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A summary of the theory behind
the LFA method

The Logical Framework Approach



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1. Background

LFA, the Logical Framework Approach, is an instrument for objective-oriented planning of projects. The method may also be used for analysis, assessment, follow-up and evaluation of projects. What the method is used for depends on the role of its users and their needs.

Sida, like many other donor agencies, has decided to use, and to encourage its cooperation partners to use the LFA method, as an instrument to improve the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a development intervention. The systematic application of the method, with good judgement and sound common sense, can help to *improve the quality*, and hence *the relevance, feasibility and sustainability* of development cooperation.

An ideal situation when planning a project is when the owner of the project (the cooperation partner) and the development partners (e.g. donors and consultants) are clear about their respective roles and when *the project owner, the cooperation partner, assumes the main responsibility for the planning, implementation and follow-up of the project. Hence true local ownership should exist.* The owner of a project is always the local organisation (the cooperation partner). Promoting local/recipient “ownership” of projects and programmes is recognised as a key issue in the strategy for sustainable development cooperation.

LFA is based on the idea that *the user, the project owner, assumes the main responsibility for the planning process.* However, *assistance with planning may be needed and useful.* LFA has the aim of improving the quality of project operations and can only achieve this *if the user has a good grasp of the method and uses it throughout the entire project cycle.* Therefore, it is useful to start cooperation by integrating information on LFA in the dialogue between the parties concerned. Most steps in the LFA method are often used during participatory workshops. However, if this is not possible, appendix E includes examples of questions which could be used in the *practical application of LFA* in the dialogue between the project counterparts, during meetings with different stakeholders.

The aim of this booklet is that it should provide guidance for the cooperation partners in project planning procedures. It contains *a description of the theory of LFA*, which summarises approaches and principles, the

different planning steps and how they are implemented, and the different roles in a planning procedure.

If further information on the method is needed, there is plenty more to be found on the Internet, www.google.com/ logical framework approach.

2. LFA, an objective-oriented planning tool

2.1 What is the purpose of LFA?

LFA is used to:

- 1) *identify problems and needs* in a certain sector of society
- 2) facilitate selecting and *setting priorities* between projects
- 3) *plan* and *implement development projects* effectively
- 4) *follow-up* and *evaluate* development projects.

What the method is used for depends on the role of and the needs of its users.

LFA was developed during the 1960s and has been widely spread all over the world since the 1970s. Today it is used by private companies, municipalities and by all most all international development organisations, when *assessing, and making follow-ups and evaluations of projects/programmes.*

The UN-system, German GTZ, Canadian Cida, USAID, Norwegian NORAD and Sida all encourage their counterparts to use the LFA method when *planning, implementing and evaluating* a process of change, a project/programme.

Note the different needs for LFA, depending on the role a party may have. *The international donor agencies* use the method for *assessing, following up and evaluating* projects and programmes, while *implementing parties* use the method for *planning, implementing and following up projects/programmes.*

LFA is:

- An *instrument for logical analysis* and structured thinking in project planning
- 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.
- A *planning instrument, which encompasses the different elements in a process of change* (problems, objectives, stakeholders, plan for implementation)

etc).The project plan *may be summarised* in a LFA matrix, the log frame, (see appendix B and C)

- An instrument to *create participation/accountability/ownership*
- *Common sense.*

Objective-oriented planning means that *the point of departure of the planning process is the problem analysis*, which leads to *the objectives* and finally makes it possible to choose the relevant *activities*. *Hence, before making a plan of activities, an analysis of the problems and objectives is necessary.*

The LFA is not a control instrument and thus does not replace different control systems such as environmental assessment studies, gender analysis or financial control systems.

The LFA method should be used *during all phases of a project cycle* (i.e. during preparation, implementation and evaluation). When the LFA analysis has been performed, the plans made with the aid of the analysis should be used and followed-up actively at each project meeting. Normally, it is necessary to make certain adjustments throughout the project implementation phase. The LFA method must be *used with flexibility* and with a great sense of feeling of what is required in each situation.

The LFA is a suitable tool to use for *capacity development*, “the effort to facilitate for individuals, groups or organisations to better identify and deal with development challenges”¹, by facilitating a discussion among stakeholders to identify obstacles to change. During the problem analysis the needs and approaches for different forms of capacity development can be recognized and made transparent. The problem analysis shows whether professional knowledge is needed among the individuals involved, *or* whether it is necessary to use a broader approach – for example to strengthen organisations, or whether there is a need to improve institutional frameworks (legislation or policies).

One basic idea in the LFA method is that one should ~~not~~ start talking about what one wants to do (the activities), but about the problem that needs to be solved and about what one wants to achieve/the objectives.

2.2 What is regarded as success in a project?

The LFA method has been developed from experience gained of what makes projects successes or failures.

Evaluations of projects have shown that certain factors are very significant for achieving good goal fulfilment.

¹ Sida and other international organizations have made a number of studies of Capacity Development. Hence, there is a great deal of information on this important topic to be found on the Internet.

The factors of success for good goal fulfilment most frequently mentioned in evaluations of projects/programmes include:

- the *commitment* of all parties involved the project owner's sense of *ownership* and responsibility,
- *definite roles* for all parties involved (division of work & responsibilities),
- *realism*, realistic objectives, *specific and clear* goal fulfilment,
- *specific links* between what is done within the framework of the project (the activities) and what will be achieved (the objectives),
- *capacity*, the project group's ability to deal with *risks*,
- *flexibility* to adjust processes if conditions change,
- projects in which the users (beneficiaries) have participated in and exerted an influence on the planning of the project.

When looking at the above list, it can be noticed that a correct and appropriate application of the LFA method would certainly improve the possibility of ensuring that all these factors are taken into consideration.

2.3 The different steps in the LFA method

The LFA method contains nine different steps:

- 1 Analysis of the project's *Context*
- 2 Stakeholder Analysis
- 3 Problem Analysis/Situation analysis
- 4 Objectives Analysis
- 5 Plan of Activities
- 6 Resource Planning
- 7 Indicators/Measurements of Objectives
- 8 Risk Analysis and Risk Management
- 9 Analysis of the Assumptions

An objective-oriented project planning process, such as LFA, is made in the nine different steps presented above.² Different stakeholders/parties have different roles and are needed for different parts of the planning procedure (see 2.6). There is an interrelationship between the different steps. They may not be gone through one by one and then finalised. The project group may need to go back and revise one of the earlier steps, such as the objective analysis, after having received more information through the later steps in the procedure. For example, when making the risk analysis, new activities may have to be included in the plan of activities.

² Some LFA guidelines have another number of steps in the method. In such cases the guidelines have, for example, integrated the plan of resources (step 6) with the plan of activity (step 5), and/or the analysis of the assumptions (step 9) with the risk analysis (step 8). It is clearer for the reader /user to have 9 separate steps, as used in these guidelines.

