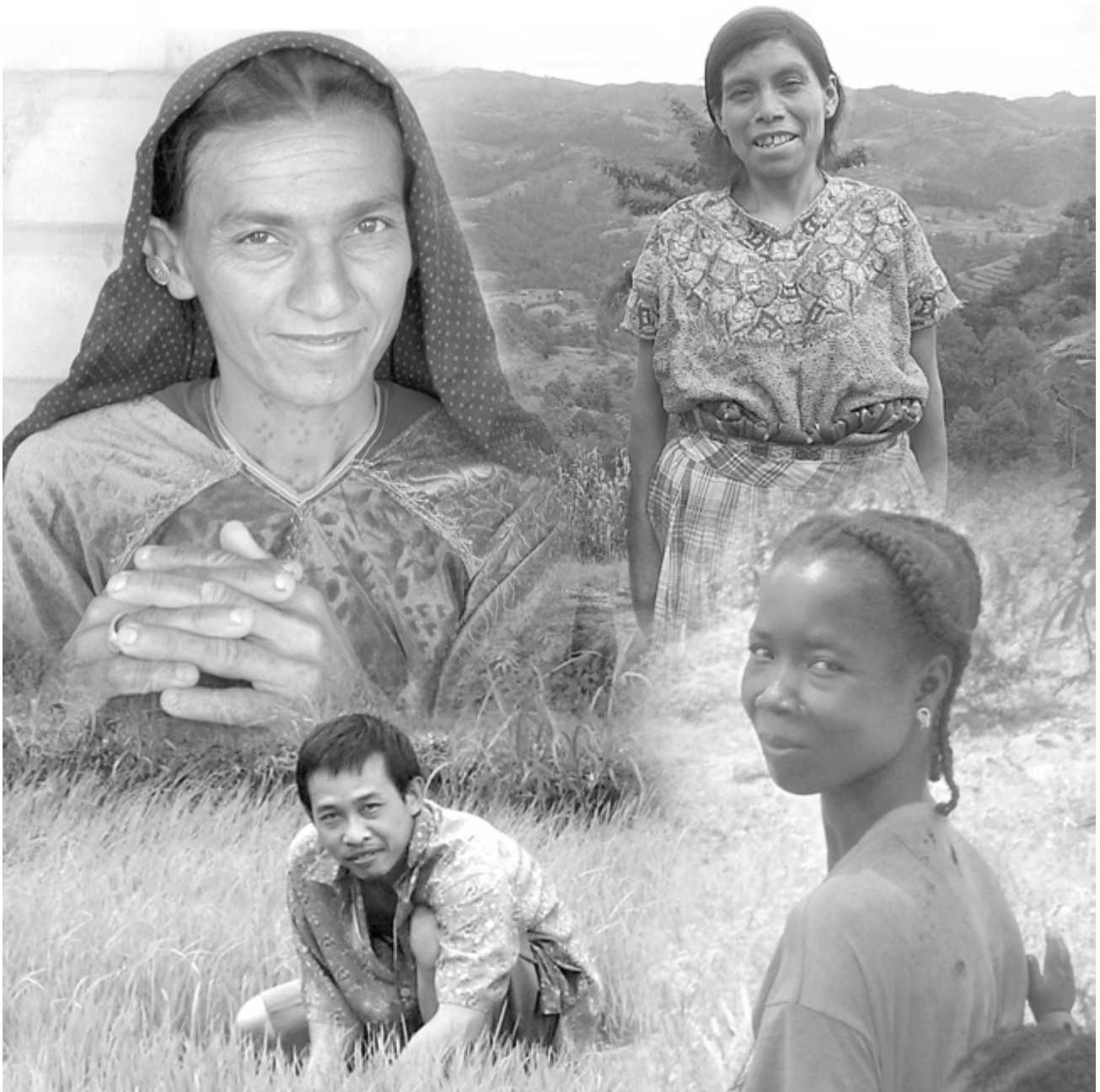


ProPack

The CRS Project Package

Project Design and Proposal Guidance for
CRS Project and Program Managers



ProPack

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for CRS Project and Program Managers

Valerie Stetson, Guy Sharrock and Susan Hahn





Since 1943, **Catholic Relief Services** (CRS) has held the privilege of serving the poor and disadvantaged overseas. Without regard to race, creed, or nationality, CRS provides emergency relief in the wake of natural and man-made disasters. Through development projects in fields such as education, peace and justice, agriculture, microfinance, health and HIV/AIDS, CRS works to uphold human dignity and promote better standards of living. CRS also works throughout the United States to expand the knowledge and action of Catholics and others interested in issues of international peace and justice. Our programs and resources respond to the U.S. Bishops' call to live in solidarity-as one human family-across borders, over oceans, and through differences in language, culture and economic condition.

Published in July 2004 by:
Catholic Relief Services
209 W. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-3443 USA

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Cover Photos:
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ProPack has been produced by CRS with financial support from two Food For Peace grants: the Institutional Support Assistance program (FAO-A-00-98-00046-00), and the Institutional Capacity Building grant (AFP-A-00-03-00015-00). The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the US Agency for International Development or Food For Peace.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While the principal authors drew from many project planning documents, the following references were of particular use: *Designing Title II Development Assistance Programs: Assessment, Analysis, Action*, by Jenny Aker; *Integrated Planning Handbook of the American Red Cross*; and *Managing for Impact in Rural Development: A Guide for Project M&E* by IFAD.

Guy Sharrock and Constance McCorkle developed the ProFrame and all other materials presented in Chapter IV.

The following people provided excellent feedback.

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Marc D'Silva	Mbuyi Lusambbo	Anne Sellers
David Donovan	Suzanne Manzer	Juan Sheehan
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Willie Kiarie	Jessica Pearl	Kim Wilson
Peter Kimeu	Senait Petros	The many participants at ProPack workshops

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Responsibility for any errors that remain in this document rests solely with the authors.

FOREWORD

Project design and proposal writing are core responsibilities for CRS programming staff and take much investment of our human and financial resources. ProPack (Project Package) has been written specifically for CRS staff to enable us to work in a consistent manner with partners to raise the quality of our planning processes.

The first CRS **Project Text Format** was written in 1986, later revised in 1993, and represented CRS' first attempt to promote a more consistent approach to project design by providing a standard outline for project proposals. **The Project Proposal Guidance, PPG**, was developed in 1999 in CRS East Africa, although it was used agency-wide. The PPG incorporated the newly developed program quality standards and the Justice Lens. It focused on a format for project proposals and also included information on project design and an appendix with definitions, tools and other documents. In 2000, staff began to use Proframe® (Project Framework) for design, monitoring and evaluations.

ProPack was written to respond to field requests for more support on project design and also to incorporate the new Proframe. ProPack was developed with input from a wide cross-section of CRS staff. They provided information on content and also reviewed and commented on drafts of the document. Many regions have already had training on earlier versions and lessons from there further influenced the final text.

We would like to thank all of the staff who have been involved in the design, development and production of ProPack because this enterprise has taken much effort. It reflects a dedication and spirit to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. Of course, "the proof is in the pudding," so let us once again encourage CRS staff to adopt ProPack for all of their project development initiatives.

With best wishes,



Sean Callahan
Vice President
Overseas Operations



Dorrett Lyttle Byrd
Director
Program Quality &
Support Department

PREFACE

Our intention in writing ProPack is to provide readers with a document that helps them design projects and write proposals. Many of the approaches recommended in ProPack will already be familiar to programming staff. What may be new is how these approaches work together in designing projects that build on CRS values and consider our partnerships, and that are locally appropriate, coherent and likely to achieve positive results.

ProPack includes six chapters which are now briefly described.

Chapter I: Introduction to the Project Package provides an overview of ProPack and its fit within the project cycle and agency goals and vision.

Chapter II: Concept Notes includes guidance for preparing the initial document that describes the ideas for a project's potential strategy.

Chapter III: Project Design Guidance includes sections on the major steps of project design.

- Section 1: Planning the Project Design
- Section 2: Stakeholder Analysis
- Section 3: Assessment
- Section 4: Analysis and Objectives Setting
- Section 5: Strategy Review

Chapter IV: Results Frameworks, Proframes and M&E Planning explains these powerful project design tools and includes a step-by-step guide to constructing them.

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: The Proframe Matrix
- Section 3: How to Construct a Proframe
- Section 4: Other M&E Planning Tools

Chapter V: Project Proposal Guidance includes information and a format needed to write an excellent proposal. It is similar to the previous PPG guidance.

- Section 1: PTS Project Summary Sheet
- Section 2: Executive Summary, Results Framework and Proframe
- Section 3: Project Design
- Section 4: Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation
- Section 5: Project Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Section 6: Capacity Building and Community Participation
- Section 7: Project Activity Scheduling
- Section 8: Budget
- Section 9: Project Proposal Annexes

Chapter VI: Further Resources provides a definition of terms, some additional tools, and a list of references corresponding to selected chapters and sections.

As you use ProPack in your everyday work you may have comments or suggestions for improving it. We are very happy to receive feedback that will inform future editions.

