:

- identification
- assessment
- response planning.

During the preparation phase it is important to return to your risk register to check that all risks are still current, any new risks have been identified and assessed, and responses have been planned. Make sure it is clear who is responsible for each risk response (identified on your risk register as the risk response owner). It is important to review the risk response plans in detail to ensure that all of the equipment, people and procedures are in place to fulfil the plan.



## 4.8 Planning for beneficiary feedback

It is very important to encourage beneficiaries to give feedback. Plan how you will collect this feedback. You should ask the community how they would like to give feedback, and set up a complaints and feedback mechanism that is safe and easy for everyone to use. You might use complaints forms, a suggestions box, verbal complaints during particular office hours, community meetings, an email address or toll-free telephone number, or ideally a combination of options that work for different types of beneficiaries, considering those with particular vulnerabilities such as a disability. You should also consider beneficiaries' literacy levels to determine appropriate ways of giving feedback.

## 4.9 Iterative or rolling wave planning

In most projects, it will not be possible to plan every detail of the project before beginning implementation. Planning will continue to happen throughout the project. You will have an overall project plan and you can then plan each stage of the project in more detail. For example, every six months you might plan for the next six months. Projects that will operate in fast-changing environments, such as conflict and emergency settings, might want to consider iterative planning. This basically means that an outline plan is developed at the start of the project, but the detail is added to the plan in waves to ensure that the project can adapt to rapid changes on the ground. For example:

- A project working in a refugee camp where the population size is increasing might plan to give out food to a certain percentage of the population during the first three months, but also have the flexibility to revise timelines and targets every fortnight to make sure those who are in greatest need are being reached.
- A project responding to a humanitarian crisis may be giving out cash grants but, when they learn that food prices are rising at the market and the cash grants are no longer allowing beneficiaries to buy what they need, they may decide to distribute food instead of cash.

## 4.10 Organising your documents

It is helpful to have a folder where you keep the final versions of all of the project documents so that everyone involved in the project knows where to find the most up-to-date versions.

The documents in the folder should include:

- the problem analysis
- the Theory of Change
- the logframe
- the budget
- the schedule (Gantt chart)
- the risk register
- the agreed limits (tolerances)
- the agreed roles and responsibilities
- the cash-flow forecast
- the supply chain plans
- the M&E plan.

## 4.11 Project launch

It is generally good practice to communicate the start of the project to all stakeholders, unless the nature of the project is such that a formal announcement would put project staff or beneficiaries at risk. This could be done by:

- putting notices in local media
- holding a meeting
- holding a launch party.

### Decision point

The decision point at the end of the preparation phase comes when you look at whether you have all the plans in place, at the correct level of detail, to be able to start carrying out your project. The Quality Standards checklist on the next page is a useful tool to help you to check if you are ready to move to the next project phase, implementation.

## Quality Standards checklist

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for preparation phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Do your organisational systems and processes reduce as much as possible the risk of fraud, bribery and other forms of unacceptable staff conduct through the lifecycle of the project?<br>☐ Who will be collecting learning about staff conduct during the implementation of the project? |
|  | ☐ Have the communities been given enough time to give feedback on provisional beneficiary lists? |
|  | ☐ Have you agreed with the different groups within a community how they would like to give feedback to the staff during the project?<br>☐ Have you established an appropriate mechanism to receive feedback from beneficiaries and the wider community, which reflects the preferences of the community, for example a comments box or an office drop-in time?<br>☐ Have you ensured communities have safe access to the feedback mechanism?<br>☐ Have you agreed with the community what type of information about the organisation, your standards, project plans, progress reports and feedback procedures will be made publicly available?<br>☐ Is the whole community aware of the feedback mechanism and how to access it? |
|  | ☐ Is the gender of staff appropriate to the specific activities that need to be carried out, recognising that some roles are only appropriate for men and some for women?<br>☐ Will the structures in place to invite ongoing participation from the community, such as beneficiary committees, public meetings, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, encourage and facilitate the participation of women and children as well as men?<br>☐ Have you set aside budget for reasonable accommodation to support people with disabilities to participate in the project? |
|  | ☐ If relevant, is there an exit strategy for when the project has been completed and has it been communicated to the affected communities? |
|  | ☐ Have you assessed the knowledge and skills of the project staff concerning protection and its key elements? If the assessment highlights a need for internal training and/or capacity strengthening, plan and budget for it.<br>☐ Have you ensured project plans reflect a commitment to the protection of all from physical, social and psychological harm, especially children and the most marginalised and vulnerable adults?<br>☐ Have you ensured specific risks to protection are managed and reduced where possible?<br>☐ Ensure activities are properly supported with time, staff and resources. |
|  | ☐ Have you planned recruitment, procurement and so on to ensure the response is timely? |

## RECAP

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of preparing properly to implement your project and have been introduced to a range of planning tools.**

**You should now be able to:**

- explain key elements of preparation to include: scope and time planning, financial planning, people-related planning, supply chain planning, and monitoring and evaluation planning
- develop planning tools including a work breakdown structure, network diagram, critical path, Gantt chart, cash-flow forecast, communication plan, and M&E plan
- explain the importance of iterative planning, particularly in emergency or conflict settings.

## REFLECT

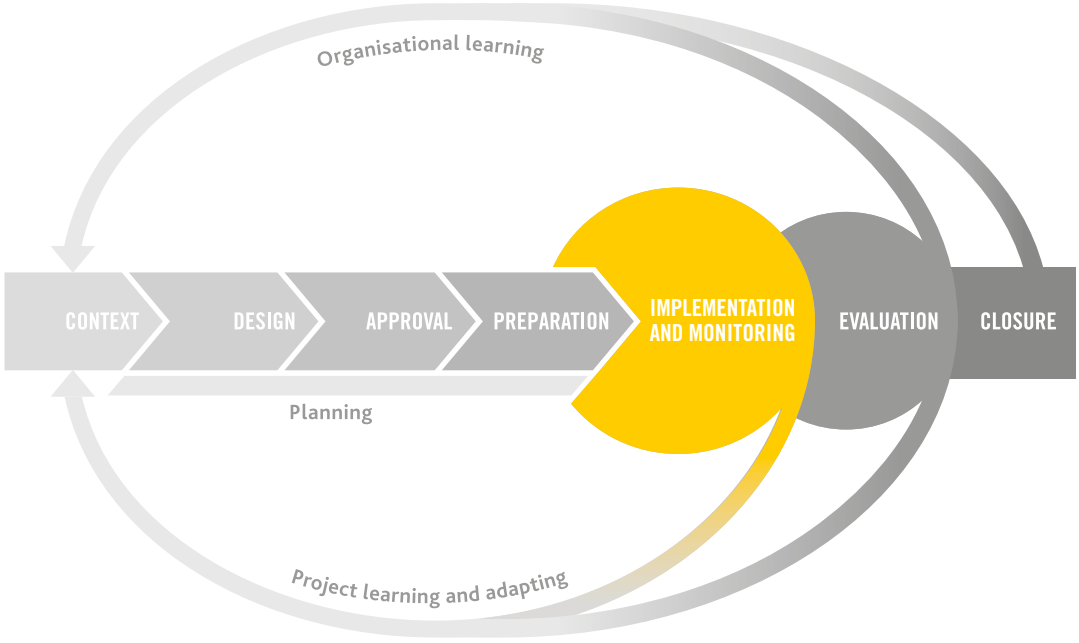
1. Which of the tools listed above do you already use and when?
2. Which other tools might improve the way your project is managed?
3. Why can't you just use your logframe as a plan to implement your project?
4. Are you working in a situation where iterative planning would be beneficial?

## PRACTISE

1. Practise creating a work breakdown structure for a current task you have. Can you order the activities to create a network diagram? Can you determine the critical path?
2. Show your work to someone in your team to get their feedback and tell them what you liked and what you didn't like about the tool.

# PHASE 5
# IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

**You are currently here in the project cycle:**




**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- explain the importance of monitoring throughout the implementation of the project: checking implementation against the planned cost, time and scope, and measuring progress towards the changes the project is meant to bring about
- use financial and narrative reports to remain accountable to donors and project participants
- understand the need to use both tools and soft skills to manage people as you implement the project
- develop logs to track issues and record lessons.

# 5.1 Introduction to implementation and monitoring

Implementation and monitoring is the project phase where the designs and plans become a reality, and the project work is completed. Implementation will take up most of the project time. Depending on the project, the project manager might spend considerable time carrying out actual project tasks, or might spend more time managing those who are doing the work. In this guide we have included monitoring and implementation in the same phase, to make it clear that it is important to monitor throughout the implementation phase.

The main responsibilities of the project manager during implementation are to:

- manage the triple constraint of cost, time and scope
- manage risk
- manage stakeholders.

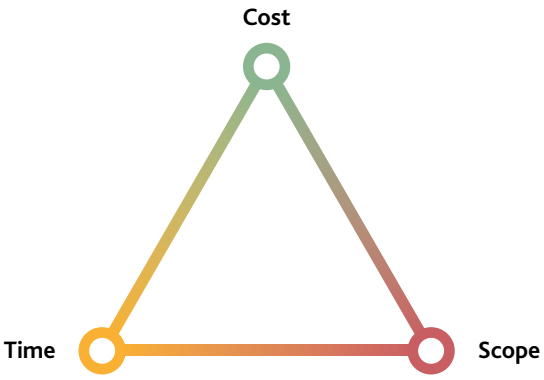
In this section we will look at useful tools to help the project manager to do this.

## Managing implementation in stages

The implementation and monitoring phase may be split into multiple stages. There may be additional decision points put in place between the different stages so that the steering group can determine if the project is ready to move to the next stage. For example, there may be an initial piloting stage to test the concept before approval is given to scale up the project activities. Or in longer, more complex projects where it is not possible to plan the whole project in detail before beginning, the project may be broken up into smaller periods of time. Portions of project time can be planned and approved as the project progresses.

# 5.2 The triple constraint in implementation and monitoring

Diagram 41 **The triple constraint**




A large part of the project manager's role during implementation is to monitor progress against the triple constraint of cost, time and scope. This means that they will need to track the progress against the project plan and make sure that the project is delivering activities on time and within budget.

Where there is a difference between the planned and actual situations (a variance), the project manager will need to consider if changes could be made to bring the project back on track. There will be some decisions that the project manager can make independently to bring the project back on track and there will be some situations where he or she will need to seek approval from the steering group, as covered in the approval and governance phase (page 83).

Below we will present three tools to help the project manager to manage the triple constraint.

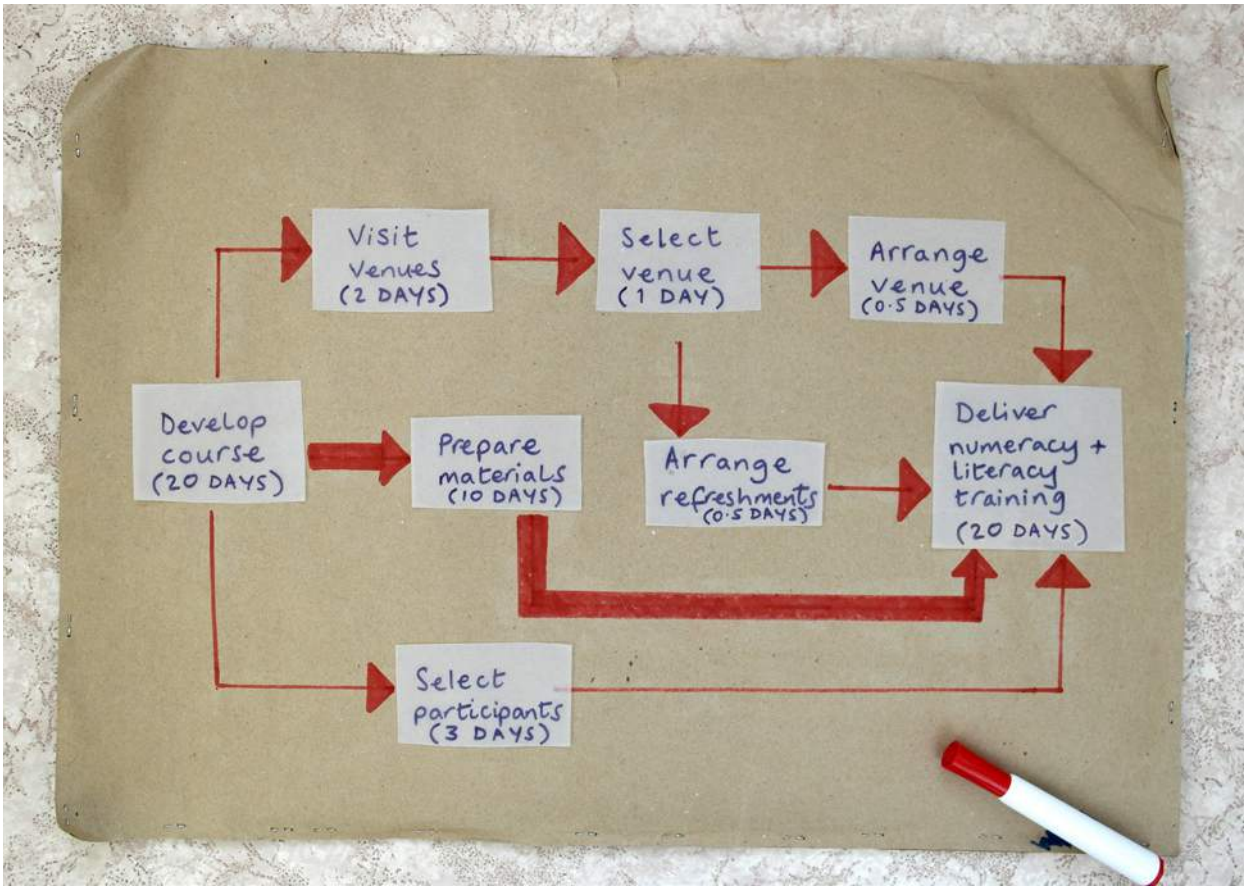
## Monitoring time: monitoring activities

