



Project Management for Development Organizations

Doing the Right Projects,
Doing the Projects Right

The Logical Framework

The Logical Framework (Logframe) is the term used to the logical structure of a project's information. A Logframe is a project management tool constructed during the project design phase and is a structured summary of the project design information needs. It should be flexible; that is, there should be opportunities for refining the details during the life of a project as more is learned about the realities of conditions in the project area.

The typical logical framework consists of a 4 x 4 matrix, with a vertical hierarchy of objectives at the (1) project final goal (impact), (2) intermediate objectives (effect), (3) output, and 4) activity levels. The horizontal components are (a) summaries of the objectives at each level, (b) performance indicators for the achievement of those objectives, (c) the sources and means needed to verify the indicators, and (d) the important risks and assumptions for moving from one level of objectives to the next.

Logframes are living documents, which may change over the life of the project according to changes in the dynamic external environment and to any alterations that need to be made to the outputs. The information contained is generated during the design of the project and is used to manage project implementation. The logical framework must show how progress towards the project purpose will be achieved.

Project Final Goal (Project Impact)

The ultimate aim or purpose of the project, described in clear terms to reflect a measurable and defined improvement in human conditions, expected to take place in a target group, in an expected period of time. What the project intends to contribute in the long term as a result of achieving the intermediate goals, e.g., improve the rural standard of living.

Outcomes

The intended changes in systemic conditions or behaviors that must be achieved in order to accomplish the impact goal; that is, each effect objective is a necessary condition to achieving the impact goal. What response the project intends to achieve among the target population groups, e.g., increases the production and sale of high quality rice by small farmers.

Outputs

What the project intends to achieve in the short term as a result of the project activities. E.g., 100 farmers trained to carry out improved rice farming

Activities

What the project staff and target population are going to do. E.g., provide technical support to existing farmer groups. This is the 'lowest' level in the sense that it occurs first, and is completely dependent on project inputs.

Objectively Verifiable Indicators

These are the performance indicators the project has identified to measure the results. The indicators present an operational description of the overall objective, project outcomes, and outputs, in terms of the variable (what will change?) and target value (how much?), target groups/beneficiaries, place and time. Performance indicators are the specific measures used to monitor this progress. Here are the criteria for a good indicator of achievement:

- Valid – it must measure the intended result.
- Reliable – the measure must be consistently attained over time.
- Sensitive – the measure should respond to changes, and should sufficiently-quickly identify if things are going wrong.
- Simple – the measure should be easy to collect or perform.
- Useful – it must help with decision making or provide information for future learning.
- Affordable – you need to be able to afford the financial and time costs involved in taking the measurement on a regular basis.

Means of Verification

This section defines how to verify the achievement of the indicators. It identifies the sources of data it will use, how the project will collect the data and how often.

Important Risks and Assumptions

These are the conditions the project believes to be true. These include any number of external factors that can limit or keep the project from achieving the expected result.

Temporal Logic Model

The core of the Logical Framework is the "temporal logic model" that runs through the matrix. This takes the form of a series of connected propositions:

- If the planned activities are implemented, and the assumptions hold, then the outputs will be delivered
- If the outputs are delivered, and the assumptions hold, then the outcome will be achieved.
- If the outcome is achieved, and the assumptions hold, then the project final goal will be achieved.

Logframe Matrix			
Project Summary	Indicators of Achievement	Means of Verification	Important Risks and Assumptions
Goal:	then		
Outcomes:	If		and
	then		
Outputs:	If		and
	then		
Activities:	If		and

Tracking progress against carefully defined output indicators provides a clear basis for monitoring progress. Given a well constructed logical framework, stakeholders should be able to agree on exactly what the project attempts to accomplish, and how likely it is to succeed in terms of programmatic goals as well as project outcomes.

The Graphical Logical Framework or Work Breakdown Structure

A Logframe can be visualized in different ways, and can take new formats to present the connections between objectives and activities. The need to visualize the project outcomes becomes an imperative in order to better understand the relationships between inputs activities outputs and the higher objectives and goals of the project. The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is another planning tool used to define a project in terms of its outputs while providing a

method for breaking these deliverables into meaningful work units. The WBS allows the project manager to clearly describe the hierarchical nature of the work to be performed and establishes a foundation for other elements of the project planning documents including the project's resource plan, budget, implementation plan, and project schedule.

With the WBS, project managers will be able describe the outcomes of a project in a way that is clear to members of the project team as well as the project's stakeholders, beneficiaries and donors, while at the same time capturing the order and sequence of the work necessary to produce those outputs. The WBS provides a means for carefully detailing the outputs of the project and facilitates the identification of specific the work elements, and groupings required to deliver each element. Additionally, once it is complete, the WBS becomes an essential building block and a reference point for other project plan components.¹ The chart below is an example of the WBS format.

