



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RESOURCE CENTRE

**PARC**

**Evaluation Series  
No.1  
The Logical Framework**

By

**Julia Flores**  
[www.parcinfo.org](http://www.parcinfo.org)

## PARC Evaluation Series No. 1: The Logical Framework

Looking back over the last year and the conferences where the PARC participated we have noticed that development interventions are at very different stages regarding methodologies for planning monitoring and evaluation. Although new evaluation approaches are being developed for new aid modalities like general budget support others like the logframe are still being used. In some cases the logframe is even just about to be introduced. Taking into account the existing needs of the evaluation community we decided to compile some useful information about the logframe, its opportunities and limitations. At the same time we have tried to capture the experiences of some institutions implementing the logframe in their interventions. Sources like IFAD, JICA, AUSAID, Programme on Disability and Healthcare Technology and PARC have been used in order to understand the thinking behind the logframe. This document provides practitioners with a quick overview about the following information:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Predominant applications and uses of the logframe**
- 3. The Logframe Matrix**
- 4. Definition of some logframe terminologies**
- 5. Key steps in the Logical Framework Approach**
- 6. Advantages and Disadvantages**
- 7. Differences in analytical focus**
- 8. Things to keep in mind**

The PARC evaluation series should be seen less as academic papers but rather as practical hands on guides for busy practitioners.

### 1 Introduction

The logical framework approach (LFA) has evolved since the 1970s as a methodology for improving the systematic planning of development projects. Over time, it has evolved from simply a framework for structuring project objectives to more sophisticated, process-orientated approaches for involving stakeholders in project design and management.

Using LFA for project or program design imposes rigour in assessing what is to be achieved and the assumptions behind what interventions and activities will be required. Many international donors, such as the Asian Development Bank and the European Union, require development interventions they fund to be designed according to an LFA.

Various groups and facilitators have integrated an extensive range of participatory planning methodologies and tools with the basic LFA framework and quite sophisticated planning workshops have been developed. There are numerous LFA manuals and documents.

The logframe is a useful tool for understanding what intervention objectives, activities, and inputs are, how target values and measurement are selected, and what intervention risks are. The logframe has been used for the planning and management

of interventions. The logframe may provide the evaluator with information about the actual situation and the logics or theories of interventions.

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is an analytical, presentational and management tool which can help planners and managers to:

- ⊙ Analyse the existing situation during intervention 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 intervention in a standard format.

## 2 Predominant applications and uses of the logframe

Design process	Funding agencies	Intervention management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tease out the reasons that the designers' proposals will lead to benefits</li> <li>▪ Locate the more modest aspirations of the project/ programme purpose as a contribution to wider and longer term development goals such MDGs</li> <li>▪ Expose assumptions, to analyse risks and</li> <li>▪ Agree the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes</li> <li>▪ Illustrate a common agreement between a diverse group of stakeholders about what the development activity intends to do and how</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get agreement over the design amongst advisers from different academic backgrounds</li> <li>▪ Get approval for funding from senior managers - the logframe is a summary of a long intervention document for busy people</li> <li>▪ Act as the basis for tendering work and as the basis of a contract between an implementer and the funder</li> <li>▪ Act as a form of institutional memory about original intentions, and assumptions as the intervention changes over time</li> <li>▪ Act as the basis for monitoring during the course of implementation to provide feedback against pre-stated interim measures which can help the implementing team to adjust what they do to achieve the outcomes</li> <li>▪ Act as the basis for interim and end of cycle evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use as a monitoring framework for the implementation team</li> <li>▪ Report progress to stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Use as a base document from which to agree major design changes with stakeholders.</li> </ul>