It is important to adapt the framework of the analysis, the different steps, to each situation and to be flexible. All the steps shall not be gone through by all the different categories of stakeholders. (See chapter 2.6). Further, it is not always necessary that all the steps have to be completed *before* certain decisions are made. For example, it can be difficult to draw up an activity plan initially for a programme of sector support (SWAP). However, it is *nonetheless* important that the relevant participants make an analysis of stakeholders, problems and objectives for the sector at an early stage when planning major programmes such as programmes of sector support.

2.4 Definition of each of the nine steps in the LFA analysis

Step 1 Context analysis – the project's environment/background information

All projects/processes of change are part of a wider context. The project is influenced continuously by different economic, social and political processes taking place in society. It is essential that the project group has a clear picture of the context when planning the project. What environment will the project be implemented in? What external factors are important for the fulfilment of the project's objectives? It is therefore necessary to make an initial overall "scanning" of the project's context (an exhaustive analysis of risks and assumptions is made later, in steps 8–9).

This step is often performed by making a study, for example of a sector or a region etc, and/or by making a SWOT analysis (SWOT stands for an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats³). Making a SWOT analysis of, for example, an organisation would preferably be done in an initial stage of a participatory project planning workshop. The result would give a broad idea of where the organisation stands. In the project document, the context analysis is presented under the chapter "Background" or "Information on the sector".

Avoid making additional studies, *if* they are not necessary! Very suitable updated information on a sector, a region, stakeholders etc may be available on the Internet or in other studies provided by ministries or from donor organisations.

The background information should be gathered as close to the "owner of the problem" as possible. When analysing the context of a project ...Ask questions! Relevant information needs to be put together in order to obtain good background information on the project in its entirety.

Step 2 Stakeholder Analysis/Participation Analysis – those who should be involved – when planning and implementing the project.

Stakeholders are those who are *influenced by and exert an influence on* those things that take place in the project – directly *or* indirectly. They can be individuals or organisations and they can be both for *or against* a change.

³ SWOT analysis was invented by an American author, Philip Kotler, in the 1960s. Originally it was intended to be a marketing management tool for analysing the possibilities of marketing new products. However, during the last few years it has also been used frequently for analysing organisations in development projects. Kotler's book "Marketing Management –analysis, planning and control" was published in 1967. New editions have been published on several occasions.

Different stakeholders have different opportunities to exert an influence on a project. A survey of the project's stakeholders and their relationship to the project is an important part of the project planning process.

Stakeholders can be divided up into four main groups:

1. Beneficiaries/Target group
2. Implementers
3. Decision-makers
4. Financiers

Some stakeholders may belong to several of the above-mentioned groups. During the project planning process, information should be obtained from *all* the different stakeholder groups. *All of them* have important information to give to the future project group. For the project group it is crucial to structure all the reasons/causes of problems in order to find sustainable solutions. This can only be done with the aid of the information gathered from local stakeholders.

When making a stakeholder analysis, think broadly of those who are influenced by or exert an influence on the activities that take place in the sector! Do not forget to include the information from important stakeholders, such as the target group, when planning a project. The different stakeholders' combined knowledge about the situation is a key to the identification of appropriate solutions. The stakeholder analysis should be made by local personnel.

A time-saving and efficient method of collecting information from different stakeholders is through a planning workshop, a so-called "GOPP" (Goal Oriented Project Planning) or "LFA workshop", during which a summary is made by the different stakeholders of *WHY a project is necessary and WHAT shall be achieved by the project* (see chapter 3 "A project planning workshop").

Step 3 Problem Analysis/Situation Analysis – an analysis of the problem that shall be solved by the project and the reasons for its existence

Prior to prescribing a relevant medicine or cure, a doctor needs to meet the patient and find out why, the reasons for, the person is in pain – a pill might not cure the patient for good.

A number of projects are started in which the solution is given, without an analysis being made of the focal problem and its causes and effects. The *causes* are analysed in order to find the reasons for the focal problem and, thereby, the solutions/the *relevant activities*. The *effects* demonstrate the *arguments* (the needs) for implementing the change/the project.

A complex problem is easier to deal with if its causes and effects are thoroughly analysed. The causes could be divided into several groups of problems or clusters. Sometimes this has the effect that, in the end, the project is divided into different projects. If the project is to be manageable,

limitations must be imposed and priorities set, see assumptions (step 9). The priorities are based on relevance, needs, mandate and resources. Focus is important. However, before setting the priorities, it is necessary to get a *total picture* of the situation by making a complete problem analysis.

The basic questions that a problem analysis should answer are the following:

- *What is the main/focal problem that shall be solved with the aid of the project?* (Why is a change/a project needed?)
- *What are the causes of this problem?* (Why does it exist?)
- *What effects does the problem have?* (Why is it important to solve the problem?)
- *Who is affected by the problem and Who “owns” the problem?*

A problem analysis is sometimes made by drawing a so-called *problem tree* during a *participatory workshop*. The *problem analysis* is made by having the stakeholders writing down the problems (causes and effects), which are related to the subject, on yellow notes and placing these paper notes on a wall in an organised, structured way. This procedure makes it possible to clearly visualise *the causes* of the focal problem and *its effects* and to find out *how different problems are related to each other* (see example of a problem tree in appendix A).

As mentioned above, the causes of the problem shall be treated by the activities, which are implemented within the framework of the project. The effects are handled automatically by treating the causes of the focal problem. Hence, no separate activities are needed for handling the effects.

In the problem tree, the causes are *the roots* of the *focal problem*, which, in turn, is symbolised by the *trunk* of the tree. The *effects* of the problem form the *top of the tree*. (For an example of a simple problem tree, see appendix A).

As with weeds, their roots must be tackled if they are to disappear.

A problem tree is always “read” from the bottom up. The problems below lead to the problems above.

When the project group later starts to plan the activities, they should try to *eliminate as many causes as possible by activities*. It is important to find the relevant activities in order to eliminate the causes of the problem. Often *several* activities are needed in order to eliminate *one* problem, one cause.

The possibilities of solving the focal problems are higher the further down in the tree the causes are tackled by activities. In other words, the further down towards the bottom of the tree, in the roots, we tackle the problems, the better the possibilities are of solving the focal problem in a sustainable way and hence, the more relevant the project plan becomes. A problem analysis should preferably be made during a workshop to which different stakeholders are invited.

When establishing relationships between causes and effects, *avoid taking up/writing “lack of...”*, for example lack of funds, as a problem. These types of statements are called *absent solutions*. They do not describe the current negative situation. It is not the lack of funds in itself that is the problem. It is rather *what the lack of funds leads to that is the problem*. Another example of an absent solution is “lack of pesticides in agriculture”. Replace this by the problem “the seeds are being attacked by vermin”. Otherwise there is a risk that there will be a tendency to see just *one* solution to the problem. In the above-mentioned case, the acquisition of pesticides would then be the solution to the problem. The problem would not be opened up to alternative solutions with statements beginning “lack of...”. One should always extend one’s thinking to find solutions. There might be several different solutions.