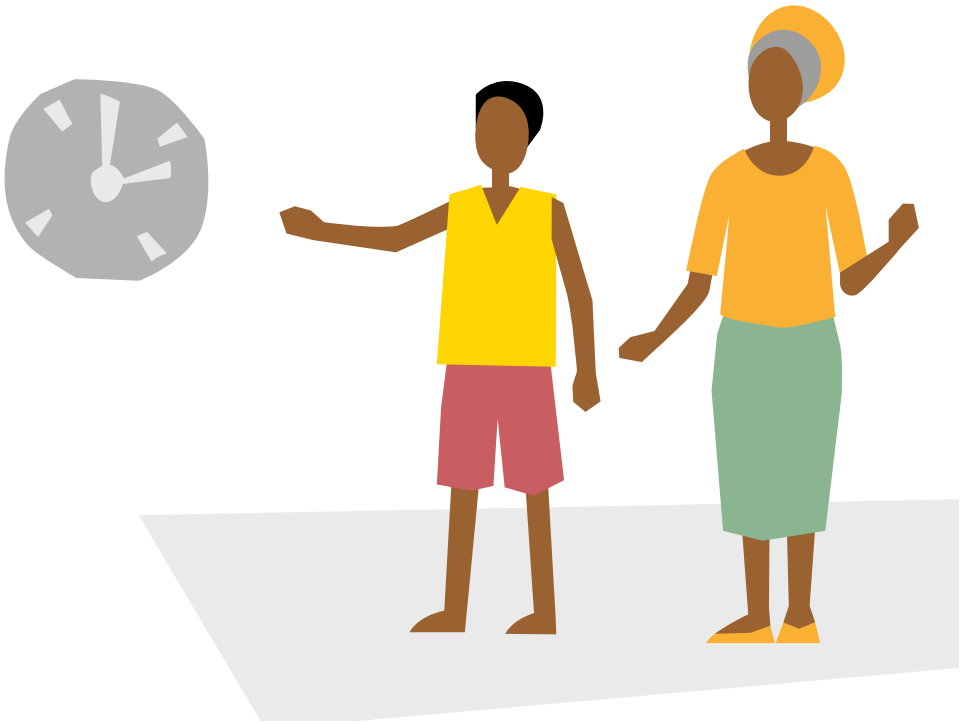
In Section 4.2 (page 92) you developed your work breakdown structure, identified your critical path and developed your Gantt chart. During implementation you should track project progress against the Gantt chart to ensure that activities are happening on time and you are holding the right people to account for completion of activities. The Gantt chart is a really helpful tool to keep project activities on track when it is used daily and revised to keep the information up to date.

You need to keep a very close eye on the critical path. For example, in the project scenario for the training activity we outlined the critical path for the training activity as below. We therefore need to keep a very close eye on developing the materials for the training because if this gets delayed, the completion of the activity will be delayed as well.

### Project scenario example

Diagram 42 **Network diagram critical path**





## Monitoring scope: indicator tracker

The M&E plan includes indicators to allow the project manager to monitor progress towards achieving the outputs, outcomes and impact in the logframe. This includes monitoring assumptions. It is no good getting to the end of a project and realising that the activities were delivered as planned, but the assumptions were flawed, and so no real change has happened. The M&E plan will detail the data collection tools that will be used to monitor the indicators. Refer back to page 17 to remind yourself of how to use the different data collection tools.

To help you to closely monitor your indicators, an indicator tracker is a useful tool. Your project can use a spreadsheet or a software programme to help you understand if your project is on track to achieve its impact, outcome and outputs. This is called an indicator tracker.

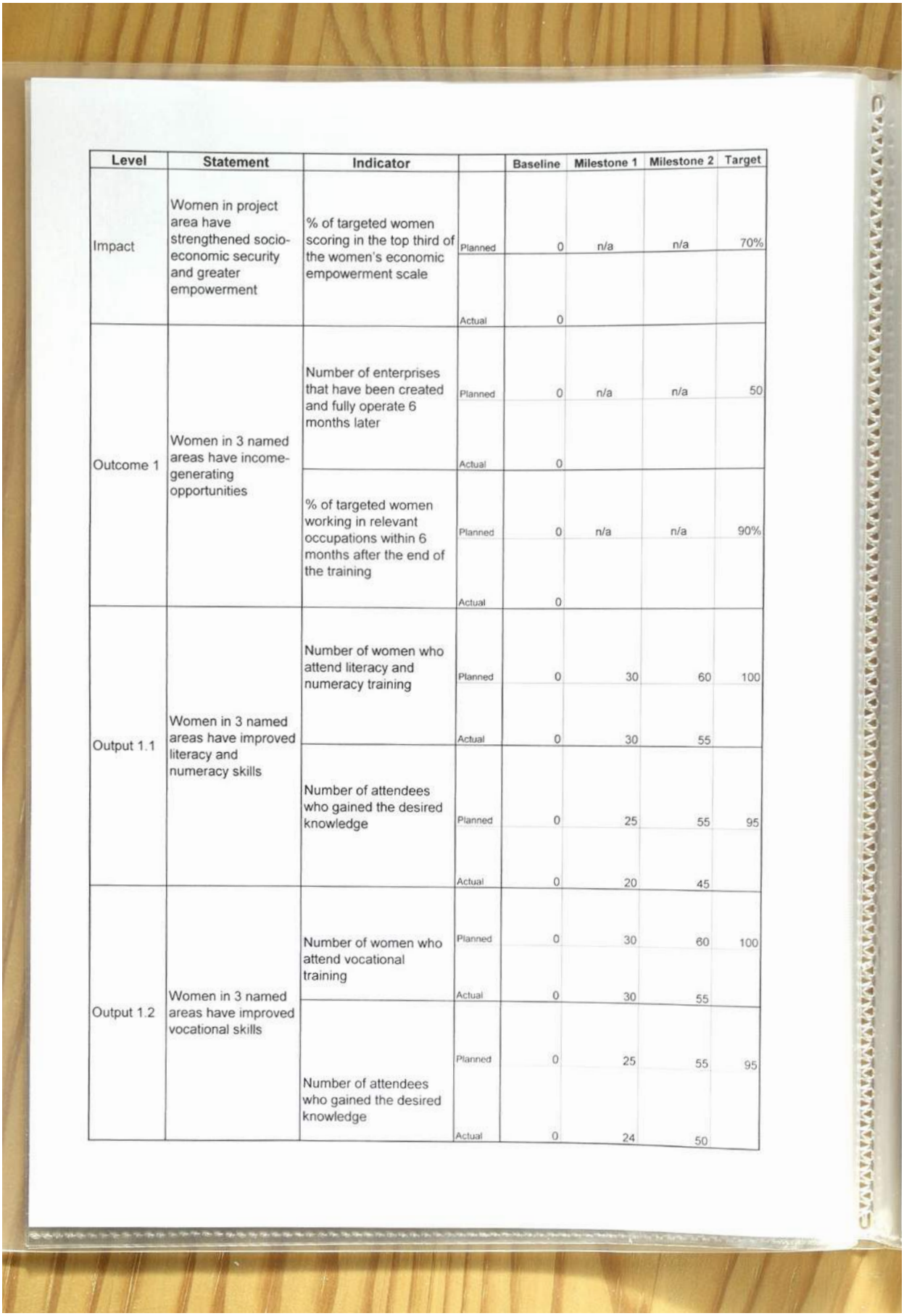
A baseline is the starting point of each indicator and this information must be collected at the beginning of implementation so that it is possible to track how much change the project has made.

### Project scenario example

In diagram 43 (page 111) there is an extract from an example indicator tracker for our project scenario. This shows the impact, outcome, one of the outputs and related activities, as well as key indicators for tracking these against a baseline, milestones and targets.

Looking at this example, you can see that the project had just passed the second milestone. If we look at the outputs, we can see that the number of women attending the literacy and numeracy training and the vocational training has been slightly lower than planned. The desired knowledge gained from the workshops is also slightly less than what the project had planned. The project team might consider running more workshops to ensure targets are met, and follow up workshops with the women, who may need further input to gain the desired knowledge.

Diagram 43 **Indicator tracker**



| Level | Statement | Indicator | | Baseline | Milestone 1 | Milestone 2 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impact | Women in project area have strengthened socio-economic security and greater empowerment | % of targeted women scoring in the top third of the women's economic empowerment scale | Planned | 0 | n/a | n/a | 70% |
| | | | Actual | 0 | | | |
| Outcome 1 | Women in 3 named areas have income-generating opportunities | Number of enterprises that have been created and fully operate 6 months later | Planned | 0 | n/a | n/a | 50 |
| | | | Actual | 0 | | | |
| | | % of targeted women working in relevant occupations within 6 months after the end of the training | Planned | 0 | n/a | n/a | 90% |
| | | | Actual | 0 | | | |
| Output 1.1 | Women in 3 named areas have improved literacy and numeracy skills | Number of women who attend literacy and numeracy training | Planned | 0 | 30 | 60 | 100 |
| | | | Actual | 0 | 30 | 55 | |
| | | Number of attendees who gained the desired knowledge | Planned | 0 | 25 | 55 | 95 |
| | | | Actual | 0 | 20 | 45 | |
| Output 1.2 | Women in 3 named areas have improved vocational skills | Number of women who attend vocational training | Planned | 0 | 30 | 60 | 100 |
| | | | Actual | 0 | 30 | 55 | |
| | | Number of attendees who gained the desired knowledge | Planned | 0 | 25 | 55 | 95 |
| | | | Actual | 0 | 24 | 50 | |

You can find lots of information on data collection and examples of tools in Phase 1 on understanding the situation. The same tools and principles can be applied to the data collected for monitoring.

## 5.3 Monitoring cost: financial monitoring

Financial monitoring is a very important part of monitoring your project and should be done alongside tracking progress towards project indicators and tracking your activities. You are accountable to your donors, your stakeholders and your beneficiaries for how you spend money. You will generally be expected to report on your expenditure. Project staff rely on the project manager to have enough money to pay their salaries each month. If your cash flow is tight, because you do not have significant reserves, it is sensible to track your cash flow (as explained in Section 4.3 on page 98) monthly or weekly.

As you implement the project, you should be tracking your actual expenditure against what you predict your expenditure will be each month, generally in a 'budget versus actual' report. Your budget versus actual report will be a valuable monitoring and learning tool for the current project and for influencing the design of future projects. If there are any big differences ('variances') between your planned and your actual expenditure, you will want to find out why this is happening.