Please send any comments or suggestions for improving this edition of ProPack to Guy Sharrock via e-mail gsharrock@catholicrelief.org.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Ag&NRM	Agriculture & Natural Resources Management
APS	Annual Program Statement
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CARE	The Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe
CARO	Central Africa Regional Office
CBO	Community-based Organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DANIDA	The Danish Agency for Development Assistance
DAP	Development Activity Proposal
DFID	Department of International Development (UK)
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DMER	Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
EOP	End of Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FFP	Food For Peace (USAID)
GTZ	German Government-supported aid agency
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IHD	Integral Human Development
IR	Intermediate Result
LACRO	Latin America Regional Office (CRS)
MAGI	Microfinance Alliance for Global Impact
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOH	Ministry of Health
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PITT	Performance Indicator Tracking Table
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTS	Project Tracking System
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RF	Results Framework
RFA	Request for Application
RFP	Request for Proposal
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SARO	Southern Africa Regional Office (CRS)
SASIA	South Asia Regional Office (CRS)
SEAPRO	Southeast Asia, East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (CRS)

SO	Strategic Objective
SVF	Seed Vouchers & Fairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARO	West Africa Regional Office (CRS)

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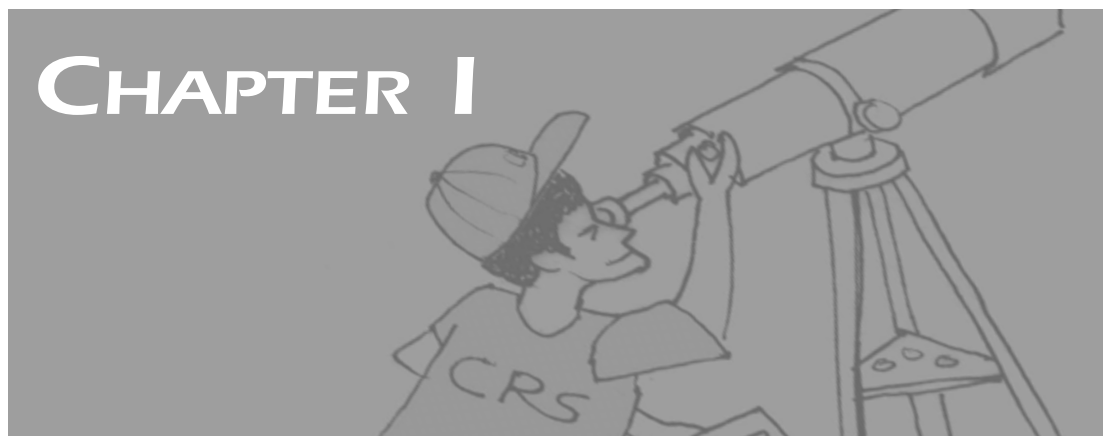
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CHAPTER I



INTRODUCTION TO PROPACK

The Project Package (ProPack) is a resource to help CRS staff improve the quality of project design and proposal writing. It is written to support CRS' work with partners and communities. ProPack includes guidance, templates and tools for project design – from developing a concept note through the writing of a project proposal. These materials are intended for use in all projects regardless of sector, funding source, or donor (although some donors may have their own proposal format that must be used.) Regardless of format, a strong design process, as described in ProPack, is always appropriate.

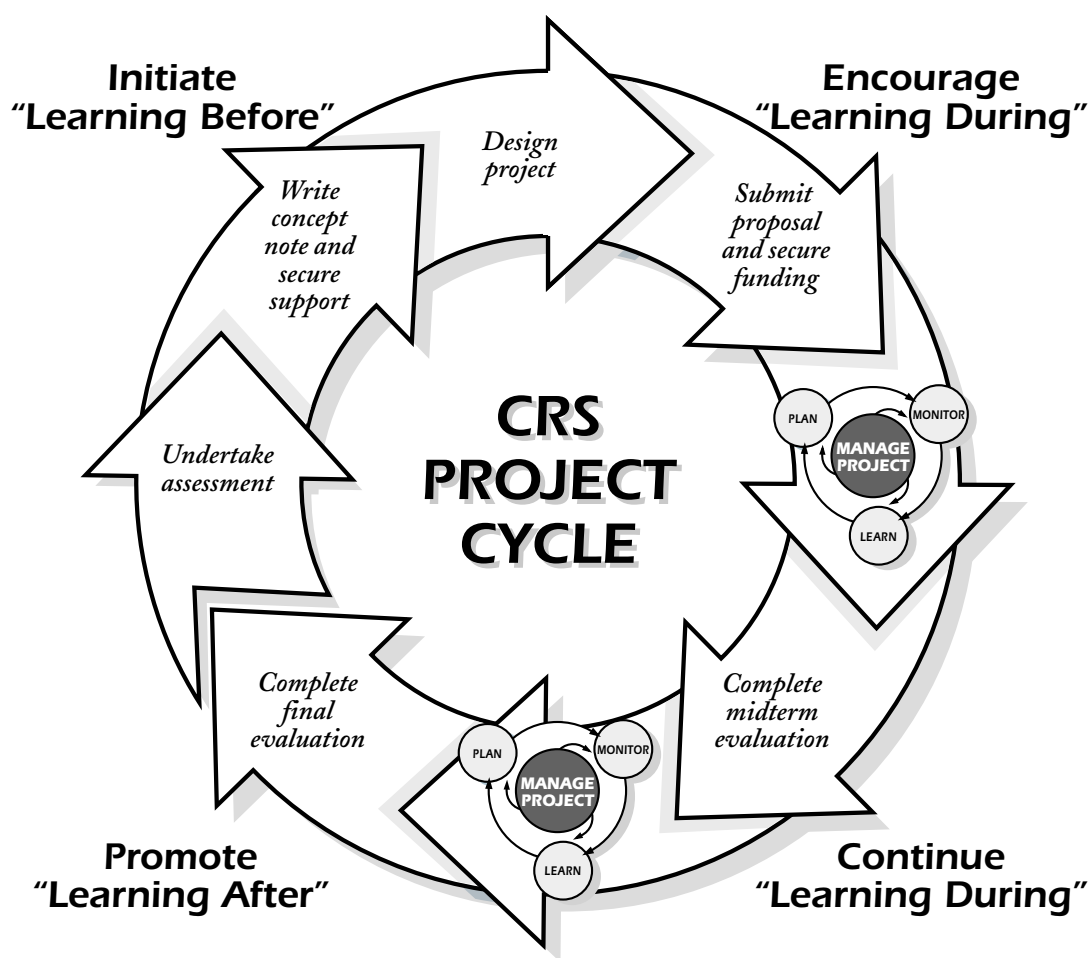
Reflection opportunities are placed throughout the text to encourage users to explore how ProPack's content relates to their own knowledge and experience in project design. These reflection opportunities are also written to build the knowledge and skills of CRS staff as they apply the concepts and techniques of ProPack in their work.

In this chapter, you will:

- learn how design fits into the overall project cycle and why it is so important;
- understand how projects link to CRS' vision and strategic plans;
- distinguish the purpose and review a description of ProPack's chapters and sections;
- examine the sequencing of project design events or products;
- review how to use ProPack; and
- reflect on the enabling environment for productive use of ProPack.

PROJECT CYCLE

A project is a set of planned, interrelated actions that achieve defined objectives within a given budget and a specified period of time. The project cycle (Figure 1) illustrates the set of actions: design, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluating, reporting and learning. These actions are interrelated and are roughly sequential. The project cycle is shown as a circle because insights and learning from project evaluations inform the design of new projects – “learning after” and “learning before.” Within individual project cycle actions, there are loops that illustrate how learning and insights change and improve ongoing projects – “learning during.”



Source: Adapted from CARE original and CRS ProPack workshop participants

Figure 1: CRS Project Cycle

Many other variations of the project cycle diagram exist. Most agencies develop their own version, but they are broadly similar to the one used by CRS:

- UNICEF uses a simplified “Triple A” circle: Assessment, Analysis and Action.
- John Paul Lederach, a peacebuilding expert, has developed a project cycle with “Plan-Watch-Learn” elements that inform and are informed by a project’s actions (e.g. Lederach, 2003; Lederach, 2001). This approach has informed the CRS project cycle.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How does the CRS project cycle in Figure 1 fit with the reality of how you design, plan, implement and evaluate projects?
2. Where do you consider the “beginning” and “end” of your project cycle to be located and why?
3. Sketch what you believe is an improved project cycle and justify what you have drawn.

Project Design within the Project Cycle

The focus of ProPack is on the *design* phase of the project cycle. The quality of design is important because it affects every other step in the project cycle. While design is an important starting point, it is also an ongoing process throughout the project cycle. For example, new understandings that emerge during project implementation should lead project managers to adjust the project design. The text box below illustrates this with two examples.