Another mistake often experienced during problem analysis is “inadequate problem specification”, when a problem is specified in insufficient detail so that *the true nature of the problem is not described*. A good example is “poor management”. This problem needs to be broken down in order to understand *what the real problem is*. The management problem might include poor financial control, poor administrative skills, poor planning of human resources or weak IT strategy etc. During the workshop, ensure that the stakeholders write one problem per note – a problem and not a solution – and that it is clear and understandable to everybody.

Without a problem analysis it will be very complicated, if possible at all, to find the right sustainable solutions (activities) to solve a problem.

The problem analysis has to be made by the relevant stakeholders, including the owners of the problem, the people who know the situation, *not by consultants or financing agencies*.

Please consult the example of a problem tree in appendix A.

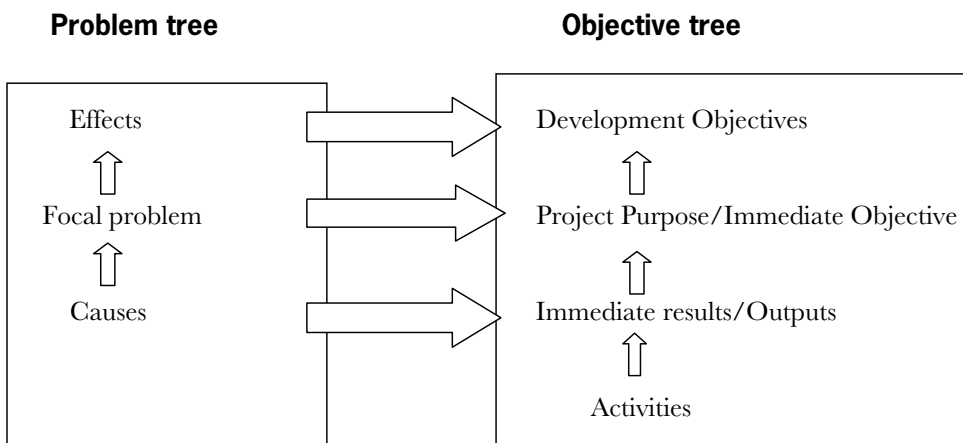
Step 4 Objective Analysis – the picture of the future situation

When the stakeholders have identified the problems that the project shall contribute to eliminating, it is time to develop the objectives, to make an objective tree/analysis. If care has been taken on the problem analysis, the formulation of objectives shall not result in any difficulties. The objective analysis is the positive reverse image of the problem analysis.

During the objectives analysis, the project group should set three levels of objectives:

- Overall objectives
- Project purpose
- Results

The relationship between the problem analysis and the objective analysis



When arranging a workshop, the problems (problem analysis) are written on yellow cards and made into a problem tree, while the objectives (objective analysis) are written on green cards. The colours of the cards make it easier to clearly visualise the analysis.

The objectives should answer the following questions:

- What shall the project contribute to achieving in the long run? Why is the project important? What are the long-term policy objectives to which the project will contribute?
(Overall Objectives)
- What is the project-owner's picture of the ideal situation? It is expected that the purpose will be achieved as a direct effect of the project's results. It clarifies why the target group needs the project. What is the *focus* of this project?
(Project Purpose)
- Which different components/sub-goals are needed in order to achieve the purpose and the overall objectives?
(Results)

Hence, the objectives are explanations of what the project is going to achieve in the short, medium *and* in the long run.

A more comprehensive explanation of the three levels of objectives is given below:

1. Goal/Overall Objectives/Development Objectives:

The highest level of objectives is the overall objective, which states the direction the project shall take, i.e. the changes which will take place in the long term partly as a result of the project. One example of an overall objective is increased incomes for small scale farmers or higher completion rates for girls in primary education, improved social welfare or poverty reduction. It cannot be expected that this goal will be achieved until possibly some 5–10 years after the project has ended. The goals constitute the long-term *vision* for the project owner.

Moreover, external factors outside the scope of the project are important for the fulfilment of the overall objectives. Hence, this objective level is often difficult to measure. It is difficult to assess how much *one* particular project has had an influence on , for example, improvements in welfare in a society. Therefore, the use of indicators is often avoided at the overall objective level.

Overall objectives/Development objectives/goals:

State the long-term social and/or economic (impact) benefits to which the project will contribute, and describe why the project is important for the beneficiaries and for the society.

2. The Project Purpose/Immediate Objective:

The project purpose is the very reason why the project is needed. The purpose describes the situation which is expected to prevail if the project delivers the expected results, and the assumptions made of the external factors, which must act together with the project.

The project purpose and the results shall be:

- Specific,
- Measurable,
- Approved by the project owner and the project group
- Realistic
- Time-bound

The abbreviation “SMART” objectives is often used.

The project purpose is the objective that should have been achieved directly *or* one to three years after the end of the project. If it is achieved, the causes of the problem will have been eliminated and, hence, the focal problem itself will disappear.

Example: The purpose of an agricultural project can, for example, be: “Improved labour productivity for crop X achieved by Y farmers”, or a primary health care project can have as its purpose: “Health hazards (in respect of certain diseases) for the population in area X reduced by 30%.....”

Project Purpose/Immediate Objective:

States the expected outcomes, or direct effects, of the project. These are the benefits which the beneficiaries derive from the project. The purpose states why the project is needed by the beneficiaries.

3. Results/Outputs:

The outputs are the direct results of the activities that are implemented within the framework of the project. The outputs/results are a description of the value of the services/products produced by the project within the framework of what the project stakeholders can guarantee. Outputs are actual, tangible results that are a direct consequence of the project's activities. Several activities are often necessary in order to reach one result/output. Results, as well as the project purpose, should be "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Approved; Realistic and Time-Bound).

Example of results:

An output of an agricultural project can be, for example, that the farmers in the area can use more efficient methods to cultivate maize. For a health care project, an output/result can be, for example, "Higher quality in the information on mother and child care for the people living in X region". For a transport project, an output can be, for example: "Improved transport between A and B".

Results/Outputs:

States the service(s) the beneficiaries will receive from the project. What the project will be responsible for delivering.

The three above-mentioned levels of objectives: overall objectives, purpose and results, differ in respect of *time/when* they shall be achieved and the possibilities available to the *project owner and the rest of the project group to exert an influence on their fulfilment*. The fulfilment of objectives at the higher levels naturally requires goal fulfilment at the lower levels.

An important rule of thumb is that the problem that the project's stakeholders have identified as the core or focal problem of the project shall correspond to the project purpose.

For further examples of the objectives, please consult the LFA matrix, see appendix B and C.

Step 5 Plan of Activities – means to achieve the objectives, means to eliminate the causes of the focal problem

Activities constitute *the means to achieve the goals*. Hence, they are *not* the goals themselves of the project! One common mistake made in project documents is to focus attention on the activities of the project and to confuse them with the goals. It is not possible to draw up a relevant activity plan until a problem analysis and an objective analysis have been made.