Below is a useful template that you can use to track your budget versus actual spending:

| Budget line | Budget | Actual spending | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

- In the budget line column insert the names of the budget lines from your overall budget
- In the budget column, insert the budgeted amount for each budget line
- In the actual spending column, insert how much money has actually been spent
- The variance is the difference between the budget and actual spending, expressed as a percentage. To calculate the variance use the sum below:

$$\text{Variance} = \frac{\text{Budget} - \text{Actual}}{\text{Budget}} \times 100$$

### Managing the triple constraint in parallel: cost, time and scope

It is not possible to monitor cost, time or scope in isolation. They are all connected and affect one another. For example, if you discover variances you may need to make changes to your project. For instance, if you are spending more than your budget allows for, this may mean that you will not have enough money to deliver all of the planned activities, so you will need to either negotiate for more budget or negotiate to reduce the scope of the project. If you are spending significantly less than your budget allows, this may mean that your project is progressing too slowly, and you may need to extend the project timeframe or change your planned activities.

If your activities are running ahead of schedule you may not have sufficient cash flow to cover all of your costs. If you are asked to increase the scope of your project you will need more time and or money to be able to do this.

If any changes need to be made to get the project back on track, outside the limits ('tolerances') that were agreed for your project, you will need to get these changes agreed by asking the steering committee for permission. Please see the change management section on page 117.

## 5.4 Monitoring risk during implementation

In Section 2.6 (page 69) we discussed the first three stages in risk management – identification, assessment, and response planning – as part of project design. Here is a brief recap:

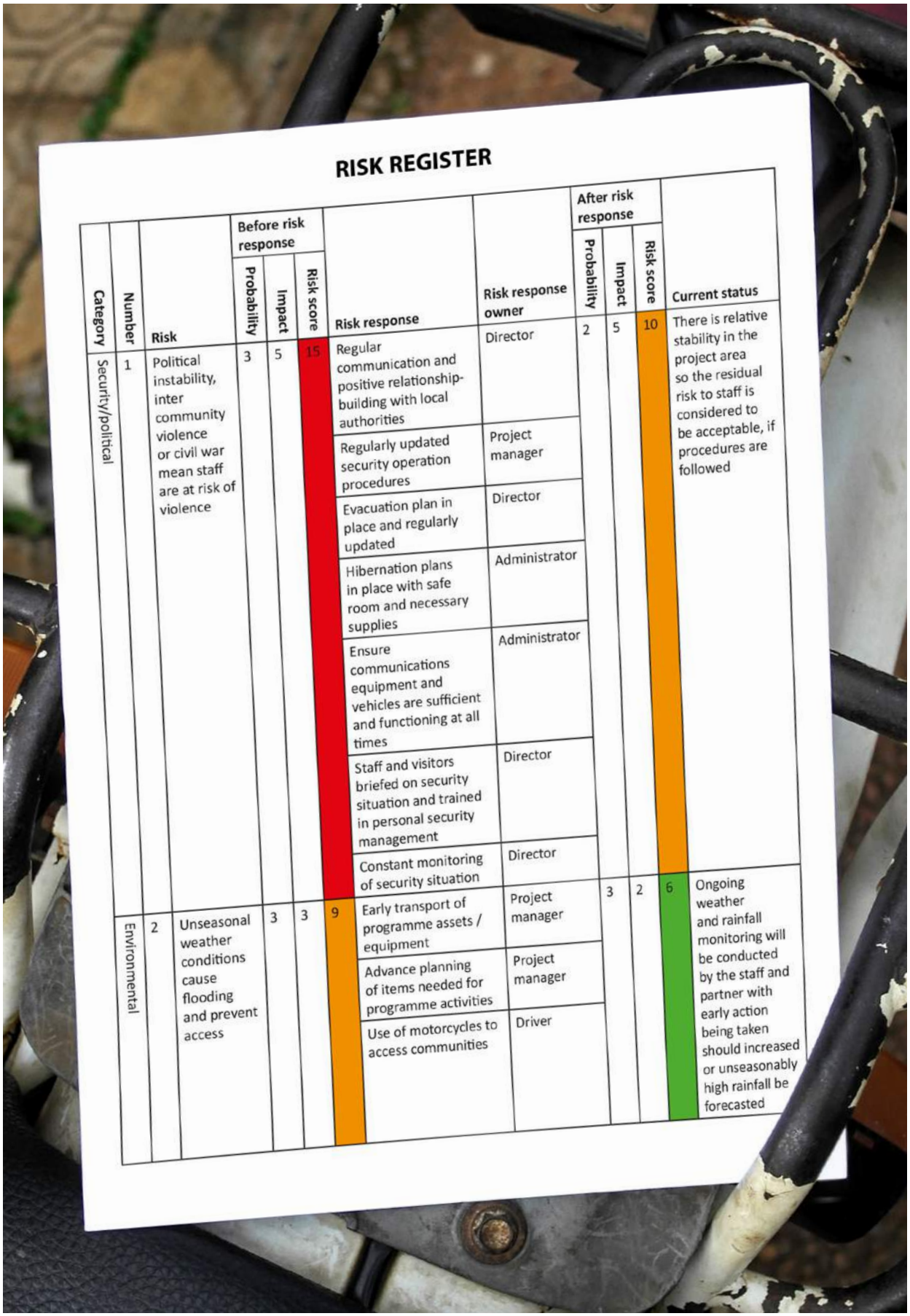
- **Identification:** identifying potential risks
- **Assessment:** determining the probability of the risks occurring and the impact they would have on the project if they do occur
- **Risk response planning:** deciding on the best course of action to reduce the risk.

We will now explain further the fourth stage: risk monitoring.

Risks should be monitored regularly to check if the impact they might have and the chance that they might happen are still accurate, and to ensure that the risk response strategies you chose are still the most appropriate. It is the project manager's role to ensure the actions that you identified in the risk response planning stage to mitigate the risks are actually being taken by the risk response owners and that the risk responses are effective at decreasing the risk. In Section 2.6 on page 72 we introduced the risk register. This is the tool to help the project manager to monitor risks during implementation, and it is designed to be used and updated regularly. It is important to check regularly if the risk response actions are working. For example, in the project scenario one of the risk responses was to build relationships with local authorities to mitigate the risk of potential violence affecting the project. We need to check with the risk response owner, in this case the director, that the relationships are being formed and that they are effectively helping to mitigate the risk.

## Project scenario example

Diagram 44 **Risk register**



**RISK REGISTER**

| Category | Number | Risk | Before risk response | | | Risk response | Risk response owner | After risk response | | | Current status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Probability | Impact | Risk score | | | Probability | Impact | Risk score | |
| Security/political | 1 | Political instability, inter community violence or civil war mean staff are at risk of violence | 3 | 5 | 15 | Regular communication and positive relationship-building with local authorities | Director | 2 | 5 | 10 | There is relative stability in the project area so the residual risk to staff is considered to be acceptable, if procedures are followed |
| | | | | | | Regularly updated security operation procedures | Project manager | | | | |
| | | | | | | Evacuation plan in place and regularly updated | Director | | | | |
| | | | | | | Hibernation plans in place with safe room and necessary supplies | Administrator | | | | |
| | | | | | | Ensure communications equipment and vehicles are sufficient and functioning at all times | Administrator | | | | |
| | | | | | | Staff and visitors briefed on security situation and trained in personal security management | Director | | | | |
| | | | | | | Constant monitoring of security situation | Director | | | | |
| Environmental | 2 | Unseasonal weather conditions cause flooding and prevent access | 3 | 3 | 9 | Early transport of programme assets / equipment | Project manager | 3 | 2 | 6 | Ongoing weather and rainfall monitoring will be conducted by the staff and partner with early action being taken should increased or unseasonably high rainfall be forecasted |
| | | | | | | Advance planning of items needed for programme activities | Project manager | | | | |
| | | | | | | Use of motorcycles to access communities | Driver | | | | |

During implementation the project manager not only needs to monitor risks but should also be identifying, assessing and planning responses to new or emerging risks and recording these in the risk register.

The project manager should proactively look for risks to materialise during implementation so that he or she is able to respond quickly when risks do become reality and turn into issues that impact the project.

The steering group should regularly review the risk register, or at least the most important risks on the register. It is the role of the project manager to make sure that the steering group have sufficient information about the risks to make good decisions, and to raise new or emerging risks to their attention.

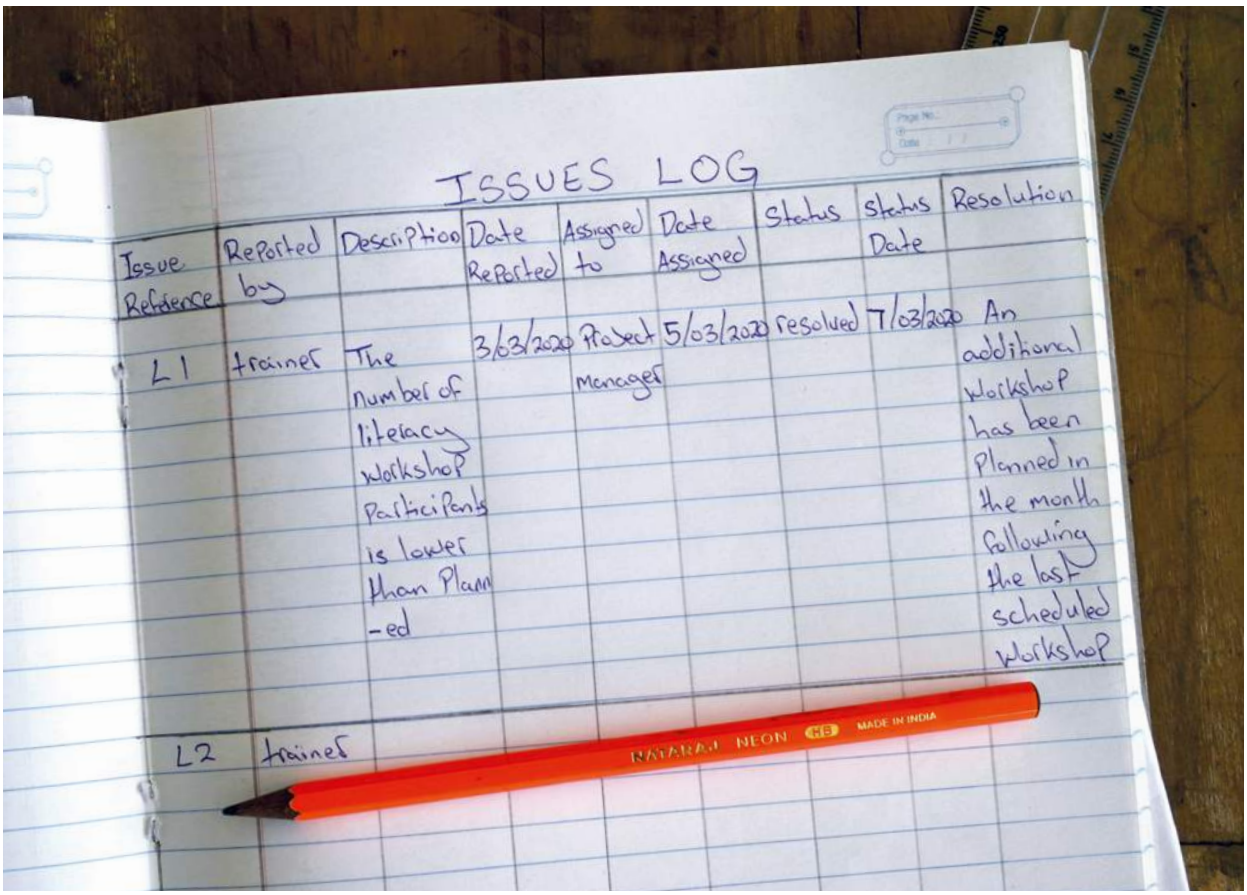
## 5.5 Issue management

A risk is an event that may or may not occur. If the event does occur it becomes an issue. During the implementation phase, you, a team member, or another stakeholder may identify issues or problems that need addressing. Some of these issues will have been project risks that were identified as a possibility and have now happened. Other problems might come up unexpectedly. You should use an issues log to record these problems. You must review this regularly and decide how best to resolve each problem. Remember that the people closest to a problem are often the best placed to resolve it. The issues log can continue to be used to track problems in the project until they are solved.

### **Project scenario example:** Issues log

An example issues log for one issue in the project scenario is shown in diagram 45 below.