Adjusting a Project Design in Light of Positive Effects	Adjusting a Project Design in Light of Negative Effects
<i>A women’s literacy project in one country was so successful that literacy monitors were overwhelmed with requests to join the program. A slight change to the project design allowed the project managers to hire and train more literacy monitors and increase the number of targeted participants</i>	<i>A small-scale water-harvesting project unexpectedly led to an increased risk of children’s exposure to unclean water. Although the project was successful in trapping water, the original design had not foreseen that children and animals might use the same water. Project managers decided to revise the project’s design to include fencing and other measures once they realized the problem.</i>

*Project design is as much an **art** as it is a **science**.*

Clear guidance and steps can help but do not replace the intuition, insights, creativity and critical thinking of project managers. The more experience you have in project design, the more comfortable you will be in applying and adapting ProPack's steps and tools.

PROJECTS AND THE CRS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Projects can be seen as the building blocks for CRS' long-term goals, vision and mission. In turn, projects are guided by the agency's core purpose and special value.

*Ideals are like the stars.
We never reach them,
but we chart our course by them.*

CRS' *Strategic Framework* defines the agency's goals, vision and mission and how they relate to the people, groups and institutions – its stakeholders – all of which have an interest in the success of agency operations. CRS' special value lies in relationships with partners and the benefits they can bring to both the poor and marginalized overseas and to the U.S. Catholic community. The Strategic Framework states that CRS' core purpose is the realization of human dignity. CRS engages in relationships that:

- alleviate human suffering;
- promote integral human development;
- change structures that undermine justice and peace locally, nationally and internationally; and
- create the realization and expression of solidarity.

Regional and country program long-term plans flow from the CRS strategy and respond to local conditions and partner priorities (Figure 2). An example of one regional strategy is shown in the box below; other regions have different strategies.

CRS West Africa's regional strategy focuses on food security and peacebuilding as the best means to promote integral human development. This is because food insecurity and conflict are overwhelming and immediate problems throughout West Africa.

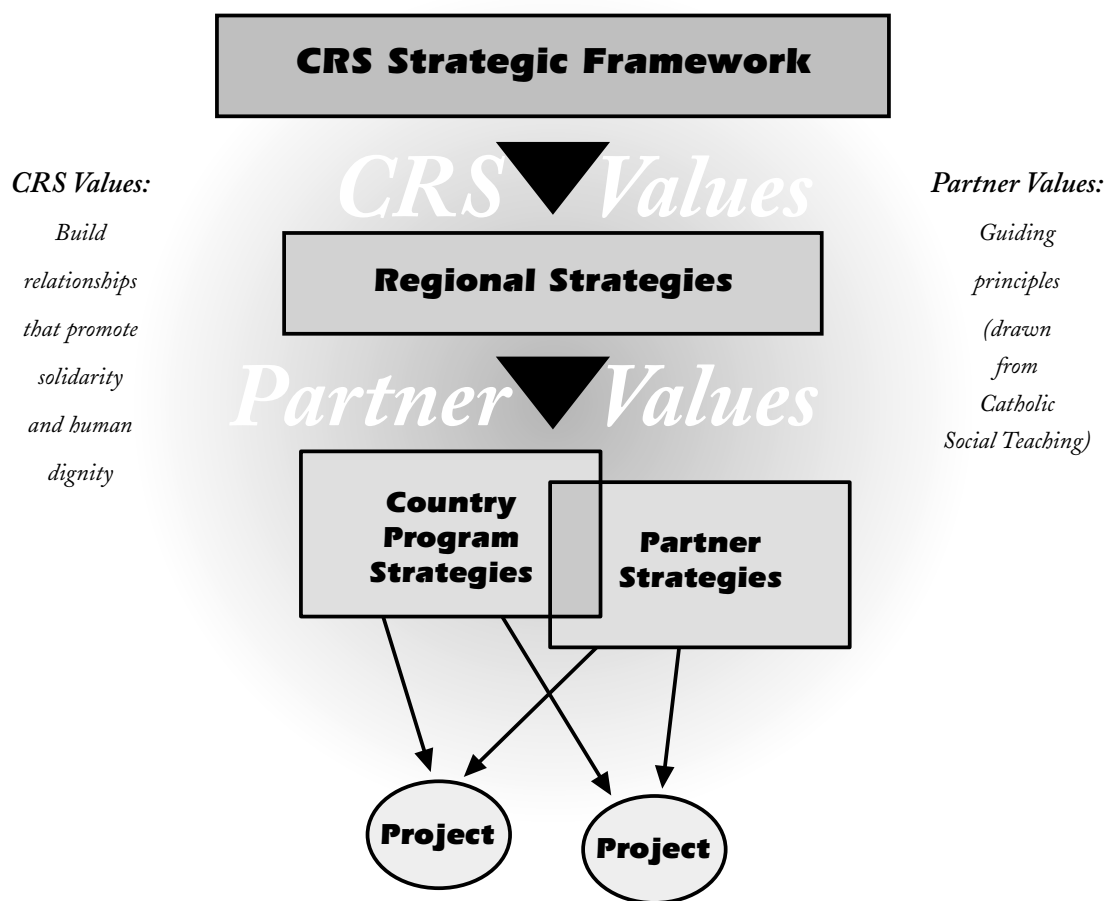


Figure 2: Strategic Frameworks and Projects

The long-term goals of CRS are realized in projects overseas and in the United States. In turn, these agency, regional and country program strategic plans provide boundaries for projects. The strategies of partners provide other boundaries. The word “boundary” is chosen deliberately. Boundaries are not restrictive, rather they clarify and justify decisions about what projects CRS can and should support. They also allow CRS to refuse projects as appropriate. The boundaries defined by CRS’ Strategic Framework indicate who CRS works with (the poor and marginalized overseas and the U.S. Catholic community); where CRS works (locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally); and how CRS works (alleviating suffering, promoting integral human development, changing structures that undermine justice and peace, and creating solidarity).

Program Quality standards and related regional or country program sector strategies also provide boundaries and program priorities that help link projects to agency-wide goals. Two examples shown in the following text box illustrate the application of boundaries to projects.

<p><i>The Interim Standards and Approach for CRS HIV/AIDS Programming in Africa provides direction for the agency's HIV/AIDS projects. Developing a home-based care project in a slum area is a project that CRS can support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>it fits within the program priorities of CRS' HIV/AIDS program standard;</i> ■ <i>it contributes to the agency's Strategic Framework in promoting the alleviation of human suffering and promoting integral human development.</i> <p><i>Funding research on an HIV vaccine is not a project CRS can support because it falls outside of the program boundaries of the Interim Standards.</i></p>	<p><i>The Guidelines for the Development of Small Scale Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Projects in Ethiopia provides guidelines for water and sanitation projects. The guidelines come from lessons learned, USAID regulations and Ethiopian legislation and environmental policy. These guidelines state that water supply projects funded under Title II must be linked to sanitation. This is because potential health benefits of water supply improvements will not be fully realized unless supported by sanitation improvements.</i></p> <p><i>By following these guidelines, project designers seek to maximize the benefits of any investment in this sector, and thereby help to ensure the agency's long-term goal of alleviating human suffering.</i></p>
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Source: CRS, 2001; Warner and Green Abate, 2003

Defining boundaries for projects helps focus the efforts to achieve the long-term goals and objectives of CRS and its partners. Defining boundaries also optimizes the investment of scarce resources.

Reflection Opportunity

1. What other documents or policies (such as government policy or other) provide important boundaries for the projects that CRS supports in your situation?
2. How do you and your partners use these documents when you design projects?
3. How would you improve current use of these documents during project design?

ProPack: What It Is

Each chapter of ProPack is described in the following table.

Table 1.1. Overview of ProPack Chapters and Sections

Chapter/Sections	Phase	Purpose and Description
Chapter I: Introduction to ProPack		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shows project design fit within the project cycle and agency long-term goals and vision. ■ Introduces and links all elements of the ProPack.
Chapter II: Concept Notes	Initiates the project design and proposal development process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fosters dialogue with partners, CRS staff and donors early on. ■ Focuses the project design effort. ■ Responds to donor requests. ■ Provides brief, clear notes that describe an idea for a project's potential strategy.
Chapter III: Project Design Guidance Sections 1 - 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning the Project Design ■ Stakeholder Analysis ■ Assessment ■ Analysis and Objectives Setting ■ Strategy Review 	Done after the concept note is approved (although project design knowledge informs the development of the concept note itself).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps ensure high quality projects and smooth, detailed project planning, implementation and evaluation. ■ Offers a series of steps for information gathering, analysis and decision-making. ■ Provides the raw materials, information and analysis for a project proposal.
Chapter IV: Results Frameworks and Proframes Sections 1 - 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduction ■ The Proframe Matrix ■ How to Construct a Proframe ■ Other M&E Planning Tools 	Initially sketched as an important element of the concept note. Results Frameworks and Proframes both distil and improve information from project design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Synthesizes all the information, analysis and decisions, using information from the previous steps of project design. ■ Helps to identify oversights or gaps in existing knowledge that should be filled in order to complete project design. ■ Represents the main elements or "heart" of a project in concise form. ■ Provides structure around which the proposal narrative can be written.
Chapter V: Project Proposal Guidance Sections 1-9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PTS Project Summary Sheet ■ Executive Summary, Results Framework and Proframe ■ Project Design ■ Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation ■ Project Organizational Structure and Staffing ■ Capacity Building and Community Participation ■ Project Activity Scheduling ■ Budget ■ Project Proposal Annexes 	Done during or immediately after the project design effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicates information about a proposed project in a clear and concise way to donors and others who need to approve and fund the project. ■ Provides guidance in writing a structured and well-presented project proposal capturing relevant information from the project design effort. ■ Suggests a generic proposal outline or format.
Chapter VI: Further Resources	Consulted throughout project design and project proposal development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides a definition of terms used in ProPack. ■ Includes some additional tools to assist project design and proposal writing. ■ Lists bibliographic references for those wanting further information.
Other Complementary Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Existing CRS manuals such as Schoonmaker Freudenberger (1999). ■ CRS' M&E Team will be producing a series of 10 "how-to" modules covering a range of M&E topics that Country Programs typically have to address that affect project design, proposal writing, and implementation.