If the activities are planned and implemented in a suitable way, the results will be achieved. This, in turn, will lead to the achievement of the project purpose and, in the long term, will also influence the overall objectives.

The activities shall tackle the *causes/reasons* of the focal or core problem(s), the roots of the tree. The activities are the work that is done by those involved in the project.

Examples of activities are:

- A three-day seminar on economic statistics for 12 statisticians responsible for financial accounting at the Statistical Agency
- Elaboration of school material in mathematics for primary schools students
- Construction of a primary health care clinic

The plan of activities is drawn up by the project group with guidance from the problem analysis made by the stakeholders and based on the objective analysis. The project group has usually obtained advice for activities from the participants at the initial planning workshop.

N.B. It will be necessary to add activities to the plan of activities when the project group has made the risk management plan (see below).

Step 6 Plan of Resources, inputs in order to implement the activities

Before the project starts, the project group needs to make a detailed plan of the resources which are needed to implement the project. The project plan, including the plan of resources, is formulated in the Scope of Work, an appendix to a contract.

Resources provided for implementing activities within the framework of the project can consist of:

- Technical expertise (local and/or foreign expertise: what kind of know-how is needed to support the development of capacity)
- equipment /spare parts /training in the use of the equipment
- premises
- funds
- time

Financing for the project can be provided in different forms, for example grants, funds or credits. It can sometimes be the case that the resources provided by the local cooperation partner are not described in the contract, for example the financing of local costs, local staff, premises etc etc. An unspecified division of responsibilities may create problems during the implementation of the project. The budget, particularly in respect of cost-sharing should also preferably be decided before the start of the project and be clearly stated in the contract. Time is an important resource, often planned too optimistically. If equipment is needed, the equipment has to be adapted to local conditions and training in the use of the equipment should be integrated as an activity in the project plan.

Step 7 Indicators – measurements of results

Is the project achieving its goals? To answer this question, the project group needs to identify indicators, which make it possible to measure the progress of the project at different levels. Establishing a suitable indicator for an objective is a way of ensuring that an objective becomes specific, realistic and tangible. There should be at least as many indicators as

there are results and some for the project purpose. An indicator may be, for example, a statistical source – if it is possible to see from the statistics that a change has occurred as a result of the project.

It is important to think about the following when establishing indicators of the fulfilment of objectives and results:

- What shall the project achieve in the terms of *quality*?
- What shall the project achieve in terms of *quantity*?
- During which *period of time*? When shall the fulfilment of objectives have taken place?
- Which group is the *target group*?
- Which *geographical region or sector* is affected by the project?

The process of setting up indicators reveals whether the objectives are non-specific and unrealistic.

The project owner, the cooperation partner, is the stakeholder that can best establish indicators. Try to find several indicators to measure each result and the project purpose and try to find easy understandable indicators.

An indicator shall be *objectively verifiable*. In other words, anybody shall be able to measure the results. It shall be clear where data for measurement purposes can be found. (State sources of verification in the project document. For examples of sources of verification, see column in appendix B).

In order to see if the situation has improved as a result of the project, it is necessary to know the basic facts about the situation *prior to project start*. Hence, it may be necessary to make a so-called *baseline study*. What is the picture before we start, what values exist? Without a study of this type, it is difficult to measure the results after the project has been implemented.

There are indicators for all types of projects, even HR/D (Human Rights and Democracy) projects, for example:

- increased membership of political parties
- greater access to media
- increase in percentage of voters registered
- change in population believing in equal rights etc..

Some of these proposed indicators need to be evaluated through interviews. Indicators for HR/D projects need to capture the complexity of the process. Hence it is advised that participatory indicators should be used.

For more examples of indicators, please consult appendix B and C, the LFA matrix, and/or study the Internet.

Step 8 Risk Analysis and Risk Management – analysis of the risks affecting the project’s objectives and plans to avoid these risks.

The persons/the project group that are responsible for the project must identify, analyse and assess different factors, which, in different ways, affect the possibilities available to the project to achieve its objectives. An analysis of possible critical external and internal factors /risks gives us an opportunity to assess the conditions that the project is working under. In the risk analysis it can be the case that so-called “killing factors” arise, i.e. factors that make goal fulfilment in a project impossible, for example political developments in the country. (See appendix D, risk analysis schedule).

After having made a risk analysis, project management has to make a *risk management plan*, i.e. a plan of *how to avoid* the potential risks. Include risk management in the project plan, as activities to overcome risks.

External factors/risks:

These are risks that exist outside the framework of the project (for example political developments, natural disasters, corruption etc.) It is most often the case that the project group cannot exert an influence on these risks. If they are triggered off, these external risks can lead to difficulties in fulfilling the objectives of the project, some of them might even be “killing factors”, see appendix D, “Risk Analysis Step by Step”.

Internal factors/risks:

These are risks of the type that are possible for the project to exercise control over. They can be practical matters such as delays in deliveries, personnel turnover etc. In most cases project management can minimise the effects of these internal risks.

The project group should preferably take the opportunity to let the stakeholders make the first risk analysis during an initial workshop. However, the project group must make a revised risk analysis when the detailed project plan has been finalised, looking at each result set and determining the risks of not achieving the result. This usually has the effect that new activities (in order to avoid risks) need to be included in the project plan. Hence, a *risk management plan* is made, a plan of how to deal with the risks.

Step 9 Assumptions- factors important for goal fulfilment, but outside the project’s scope

A project does not exist in a social, economic and political vacuum. For its success it is dependent on norms, laws, ordinances, policies, political will and commitment, allocation of funds etc. This is what is normally referred to as the institutional situation in a country. It is not always possible for the project group to exert an influence on this situation and it creates assumptions for the project, which can be favourable *or* not so favourable. These assumptions should be analysed through the problem analysis before the project is started. *A project’s priorities should be set with reference to resources, mandate, limits and with reference to what the project group needs to rely on/assume that other parties/projects are handling.*

Example of assumptions:

Provided that a new traffic law is approved by the Parliament, the number of road accidents may decrease by x%. The project group *assumes* that the law will be approved. However, it has no power to ensure that the law is approved or not.

Assumptions are set at the different levels in the objective hierarchy. An assumption for achieving a project purpose may be, for example, a long-lasting stable political situation. Project management is aware that the political situation is important for the project's objective fulfilment. However, it is unable to exert an influence on the political situation. It may only assume that a stable political situation prevails, *if* it is a reasonable assumption. If it is *not* a reasonable assumption, it might be *a risk*, and the project group has to analyse whether a change in the political situation is a killing risk/factor (see appendix D). If the project group considers the political situation to be a killing factor, that it is most possible that a change will occur on the political scene, it might be necessary to postpone the implementation of the project.

If an assumption is found to be a risk, i.e. that nobody else will deal with this factor, *but* the project group knows that it is a very important factor in order to achieve the results, then the project group needs to consider *if* it should include activities dealing with this risk (in order to avoid the risk occurring) in the plan of activities.

