The Logical Framework Approach

Background, concepts, tools and practice
Discussion Outline

- What is the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)?
  - Key steps in the LFA
  - The logframe
  - The Logic in the LFA
  - Strengths and weaknesses of the LFA

- The link between LFA and RBME

- Using the logical framework matrix
What is the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)?

- It is an analytical, presentational and management tool which can help planners and managers to:
  - Analyze the existing situation during project preparation;
  - Establish a logical hierarchy of means by which objectives will be reached;
  - Identify some of the potential risks;
  - Establish how outputs and outcomes might best be monitored and evaluated; and
  - Present a summary of the project in a standard format.
- It is an instrument for logical analysis and structured thinking in project planning.
What is the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)?

- It is a framework, a battery of questions which, if they are used in a uniform way, provide a structure for the dialogue between different stakeholders in a project.

- It is a planning instrument, which encompasses the different elements in a process of change (problems, objectives, stakeholders, plan for implementation).

- It is an instrument to create participation, accountability and ownership.
Key steps in the LFA

- Establish the general scope and focus of the project.
- Agree on the specific planning framework, terminology and design process.
- Undertake a detailed situation analysis.
- Develop the project strategy, objectives hierarchy, implementation arrangements and resources.
- Identify and analyze the assumptions and risks for the chosen strategies and modify the project design if assumptions are incorrect or risks are too high.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation framework.
The Logframe

- It is the product of the LFA process
- A 4 x 4 matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Summary</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)</th>
<th>Means of Verification (MOV)</th>
<th>Important Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL</td>
<td>(Measurement of goal achievement)</td>
<td>(Sources of information; Methods used)</td>
<td>(Assumptions affecting Purpose-Goal linkage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>(End of project status)</td>
<td>(Sources of information; Methods used)</td>
<td>(Assumptions affecting Output-Purpose linkage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTPUTS</td>
<td>(Magnitude of outputs; Planned completion date)</td>
<td>(Sources of information; Methods used)</td>
<td>(Assumptions affecting Inputs-Outputs linkage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Inputs (Nature and level of resources necessary’ cost’ Planned starting date)</td>
<td>(Sources of information; Methods used)</td>
<td>(Initial assumptions about the project)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key features of the Logframe**

- Defines a hierarchy of aims, thereby developing a common understanding of programme/project expectations;

- Defines indicators of success and establishes criteria for monitoring and evaluation;

- Defines critical assumptions on which the programme is based; and

- Identifies the means of verifying programme accomplishments.
The hierarchy of aims is shown in this diagram, with the goal to be achieved referring to the condition of well-being of the target group: individuals, families, or communities.

The purpose is determined by asking the question “how will this goal be achieved?”

The outputs are the deliverables through which the purpose will be achieved.

Activities are the main elements of component projects which produce the outputs.
Cause-effect relationships among objectives at all levels

- **Goal**
- **Purpose**
- **Outputs**
- **Activities**
- **Inputs**

Under full control of project management
Beyond control of project management
Goal

- Otherwise labeled the Development Objective, this refers to the higher level objective that the project is expected to contribute to.

- Wide in breadth and scope so that its achievement is expected to be done by more than one programme or project.
Purpose

- Otherwise labeled the Immediate Objective
- The result that is achieved as a consequence of the project delivering the planned outputs
- May be expressed as a ‘change in behavior’ of a group or institution, with the project outputs causing or facilitating that change
Outcomes

- The tangible results or deliverables that the project management team should be able to guarantee delivering
- Specifies the group or institution that will benefit from the outputs
- Indicates timetable
Activities

- Specific activities needed to produce the outputs
- Time frames may be specified
- As many sets of activities will have to be identified as there are outputs.
- Activities will have corresponding inputs, which are the resources that the project or programme utilizes so the outputs will be produced.
Unlike the vertical logic, does not completely show causal relationship

A row in the matrix presents (from left to right)

- The result or objective
- How the achievement will be measured or verified
- From where and how this information will be obtained
- The external factors that could prevent the project from achieving the next level objective.
Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)

- Quantitative, qualitative and time-bound measures that provide evidence of the extent to which the aims have been met at the four levels of the hierarchy

- May be direct or indirect

- Help refine and clarify aims

- Indicate how to recognize success at each level

- Facilitate monitoring and give the signal to take remedial actions if needed

- Facilitate end of programme evaluation
Must be valid, reliable, precise, cost-effective and stated independently between levels

Should provide a clear statement of how the project target group will benefit from the realization of outputs.

Should be specific in terms of

- Quality – what?
- Quantity – how much?
- Time – when? how long?
- Target Group – who?
- Place – where?
An OVI should...