Diagram 45 **Issues log**




IMPLEMENTATION

# 5.6 Learning and adapting

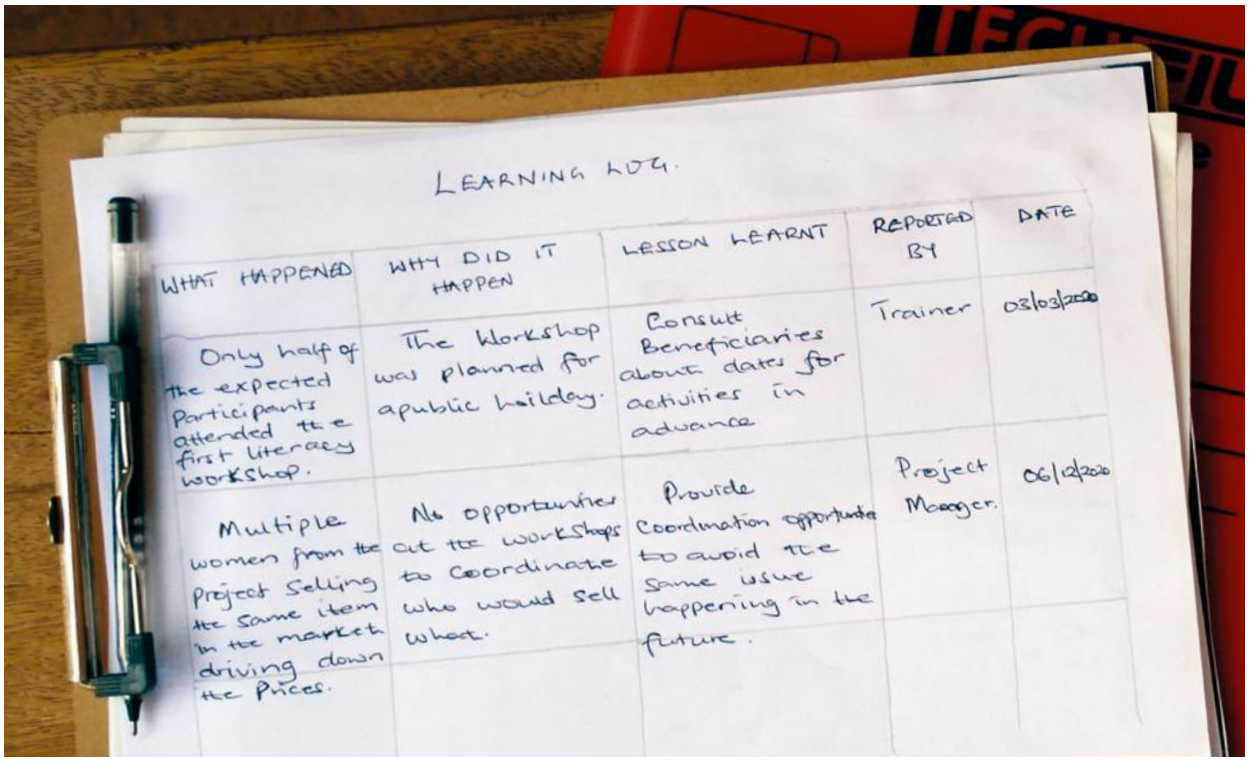
During your project implementation you should expect to learn lessons about what is working well and why, and what is not delivering the results you expected and may need to be adjusted. A lessons log is a useful tool to record what you are learning. You can review this regularly and see if you need to adapt your plans and activities based on what you are learning.

Adding a regular learning section to the agenda in project meetings where you can learn from each other and from other stakeholders is a helpful way of getting into the habit of sharing and capturing learning. Learning logs can take many forms, and are often a table showing what happened, why it happened, what was learnt, and the date and the name of the person logging (recording) the lesson.

### **Project scenario example:** Learning log

An example learning log for the project scenario is shown in diagram 46 below.

Diagram 46 **Learning log**




The project cycle management diagram shows a loop back from project implementation and monitoring to context. This is because, as you learn about what works and what does not work in your project, you will need to go back to look at how to adjust your project design to integrate this learning fully. For example, in the Theory of Change for the project scenario we state that by running training, women will increase their literacy, numeracy and vocational skills, and with these skills they will have access to income-generating opportunities. If, from tracking our indicators, we realise that the women's literacy, numeracy and vocational skills are not improving, we may need to change our project activities and look for alternative ways to deliver the training or alternative ways to develop these skills. You will need to follow the change processes discussed in this section to make these changes to the project design and to make the necessary changes to the project plan. It is extremely important to integrate the learnings during the project's lifetime and not wait for the final evaluation to discover that your project has not brought about the desired impact in the community. These lessons should also be shared with the wider organisation because they will be very useful when designing new projects.

## Change management

Changes are normal, and sometimes even desirable, and plans should not be seen as static. But before making any changes, it is important to understand fully what they might mean. Some changes might have effects beyond a single project, or might go beyond one of the limits that the steering group has agreed. If so, these suggestions for changes must be taken to the steering group for approval.

A helpful way to manage change is to set up a process for it. When the project manager wants to make a change that goes beyond the agreed limits set out in the governance structure, he or she can request the steering group to approve the change. The steering group should consider if the request for change is sensible, how it affects the project stakeholders and if there is sufficient budget available before deciding if they can approve the change. All changes need to be documented so that there is a clear record of the decisions that have been made and why.

The project manager and the steering group may also need to seek consent from your donor to make changes to your project plans or budget. If you give good reasons for the proposed changes, which are supported by your monitoring data, donors will generally be willing to approve changes about when and how you deliver your project activities, as long as the final outcome and impact remain the same. Each donor will have a process for how to request a change to your original plan. Approval can take time so request any changes as early as possible. Being reluctant to seek donor consent is not an excuse to carry on with project activities that are not producing results.

Once changes are approved it is important that you document them and share them with all relevant stakeholders.

# 5.7 People management

Many project managers spend a lot of the implementation stage managing people. The larger a project is, the more time the project manager will spend managing the people doing the work, and the less time he or she will spend actually doing the project activities.

In Section 4.4 we covered the main staff plans including a recruitment plan and a staff work plan (page 100). In Section 3.3 we discussed the RASCI matrix (page 87) and in Section 4.4 we discussed the communications plan (page 99). These planning tools all help the project manager manage project staff and stakeholders during implementation.

When it comes to managing people, a project manager's soft skills become very important. It is beyond the scope of this guide to go into details, but the art of project management requires good skills in communication, motivation, coaching, negotiation, influencing, delegation and conflict resolution. The project manager may have to follow formal organisational performance management processes and will certainly use feedback as an informal way to make sure people perform as they should.

# 5.8 Beneficiary feedback

In the preparation phase we discussed planning for beneficiary feedback by setting up a complaints and feedback mechanism that is safe and easy for everyone to use. You might have set up complaints forms, a suggestions box, office hours when verbal complaints can be lodged, community meetings, an email address or a toll-free telephone number or ideally a combination of options that work for different types of beneficiaries, considering those with particular vulnerabilities such as a disability and taking into account different literacy levels.

During implementation, make sure people know they have a right to complain, how to do so, and which types of complaints you will be able to deal with. Consider safeguarding, data protection and confidentiality very carefully, while still ensuring people receive a response. Once you receive the feedback it is important to respond to the feedback and make changes in the project where appropriate. You should keep a record of the feedback received and the responses given in a beneficiary feedback log.

## 5.9 Reporting, record-keeping and communication

One important purpose of good monitoring is that it will help you keep good records and report project progress to donors, to the community you are serving and to other stakeholders. If you report regularly to these groups on your successes and challenges, they will feel more connected to the project and more likely to give their ongoing support.

How often you report, and in what format, will depend on the nature and duration of your project, and on what your donors, beneficiaries and stakeholders want to see. Donors will often expect you to report against your original project proposal, logframe, schedule and budget. You will need to explain any changes from your original plans (variances), and the reasons for those changes. (As noted on page 117, it is often a good idea to communicate significant changes as soon as you become aware of them, rather than waiting until a formal reporting point to do so.)

### What does a good report look like?

A good report:

- uses the donor templates and answers all questions
- demonstrates progress against all indicators
- provides some anecdotal evidence to illustrate impact
- is concise and keeps within the word count
- is consistent throughout (ie the narrative report matches the logframe and is consistent with the financial report)
- is consistent with previous reports that have been provided
- contains good case studies that demonstrate how lives have been transformed as a result
- is honest about problems and challenges
- is written in good English (or other language permitted by the donor) and has been spell-checked

Even if you only plan to report formally once a year, it is often a good idea to share project successes informally more often. This can be a simple email to the donor with a brief project update, or a short presentation at a stakeholder meeting. This is a good way to keep your donors, beneficiaries and stakeholders engaged in the project and for them to see the benefits of taking part.

When reporting, take into account donor deadlines and audit requirements. Donors may check project records (audit) during the projects, or even several years after they have finished. So it's really important to have good paper or electronic records, organised so that information can be found even if the project team have moved on to new jobs. Key documents should be filed along with notes or recordings from meetings and discussions.

## 5.10 Quality assurance

Quality assurance is a key part of the project manager's role throughout implementation. One way to ensure quality is to have appropriate checks in place to make sure that the quality meets the required standards. It is important to define with your steering group what level of quality is required and how sign-off will be given on project documentation such as reports before submitting them to donors. This is different to the Quality Standards, which are about how we deliver the project. Quality assurance focuses on the reports and other documentation produced by the project.

### Decision point

During implementation your project might pass through several decision points. If your monitoring shows that you are off track you might need to revise your plans. If changes are needed these might have to be approved by the steering group and/or donor. At some stage the decision will be made that the project activities are complete.

**Quality Standards checklist**

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for implementation and monitoring phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Is induction and refresher training for staff on the organisation's values and policies being carried out throughout the lifecycle of the project?<br>☐ Are the communities we serve aware of what constitutes unacceptable conduct by staff?<br>☐ Do the communities know how to report unacceptable conduct?<br>☐ Have staff members been identified and trained to carry out investigations into unacceptable conduct when required?<br>☐ If there are reports about unacceptable conduct by staff, are they investigated in a timely manner? |
|  | ☐ Are you monitoring the project to ensure that the selection criteria continue to be appropriate and you are reaching the most vulnerable? |
|  | ☐ Are you changing project plans in light of the feedback received?<br>☐ Are representatives of the community involved in addressing complaints and resolving disputes?<br>☐ Are you ensuring feedback is given, received and responded to in a timely manner?<br>☐ Are you recognising the difference between sensitive and non-sensitive feedback?<br>☐ Are you referring feedback that is out of your project's scope?<br>☐ Are you keeping a record of the feedback received, the responses given and project decisions made?<br>☐ Are you ensuring the records can only be accessed by designated team members and that beneficiaries' confidential data is protected? |
|  | ☐ Are you measuring and monitoring the impact of the project on both men and women (including those with disabilities) and keeping data on men and women separate (disaggregated)?<br>☐ Are you consulting women and girls (including those with disabilities) about their safety and security throughout the project? |
|  | ☐ Are you monitoring to ensure that your project is not creating dependency? |
|  | ☐ Do the communities have access to information about their risks?<br>☐ Are you monitoring the project to check that vulnerabilities are being reduced and capacities are being built and not undermined?<br>☐ Is the project being monitored to observe and manage its environmental impact? |
|  | ☐ Do you consult beneficiaries to assess their views, opinions and perception in terms of safety, dignity, access and participation throughout the project?<br>☐ Do you monitor to ensure your programme does not have a negative impact on communities? |
|  | ☐ Are you monitoring the technical quality of the project and making technical adjustments where needed? |

## RECAP

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of monitoring as a process used throughout the implementation phase. The M&E plan that you developed during the preparation phase is a valuable tool to track progress and spot variances between actual and planned situations during your project.**

**You should now be able to:**

- explain the importance of monitoring throughout the implementation phase: checking implementation against the planned cost, time and scope, and measuring progress towards the changes the project is meant to bring about
- use financial and narrative reports to remain accountable to donors and project participants
- understand the need to use both tools and soft skills to manage people as you implement the project
- develop logs to track issues and record lessons.