Assumptions are included in the project document for fulfilment of each objective level. (See step 4 above and in the matrix appendix A). The project group is aware that the assumptions are important for fulfilment of the objectives. However, it is not possible to include *all* the possible scenarios in the project.

Assumptions are the causes of the focal problem which are important for goal fulfilment, but which the project group does not have direct control over. However, the project group assumes that others are dealing with these causes.

The project group has to look at the causes in the problem analysis and consider which causes that may not be possible for them to handle. These causes are nevertheless important for goal fulfilment. The assumptions are set with regard to the resources and the mandate the project group has, and with regard to what the project group knows that others are handling. The project group should state the assumptions in the project proposal. The assumptions have to be *realistic*, otherwise they are considered to be *risks and should be handled in the risk management plan*.

2.5 Why have the different steps in the LFA analysis?

Relevance, Feasibility and Sustainability

- **Relevance:** With the assistance of steps 1–4 (context, problem analysis, stakeholder analysis, objective analysis), we can make sure that we *are doing the right thing, by involving the relevant stake-holders, dealing with the right problems and establishing the correct objectives, which enables us to select the right activities at a later stage. These steps ensure that the project idea is relevant in a problem-solving perspective.*
- **Feasibility:** With the assistance of steps 5–7 (activity plan, resource planning, indicators of objective fulfilment), we can see *that we are doing things in the right way, that the programme is feasible, with the right activities and with sufficient resources (personnel, equipment, budget, time) to solve the problem.*
- **Sustainability:** With the aid of steps 8–9 (analysis of risks and assumptions), we can assess *whether the project can continue by itself, without external support, and that the project purpose is sustainable in the long-term.*

2.6 Roles and responsibilities when making an LFA analysis

It is very important to observe that *the right stakeholders perform the right steps* in the planning process/analysis of the project. For example, it is the project owner, the beneficiaries, the implementers and the decision-makers etc, the local stakeholders *in the partner country* that primarily shall make:

- the stakeholder analysis,
- the problem analysis,
- the objectives analysis
- the risk analysis.
- the analysis of the assumptions

It is neither the consultant *nor* the financier who “owns the problem” which shall be solved. These parties are not sufficiently well informed, and hence *cannot and should not* perform these steps. However, financing agencies and/or consultants may assist in the project planning process by, for instance, providing expertise in the LFA method and suggesting solutions to the problem (plan of activities and plan of resources).

Involving the wrong parties, or not involving different stakeholders in the different steps in the project planning process, is a common mistake made in project planning. This has the consequence that cause-and-effect relationships are incorrectly analysed, which leads to a situation in which incorrect activities are implemented to solve the “wrong” problems. The effect will be that the results/objectives are never achieved.

Giving the wrong treatment to a patient may have fatal effects

Sincere cooperation and a correct division of roles in the planning process prior to implementation increase the likelihood of smooth implementation and the degree of local ownership and readiness to work towards sustainable results.

The division of roles and responsibilities can vary due to the character of the project and the availability of skilled officers, but the *main principle is that the local cooperation partner shall bear the main responsibility for both planning and implementation to as great an extent as possible.*

3. A project-planning workshop

Visualisation is a powerful tool

Arranging a project-planning workshop is an efficient way of avoiding mistakes in the planning procedure. The advantages of a workshop are:

- That the most important stakeholders are invited and *together* make their voices heard.
- The possibility for the stakeholders to decide on a *joint and structured picture* on the situation and what *the needs are / the problems are* (the cause and effect relations). A process, which creates consensus on the issue.
- Arriving at a joint understanding of the situation makes it possible to focus and avoid conflicts during implementation of the project.
- To obtain local ownership and ensure that responsibilities are assumed by the relevant stakeholders
- The workshop is a time-saving and a cost efficient method of obtaining good insight into the situation, which could replace some studies.

An initial project-planning workshop is usually arranged for two to four days, depending on the project and the needs. During the workshop the broad group of stakeholders normally go through the following steps in an LFA analysis:

- A *problem analysis* (step 3)
- A revised *stakeholder analysis*, (step 2)
- A proposal for an *objectives analysis* (step 4)
- Producing proposals for *indicators* for the project purpose (step 7)
- Draft proposals to the project group for a plan of activities (step 5)
- An initial *risk analysis* (step 8)
- Proposals on *assumptions* (step 9)

The purpose of an initial planning workshop (a goal-oriented project planning workshop, GOPP-workshop, or an LFA workshop) is to clarify *WHY* a change (why a project) is needed and to gain consensus on *WHAT* shall be done.

The programme for an initial workshop may be slightly different for different workshops, since it should always be adapted to the needs of the stakeholders and to the situation. Hence, the LFA steps taken during a workshop may vary, but the problem analysis is always included. The results of the workshop should be presented in a report, which may include a first draft of an LFA matrix. The results of the initial workshop should be taken into consideration by the future project group, when it plans the details of the project.

After a GOPP workshop has been held, the project group should perform a more detailed planning process, in which a detailed project plan is drawn up on *HOW* the project shall be implemented, including a *specific* activity plan, a time schedule, a detailed resource analysis, risk management plan, budget etc. This defines the entire scope of work. This is usually referred to as a *management workshop* or management planning process, which specifies in detail *HOW* the project shall be implemented.

Recommendations with regard to initial project planning workshops

A GOPP workshop may preferably be arranged with the assistance of an independent facilitator (moderator), who should know LFA and facilitating well. The moderator is responsible for the planning process during the workshop. The moderator should be independent of the future project. He or she does not need to know the field, the sector, *but* should be fully conversant with the planning method, LFA. It may even be an advantage if the moderator does not know the field, the subject, since he or she will ask for clarifications, which the stakeholders may take for granted. Successful project planning needs clear answers. There are certified moderators in several countries. The donor organisation can usually provide the group with lists of names of facilitators.

Prior to the workshop, an initial stakeholder analysis has to be made in order to find out *who should be invited* to the workshop. The stakeholders are fully familiar with the situation and hence they do not have to make preparations in advance. For practical reasons and to enable everyone to participate actively, no more than 25 persons should attend the workshop.

A workshop usually takes 2–4 days, depending on the needs and the project. A workshop should preferably start with an introduction to LFA theory, about one-two hours. The next step is normally the *problem analysis*, which may take a day or even more. The problem analysis is normally followed by the *objective analysis*, proposals to the future project group for *activities*, *risk analysis*, *assumptions* and proposals for *indicators*. Revise the stakeholder analysis, consider whether some stakeholders were not invited, who need to provide more information.

Most of the workshop takes place in the form of a plenary session; however, parts could preferably be arranged as group activities and then later presented and discussed in plenum.

Ensure that the workshop is held in a big conference room, with a large wall surface. Bring pens, lots of notepaper in different colours, scotch tape, an overhead projector/powerpoint projector (for the presentation of the LFA theory) and a large piece of paper to cover the wall for the problem analysis and objective analysis.