ProPack: What It Is Not

ProPack does not include guidance on how to do strategic planning. This involves a particular planning approach (e.g. justice and solidarity reflection and the development of a vision statement) that is different from project design. That said, there are tools in ProPack that are very useful for strategic planning such as Stakeholder Analysis, Results Framework, Proframe, and others.

ProPack does not provide detailed advice on issues concerning budgeting, organizational structure and staffing, partner and community capacity building, and gender. The first three topics are important elements of any proposal and are included in Chapter V on Project Proposal Guidance. Reminders about addressing gender are placed at various points throughout ProPack. Readers are advised, however, to seek more comprehensive and detailed information about each of these issues from other CRS sources (see Chapter VI). For example, the *Project Proposal Guidance* (Stetson, Hahn and Remington, 1999) contains excellent materials on gender responsive programming.

Currently, **ProPack does not include detailed guidance on project management and implementation.** Once funding is obtained for your proposed project, detailed plans for project implementation (involving activity schedules, critical path analysis, GANTT charts¹) and for undertaking the baseline survey will be required. Although ProPack includes some guidance on these two topics for the purposes of submitting a project proposal, the level of detail required once implementation commences will be significantly greater.

A project proposal does not contain guidance for the level of detail needed by managers for project implementation and proposals should not be used for this purpose.

PRIMARY INTENDED USERS OF PROPACK

ProPack is for use by CRS country program national and international staff who work with partners to design projects and write proposals. Within CRS, these staff members often have the following titles: Head of Office, Project Manager, Program Manager, Agriculture (or other sector) Manager, or Project Officer.

Supervisors of these primary users should use the ProPack as they manage, support and mentor staff. Supervisors or technical support staff in this category include: Regional Directors, Country Representatives, Regional Technical Advisors (RTA), Deputy Regional Directors for Program Quality (DRDs/PQ) and headquarters-based Senior Technical Advisors and Technical Advisors. Some of the program staff positions listed above may also be in supervisory positions.

¹ A Gantt chart is a horizontal bar chart developed in 1917 by Henry Gantt. It provides a graphical illustration of a schedule that helps to plan, coordinate, and track specific tasks in a project.

Reflection Opportunity

1. Who in your own country program would be a primary user of ProPack?
2. Who are the specific individuals that need to support these primary users in your country program and region?

ProPack is not intended for distribution to partners without sufficient orientation or training.

It is inappropriate to distribute CRS project materials to partners for immediate use. Rather, CRS staff must decide carefully how to use ProPack in the most meaningful and appropriate way when working with partners.

An experienced partner may be able to make good use of ProPack materials after they have reviewed the materials with CRS staff. Or, CRS staff may design a training workshop for partners to learn about key concepts and build specific skills in project design. In this case, they would draw from ProPack, perhaps photocopying some key pages, but would not distribute it in full.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How have you used CRS-generated materials with partners in the past?
2. What worked well and why?
3. What problems did you experience and why?
4. How should these lessons learned be applied to your use of ProPack with partners?

HOW TO USE PROPACK MATERIALS

Each proposal developed by CRS and partners requires a solid analysis of the situation and clear thinking in the design regardless of the size of its budget, timeframe, number of people reached, or the particular donor and CRS regional requirements. Attention to critical aspects of program design demonstrates respect for project participants whose lives are touched by CRS-supported interventions. Even small projects can have a negative impact on poor people, so CRS staff should always plan carefully. Figure 3 shows the various steps of ProPack from the concept note through the final submission of the proposal.

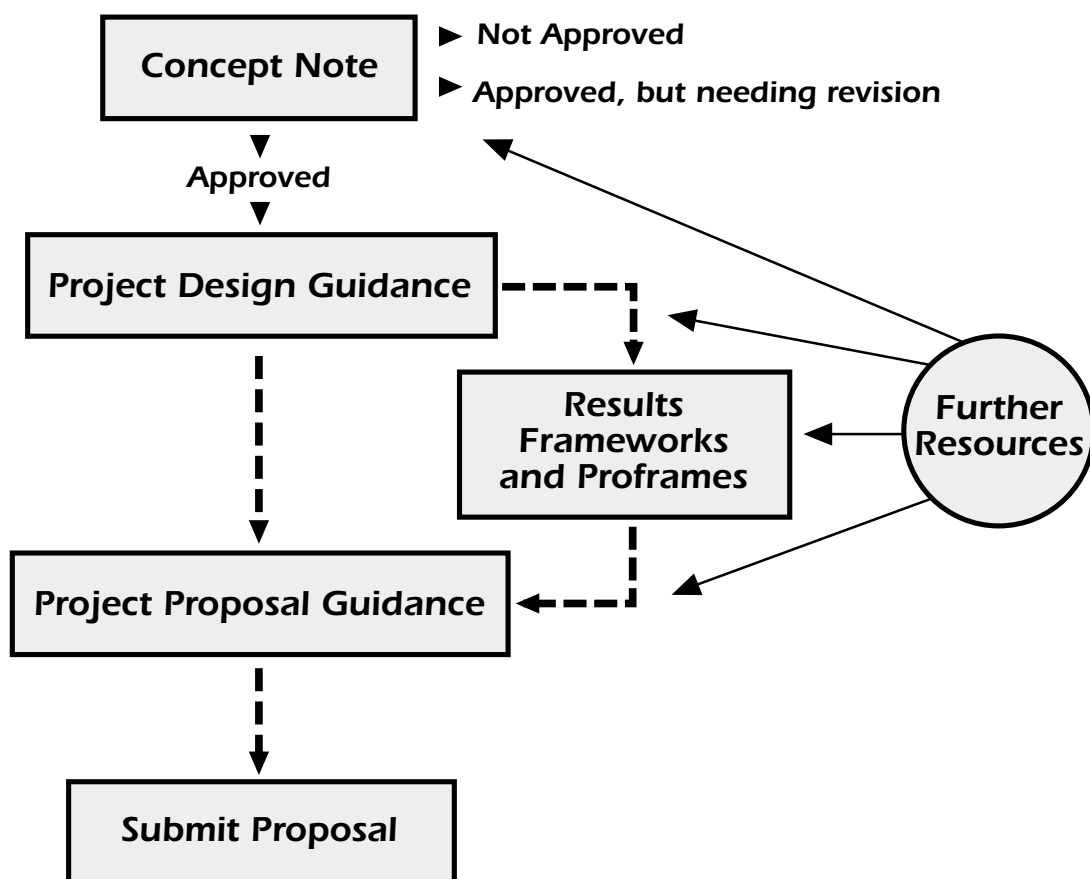


Figure 3: ProPack Flow Chart

Telescoping

The idea of *telescoping* is helpful in understanding how ProPack’s materials and guidance can be suitably adapted to specific situations. A telescope can be adjusted in length, yet all the useful features of the instrument – the lenses, for example – remain. It is the responsibility of the person using the telescope to think and then decide how best to shorten, lengthen or otherwise adjust it to get the best result.



The following table illustrates how ProPack materials can be telescoped for use within two very different project design contexts: a five-year USAID funded integrated project and a one-year project extension for an existing HIV/AIDS project.

Table 1.2. Telescoping Examples: Project Design and Proposal Development

	Developing a 5-year Integrated Project	Developing a 1-year Project Extension
Concept Note	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project managers and partner staff meet with regional staff, spend one week at the project site and another week writing a five-page concept note for review by the donor. ■ The donor approves the concept note with a list of suggestions, allowing the project managers to move forward to project design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CRS and the partners' project health officer discuss preliminary ideas with the RTA for health during a one-day meeting. They sketch out the concept note elements on two pages. ■ The RTA provides feedback to improve ideas and gives the go-ahead for further project design.
Planning the Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The country representative approves a substantial budget for the project design work. ■ CRS' project manager is assigned to work on the project design full-time over the next 4 months. ■ A skilled consultant is hired to write the final proposal. ■ A room is set aside for project design team meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The country representative approves a modest budget for the project design work. ■ Existing CRS and partner project staff carry out all project design work.
Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment and analysis, including a field-based rapid rural assessment is a large, multi-team effort undertaken by CRS staff and partners and requires 15 days to complete. ■ A five-day consultative workshop is held with partners to make decisions on the project's objectives and strategies. A consultant distills this information into a Proframe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment and analysis is done by reviewing the evaluation of the first phase and making a site visit to another NGO with a similar, highly regarded program. A two-day rapid assessment at the project site is also done. ■ A one-day workshop is organized for all project stakeholders to discuss and analyze the assessment information, develop objectives and a strategy, and finalize a Proframe.
Project Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A consultant spends several weeks working under the CRS project officer and consulting with various project stakeholders to finalize the 50-page proposal. The country program submits the proposal to USAID. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The partner's health officer drafts a 10-page proposal. She meets with the CRS project officer to finalize the Proframe and ensure the budget is complete as these were areas of difficulty in past project proposals. She then submits the proposal to CRS.