## REFLECT

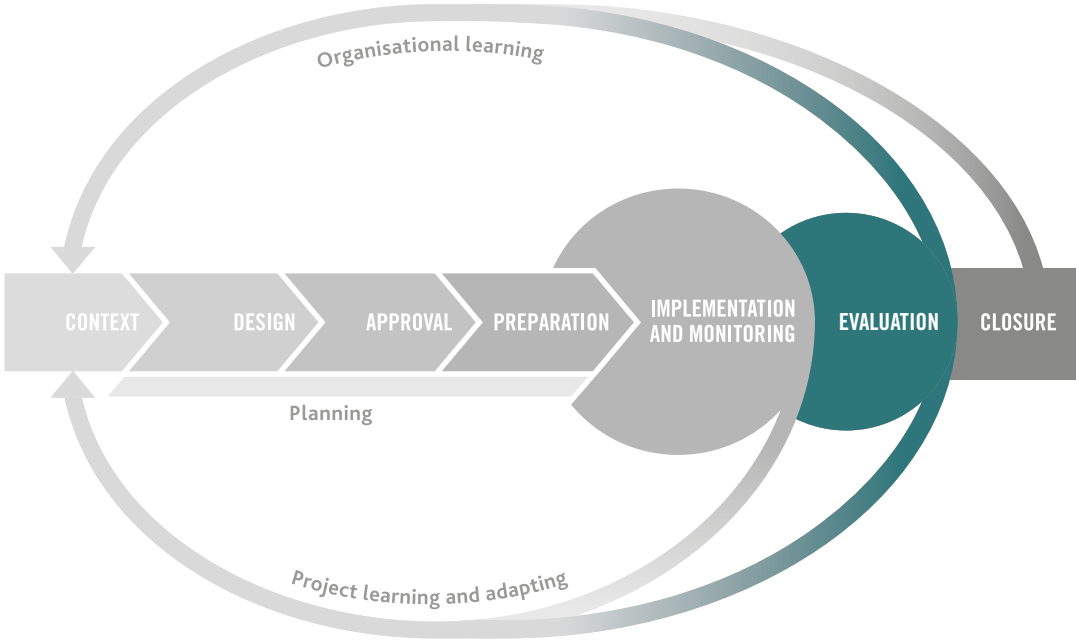
1. Do you have a clear system for approving and communicating changes needed to your project (both internally and externally)?
2. Are project participants encouraged to give feedback, and are there tools in place for this?
3. Are you monitoring to track the progress against the triple constraint (cost, time and scope)?
4. Some project managers say most of their time during implementation is taken up with managing people. Is this true in your experience?

## PRACTISE

1. Create a budget versus actual report for a project that you are currently working on. What does it tell you? How will the information affect time and scope?
2. Add an emerging risk to your risk register.
3. If you don't have a learning log for a current project, set one up.

# PHASE 6
# EVALUATION

**You are currently here in the project cycle:**




**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- explain the difference between assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
- name the three points when an evaluation could be carried out
- write questions for an evaluation based on the five DAC (Development Assistance Committee) criteria
- explain the importance of good terms of reference, and outline the contents of a terms of reference document
- list the stages involved in carrying out an evaluation.

## 6.1 Introduction to evaluation

Evaluation is the process of judging whether a project is creating, or did create, the changes it set out to achieve. It is more than checking whether you did what you planned to and looks deeper at what is different in a community as a result of your project or programme. Evaluation includes assessing efficiency (how well time and money were used), effectiveness (how well the project achieved its aims), impact and sustainability. It might look at any unintended consequences of your work, both positive and negative. Evaluation is closely linked to learning, and a good evaluation will help you, and the wider development sector, learn what does and doesn't work, to be applied in future projects.

Ideally you will have developed a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan during the preparation phase (see Section 4.6). But it is important to think about evaluation early in the project, when you are assessing the situation or context initially to ensure that you budget and plan for it. At least 5 per cent of the budget should be allowed for monitoring and evaluation.

## 6.2 What is the difference between assessment, monitoring, and evaluation?

Assessment is the collection of data which is then analysed to help us understand a situation. Typically this happens at the start of a project, and helps us understand the needs and design the project.

Monitoring is the ongoing collection and analysis of data to check that the project is on track in relation to the triple constraint (cost, time and scope) and that it is working in the way in which it was intended.

Evaluation takes place at set points (see below) and uses data to decide if the project is/was a success. Evaluations help us to be accountable to both donors and beneficiaries as well as allowing us to learn lessons for future projects.

Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation all rely on good data collection, detailed in Section 1.3.

## 6.3 Types of evaluation

There are three main points at which an evaluation might be conducted:

- **During the project:** This will be at set points, maybe the end of every year or the middle point of the project. This type of evaluation will be mainly judging whether the project is making progress towards the change it intended, and might make suggestions for how the project can be adapted to make it more effective. It will test the Theory of Change, the logframe, and the assumptions. This evaluation might also look at unintended impacts, so the positive ones can be built upon in the time you have left, and the negative ones can be kept to a minimum.

  Emergency relief projects might use a particular type of evaluation called a **real-time evaluation**. This is used to ensure the project is making a difference to people affected by an emergency, and allows changes to be made early on if things are not working as well as they could. The focus of a real-time evaluation is on learning, not accountability.

- **After the project:** An end-of-project evaluation will look at whether the project was successful at influencing the intended change, and why, or why not. It will look more widely at changes in the context where the project took place, and see if any can be attributed to the project. It will consider the Theory of Change, and determine if change really did take place in the way it was expected to. It will look at the logframe, and the assumptions within this, and see if they proved to be realistic.

- **Several years later:** This is sometimes called an ex-post or impact evaluation. It will look to see if the benefits of the project have continued after the project ended.

## 6.4 Evaluation questions

When evaluating programmes and projects, it may be useful to consider the DAC (Development Assistance Committee) evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance:** How well did the project match the priorities and needs of the target group?
- **Effectiveness:** Did the project meet its goals? Why or why not?
- **Efficiency:** How well have our efforts and resources (inputs) been changed to outputs? Could we have had better, or cheaper, results by doing things differently?
- **Impact:** The positive and negative changes produced by our project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. What has happened as a result of the programme or project? What real difference has the project made to the beneficiaries?
- **Sustainability:** Whether the benefits of a project are likely to continue after it ends and funding is stopped

We can evaluate our development projects against these five standards, and thinking through each in turn helps us to write evaluation questions. Depending on the nature of the project and the evaluation, you may focus on some of these questions more than on others. For example, if we are interested in learning about how the benefits of our work might be felt even after the project ends, we would be more interested in questions related to impact and sustainability. When writing questions for learning, you should consider what you already know about what has worked and what has not worked and write questions that will help to fill the gaps in your knowledge.

For emergency relief projects there are eight criteria suggested by DAC. The first four are the same as for development projects. The others are:

- **Connectedness:** Did short-term emergency actions contribute to longer-term development progress?
- **Coherence:** Were diplomatic, political and military policies consistent with humanitarian ones, and were human rights considered?
- **Coordination:** Did political, military and emergency relief organisations work together and share information?
- **Coverage:** Did all groups who needed assistance receive support?

It is also important to include questions on how **inclusive** the project has been of vulnerable groups such as:

- Did the project create change differently for different members of the community?

For example, women with disabilities.

## 6.5 Who should conduct an evaluation?

Evaluations can be conducted by people on the project team, people from elsewhere in the organisation, or people from outside the organisation. People on the project team obviously already know the context, community and key stakeholders, and so might find the evaluation process quicker and easier. But they may have fixed ideas about what is working and why, and might be less able to see the situation objectively. An outside team can give a much more impartial evaluation of a project. Sometimes you might want to combine people from within and outside the organisation on an evaluation team. And sometimes you need to build the capacity of the team before the evaluation starts, and ideally this will have been built into your project activities in the capacity analysis in Section 1.4 (page 31). Some projects might need particular technical knowledge in the evaluation team. The evaluation team could also include key stakeholder representatives to ensure that the evaluation reflects how the project has affected different groups such as women and men, and those with disabilities.

The table below shows advantages and disadvantages of using internal and external evaluators.

| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| **Advantages:**<br>• Any knowledge gained through evaluation remains in the organisation<br>• The evaluator knows the organisation and its culture<br>• The evaluator knows the staff and might be seen as less threatening<br>• Recommendations made might be more appropriate for the organisation<br>• There may be a better chance of recommendations being adopted<br>• The evaluation is less expensive | **Advantages:**<br>• The evaluator is more likely to be objective and so the evaluation may be seen as more trustworthy and more impartial<br>• The evaluator may bring a fresh perspective<br>• The evaluator is more likely to be a specialist with more experience of evaluation techniques<br>• The evaluator can give more time to the evaluation<br>• The evaluator is not part of the organisation's power structure |
| **Disadvantages:**<br>• People may question how impartial and trustworthy the evaluation is<br>• The evaluator might get distracted by other work<br>• People may question the motivations of the evaluator<br>• The evaluator might accept the assumptions of the organisation too quickly<br>• The evaluator may not be sufficiently trained, and you might need to build their capacity | **Disadvantages:**<br>• The evaluator may not know the organisation<br>• The evaluator may not understand the constraints or the context<br>• There is more chance of learning being lost from the organisation<br>• Project staff may see the evaluator as being against them<br>• The evaluation may be more expensive<br>• Talks to agree on recruitment and contract may take a long time |

## 6.6 Terms of reference

Whoever carries out the evaluation has to have clear and comprehensive guidelines (often called terms of reference) to follow. If you are commissioning an external evaluator, these terms of reference will form part of the selection and contracting process.

The terms of reference (ToR) will set out how you expect the evaluator or evaluation team to carry out the evaluation. They will include:

- the aims and the scope of the evaluation
- the background and reason for the evaluation
- the main evaluation questions to be asked
- the methods to be used (sometimes decided by the project team, sometimes by the evaluator)
- the responsibilities of the evaluator or evaluation team
- the resources available to conduct the study (people and budget)
- the outputs of the evaluation (usually a report, but may be a meeting or presentation too) and timeline for these
- a schedule for carrying out the whole process.

## 6.7 Stages in conducting an evaluation

These are the recommended stages in conducting an evaluation. The person or people responsible are listed in brackets after each stage:

1. Decide that the project or programme is ready to be evaluated *(project manager and sponsor/board)*.
2. Decide if the evaluation will be internal or external *(project manager, sponsor/board, possibly donor)*.
3. Draw up the terms of reference *(project manager)*.
4. Select the evaluation team, brief them and agree roles and responsibilities *(project manager, possibly human resources staff, sometimes donor and steering committee)*.
5. If the evaluator/evaluation team is external, draw up a contract.
6. Organise existing data and documentation *(project manager and team)*.
7. Draft an outline of how the evaluation will be carried out (often called an inception report), the tools and methods to be used, and the evaluation questions to be answered *(evaluator)*.
8. Review the outline of how the evaluation will be carried out (often called the inception report) *(project manager, possibly donor)*.
9. Collect data and analyse it *(evaluator)*.
10. Draft the evaluation report *(evaluator)*.
11. Review the evaluation report *(project manager, possibly donor)*.
12. Make any necessary amendments to the evaluation report *(evaluator)*.
13. Share the report *(project manager)*.
14. Share and use lessons learnt *(project organisation, possibly donor or wider development community)*.

### Data collection

In Section 1.3 we introduced the data collection toolkit to be used throughout the whole project cycle (pages 12–30). These tools will be extremely useful during the evaluation. More information on how to carry out an evaluation can be found in Further reading on page 149.

#### Inclusive data collection

It is important to ensure that communities are fairly and accurately represented in your evaluation. As you think about collecting data for your evaluation, refer back to the checklist on page 14 to ensure you take into account the needs of all the individuals and groups you are working with, to be able to understand the positive and negative effects of the project for them.

### What should be included in an evaluation report?

Most evaluation reports cover the following areas:

- **Introduction:** States the purpose of the evaluation
- **Methodology:** Explains where the evaluation was carried out and the data collection and analysis tools that have been used
- **Context analysis:** Gives a brief overview of the local context
- **Project overview:** Summarises the main problem that the project is addressing and the changes it is seeking to make
- **Key findings:** Shares and analyses the key findings for each of the evaluation questions
- **Conclusions:** Draws out the main points from the analysis of the findings
- **Recommendations:** Makes specific, actionable recommendations to the project team and wider organisation

## Responding to the recommendations

The specific recommendations should be reviewed by the project team to decide if they accept them. For each of the recommendations that they accept, they should write an action plan including what the response to the recommendation is, the actions that need to be taken and who is responsible for the actions by when. It can be helpful to record this in a table like the one below. It is important to review the actions regularly to check that they have been completed.

| Number | Specific, actionable recommendation | Project team response | Action | Responsible for action (who) | By when |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |

## Sharing the findings

The project cycle management diagram shows a loop back from evaluation to context, for project-level learning and for the wider organisation's learning. After a mid-term evaluation or real-time review, learning can be directly applied and the project adapted as a result. This can only happen if evaluation findings are shared.