A draft report on the results of the workshop should be written. Normally this is done by the moderator/facilitator. The report is mainly written for the project group, but is naturally distributed to all the stakeholders who participated in the workshop. The report *is not a complete project plan*, but represents the initial planning document and it will be used for the final part of the planning procedure, the detailed planning by the project group.

During the *management workshop, the "how-workshop"*, the project group identifies the details of the project and draws up the final project plan. The basis of the management workshop is the outcome of the initial GOPP workshop. The LFA steps dealt with in a management workshop are:

A revised stakeholder analysis (step 2)

A revised objective analysis (step 4)

A plan of activity (step 5)

A plan of resources (step 6)

Establishing the indicators for the objectives (step 7)

A risk analysis including a risk management plan (step 8)

Establishing the assumptions (step 9)

If it is used, the final log frame (matrix) is completed after the management workshop.

There are advantages in having separate workshops, since different stakeholders have different roles and mandates. Further, time for reflection is needed between the workshops. The project group needs to be formed and the necessary resources need to be discussed and verified.

4. The advantages offered by the LFA method

When all the nine steps in the LFA analysis have been performed as described above, the foundations have been laid for successful project/programme implementation, provided naturally that the external risks do not change/occur adversely and that the plan is followed wisely. Always bear in mind that *the LFA analysis can and should be adapted* to the prevailing situation. However, always with a participatory approach.

The LFA work is mainly the responsibility of the development partner/the recipient organisation. Naturally, assistance, if needed, may be provided by, for example, the financier. The target group of the project *should always*, whenever possible, participate in the planning and implementation of the project. The method *should be applied flexibly* and with a level of ambition, which, in each situation, is ultimately determined by the recipient, after consultation with other parties involved in the project. If LFA is based on reality and applied with sound common sense, the development assistance given will be used more efficiently and will be of greater benefit.

Sida does not seek to force fixed models for the use of LFA on recipients. If, for one reason or another, the LFA analysis cannot be performed at a workshop, a “LFA battery of questions” can provide support for the parties involved. (See appendix E).

In principle, most donors request the same information prior to making a decision on project support. Hence they request their cooperation partners to provide information on relevance, feasibility and sustainability by using a goal-oriented project planning method such as LFA. The project proposal should include information on:

The context

The stakeholder

The problem

The objectives

The plan of activities

The resources needed

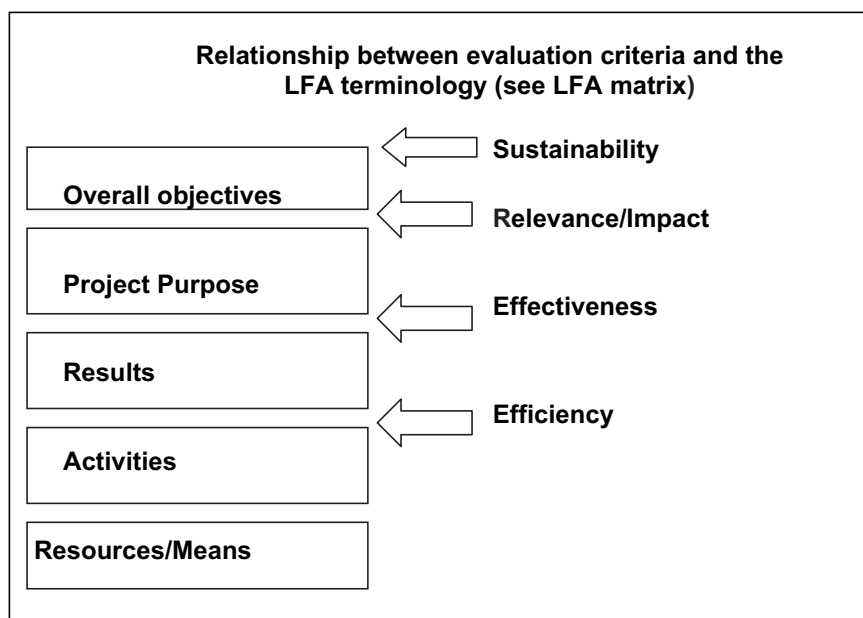
The risk analysis and a risk management plan

The assumptions

Further, a plan of exit, how to prepare for the take-over of the project, needs to be prepared and included in a project plan, which is part of sustainability analysis.

For a financing agency the purpose of using LFA for the assessment of a project proposal is to identify weaknesses or gaps in the design of the programme/project. These gaps will relate to the *relevance, feasibility and sustainability* of the project. Hence, it is necessary for a project owner to use a goal-oriented project planning method in order to receive finance for well-planned projects/programmes.

Later in the project cycle, during the evaluation, the connection between the terminology used in evaluations and the terminology used in the LFA method becomes clear. If the project has not been planned properly, with clear objectives and indicators, it will be very difficult to succeed in achieving the objectives in the implementation phase and finally, it will be difficult to evaluate the results.



To sum up, it should be mentioned that, provided that it is used correctly and wisely and is adapted to the prevailing situation, the LFA method will:

- Make a dialogue possible between *all* parties involved (beneficiaries, implementers, decision-makers and financiers)
- Offer a tool for the *identification of problems and correct solutions to problems*
- Contribute to *clarifying and concretising the project's* objectives and to specifying correct *activities* that are necessary to realise the objectives
- *Facilitate* the production of follow-up reports and evaluations
- Create a joint *approach* to the project, reducing complexity.
- Ensure that the *ownership* of the project ends up with the partner in co-operation
- Make the implementation of the project more *efficient, reduce the amount of time required and make the project/programme sustainable.*