Both projects undertook the same series of steps to arrive at proposal submission. The “telescoping” or adjustments for each project was the amount of time, human resources, and budget required to develop the project. There is no simple rule-of-thumb that indicates the most appropriate way to telescope your project design effort. Telescoping is a matter of judgment.

Navigating ProPack – linear and dynamic approaches

It is a challenge to capture the dynamic, iterative aspects of real-life project design when writing a manual that presents the topics in a linear way. You should view ProPack's step-by-step presentation as a way of providing new information and materials to readers in bite-size units. For example, while the assessment and analysis chapters are presented separately, you may be doing analysis throughout the assessment process. The Results Framework and Proframe are presented in Chapter IV, but you may start to use them much earlier.

Use your past experiences and best judgment to determine how and when to incorporate the tools and methods. This is the “art” of project design. Staff should review the ProPack in its entirety before beginning a concept paper or project design. It is important to understand the whole process and what each element may contribute.

ENABLING THE USE OF PROPACK

Good project design materials alone do not improve projects. They are simply tools that can help staff increase knowledge and skills in project design. Other factors are important in helping CRS staff and partners master project design, use ProPack appropriately, and develop positive attitudes and practices. These may include the following:

- supervisors can support project managers to break the “not enough time to design” syndrome;
- senior staff can clarify strategic directions so that the context and framework for project design is more apparent;
- technical advisors can help staff and partners to discover for themselves the value and rationale for investing resources in high quality project design; and
- project managers should recognize the abilities and talents that each person or group can bring to project design.

Reflection Opportunity

1. What other factors supporting high quality project design can you add to the above list?
2. As a project manager, how would you help yourselves and your partners to address the “not enough time to design” syndrome?

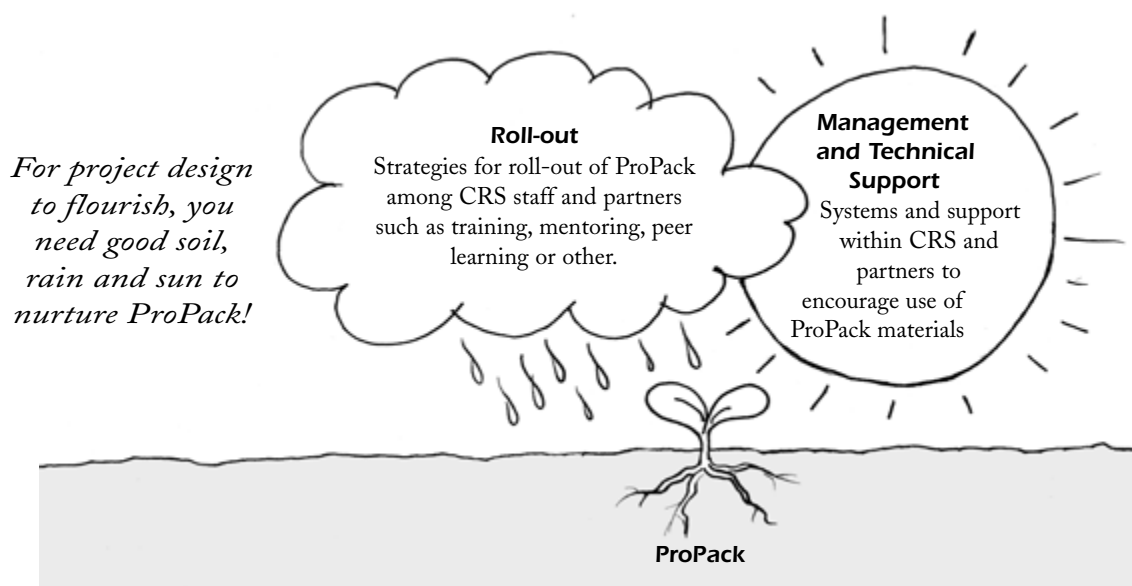


Figure 4: Enabling the Use of ProPack

Figure 4 illustrates that using ProPack to strengthen the quality of project design also requires that:

- ProPack is rolled-out to those who can benefit from it; and
- management and technical advisers support the use of ProPack and its ideas.

Roll-out

Roll-out describes how the ProPack is disseminated within CRS and how staff then use these materials with partners. Roll-out will include training workshops or on-the-job training for current and new staff, using materials included in this package. This will help users increase knowledge, acquire skills and examine their attitudes around project design.

Critical to any global training strategy is the expectation that CRS country programs will, in turn, draft their own appropriate roll-out strategy to build their partners' skills in project design.

ProPack training will promote organization of communities of learning among participants. A community of learning is a peer support system to reinforce learning and use of ProPack materials (Figure 5).

Members of a community of learning may:

- meet online through various means or face-to-face periodically to discuss current issues or difficulties;
- discuss selected reflection and skill-building questions from ProPack; and
- invite a mentor (someone with strong skills in project design) to attend their meetings.

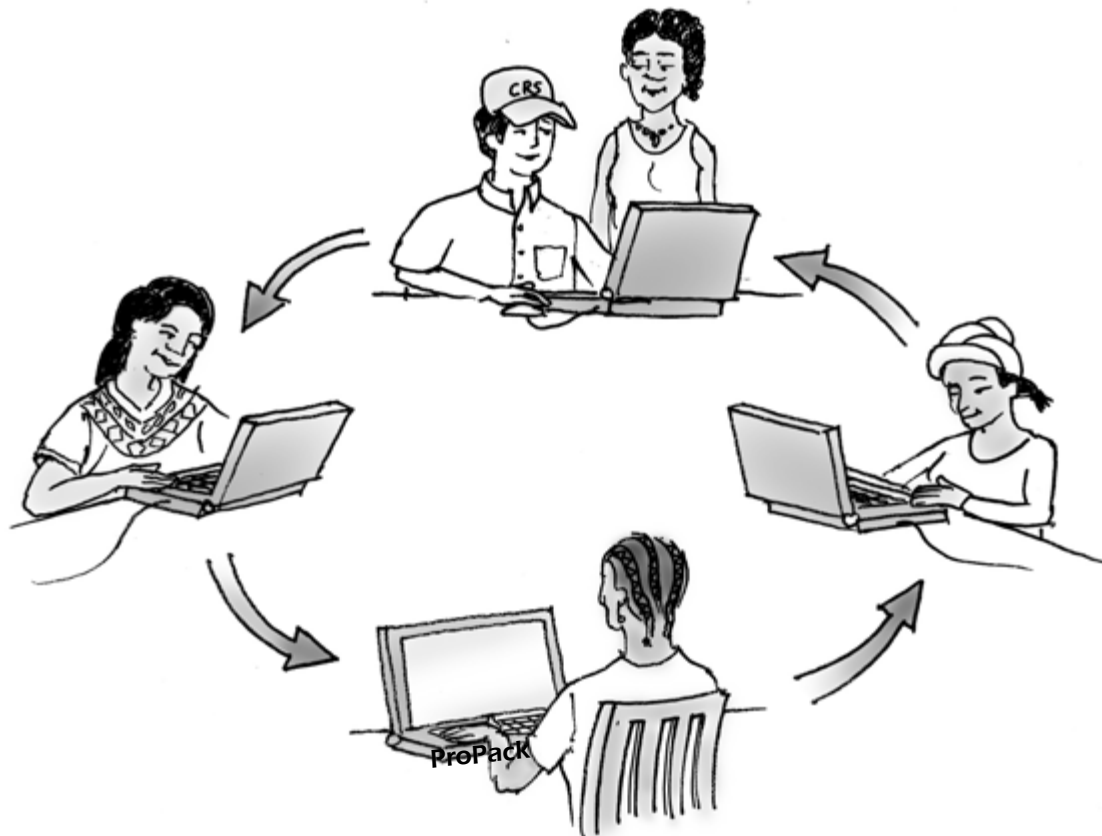
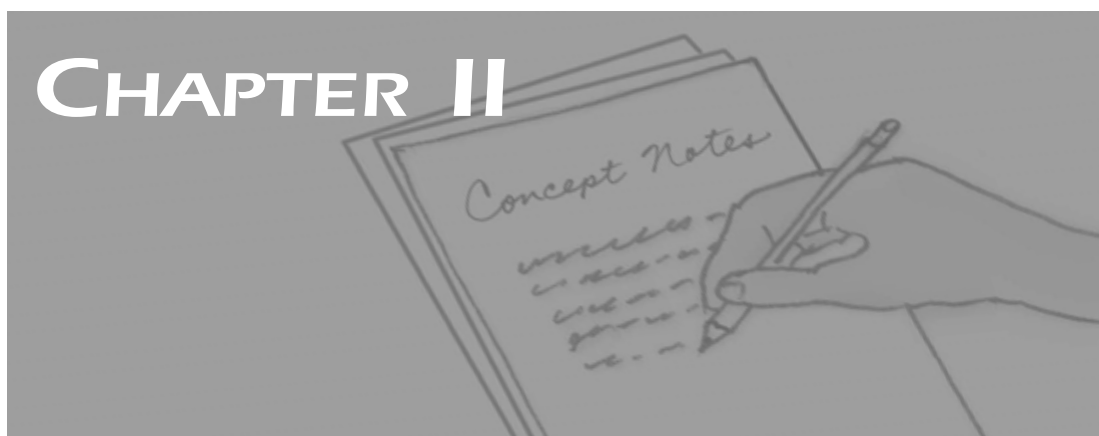


Figure 5: A Community of Learning

Reflection Opportunity

1. In your situation, what will help or hinder effective use of ProPack? Make a list of these helping and hindering factors.
2. In light of your list, what would you suggest doing to ensure future effective use of ProPack?