Ideas for how to share the findings with different groups:

- **For the beneficiary community**
  You could hold feedback sessions with the beneficiary community. Make sure that the report findings are in a language and format that the community will understand. The community can then also comment on the findings and state if they agree or disagree with them.
- **For the wider organisation**
  You could ask the evaluation team to present to the wider organisation in person or by making a short video. You could produce a poster to summarise the findings. Make sure you file the evaluation correctly so that other people in your organisation can find it and benefit from the learning.
- **For the wider sector**
  You could consider sharing the learning more widely across the development sector by writing blogs about the evaluation or making it publicly available.

### Decision point

The decision points in the evaluation phase relate to the decision to carry out an evaluation, the selection of the evaluator and how to respond to each of the recommendations in the evaluation report.

**Quality Standards checklist**

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for evaluation phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Where project staff interacted directly with communities, consider asking the communities if they are satisfied with the way they were treated by staff throughout the project. |
|  | ☐ Do the community members know why they were or were not selected as project beneficiaries?<br>☐ Do the community members believe the most vulnerable were indeed selected to participate in the project? |
|  | ☐ Do the community members feel that they had access to relevant information about the project?<br>☐ Are the community members satisfied with the influence they had over the project throughout its lifecycle? |
|  | ☐ Are men and women's perspectives (including those with disabilities) considered when evaluating the impact of the project? |
|  | ☐ Do the community members say that they feel empowered/not disempowered as a result of your project? |
|  | ☐ Are the communities saying they are better able to cope with future shocks as a result of the project? |
|  | ☐ Do the community members feel that the risk of harm to their safety, security and dignity increased or decreased due to your intervention? |
|  | ☐ Did the communities find the response appropriate to their needs?<br>☐ Did the communities find the response timely? |

**RECAP**

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of evaluation in comparing the current situation to that at the start of the project. You have also learnt the importance of good evaluation questions based on the DAC criteria, and terms of reference.**

**You should now be able to:**

- explain the difference between assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
- name three points when an evaluation could be carried out
- write questions for an evaluation based on the five DAC (Development Assistance Committee) criteria
- explain the importance of good terms of reference, and outline the contents of a terms of reference document
- list the stages involved in carrying out an evaluation.

**REFLECT**

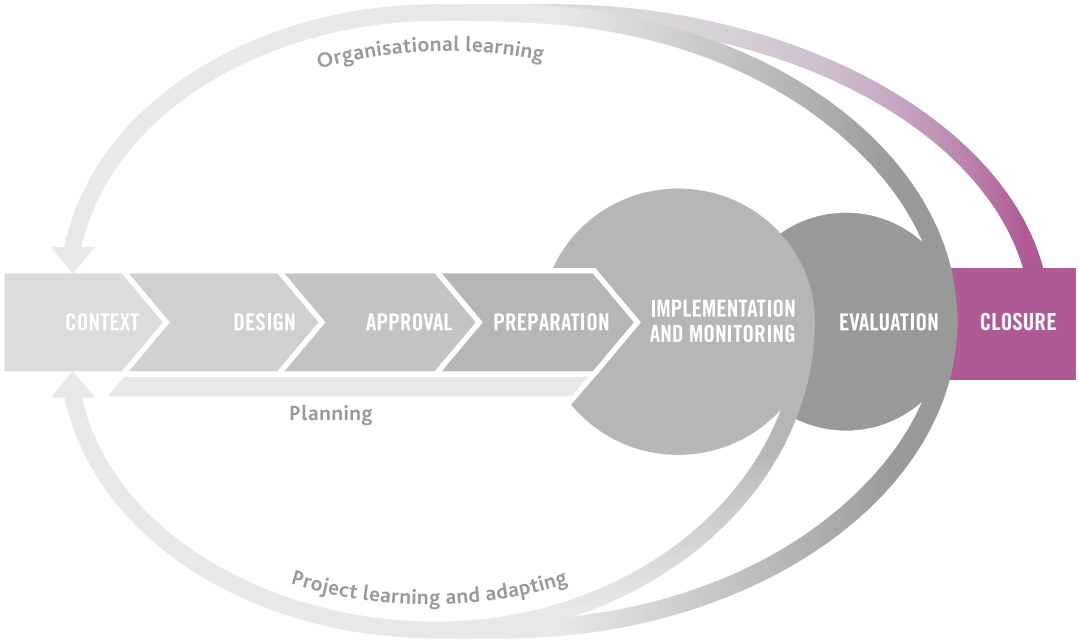
1. What do you need to do at the start of your project to ensure a good evaluation is possible?
2. When would be the best time to evaluate your project?
3. Who would be the best person to carry out the evaluation?

**PRACTISE**

1. Write a list of evaluation questions for a project that you are currently working on. Show this list to the project team and get their feedback.
2. Review an action plan from a previous evaluation – have the actions been completed?

# PHASE 7
# PROJECT CLOSURE

**You are currently here in the project cycle:**




**By the end of this phase you will be able to:**

- know the different ways in which a project can end or transition, including: termination, extension, expansion, redesign and handover
- list the reasons a project might come to an end
- list tasks that might need to be completed at the end of a project.

## 7.1 The importance of the closure phase

When project activities have finished, and the evaluation has been planned, it can be tempting to think that all the work has been done. But it is important to make sure that you bring the project to a formal end, or you move it on to the next stage (transition), and that you complete any administrative, contractual and financial tasks. It is also important to end or transition in such a way that the benefits of the project are likely to be sustained and that all stakeholders know why the project has ended, and what was achieved.

## 7.2 Types of transition

There are different options for what happens when a project reaches the end of its planned time or scope, or has to close early:

- **Termination** – all project activities stop and closure is completed.
- **Extension** – extra time is allowed to finish project activities. Occasionally a donor might provide extra funding for an extension, but a 'no cost extension' is more common. But be aware that the extension will still cost your organisation in staff time etc.
- **Expansion** – elements of the project are replicated in a new area or with a new group of beneficiaries.
- **Redesign** – the project enters a new stage with a modified design and new activities. For example, our project scenario may come to an end and be relatively successful at addressing livelihoods. But it might be realised that a follow-on project addressing harmful gender norms will be needed for lasting impact.
- **Handover** – project activities are transferred to a local partner or beneficiary community.

It is important to decide on the most likely type of transition when the project is being designed. This is so that project activities and approach can work towards the transition. For example, if the project is a pilot and you intend to expand it, the team must pay even more attention than normal to learning throughout the project. If the likely transition involves handing the project over to a partner, capacity-building activities might have to be included. If the likely transition is expansion, you will need to consider where you can get additional funding from.

## 7.3 Tasks at the end of the project

If the project is ending when planned you must ensure it has delivered what it was supposed to. You must check the work you have done against the plan, and make sure that no tasks have been missed. Stakeholders – external and internal – including the board or sponsor, the donor, and the beneficiaries should be consulted. Relevant stakeholders should be asked to verify that you have delivered what was intended and that they are happy with the results. With donors, this is usually done by completing a final report and the donor accepting it.

You then need to ensure that you complete the project closure tasks:

**Project closure tasks checklist**

- ☐ terminate all contracts with suppliers, consultants and donors
- ☐ write to other stakeholders to inform them that the project has ended or moved into a new phase
- ☐ request the final instalment of funding from the donor, if applicable
- ☐ complete any required reports, narrative and financial
- ☐ pay any remaining invoices
- ☐ let staff go or give them new roles
- ☐ return, sell or transfer any project resources (in the way you agreed at the start of the project)
- ☐ archive project files and documents, preferably electronically

Remember that your project might be audited several years after the project has closed, so you must comply with any audit requirements when carrying out these tasks.

If a project closes early, it is best practice to check what was delivered against what was planned, and to note which elements were completed. In most cases of early closure, you should still carry out the end-of-project tasks listed above, with the possible exception of the case of immediate closure due to unusual, unforeseen circumstances beyond your control.

## 7.4 Reasons why a project might end early

Hopefully your project will come to an end when you have scheduled it to, because you have completed the project activities and achieved the change that was needed.

Sometimes, though, a project might end early. Reasons might include:

- The context changes and the project is no longer relevant.
- Your organisation's strategy changes and the project no longer fits with its aims.
- The donor changes their policy and funding stops.
- The beneficiaries or other stakeholders no longer want to be involved.
- Fraud is discovered.
- The government will no longer support the project.
- There is an environment-related disaster, conflict or an unusual, unforeseen event in the area that prevents the project continuing.
- The security situation changes and it is no longer safe to continue.
- The project design proves to be faulty and your activities are not delivering results or achieving the outcomes they were intended to.

## 7.5 Sharing and using lessons learnt

Learning has been discussed in the implementation and monitoring phase (Section 5.6, page 116), and in the evaluation phase, and it is obviously important to learn lessons throughout a project. At the end of the project, all lessons need to be brought together, recorded and shared with stakeholders.

You might want to hold a quick meeting in which stakeholders are invited to share lessons. It is much less formal than an evaluation.

Finally you might want to have a celebration of everything you have achieved, and a ceremony to bring things to a formal end or transfer ownership to the community.

With your project closure, you have now completed all stages of project cycle management. You should now be clear on what is needed at each stage of the project cycle, including the decisions that will need to be made, and be familiar with the tools that you can use to help you.

### Decision point

The decision points in this phase of the project help decide if a project is ready to close because it has completed activities, if it needs to close early, and how transition will take place.

**Quality Standards checklist**

| Tearfund Quality Standard | Checklist for closure phase |
|---|---|
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt about the behaviour of staff? |
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt about impartiality and targeting? |
|  | ☐ Have you informed the communities of the date your feedback mechanism will stop?<br>☐ Have you documented any learning that has to do with community engagement and accountability? |
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt on gender? |
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt about empowerment?<br>☐ Are any long-term systems required to provide ongoing financial input that will ensure project sustainability, such as village contributions, local government support or user fees? |
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt about resilience? |
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt about protection? |
|  | ☐ Have you documented any lessons learnt that have to do with technical quality? |

**RECAP**

**In this phase, you have learnt the importance of deciding on the most likely type of transition when the project is being designed. This is so that project activities and the project approach can work towards the transition. You have also learnt that it is important to work through the appropriate stages when closing a project, bearing in mind that your project may be audited long after the end of the project.**

**You should now be able to:**

- differentiate the types of project transition including: termination, extension, expansion, redesign and handover
- list the reasons a project might come to an end early
- list tasks that might need to be completed at the end of a project.

**REFLECT**

1. What type of transition is most appropriate for your project?
   a. What do you need to do now to help that transition go smoothly?
   b. What will you need to do to ensure the benefits of your project are sustained after the transition?
2. How will you communicate the end of your project, share lessons and celebrate success?

**PRACTISE**

1. Write a checklist of things that the project team will need to do to close a project that you are working on at the moment.
2. Share this list with the wider project team for their feedback.
3. Decide who will be responsible for each task.

# APPENDIX 1
# BIBLICAL BASIS FOR PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

One of Tearfund's distinctives is putting the church at the centre of all we do. God calls the church to help release people from poverty, regardless of their faith or background, and we see part of Tearfund's role as enabling the church to live out this calling.

By 'church', we mean the local church, the congregation on the front line, battling the same injustices as the wider community. And we mean the global church, a worldwide movement of Jesus' followers, playing their part in ending extreme poverty.

The Bible studies below are written for churches and Christian organisations to explain the biblical basis for project cycle management. The passages and questions below can be used for individual study or a group conversation.

## Nehemiah as a project manager

The book of Nehemiah tells how Nehemiah led the people in rebuilding Jerusalem's wall, which had been burnt down by the Babylonians. The way Nehemiah managed this project can teach us a lot.

### Introduction – Nehemiah 1

Chapter 1 tells us how God called Nehemiah to the task. What does this chapter tell us about Nehemiah? Consider:

- his sensitivity to God's will
- his motivation
- his attitude as a leader
- his compassion
- his attitude to prayer.

All these factors gave Nehemiah vision for the task ahead.

- How does this challenge us in our attitude towards our work?

Proverbs 16:3 tells us: 'Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.' (NIV)

- What does this verse tell us about the link between prayer and planning? Is prayer alone enough? Is planning alone enough?
- Do we plan prayerfully in our work?

### Responding to a need – Nehemiah 1

Nehemiah was a Jew in exile in a foreign land. Some of the Jews had returned to Judah after their attackers, the Babylonians, were overthrown by the Persians. But many of the Jews felt settled where they were and so remained in exile.