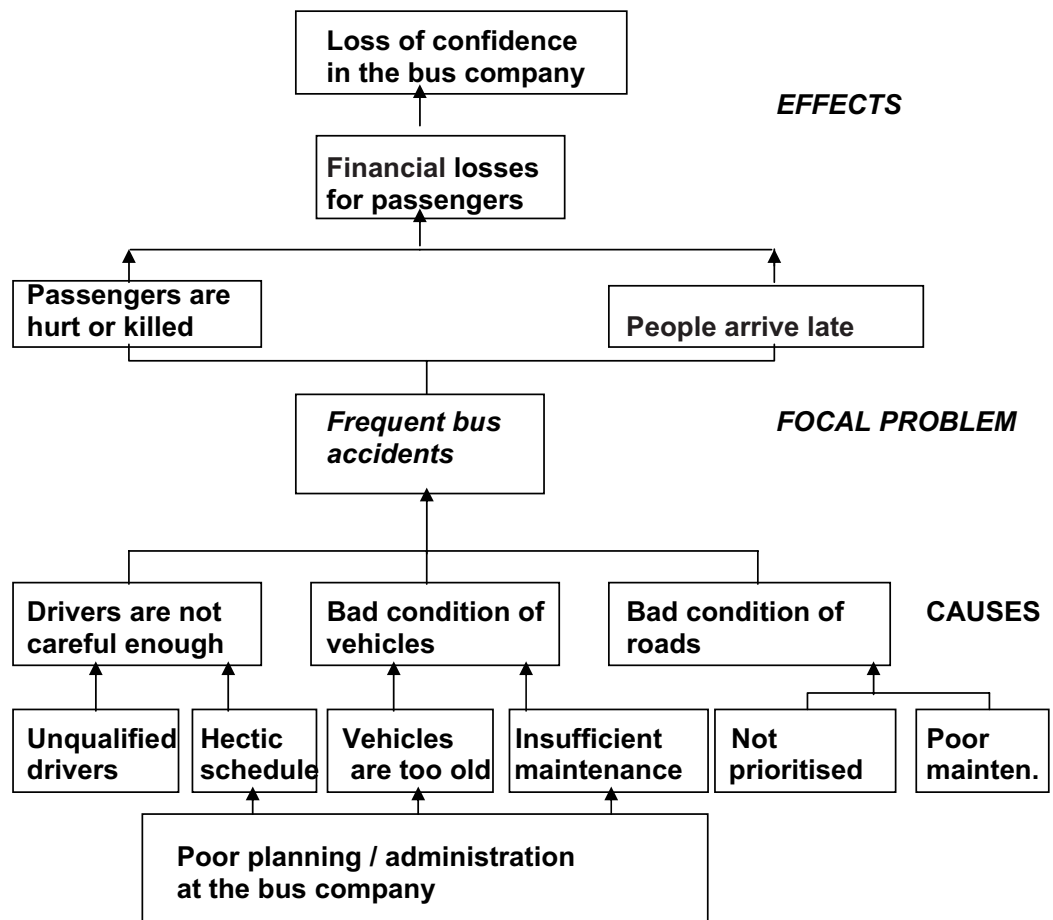
- Improve the conditions for relevance, feasibility and sustainability of projects and programs.

LFA is common sense, a structured way of obtaining answers to essential questions!

How the LFA method works depends very much on its users. LFA is no better and no worse than its users

Appendix A:

Example of a Problem Tree



NB: This example is taken from a book on LFA written by NORAD 1999. See references. However, some important changes have been made to NORAD's problem tree in order to show examples of several deeper root causes of the focal problem, "Frequent bus accidents". *It is very important to find the fundamental causes of a focal problem in order to find the sustainable solutions.* Often some 40–60 causes and effects are identified when a real problem analysis is made during a workshop with all important stakeholders participating. Keep on asking the question *WHY* a problem (a cause) exists until there are no more answers. In order to arrive at sustainable solutions the project group needs to tackle the problems at the bottom of the tree. It is crucial to find out what the real obstacles are to the realisation of change! The problem tree above should be elaborated further with the local stakeholders, in respect of both causes and effects.

Appendix B:

Bus company/Example
one of an LFA matrix

<p>1. GOAL</p> <p>1. High service level for bus passengers</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <p>90 % of departures with less than 5 minutes delay</p> <p>Company's market share on the increase</p>	<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <p>Passengers continue using company buses</p>
<p>2. PURPOSE</p> <p>2. Frequency of bus accidents reduced</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <p>Less than x accidents annually after 12 months</p> <p>Less than y serious injuries after 12 months</p>	<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <p>Road conditions are improved</p>
<p>3. OUTPUTS</p> <p>1. Drivers trained</p> <p>2.. X new buses operational</p> <p>3. Maintenance workshop equipped</p> <p>4. Maintenance routines established</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <p>See opposite page</p>	<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <p>Trained drivers remain with the bus company</p>
<p>4. ACTIVITIES</p> <p>1. Undertake training programme</p> <p>2.. Procure buses</p> <p>3. Procure tools and spareparts</p> <p>4. Develop maintenance routines</p>	<p>5. INPUTS</p> <p>1. Bus instructor x months</p> <p>2.. Funds for buses</p> <p>3. Funds for tools and spareparts</p> <p>4. Maintenance instructor y months</p>	<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <p>Tools and spares supplied and cleared in time</p>

Appendix C:

Example of an LFA matrix, Project: Drinking water

	Intervention logic	Objectively measurable and verifiable indicators	Sources of verifications	Important assumptions
Development objectives/Goal	Target groups' health shall improve	20% fewer cases of diarrhea, scabies, eye infections, malaria, blood parasites (bilharzias) and malnutrition	Reports from health clinics in the project area	
Project objective/Purpose	Consumption of clean water shall increase from x to y and the use of latrines from a to b	xx water points erected and xx latrines constructed and their use recorded	Project half –yearly reports	Water sources remain unpolluted Primary health care and education are still provided
Results/Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50% of the target group supplied with sufficient quantities of clean water 2. 50% of existing water points in the target area repaired 3. Maintenance and repair organization commences operations 4. 20% of households in the target area supplied with latrines 5. Hygienic habits of the target group improved 	<p>Water points taken into operation; water quality tested</p> <hr/> <p>50% of existing water points in working order</p> <hr/> <p>All water points included in the maintenance programme</p> <hr/> <p>Latrines built and used correctly</p> <hr/> <p>Target groups' habits more hygienic</p>	<p>Project personnel who visit all construction sites when the installations are complete</p> <hr/> <p>Project half-yearly reports</p> <hr/> <p>Reports from the District Development Fund</p> <hr/> <p>Reports from the District Council</p> <hr/> <p>Half-yearly reports from the Min of Health</p> <hr/> <p>Examinations of the target group which is given training in health matters</p>	<p>Maintenance system will continue to function</p> <hr/> <p>Action to be taken: budget for current costs to be established at the health authority</p> <hr/> <p>Target group is willing to adopt new habits in respect of water and sanitation</p> <hr/> <p>Action to be taken: methods used for the active participation of the target group</p>
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Train xx personnel 1.2 Designate xx places for water points 1.3 Procure materials 1.4 Drill and construct xx wells 2.1 Train xx "water groups" 2.2 Acquire materials 2.3 Repair xx old water points 3.1 Form maintenance organization 3.2 Establish a cost-coverage mechanism 4.1 Acquire materials 4.2 Train xx builders 4.3 Identify target group 4.4 Build xx latrines 5.1 Survey present habits of hygiene 5.2 Train in hygiene 	<p><u>Project and costs</u></p> <p>Foreign financing</p> <p>Capital goods_____</p> <p>Operating costs_____</p> <p>Infrastructure_____</p> <p>Technical assistance (4 technicians)</p> <p>Total cost District 1 20.000 euro</p> <p>Total cost District 2 22.000 euro</p> <p>Total foreign cost 42.000 euro</p> <p>Local financing</p> <p>Personnel (unit at local health authority)</p> <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Maintenance</p> <p>Operating costs</p> <p>Total cost District 1 Local currency 15.500.</p> <p>Total cost District 2 19.800.</p> <p>Total local cost in local currency 35.300.</p> <p>Total local cost in euro 17500.</p> <p>Total cost for Sweden and Rec. Country in euro 59500</p>	<p>Necessary capital goods, materials and personnel are available</p> <hr/> <p>Action to be taken: study to be made</p> <hr/> <p>Target group will cooperate</p> <hr/> <p>Action to be taken: target group participates in planning, implementation and follow-up</p> <hr/> <p>Implementing organization fulfils its obligations</p> <hr/> <p>Action to be taken: health authorities sign an agreement</p>	
Inputs/Resources			Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adequate supply of ground water of good quality 2. Government continues to support the project

Appendix D:

Risk analysis step by step

The project group should analyse the risks, one by one, identified by the project group and other stakeholders, as shown below.