### 3 The Logframe Matrix

Activity description	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
<p><b>Goal or Impact</b> – The long term development impact (policy goal) that the activity contributes to at the national or sectoral level</p>	<p>What are the quantitative ways of measuring, or qualitative ways of judging, whether these broad objectives are being achieved? (estimated time) How the achievement will be measured - Including who will collect the information and how often</p>	<p>What sources of information exist, or can be provided cost-effectively? Including who will collect the information and how often</p>	<p>(Goal to Supergoal): What external factors are necessary for sustaining objectives in the long run?</p>
<p><b>Purpose or Outcome</b> – The medium term results that the activity aims to achieve – in terms of benefits to target groups</p>	<p>How the achievement of the purpose will be measured – including appropriate targets. What are the quantitative measures or qualitative evidence by which achievement and distribution of impacts and benefits can be judged</p>	<p>What sources of information exists or can be provided cost-effectively? Does provision for collection need to be made under inputs-outputs?</p>	<p>(Purpose to Goal): What conditions external to the intervention are necessary if achievements of the intervention’s purpose are to contribute to reaching the intervention goal?</p>
<p><b>Component objectives or Intermediate Results</b> – This level in the objectives or results hierarchy can be used to provide a clear link between outputs and outcomes (particularly for larger multi-component activities)</p>	<p>How the achievement of the component objectives will be measured – including appropriate targets. What kind and quantity of outputs, and by when will they be produced? (quantity, quality, time)</p>	<p>What sources of information? Including who will collect it and how often</p>	<p>(Output of Purpose): What are the factors beyond the control of the intervention which, if not present, are liable to restrict progress from outputs to achievements of intervention purpose?</p>
<p><b>Outputs</b> – The tangible products or services that the activity will deliver</p>	<p>How the achievement of the Outputs will be measured – including appropriate targets. We recommend that the verifiable indicators are included against all activities. This is essential for interventions reporting and monitoring against the Logical Framework.</p>	<p>What are sources of information? Including who will collect it and how often</p>	<p>(Activity to Output): 1) What external factors must be realised to obtain planned outputs on schedule? 2) What kind of decisions or actions outside the control of the intervention are necessary for inception of the intervention?</p>

## 4 Definition of some logframe terminologies

In order to design the logframe all stakeholders must be clear about the meaning of the terminology. Depending on the country of the intervention it might be necessary to change the wording in order to facilitate the implementation and the ownership. For a detail list please see annex 1.

## 5 Key steps in the Logical Framework Approach

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

The Logical Framework Approach involves problem analysis (problem tree), stakeholder analysis, objectives tree, objectives hierarchy and selecting a preferred implementation strategy.

The product of this analytical approach is the matrix (the Logframe), which summarises what the intervention intends to do and how, what the key assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated.

## 6 Advantages and Disadvantages

### **6.1 Logframe limitations and weaknesses**

- ⊙ The main criticism is that it can lead to a rigid and bureaucratically controlled intervention design that becomes disconnected from field realities and changing situations
- ⊙ Focusing too much on problems rather than opportunities and vision;
- ⊙ Being used too rigidly, leading people into a 'blueprint' approach to intervention design;
- ⊙ Limited attention to problems of uncertainty where a learning or adaptive approach to intervention design and management is required; and
- ⊙ A tendency for poorly-thought-through sets of activities and objectives to be entered into a PPM table, giving the appearance of a logical framework when in fact the key elements of the analytical process have been skipped.

- ⦿ It may not always be possible to find agreement on the logframe within all stakeholders
- ⦿ In some case logframes are the basis of a contractual agreement between funders and implementers. This could lead that the managers of the intervention may present an optimistic view about what would be achieved in order to get the intervention funds approved
- ⦿ The logframe uses a linear model of change while social and cultural processes are very complex and not always linear