- What concerned Nehemiah in verse 2?

- What news did Nehemiah's visitors bring (verse 3)? What was Nehemiah's reaction to the news? What does this say about his character?
- How does this passage challenge us in our relationship with God and with local communities, and in our response to others?

## Planning the rebuilding of the wall – Nehemiah 2 and 3

Nehemiah had a good job. He was cupbearer to the King (Nehemiah 1:11). This meant that he tested the King's food and wine to check that it had not been poisoned. The King put a lot of trust in him, and Nehemiah was probably a personal adviser to him.

Read Nehemiah 2:1–9

- In verse 2, why was Nehemiah afraid? (Ezra 4 might help you.)

However, verses 5–9 show us that Nehemiah had planned in detail what he wanted to do and how he wanted to do it.

- What did Nehemiah do before answering the King's question (verse 4)?
- What kind of things had Nehemiah planned for?
- What can we learn from this for the way we plan our projects?

Read Nehemiah 3

- What does this chapter tell us about people's participation?

Read Nehemiah 2:17

- How did Nehemiah encourage people to participate in the project?
- What does this say about his leadership skills?
- Some people rebuilt more than one section of the wall. Why do we think they participated so passionately?

Nehemiah 3:5 tells us that some people refused to take part.

- How should we respond to people who do not want to get involved?

## Responding to changes – Nehemiah 4

At the beginning of Nehemiah 4 we are told that some people were opposed to the project.

- What was Nehemiah's response (verse 9)?
- How did Nehemiah change his plans to limit the risks to the project (verses 9, 13, 16–22)?
- What can we learn from Nehemiah's experience for the projects we plan?

## Celebrating the new wall – Nehemiah 6:15–16 and Nehemiah 12:27–43

Nehemiah 6:15–16 tells us that the wall of Jerusalem was completed. How successful was the project? Do people see the work of God in our projects?

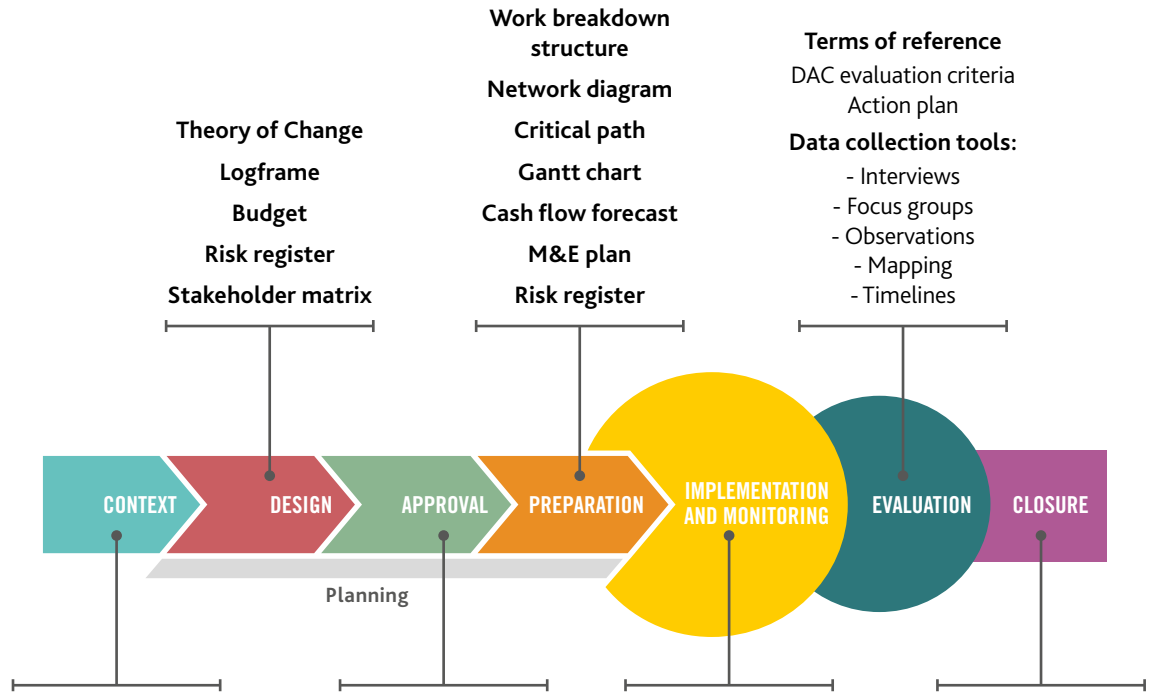
Chapter 12 tells us about the dedication of the wall.

- How was it celebrated?
- Why do we think Nehemiah dedicated the wall to God?
- Do we dedicate our projects to God?
- What creative ways can we think of to celebrate the success of our projects?

# APPENDIX 2
# PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT DIAGRAM SHOWING KEY TOOLS

**This map is not an exhaustive list of all the tools in the guide, but it gives a flavour of some of the most popular tools, and when they can be used. In the table below you can see which tools would sit where.**

Diagram 47 **Project cycle management key tools**



# APPENDIX 3
# TEARFUND'S LIGHT WHEEL

The Light Wheel was developed by Tearfund, influenced by the University of Bath's (UK) work on well-being. It provides a framework with nine different 'spokes' representing different dimensions of individual and community well-being (see diagram 48 on the next page).

As the wheel analogy illustrates, all of these areas are inter-connected – just as they are in the life of any human being. We believe that positive change in each of the nine spokes is the key to unlocking whole-life transformation in the lives of individuals and communities we work with.

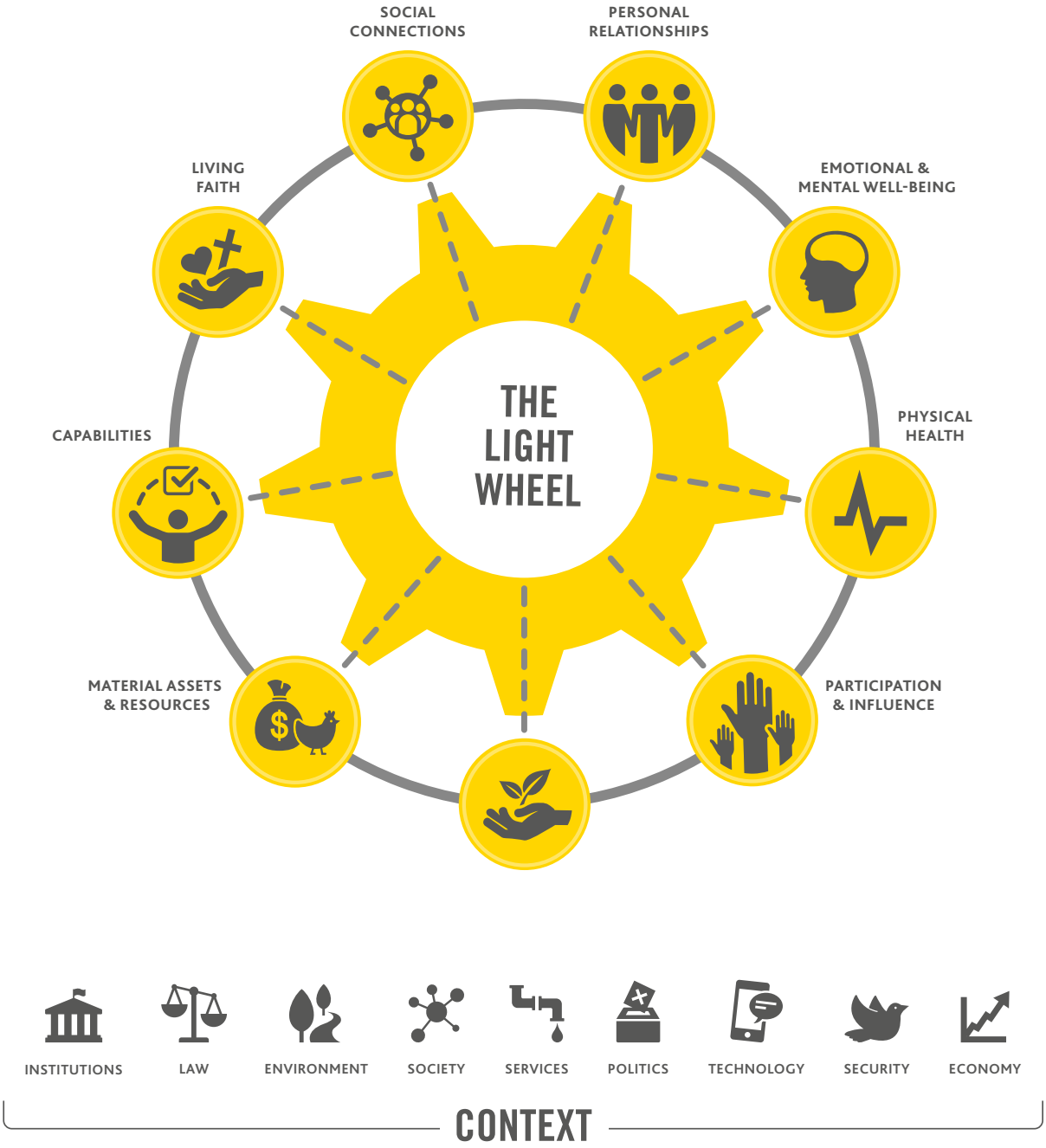
As well as providing a framework to think about whole-life transformation, the Light Wheel toolkit contains a range of data collection tools, including focus group discussion questions, household survey questions and observation questions, for each of the nine spokes. The tools are based on a 'maturity model', with one being the lowest score and five the highest score.

The Light Wheel is a participatory tool that encourages communities to score themselves during the focus group discussions. The community's score can be compared with the findings from the household survey and direct observation to build a rich picture of community life. This process can be repeated throughout a project cycle to understand holistic change over time.

The Light Wheel takes data collection beyond measuring the direct outputs and outcomes of a project, and helps us to capture the intended and unintended impact of a project from a holistic perspective. Experience tells us that the tools are most effective when they are adapted for the specific context in which they are being used.

For more advice you can contact lightwheel.support@tearfund.org or find the Light Wheel toolkit on Tearfund Learn (see the further reading list for details).