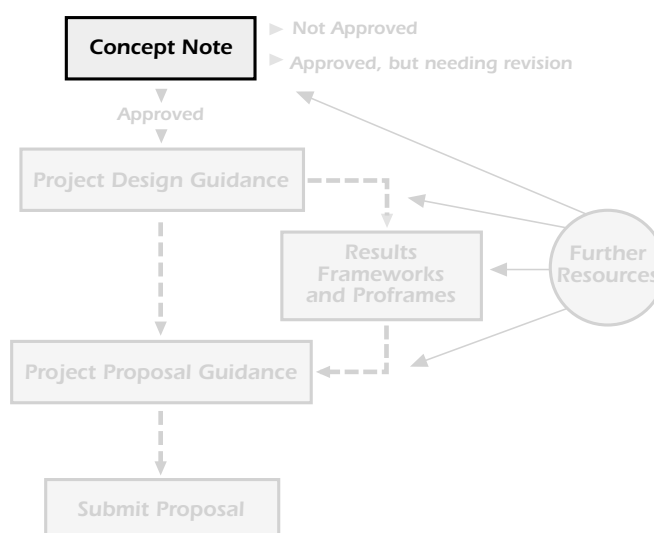


CONCEPT NOTES

ProPack begins the project cycle with a concept note. Development of a concept note, however, assumes that you and your partners are already familiar with the ideas and approaches from other parts of the project cycle and especially the steps of project design.

In this chapter, you will:

- define a concept note and its purpose;
- learn how concept notes ultimately reduce the work in project design and proposal development;
- examine how to promote concept notes in your situation; and
- review the format and steps to develop a concept note.



INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

The *concept note* initiates the project design and proposal development process. Its purpose is to foster dialogue among partners, CRS staff in country programs and regions, and donors before there is a large investment in the project design. The concept note can also encourage staff and partners to try out new ideas for discussion before the development of a full proposal.

Concept notes focus on ideas, not details. The ideas are preliminary and perhaps rough, but with enough detail to show what the project is intended to achieve and why, and how it will do so. Concept notes should convey why the proposed ideas have a fair chance of success without going into details or long justifications.

The concept note answers four questions:

- What are the identified problems or issues, and why are they important?
- What are the project's objectives?
- What are the strategies to achieve these objectives?
- How realistic are these objectives and strategies?

Concept notes present your *draft project strategy* that will be reworked and refined during the project design and then described in the final project proposal. Other relevant ideas about the project may also be included in the concept note if critical to understanding or if required by donors.

The concept note focuses on the concept or idea driving the project. *Note* is defined as “a short, informal letter” so concept notes are usually only two to five pages in length. They are not intended to be perfectly crafted project proposals, but instead brief, clear notes. Donors or other organizations may refer to concept notes as concept papers.



WHY CONCEPT NOTES?

Concept notes allow for a discussion of a proposed strategy in the very early stages. Country program staff and partners can sometimes invest significant resources in designing a project and developing a proposal only to have reviewers suggest major amendments, or to find out that the donor has little interest in the project. The “perfected but rejected” scenario can be devastating for those who have worked hard to produce the proposal. This ends up causing resentment and resistance rather than a willingness to revise. The concept note can help get key stakeholders in agreement with a draft strategy early on in the planning process.

Concept notes are increasingly requested by donors as the first step of a process to obtain funding. Some donors want preliminary ideas and an outline of the proposed

project before encouraging further investment in project design and development. Other donors use concept notes as a way to short-list applicants in which case the content is more refined than those notes used to promote early dialogue about a possible intervention.

Critical Incident

A diocesan partner submits a long, detailed proposal for a peace and justice project. The Peace and Justice CRS officer reviews it and is dismayed to see that there was nothing on resolving Muslim and Christian clashes despite the fact that it is a major issue in the project area. When she brings this up in a meeting, the partner staff members are stunned and can only focus on the wasted time and funds they have already invested in the original proposal. The CRS officer understands their dilemma but cannot accept a proposal that ignores a significant problem.

Reflection Opportunity

1. In this critical incident, how do you think each party feels at this point? Why?
2. Have you ever experienced a similar situation? What happened and why?
3. How can these situations be avoided?

PROMOTING THE USE OF CONCEPT NOTES

Not everyone understands concept notes. Some find it unsettling to seek critiques of a proposed initiative and may perceive this as threatening rather than helpful. Others find it to be an unnecessary extra step before getting project approval. It is important to sensitize staff and partners on the differences between a concept note and a full proposal to promote the concept note habit. The following table summarizes some of the main differences.

Table 2.1. Differences between a Concept Note and a Full Proposal

	Concept Note	Full Proposal
Main purpose	A way to initiate and test ideas or concepts for a project before investing in extensive project design activities and, ultimately, a full proposal. Can be used by some donors to short-list project ideas.	A tool to receive approval and funding for a project. Distills a clear and precise description of the outcomes of the project design process and decisions.

(cont.)

	Concept Note	Full Proposal
Content	<p>Focuses on problem or opportunity analysis, objectives and a feasible project strategy.</p> <p>Includes a preliminary Results Framework; may include a preliminary Proframe in some cases.</p>	<p>Includes fully developed sections or chapters describing various aspects of the project, in addition to information contained in the concept note.</p> <p>A Proframe, Results Framework, Performance Indicator Tracking Table, M&E Plan, and implementation schedule are included.</p>
When	<p>First step of project design. Existing knowledge or rapid assessment and analysis informs the telescoped project design.</p>	<p>Last step of the project design process.</p>
Human and financial resources required	<p>Requires few resources. Usually capitalizes on partner and CRS in-house staff knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Requires investment of resources appropriate to the timeframe and scope. Large projects may involve costs for consultants or time from CRS technical advisors from the region or headquarters.</p>
Time required for development	<p>Rapid – varies from a few hours to a few weeks depending on existing knowledge.</p>	<p>Usually requires several weeks at a minimum. Larger project proposals may require months of project design effort and weeks to write.</p>

Concept notes (and fully-developed proposals) should be reviewed in a safe, respectful and collaborative environment. In this environment, CRS partners and staff submitting concept notes will feel confident about their proposals and open to suggestions for improvement; advisors and supervisors will give constructive and appropriate feedback. In the concept note, criticism of petty details, grammar and wording is inappropriate and the writers may be hesitant to submit concept notes again. The next box describes ways to give effective and respectful feedback.

How to Give Effective Feedback on Concept Notes

1. *Give specific comments rather than general ones.*
2. *Focus on the coherence of the ideas presented; not on incidental details.*
3. *Write comments that are descriptive, not judgmental.*
4. *Direct comments and suggestions at something the author can do something about.*
5. *Check to ensure that review comments and suggestions were clearly communicated and understood.*

Reflection Opportunity

1. Think of a time when feedback on your project ideas was given ineffectively or disrespectfully. How did it feel? How did you respond?
2. If a concept note needs improvement, how can this information be communicated to partners in a way that does not harm the relationship and that safeguards ownership?

Country programs and regions should also think carefully about review processes for concept notes. A bureaucratic, overly formal review process goes against the very purpose of writing a concept note. It may prevent rather than promote dialogue on the concepts and ideas. Feedback on concept notes should be rapid (days or weeks, not months) and as direct as possible.

Reflection Opportunity

1. In your situation, what training or sensitization is needed so that concept notes are skillfully used in the ways described above?
2. Who needs to be trained or sensitized and why? Think about partners, CRS managers and yourselves.

INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS APPROPRIATELY

Ownership of projects is promoted when the people who are responsible for implementing the project are involved from the start, specifically, in the development of the concept note. The concept note might be fully developed by the partner or the partner may work in collaboration with CRS. There is no one right way. Below are two examples of concept note development. The first describes how partners developed a concept note to explore funding opportunities for replication of a good project. The second describes how CRS used a concept note to gather input from its own staff and partners for a large project. These illustrate two different, acceptable processes although many other scenarios for developing concept notes are possible.