## 6.2 Advantages of using the LFA

- ⦿ It brings together in one place a statement of all the key components of a intervention (this is particularly helpful when there is a change of staff)
- ⦿ It presents them in a systematic, concise and coherent way, thus clarifying and exposing the logic of how the intervention is expected to work
- ⦿ It separates out the various levels in the hierarchy of objectives, helping to ensure that inputs and outputs are not confused with each other or with objectives and that wider ranging objectives are not overlooked
- ⦿ It clarifies the relationships which underlie judgments about likely efficiency and effectiveness of interventions
- ⦿ It identifies the main factors related to the success of the intervention
- ⦿ It provides a basis for monitoring and evaluation by identifying indicators of success, and means of quantification or assessment
- ⦿ It encourages a multidisciplinary approach to intervention preparation and supervision.
- ⦿ During initial stages can be used to test intervention ideas and concepts for relevance and usefulness.
- ⦿ When 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.
- ⦿ Logframe provides indicators against which the intervention progress and achievements can be assessed.
- ⦿ Is easy to use more adaptively, particularly if the original design is seen, at least in part, as needing future finalization and probably revision, and intervention management prioritises annual reviews and logframe updating.

## 7 Differences in analytical focus

This table highlights differences between the Macro and Micro level when implementing the logframe.

LFA Element	Macro-Policy and Program Support	Projects and Stand Alone TA
<b>Problem and Stakeholder Analysis</b>	Focus more on: Macro-economic framework, status of the aid 'market', national development/poverty reduction strategies, sector program strategies, public finance management systems, institutional framework, organisational capacity, donor coordination, etc	Focus more on: Overview of institutional and organisational context, then with greater attention paid to specific technical constraints or problems within the focus area of 'intervention'
<b>Objectives Analysis</b>	Focus more on: Partner Government priorities, higher level policy and program level objectives, development outcomes/results, strategies for achieving results	Focus more on: Project-based objectives, technical outputs, activities and input requirements
<b>Strategy Options</b>	Focus more on: Analysis of options for working through or within PG systems, coordination arrangements with other development partners, aid effectiveness considerations, etc	Focus more on: Choosing between technical alternatives, considering appropriate parallel management and financing arrangements, considering Australian comparative advantage
<b>Performance Indicators and MOVs</b>	Focus more on: Higher level indicators of impact and outcome (results), use of MDGs or similar, using (or building on) existing PG systems, harmonisation with other donors, accountability to 'beneficiaries'	Focus more on: Project specific indicators, output focus, contract milestones, reporting to GoA, attribution of benefit to Australian contribution, accountability to Australian tax payers/authorities
<b>Assumptions/Risks</b>	Focus more on: Assumptions from the perspective of the partner government and their 'program managers'	Focus more on: Assumptions from the perspective of the 'project managers' and the donor(s) - as well as on those from the perspective of the partner government and their 'program managers'

## 8 Things to keep in mind

- ⦿ The logframe is a **living document** that needs to be updated to the environment in which is being implemented
- ⦿ Implementers of an intervention should **use the logframe routinely** to monitor the inputs and outputs
- ⦿ The logframe is a tool that needs to be **applied with other tools** in order to deliver evidence related to the long term impact of an intervention
- ⦿ The logframe is a very suitable tool for the project level and can deliver very detail information if necessary to project implementers. Nevertheless it needs to be simplified if it is going to be implemented in a more complex intervention
- ⦿ The logframe should be used as a **planning tool**
- ⦿ If the logframe is being used **in a complex intervention** like programmes then it may be necessary to make use of a series of logframes nested inside a larger all embracing logframe with the goal or purpose level of the smaller projects contributing to the outputs of the over-arching logframe.
- ⦿ The logframe is a very **useful tool for evaluators** as it provides a picture of intentions and theories of change
- ⦿ If possible **all beneficiaries need to be involved** in the drafting and design process of the logframes
- ✿ **Keep realistic** in context where project managers have very little control or power and when the speed of change in the real world can either be very slow or unpredictable fast
- ⦿ Any updates done to the logframe must be shared with all stakeholders and need to be agreed in advance in order to increase ownership

## **Annex1: Definition of some logframe terminologies**

**Activity description** provides a narrative summary of what the activity intends to achieve and how. It describes the means by which desired ends are to be achieved (the vertical logic). That is, it describes what the activity will actually do in order to produce the planned outputs and outcomes.

**Activity component:** Constructing the activity description may involve disaggregating the work to be undertaken into a number of 'activity components'. An activity component consists of a sub-set of inputs, work program tasks and outputs that form a natural whole, and can be considered as a separate part of the overall activity.