- Measure what is important to the project
- Measure changes that are caused by the project (be attributable to the project)
- Be cost-effective in the collection and analysis of data
- Be independent and not inherent to the project
- Be verifiable to reach agreement.
Means of Verification (MOV)

- The specific sources from which the status of each of the indicators can be ascertained
- The precise method by which the verification is done or the measurement conducted
Important assumptions...

- Are external factors—preconditions or important events, conditions or decisions outside the control of the project management which...
  - Must prevail on the goal
  - Are necessary for the achievement of its purpose
  - Are necessary for the production of outputs
  - Are necessary for the start of the project.

- The achievement of aims depends on whether the assumption holds true and the risks do not materialize.
Assessing external factors

The following table may be used as a guide in assessing external factors. You may improve on this and develop your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Is the external factor important?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Include in logframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Will this factor be realized as a result of another activity outside the project being developed?</td>
<td>Almost certainly</td>
<td>Do not include in logframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ If the external factor is unlikely to be realized by another activity, is it possible to design the current project so that it can influence the external factor?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Redesign the project so the factor becomes an acceptable assumption (add/revise objectives, activities, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ If the external factor is unlikely to be realized by another activity, is it possible to design the current project so that it can influence the external factor?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The assumption is a killer assumption and the project is not feasible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The temporal logic model (means-end or if-then logic)

- If these Activities are implemented and the Assumptions hold, then these Outputs will be delivered.
- If these outputs are delivered, and these Assumptions hold, then this Purpose will be achieved.
- If this Purpose is achieved, and these Assumptions hold, then this Goal will be achieved.
How do you plan using the LFA?

- Start by identifying the results you would like to achieve:
  - The impact in or goal for a particular development situation
  - The lower level results you need to achieve in order to cause that impact
  - The activities and resources that are required.

2. Clarify each level of the results hierarchy by thinking upwards:
   - What specific problem will this address (problem statement)?
   - What external factors need to be considered at each level of objectives to ensure successful implementation?

Adapted from Pradhan, The Logical Framework Approach.
How to develop a good logframe

- Level of detail – should be enough to guide project implementation

- Matrix structure – 4x4, and is therefore limiting, especially for large projects; different matrices can be prepared for each purpose

- Process or product-driven – the trend towards process-driven interventions is increasing, with capacity development recognized as needed for people and institutions to guide their own development process
How to develop a good logframe...2

- The sideways logic – it is important to remember that outputs from one part of the project will often be necessary inputs or conditions for another part.

- Where to locate outputs and activities – place under a specific output all activities necessary to achieve it, or split up an activity and be more specific if it relates to several outputs.

- Performance questions and target indicators – both may be found in the second column; performance questions are important at the purpose and goal level where quantitative indicators may be difficult.
7. Aggregation of outputs – achieved by a project at the purpose level; purpose-level indicators may therefore be a compilation of the separate indicators for each output (aggregate indicators may not be possible)

8. Indicative targets – indicative outputs, activities and indicators may be written in the first draft of the matrix; project design is a continuing process

9. Monitoring mechanisms – may be the same for different purposes and outputs, e.g., survey
10. Assumptions and risks – should also be about the internal logic of the project strategy, in addition to external conditions; project design may be adjusted to lower risks.

11. Gender and other equity differences – such cross-cutting issues may have to be addressed in both project design and M&E; where they are critical, it may be desirable to have cross-cutting objectives and indicators.
In summary, the logframe serves as...

- A tool for planning a logical set of interventions;
- A tool for appraising a programme document;
- A concise summary of the programme;
- A tool for monitoring progress made with regard to delivery of outputs and activities; and
- A tool for evaluating impact of programme outputs, or progress in achieving purpose and goal.
- A tool for participation, ownership, and accountability.
Strengths of the LFA

- During initial stages can be used to test project ideas and concepts for relevance and usefulness.
- Designing logframes help to make comprehensive plans that are feasible within acceptable levels of risks.
- Logframes can form the basis of ‘contracts’ with explicit statements of what will be delivered.
- During implementation the logframe serves as the main reference for drawing up detailed work plans, terms of reference, budgets, etc.
- The logframe provides indicators against which the project progress and achievements can be assessed.
Weaknesses of the LFA

- There may be a tendency to focus too much on problems rather than on opportunities and vision.

- The logframe may be used too rigidly, leading people into a ‘blueprint’ approach to project design.

- Limited attention to problems of uncertainty is provided, where a learning or adaptive approach to project design and management is required.

- There may be a tendency for poorly-thought-through sets of activities and objectives to be entered into a matrix, giving the appearance of a logical framework when in fact the key elements of the analytical process have been skipped.