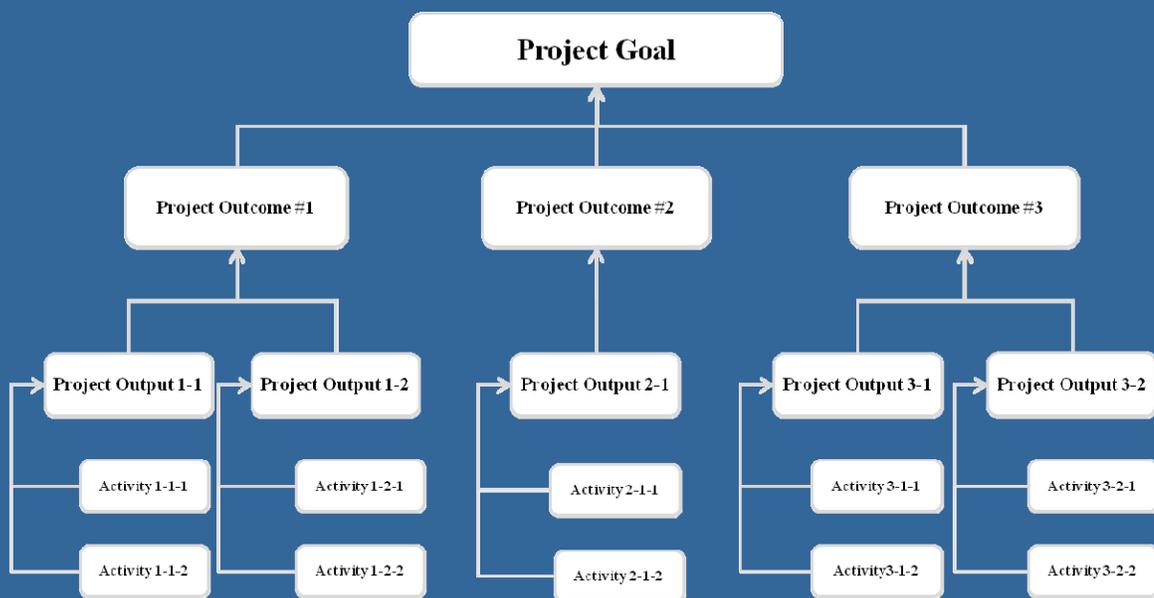


Figure 1 Graphical Logframe WBS

In the above example it's much easier to see how the project activities are organized under each corresponding output and each with its corresponding project objectives. One significant value of the Logframe, within the context of an information system, is the ability to show where the project achieved its initial goals and where is lagging behind; this help managers reallocate resources and efforts in those areas that need more inputs.

¹ Project Management Institute, WBS Standards, 2003

Typical Log Frame Structure

(a) Project Structure	(b) Indicators of Achievement	(c) Means of Verification	(d) Important Risks and Assumptions
<p>(1) Project Final Goal (Impact Goal) What are the wider objectives which the project will help achieve? Longer term program impact</p>	<p>What are the quantitative measures or qualitative judgments to know whether these broad objectives have been achieved?</p>	<p>What sources of information exist or can be provided to allow the goal to be measured?</p>	<p>What external factors are necessary to sustain the objectives in the long run?</p>
<p>(2) Intermediate Objectives (Effect Objectives) What are the intended immediate effects of the project, what are the benefits, to whom? What effect, improvements or changes will the project bring about?</p>	<p>What are the quantitative measures or qualitative judgments, by which achievement of the purpose can be judged?</p>	<p>What sources of information exist or can be provided to allow the goal to be measured?</p>	<p>What external factors are necessary to contribute to the achievement of the goal?</p>
<p>(3) Outputs What outputs (deliverables) are to be produced in order to achieve the intermediate objectives?</p>	<p>What kind and quality of outputs and by when will they be produced? (Quantity, Quality, Time)</p>	<p>What are the sources of information to verify the achievement of the outputs?</p>	<p>What are the factors not in control of the project which are liable to restrict the outputs achieving the Intermediate Objectives?</p>
<p>(4) Activities What activities must be achieved to accomplish the outputs?</p>	<p>What kind and quality of activities and by when will they be produced?</p>	<p>What are the sources of information to verify the achievement of the activities?</p>	<p>What factors will restrict the activities from creating the outputs?</p>

These series of articles focuses on concepts and practices related to development projects. It is our hope that the ideas and methodologies presented here prove useful to anyone who is engaged in managing projects in the broader development community, and helps bring sustainable benefits to the communities and beneficiaries who need it the most.

The Millennium Development Goals aim by 2015 to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people.

PM4DEV is committed to provide resources and develop knowledge and expertise to support development organizations in their efforts to achieve this ambitious goal.



Project Management
For Development
Organizations

www.pm4dev.com
info@pm4dev.com