Components may be identified on the basis of a number of possible variables, including

- ⦿ Technical features (e.g. a health activity may have components focusing on malaria control, diarrhoeal disease, and acute respiratory infections)
- ⦿ Geographic locations (e.g. a census support activity focusing its capacity building activities on different provinces or regions and at the national level)
- ⦿ Beneficiaries (e.g. an HIV aids activity focusing on raising awareness among schoolchildren, sex-workers, injecting drug users and health workers)
- ⦿ Management/organisational structures (e.g. an agriculture activity divided into extension, training, research and credit components to reflect the local structure of the Department of Agriculture)
- ⦿ Phasing of key tasks (e.g. a rural electrification activity which requires a feasibility study, pilot testing, implementation and maintenance stages).

**Goal/Impact** refers to the sectoral or national objectives which the activity is designed to contribute to, eg increased incomes, improved nutritional status, reduced crime. The goal helps set the macro-level context within which the activity fits, and describes the long-term impact that the activity is expected to contribute towards (but not by itself achieve).

**Purpose/Outcome** refers to what the activity itself is expected to achieve in terms of sustainable development results, if the relevant assumptions of the activity design are correct. It is the positive developmental change which the activity would produce if it were completely successful (and the assumptions were fully accurate). Examples might include increased agricultural production, higher immunisation coverage, cleaner water, or improved legal services.

**Component Objectives/Intermediate Results:** Where the activity is relatively large and has a number of components (output/work program areas) it can be useful to give each component an objective statement. These statements should help provide a logical link between the outputs of that component and the overall purpose/outcome.

**Outputs** refer to the tangible products (goods and services) produced by undertaking a series of tasks as part of the planned work of the activity. Examples might include: irrigation systems or water supplies constructed, areas planted/developed, children immunised, buildings or other infrastructure built, policy guidelines produced, and staff effectively trained. The delivery of outputs should be largely under activity management's control.

**Work program** refers to the specific tasks to be undertaken as part of the planned delivery of the activity to achieve the required outputs. Examples for a new community water supply might include: establishing water users committee and maintenance procedures, site preparation, collection of local materials, tank construction and pipe laying, digging soak pits, and commissioning. However, the Logframe matrix should not include too much detail on work program otherwise it becomes too lengthy and potentially prescriptive. If detailed specification is required, this should be presented separately in a work schedule/Gantt chart format and not in the matrix itself.

**Inputs** refer to the resources required to undertake the work program and produce the outputs, e.g. as personnel, equipment, and materials. However, inputs should not be included in the matrix format.

**Assumptions:** Assumptions refer to assumptions made about conditions which could affect the progress or success of the activity, but over which activity managers may have no direct control, e.g. price changes, rainfall, land reform policies, non-enforcement of supporting legislation. An assumption is a positive statement of a condition that must be met in order for objectives to be achieved. A risk is a negative statement of what might prevent objectives being achieved.

**Indicators:** Indicators are measure of progress or lack of progress used to assess progress towards meeting stated objectives. An indicator should provide, where possible, a clearly defined unit of measurement and a target detailing the quantity, quality and timing of expected results.

**Means of verification:** Means of verification should clearly specify the expected source of the information we need to collect. We need to consider how the information will be collected (method), who will be responsible, and the frequency with which the information should be provided.

## Further reading

IFAD

[http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/3/3.htm#3\\_3](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/3/3.htm#3_3)

JICA

<http://www.jica.go.jp/english/evaluation/introduction/meth.html>

For a practical example in the following areas please visit the following links:

Forestry: Center for International Forestry Research

[http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/\\_ref/aboutcifor/mtp2002-2004/logframe.htm](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/_ref/aboutcifor/mtp2002-2004/logframe.htm)

Programme on Disability and Healthcare Technology

<http://www.kar-dht.org/logframe.html>

AusAid

<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/ausguide/pdf/ausguideline3.3.pdf>