

## Tools

### Interactive Community Planning: ZOPP : Goal Oriented Project Planning

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The ZOPP approach ((Zielorientierte Projektplanung, or GOPP- Goal Oriented Project Planning - as it is sometimes presented in English) is used and promoted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit ([GTZ](#) - German Technical Cooperation). The approach provides a systematic structure for identification, planning, and management of projects developed again in a workshop setting, with principal interest groups. The ZOPPs output is a planning matrix – the logical project framework – which summarizes and structures the main elements of a project and highlights logical linkages between intended inputs, planned activities and expected results. The ZOPP approach is used for essentially all German funded projects and is a prerequisite for funding approval. We have adopted the label ‘ZOPP’ to encompass all of the logical framework methodologies in deference to its principal initiators, the German development agencies and particularly the GTZ.

It was initially called the ‘Logical Framework Approach (LFA)’ when developed for the US Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)) in the 1960s. It continued to be developed by various UN agencies, but the GTZ has strongly embraced the approach and developed it into a practical systematic tool. USAID has largely abandoned the use, due, it seems, to its complexity and inflexibility.

ZOPP enjoys widespread use by the larger donor organizations, partially because of the orderly structuring and documentation of information as well as its demand for more skill in application. ZOPP includes various subparts used to clarify projects, and the logical project framework itself is often required by agencies in their project appraisal. The British Overseas Development Agency (ODA - now [DFID](#)) requires the ‘Log Frame’ in research project proposals. The OECDs Development Assistance Committee is promoting its use among member countries, and the Nordic countries and Canada make use in development aid programs as well as occasionally in domestic public investment. It is mandatory for DANIDA – the Danish aid agency – projects. Use at the community level is also noted, but may be the exception.

The GTZ recommends the ZOPP methodology for all stages of project preparation and implementation. Experience indicates five logical levels of the ZOPP in a standard project cycle.

- Pre-ZOPP: an inhouse exercise by agencies in preparation for a project.
- Appraisal ZOPP: an inhouse appraisal for preparing Terms of Reference of a project.
- Partner ZOPP: prepared in-country; coordination of conclusions and recommendations with staff of project country
- Take-off ZOPP: prepared in-country; preparation of the plan of operations with personnel responsible for project execution counterpart authorities.
- Replanning ZOPP: prepared in-country; adjustments during project implementation.

Other ZOPPs are recommended annually in projects to update planning as needed. Although the GTZ outlines an elaborate systemization of the approach, the approach is viable for community-based planning without the need for the elaborate structuring of levels. Indeed, the Take-off ZOPP and Replanning ZOPP are essentially community-based and participatory.

ZOPP workshops last from 1 day to 2 weeks, with a typical session lasting 1 week. It is customary in some ZOPPs to sequester the participants in distance locales to enforce unhindered focus on the activities. To mitigate participant dissatisfaction, the locations are invariably selected for their desirable features, and a venue in distant resorts is not uncommon. Participants are selected to represent all interest groups, project technical staff as well as high-level authorities, and community leaders. A basic premise is that the main interest groups must be represented from all levels, particularly top government officials.

A ZOPP requires a moderator with a high degree of experience and skill. The GTZ often brings a highly trained and paid external consultant to moderate their ZOPPs, and to achieve moderator status a special course must be completed. An elaborate custom-built suitcase is provided to ZOPPs with markers, pins, glue-sticks, varied colored shapes and sizes of paper strips. A smaller ‘refill’ suitcase is available as materials are exhausted in subsequent workshops. A typical session is led by a moderator with participants sitting facing large sheets of paper fixed on panels, walls, etc. As participants go through the exercises, the results are affixed to the sheets with pins to allow adjustment and glued permanently at the end of each day. This information is typed at the end of each day and becomes a part of the workshop record.

The ZOPP has two phases: analysis and project planning. The analysis phase has 4 substeps, with the identification of ‘real’ problems as the driver for the exercises.

- Participation analysis: an overview of persons, groups, organizations connected to a project and their interests, motives, attitudes and implications for project planning. This is done in a chart form.
- Problems analysis: major problems grouped into a problem-tree with cause and effect and identification of the core problem. The problems are noted on cards - one to a card - and organized by smaller groups.
- Objectives analysis: a restatement of the problems into realistically achievable goals; this is often done by rewriting the problems into outcomes, often by reversing the cards.
- Alternatives analysis: identification of objectives and assessment of alternatives according to resources, probability of achieving objectives, political feasibility, cost-benefit ratio, social risks, time horizon, sustainability, and others factors as decided by group. Prepared on charts.

The project planning phase has as its outcome the Project Planning Matrix (PPM), sometimes called the project planning framework. The PPM is a one-page summary of why the project is carried out, what the project is expected to achieve, how the project is going to achieve these results, which factors are crucial for the success of the project, how can success be measured, where data is required to assess project

success, and what the project will cost. All of this information is combined in 4 x 4 matrix.

The ZOPP has been cited for its rigidity and rigor, and the need for all participants to actively take part in order for it to succeed. Overly directive moderators and disinterested local partners are some of the reasons that the ZOPP has sometimes failed to achieve its full potential.

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For further information:

**ZOPP in Brief, ZOPP Flipcharts, An Introduction to the Method.** 1987-88. Order from [GTZ](#), Eschborn, Germany.

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