A Concept Note for Project Replication

One CRS-funded pilot project mobilized NGOs and a municipal government to promote the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically the right to education in one's own language. The project promoted teaching in the Roma language and hired classroom assistants from this ethnic minority. Civil society structures were quite weak in the region so the project received favorable attention from foreign donors thanks to the success in fostering a common platform between NGOs and government. CRS helped two partners write a three-page concept note for the expansion of the project to their municipalities. The purpose of the concept note was to initiate dialogue with potential donors to fund the replication of the pilot project.

A Concept Note for a New, Multi-Country Project

A large multi-country grant was announced for an organization to provide sub-grants to increase inter-ethnic understanding and reconciliation, cross-border cooperation, and local government responsiveness in an area previously torn by war. The grant fit within the CRS regional strategy and CRS was well positioned to win due to its presence and established partners in the targeted countries. CRS wrote a two-page concept note as a vehicle to solicit input and ideas from other CRS offices and partners concerned. This led to a second, five-page concept note that followed the donor guidelines, included a Proframe and was submitted to the donor by CRS.

The key to a successful concept note is participation, clarity and coherence, NOT perfection.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How involved should CRS staff be in working with partners (and other project stakeholders) at the concept note development and writing stage?
2. How might this change depending on the envisioned project or donor?

HOW TO DEVELOP CONCEPT NOTES

Three steps for writing concept notes are included below.

Step One: Telescoped Project Design

How much time and effort is needed to develop a concept note? Remember the idea of telescoping: use your best judgment regarding the amount of time, human

resources and budget required to develop the concept note. The length and scope of the project design effort for a concept note usually depends on CRS' and its partners' local knowledge of the project area and on knowledge of best practices from previous similar efforts in the sector. Concept notes can usually be written from an initial project design process that includes a brief stakeholder analysis, assessment, analysis and objectives setting and strategy identification; ideally, a draft Results Framework should also be included. This process includes dialogue among project stakeholders.

The following table provides guidelines for developing a concept note in various situations.

Table 2.2. Concept Note Design Guidelines

Situation	Concept Note Design Effort
CRS has in-depth knowledge of the project sector and probable geographic location along with a long history of collaboration with its partner in the region.	A concept note may be produced in a few hours during a joint meeting between CRS and its partner. (It is of course advisable to consult with project stakeholders affected by the project at the earliest opportunity).
CRS is well established with long-time partners and national staff but has less knowledge of the project topic and geographic area.	Assessment might involve meeting with key stakeholders and making a short visit to the project site, perhaps one to three days of work.
CRS has no experience in the project geographic area and sector and is working with a new partner.	Concept note design may take a few weeks involving a more in-depth stakeholder analysis, assessment, problem tree analysis, and careful consideration of alternative project strategies.

Step Two: Writing the Concept Note

The concept note format below allows the writer to organize and present the information in the clearest possible manner. Page limits help you to keep the concept note short and succinct, focusing on the central ideas and not the details. A sketch of a Results Framework helps the reviewer to visualize the “heart” of your concept note (major objectives and strategy). Remember that more details about the proposed project can be developed later, if the relevant stakeholders are in favor of developing a full proposal. Each region may have its own concept note format. Ask your supervisor for copies of existing concept notes that are examples of good practice.

Some donors may also require a particular format, specifying page length and content. Donors may ask, for example, why CRS has a competitive advantage over other NGOs in cases where many organizations have been invited to submit concept notes.

Step Three: Concept Note Format

The concept note should be three to five pages in length, no longer.

Step Four: Submitting the Concept Note for Approval

Each CRS region has its own guidelines for concept note submission and approval. Check your regional review mechanism. Examples of regional concept note submission and review guidelines are included in the box below.

CONCEPT NOTE TITLE: _____

SUBMITTED BY: _____

DATE: _____

PROJECT DESIGN (1-3 Pages)

1. State the problem, opportunity or issue this concept note addresses.
2. Briefly discuss the key or root causes of this problem or issue.
3. Whom does this problem or issue affect, and where does it occur? Be sure to distinguish how issues may be different for women and men.
4. List the strategic objectives the project is expected to achieve. (See Chapter IV for the definition of a strategic objective.)
5. Describe the proposed project strategy or the package of activities that you expect will achieve the objectives, and address the problem and its causes. Provide a rationale and justification for this strategy. (See Chapter III, Section 5 for further information on strategy.)
6. Sketch a Results Framework with the above information. (See Chapter IV for further information on the Results Framework.)
7. If appropriate or depending on regional office practices, include a draft Proframe. (See Chapter IV for further information on Proframe.)
8. State the expected timeframe for this project. (How many months or years?)

CAPACITY ANALYSIS (1 Page)

9. Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring this project?
10. Discuss the capacity or competencies of CRS and its partner to implement, monitor and evaluate the proposed interventions.
11. Describe any increase in capacity of CRS or partners that this project would require and how the project addresses this (hiring of new staff? training? other?).

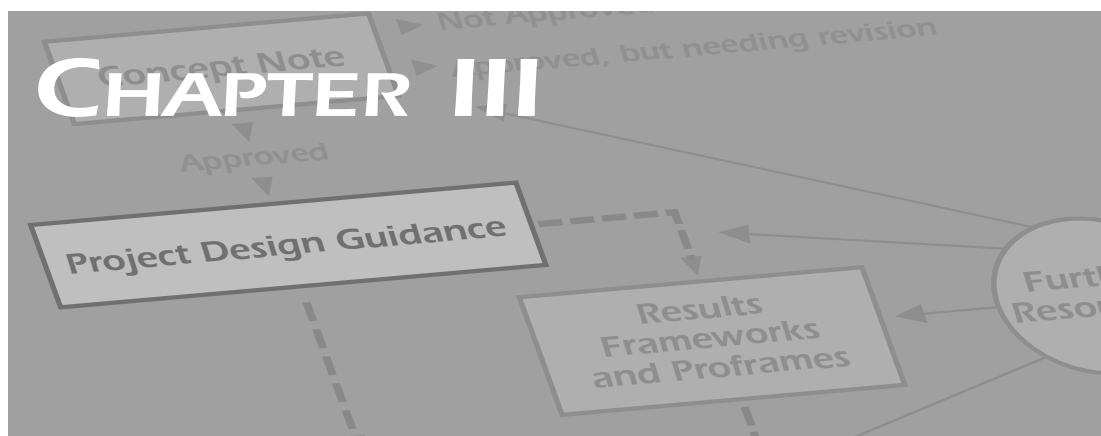
FINANCE (1 Page)

12. If known, discuss the potential funding sources for this project and the likelihood of gaining their support.
13. Provide an estimated monetary value (dollars or other) for the entire cost of this project.
14. Estimate the additional funds necessary for further project design and proposal development, if this concept note is approved.

Example of Regional Guidelines for Concept Note Submission and Review:

- *In WARO, Project Idea Notes are written before developing a concept note. This is a form that takes 10 minutes to fill out. The purpose of the Project Idea Note is to share thoughts on project ideas for discussion and identify potential assistance from within the region. A copy of WARO's Project Idea Notes form is available from the WARO DRD/PQ.*
- *In CARO, CRS Project Managers form a team to discuss interesting ideas from partners and develop a concept note. The concept note is then submitted to an Internal Review Committee (other Project Managers and Heads of Programming) for review and approval. If approved, the Project Manager team works with partners to develop the full proposal.*





PROJECT DESIGN GUIDANCE

Now that your concept note is approved, you have a green light to begin a more comprehensive project design process. This chapter includes five sections, each describing a step of project design and its related frameworks, methods and tools.

Section 1: Planning the Project Design

Section 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Section 3: Assessment

Section 4: Analysis and Objectives Setting

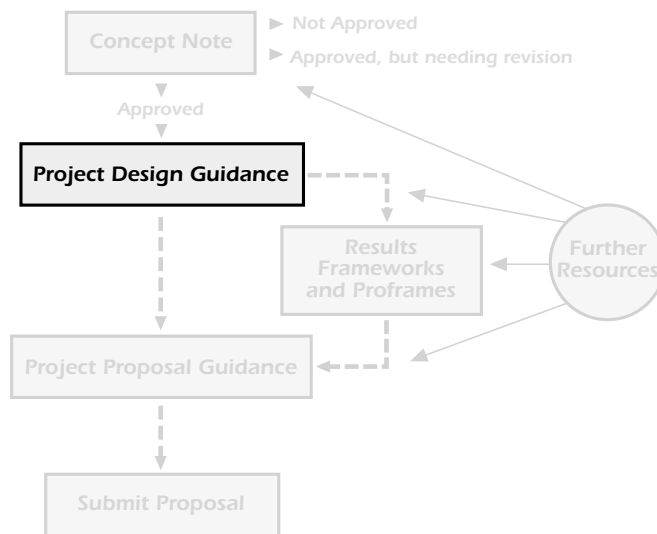
Section 5: Strategy Review

While these steps are roughly in chronological order, experience shows that in reality they are iterative and dynamic. For example, in reviewing the proposed strategy (Section 5), you may discover a need for more information sending you back to the assessment (Section 3). Similarly, as you are working on the assessment, you may be doing analysis at the same time (Section 4). Use your own experiences and judgment in deciding how to use the sections in Chapter III.