1. Will this factor/risk affect the implementation of the project or make the objectives unachievable?

Yes = Continue

No = Ignore



2. Is it possible that the identified obstacle/risk will occur?

Yes = Continue

Perhaps = Continue No = Ignore



3. Will anyone outside the project deal with the obstacle/risk?

No = Continue

Perhaps = Continue Yes = Ignore



4. Can project management deal with the obstacle/risk?

If the answer to question no. 4 is:

YES = then...the project group has to allocate resources and integrate activities in the plan in order to avoid the risk

NO = then...The project group has to monitor the obstacle carefully since the obstacle can be a killing factor and

NO = then...The project group needs to plan alternative strategies for implementation in order to avoid the obstacle (The project group has to make a risk management plan)

Appendix E:

Logical question list

A project outline or project description, which has been elaborated by the recipient, should elucidate the answers to the following questions. The use of the question list should not be regarded as a formal exercise, but as a way to inspire logical analysis. The questions – or those which are relevant to the issue – should be applied flexibly and with common sense. The questions are based on the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) method.

0. Background: Country and Sector

- 0.1 What are the country's basic development problems? (cf. the country's development policy, Sida's country analysis and country strategy). Is the proposed project relevant in this context?
- 0.2 What are the problems in the particular sector? (cf the country's sector policy, any available sector analyses, results reports and results analyses)

1. Analysis of Participants/Stakeholders

- 1.1 Which agencies, organisations, groups and people will influence/be influenced by the project, directly or indirectly? Define their roles in relation to each other.
- 1.2 Describe the target group (sex, age, income, work situation, etc) and analyse effects on different parts of the target group.
- 1.3 In what way does the target group participate in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the project? To what extent does the project group own the project?
- 1.4 How will the effects of the project help/hinder weak/poor people or groups?
- 1.5 How are men and women each affected by the project?
- 1.6 Can any groups be affected negatively?

2. Problem Analysis

- 2.1 What does the problem (or problems) in question consist of? Why is a project needed? (It is necessary to reach a common definition of the main problem together with the participants in the discussion.) The problem or problems should be defined with regard to the project's proposed target group and not only defined at the macro level.
- 2.2 What are the causes and the effects of the main problem identified by the stakeholders?
- 2.3 Why is it not possible for the country/target group to solve the problem itself? Why is development assistance necessary?
- 2.4 Are there any background studies which have analysed the problem area?

3. Analysis of Objectives

(Stipulate in concrete terms the objectives at different levels: development objectives or sector objectives, project objectives/purpose, results, activities). The objectives should be specific, attainable, relevant, realistic, limited in time, and preferably measurable.

- 3.1 What are the development goals in the sector, which this project should help to achieve?
- 3.2 What is the project's objective/purpose in concrete, realistic and – if possible – measurable terms? (The objective of the project shall be to remove the causes of the main problem, which has been identified.)
- 3.3 What effects is the project expected to give rise to, in relation to its development objectives? Why is the planned project important for the target group, the region, the country?
- 3.4 What is the project's relationship with other development efforts being made in the sector?
- 3.5 What concrete results should the activities lead to? What goods or services are the project expected to supply to the target group?
- 3.6 Does the sum of the outputs/results of the project lead to the fulfilment of the project objective?

4. Internal and External Risk Factors

- 4.1 What factors, or conflicts of interest – both internal and external – can prevent, make it difficult, or delay the implementation of the project?
- 4.2 Assess the external risks (conflicts or other disruptive factors) and the extent to which they are likely to affect the project. What can be done about them?
- 4.3 Is there any decisive factor which is a precondition for the success of the project? What are the plans of the partner country to deal with any such factors?
- 4.4 What negative side-effects can the project bring about?
- 4.4 Have alternative strategies been considered to reach the planned project objective/purpose and to avoid the risks? (a risk management plan)

5. Project Organisation and Implementation

- 5.1 What resources (human, financial and material) have been allocated at activity level to guarantee that the project can be implemented?
- 5.2 What is the situation in respect of organisational capacity and institutional capacity, including administrative and managerial skills and capacity?
- 5.3 Has the division of roles and responsibilities between the parties been clearly defined?
- 5.4 Will the target group be trained in the operation and management of the project activities?
- 5.5 What other projects are being implemented by the Government, non-governmental organisations and other donors in the same sector? Is there any danger of duplication or conflict?

Time Schedule

- 5.6 Have specific dates been determined for the planned start and completion of each activity?
- 5.7 Is there a specific date and a plan for the phasing-out of the project?

Budget and Financing

- 5.8 Is the budget for the project and its activities realistic and comprehensive? Does it include local costs? Is it clear who is paying for what?
- 5.9 How is the recipient country participating in the financing of the project? Are there other donors financing parts of the same project?
- 5.10 What measures have been planned to finance operation and maintenance costs locally when development assistance has been phased out?

6. Analysis of Preconditions for Economically Sound and Sustainable Development

- 6.1 Is there a policy and legislation to back up the project?
- 6.2 Is there sufficient management, personnel and institutional capacity, as well as financial resources, to keep the activity running in the long-term?
- 6.3 Is the level of technology adapted to the conditions prevailing in the country?
- 6.4 Has an environmental impact assessment been made?

This list of questions was originally included in “Guidelines for the Application of LFA in Project Cycle Management”, Sida Methods Development Unit, 1996, Berit Rylander och Erik Illes. Some changes have been made to the original list.

Appendix F:

List of References

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Sidas “Guidelines for the Application of LFA in Project Cycle Management”, Sida/ METOD 1996

Appendix A and B: Problem tree and LFA matrix

NORAD Handbook for objectives-oriented planning/Fourth Edition, “The Logical Framework Approach”, 1999

Appendix C: Example of an LFA matrix, Project: Drinking water

LFA matrix, example taken from Sida’s “Guidelines for the Application of LFA in Project Cycle Management”, Sida/METOD 1996

Appendix D: Risk Analysis

Sida's "Guidelines for the Application of LFA in Project Cycle Management", Sida/METHOD 1996

Appendix E: Logical Question List

LFA Questions taken from Sida's "Guidelines for the Application of LFA in Project Cycle Management", Sida/METHOD 1996

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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