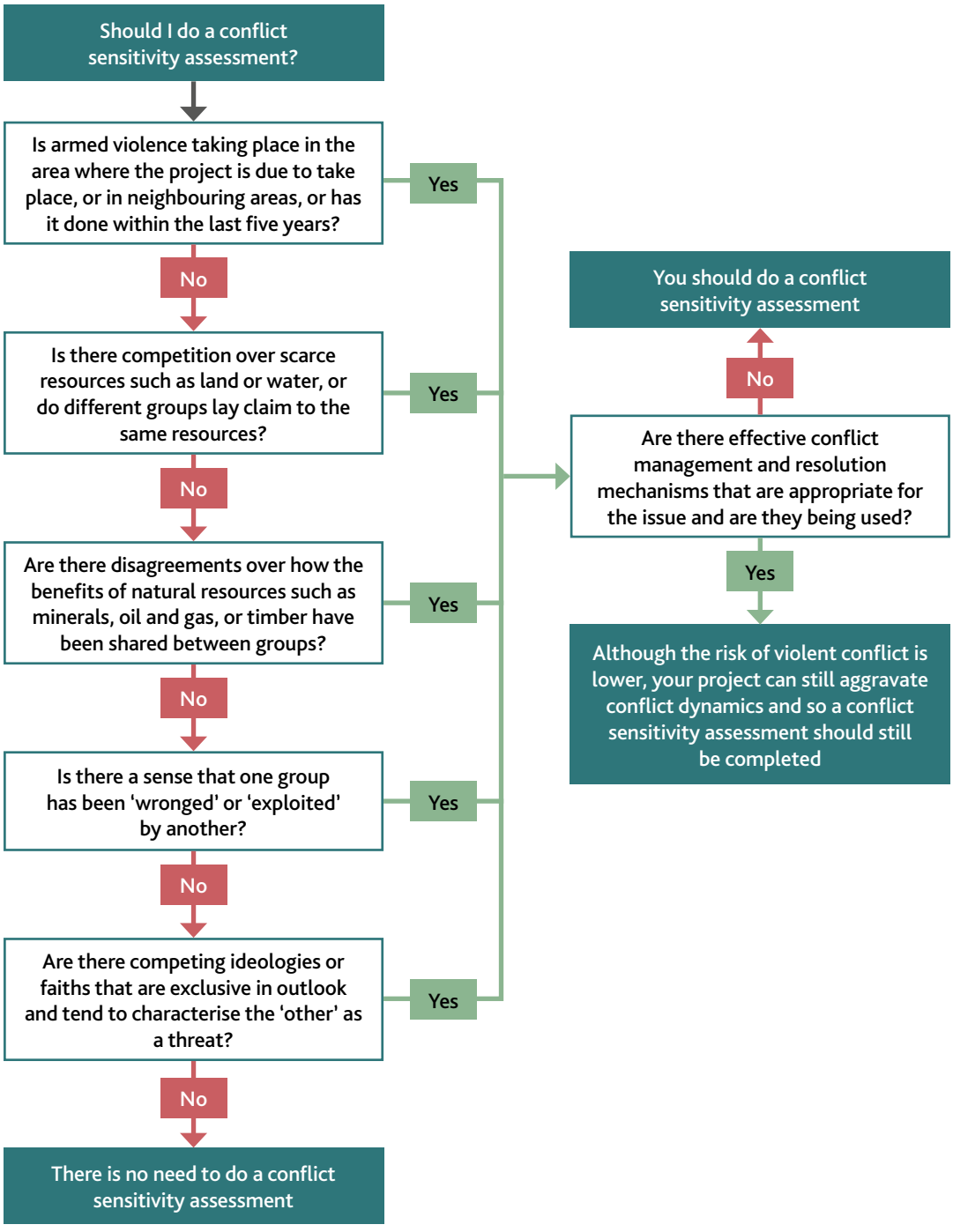
Diagram 48 **Tearfund's Light Wheel**



# APPENDIX 4
# CONFLICT ANALYSIS TOOLS

Is there conflict or violence, either obvious or hidden, in the area that I am working in? Do I need to do a conflict sensitivity assessment? Refer to the flowchart below.

Diagram 49 **Conflict sensitivity assessment**



If you read through the flowchart and the answer is yes, we would recommend that you use the 'C2 conflict sensitivity assessment' tool, which can be found on the Tearfund Peacebuilding hub (https://sites.google.com/a/tearfundfriends.net/tearfund-peacebuilding/home/conflict-sensitivity-tools). It is a public site but you may need to request permission to view the document. The C2 conflict sensitivity tool is a 7-step process which will take you through the essentials of both conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity assessment. It will help you to think about how your project will interact with drivers of conflict and make sure that your planned intervention will not make existing divisions or tensions worse.

The tool is structured for workshop use. You will need to put aside between half a day and three days depending on the complexity of your project, and plan ahead to include the right people in the discussion. A full list of instructions, a framework for discussion and helpful questions are included in the toolkit.

If you have already been through the analysis process, and want to check that your project is as conflict-sensitive as possible, you can work through the 'Conflict Sensitivity Checklist'. This self-assessment can be found on the Tearfund Peacebuilding hub, in the Conflict Sensitivity Tools section.

## Putting conflict analysis into practice

Key recommendations for carrying out conflict analysis:

1. Conduct regular reviews of your original conflict analysis or conflict sensitivity assessment, especially if you are in an area where the situation is fluid and subject to rapid change.
2. Think about conflict from a gender perspective: how different is this for men and women? This is increasingly important for project proposals, and you can refer to the 'Conducting a Gender Conflict Analysis' tool on the Tearfund Peacebuilding site for more detail. It is also important to think from an age perspective, and consider any other demographics (tribe, faith, disability etc).
3. Remember that conflict analysis is not just about looking at negative drivers – it is also a nudge to look at positive influences, things that strengthen communities, and ways that we can slow down divisions and build capacity.
4. When working in conflict situations, think about modelling the change you want to see, as our words, actions and behaviour will often speak volumes.

# APPENDIX 5
# CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

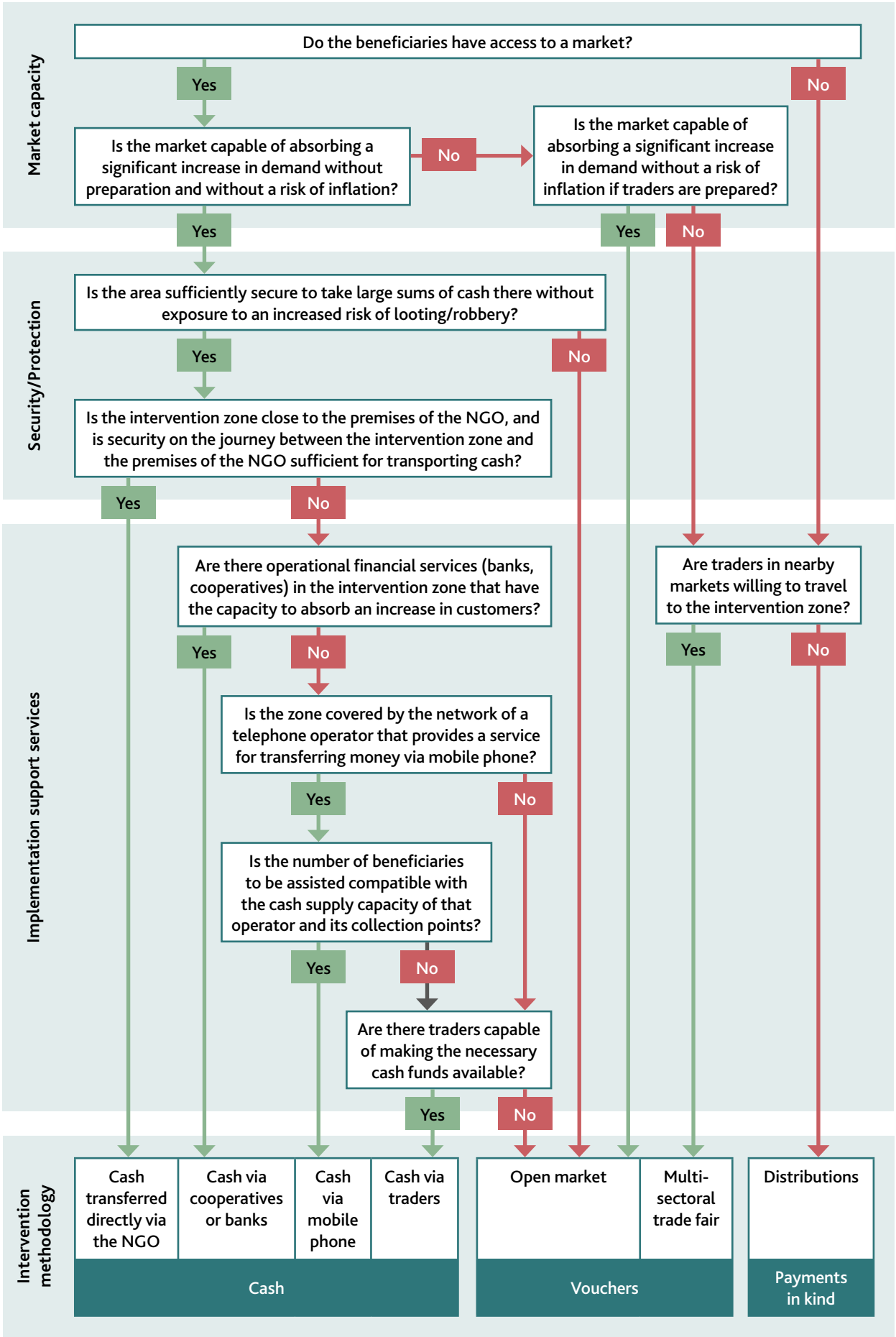
Diagram 50 **Cash and voucher assistance feasibility checklist**

| Criteria | Consideration | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Can households' needs be met through specific commodities and/or services? | | | |
| | Do the beneficiaries have access to a market? | | | |
| | Is the economy monetised and are people used to handling money? | | | |
| | Does the population usually use markets to access its needs? | | | |
| | Are markets accessible? | | | |
| | Are needed items available in sufficient quantity and at acceptable prices in the local markets? | | | |
| | Are traders able and willing to adapt to an increased demand?<br>*Consider transportation, stocking, quality and quantity issues* | | | |
| | Are prices likely to remain stable in the coming weeks/months? | | | |
| | Are cash transfers the preferred option for the beneficiaries? If not, which is their preference? (cash, vouchers, in-kind, a mix of those)<br>*Consider empowerment, dignity issues and beneficiary capacity to deal with technology (mobiles, cards, etc)* | | | |

| Criteria | Consideration | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Are the infrastructure and services needed to transfer cash to beneficiaries available?<br>*Consider financial and technology requirements (banks, microfinance institutions, mobile phone coverage, etc)* | | | |
| | Is cash and voucher assistance in accordance with local government policies?<br>*Check that the government allows cash and voucher assistance* | | | |
| | Are the risks associated with cash and voucher assistance acceptable or possible to mitigate?<br>*Consider beneficiary and staff security, as well as corruption issues* | | | |
| | Can you be sure that the beneficiaries will not be exposed to a major risk compared with other types of assistance? | | | |
| | Is security in the region controllable and does it permit the implementing partner to intervene through cash? | | | |
| | Is cash and voucher assistance within donors' funding policies and framework? | | | |
| | Does the organisation have the internal capacity (programmatic, financial, logistic) to implement a cash and/or voucher intervention?<br>*Consider previous experience and potential partnerships* | | | |
| | Is it possible to set up and implement cash and voucher assistance with the necessary speed and at the intended scale?<br>*Consider the time that might be required to roll out the different delivery mechanisms* | | | |

Adapted from International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, *Cash in Emergencies Toolkit,* Module 3, Response Analysis, M3.1.2.1 Is cash feasible checklist. See rcmcash.org (accessed 13 December 2019).

Diagram 51 **Cash and voucher assistance decision-making tree**



# FURTHER READING

**Throughout the guide we point to excellent guides and tools that can offer more information. Here is a list of titles and links:**

- ***The Sphere Handbook* 2018**
  spherestandards.org/handbook-2018
- **The Light Wheel toolkit**
  learn.tearfund.org/lightwheel
- **Online sample size calculator**
  surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator
- **Political economy analysis**
  washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/political-economy-analysis-toolkit
- **Market assessment, and cash and voucher assistance**
  Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) cashlearning.org
  unhcr.org/cash-based-interventions.html
  cmcash.org/toolkit
- **Evaluations guidance**
  alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-guide

**Two other guides you may find useful:**

- ***Reveal* toolkit**
  learn.tearfund.org/reveal
- ***Project Management for Development Professionals***
  pm4ngos.org/pmd-pro

Websites accessed December 2019.

# ROOTS GUIDES

Photo: Andrew Philip/Tearfund

**Capacity building for development organisations: use these guides to develop your knowledge, strengthen your practice and train others.**

### Roots 1&2 – Advocacy toolkit

A comprehensive guide to the theory and practice of advocacy, with case studies and handouts to use in training.

### Roots 3 – Capacity self-assessment

An organisational assessment tool to enable organisations to identify their capacity-building needs.

### Roots 4 – Peace-building within our communities

Learning points taken from case studies of Tearfund partners who have been involved in encouraging peace and reconciliation in communities.

### Roots 6 – Fundraising

Shows how to develop a fundraising strategy and contains ideas to help organisations diversify their funding base.

### Roots 7 – Child participation

Looks at the importance of including children in community life and in project planning, implementation and evaluation.

### Roots 9 – Reducing risk of disaster in our communities

Looks at a process called 'Participatory Assessment of Disaster Risk', which enables communities to consider the hazards they face, their vulnerabilities, their capacities, and how they can take action to reduce disaster risk.

### Roots 10 – Organisational governance

Looks at governance principles and issues so that organisations can improve their governance structure or set up a governing body if they do not already have one.

### Roots 11 – Partnering with the local church

Looks at how Christian organisations can work more closely with local churches.

### Roots 12 – Human resource management

Looks at policy and practice relating to people who work for an organisation, including information about recruitment, contracts and managing and developing staff.

### Roots 13 – Environmental sustainability

Shows development organisations how to become more environmentally sustainable and how to respond effectively to environmental issues such as climate change and environmental degradation.

All are available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, and can be downloaded from: **learn.tearfund.org**

*Please note that Roots 8 on HIV is no longer available as the recommendations are out of date.*

Go to **learn.tearfund.org/shop** or contact Tearfund using the details on the back cover to purchase printed copies.


## PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

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