A final step before writing the proposal is to complete the *Results Framework* (RF) and the *Proframe*. As you do this you will also be thinking about some related M&E planning issues. While the RF and the Proframe are not described until Chapter IV, they may help you focus the work you will be doing in this chapter. In fact, you may have initially sketched the RF and the Proframe for the concept note. With that initial draft, you may find it useful to continue to working on it as you go through the steps in this chapter.

In this short introduction to Chapter III, you will:

- compare two very different project strategies that address the same problems, needs and opportunities;
- analyze the importance of committing resources to the various steps of project design.



INTRODUCTION TO THE STEPS OF PROJECT DESIGN

Project design is a key element in the project cycle. The quality of a project's design will help you (or haunt you) during the life of the project. The five steps of project design, along with the Results Framework and Proframe, are based on reflections and lessons learned from long years of experience within CRS. Certainly, these steps will help you improve the “science” of project design, but it is your own ability to use successes and failures from past experiences that provide the “art” of project design.

The story of Seed Vouchers and Fairs in the text box below illustrates the importance of art and science.

From Seeds and Tools to Seed Vouchers and Fairs

Projects that distributed seeds and tools were a common and popular intervention to help farm communities recover from disaster. Such projects have been supported by CRS and other agencies for many years. Evaluations of these projects, however, showed them to be of questionable value despite being well intentioned: they were found to implicitly favor powerful stakeholders such as commercial seed companies, disregard local seed systems, and encourage dependency on external resources. A number of weaknesses in the way seeds and tools projects were designed contributed to the problems uncovered in the evaluations. For example:

- *insufficient investment of time and human resources plagued the project design effort;*
- *project design team tended to prefer existing, known interventions;*
- *assumptions and biases (that people lack seeds and tools) drove the choice of project strategy rather than solid information and analysis from on-site rapid rural appraisals;*
- *an existing well-developed logistics capacity encouraged CRS to remain on a commodity distribution “treadmill;”*

(cont.)

- *evaluation for accountability (the amount of seed and numbers of tools delivered) was favored over evaluation for learning (impact assessment);*
- *frameworks – in this situation, those relating to food insecurity – were applied incorrectly during assessment and analysis; and*
- *commercial seed companies (that depend heavily on the sale of seed to relief agencies for distribution in agricultural recovery programs) had an undue and hidden influence on decisions made by the project design team.*

In contrast, early evaluations of Seed Vouchers and Fairs (SVF) interventions revealed a more attractive solution for many communities recovering from disaster. These evaluations showed a number of positive outcomes including the involvement of local people in planning and implementing the SVF; support of women's traditional roles as seed traders; bringing together host and displaced communities through economic interdependence; and a respect for, and use of local people's knowledge, skills and systems. Design of the SVF projects showed a number of strengths:

- *project stakeholders were clearly identified and participated in decision-making (women seed traders, farmers, CRS itself, partners, seed researchers, and others);*
- *on-site rapid rural appraisals were conducted to study local seed systems to generate data for project design;*
- *farmers' resources and assets were considered, as well as needs from multiple perspectives (community, program managers, partners, agriculture researchers and others);*
- *an appropriate framework was used to analyze the situation – in this case a seed security framework;*
- *lessons learned from previous interventions (seeds and tools) were studied; and*
- *mini-evaluations focusing on project stakeholder responses to the fairs helped make improvements in the ongoing design of such projects.*

Source: CRS, 2002; Remington et al, Unpublished paper

The Art and Science of Project Design

SVF projects illustrate a number of good practices that show attention to both the “science” and “art” of project design. Following the steps of project design represent the “science” of project design. Astute judgment, the willingness to try something new, in-depth experience of the project design team, and a spirit of inquiry represent the “art” of project design.

Section 1: Planning the Project Design

The project design team invested time, money and human resources for their design effort. The team traveled to the sites and spent time in communities, which was

viewed as an investment well worth making. The team built on pre-project networking with agriculture research institutes and developed strong relations with the communities. All of these efforts increased the quality of information collected.

Section 2: Stakeholder Analysis

A comprehensive stakeholder analysis encouraged participation, involvement and good relations among people, groups, and institutions who were affected by this project. The analysis revealed those stakeholders who were powerful and may have had undue influence. It also helped to identify those stakeholders important to the success of project (women seed sellers, seed traders, farmers, etc.).

Section 3: Assessment

The design team undertook a thorough assessment that helped to define community, household and individual needs, opportunities and priority problems. A rapid rural appraisal was done on-site across a wide range of community members that helped to reduce incorrect assumptions about existing needs.

Section 4: Analysis and Objectives Setting

The team used an appropriate seed system framework to classify information. The framework also gave the team new insights about appropriate project objectives. The existing problem statement that “farmers lack seed and tools” was both weak and inaccurate. Careful thinking meant that a better problem statement was developed, namely, “seed systems and supplies are adversely affected during an emergency.” Correct identification of the problem, based on situation-specific information, allowed superior analysis of the causal factors.

Section 5: Strategy Review

A careful look at the lessons learned from seeds and tools projects helped the project design team avoid the problems and weaknesses of the earlier intervention. Creative and “outside-the-box” thinking helped project stakeholders consider new ways to address problems, needs and opportunities and meet objectives. The project design team moved beyond existing, comfortable and habitual project strategies.

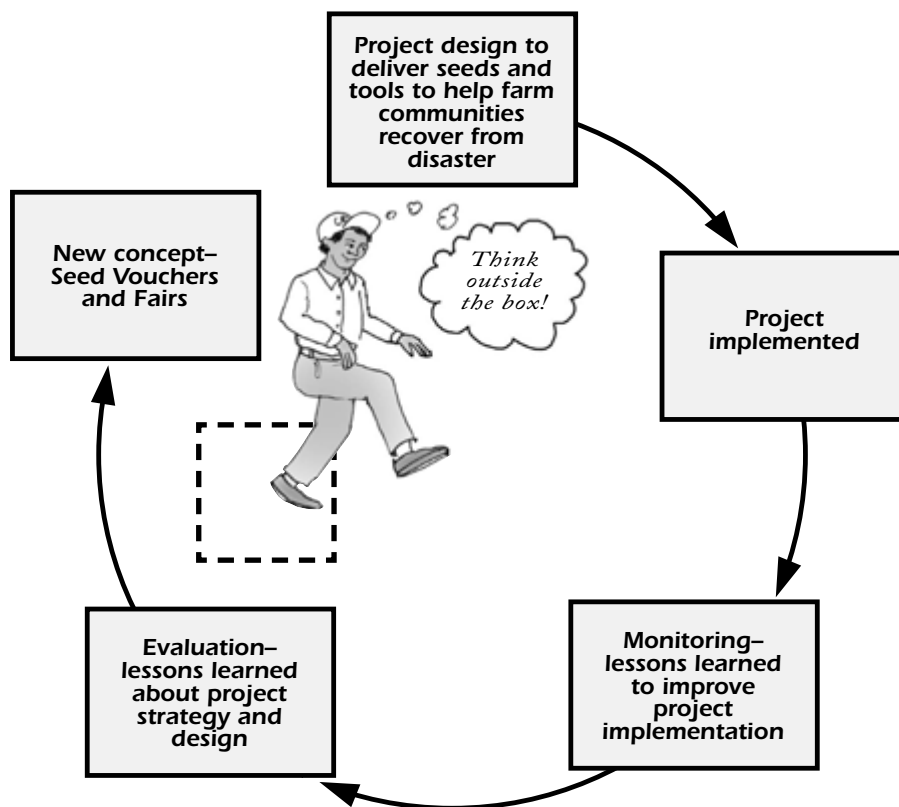


Figure 6: Learning to Improve Project Interventions

Managers of SVF projects pay special attention to how people benefit from the project intervention by using, in particular, the Proframe's Intermediate Results-level of objectives. They are encouraged to “learn during” the project by monitoring and then adjusting as necessary. In this way, managers overcome problems early on giving them a much better chance to achieve the project's ultimate objectives (see Chapter IV).

Reflection Opportunity

1. Think of a project that you helped to plan or design and that you consider very successful. What happened in the project design phase that you feel contributed to the ultimate success of the project?
2. How do your responses to the above reflection enrich the science of project design (steps) or the art (how the steps are done)?

Section 1

PROJECT DESIGN GUIDANCE

PLANNING THE PROJECT DESIGN

Before you begin the first step of project design, it is helpful to review a checklist for planning and managing the work involved. In this section you will:

- review hints, tips and lessons learned that can save time during project design; and
- learn how to design projects effectively and efficiently.

LESSONS LEARNED IN PROJECT DESIGN PLANNING

Build Relationships First

Building relationships with key partners is a central responsibility of a CRS program office. These relationships exist outside of the context of specific projects and demonstrate both CRS' respect for the partnership and long-term commitment to the partner. CRS responsibilities also include developing good relationships with other influential actors in the country, such as other international and local NGOs, local government, and donors. These long-term relationships provide an excellent environment and platform for subsequent work in all aspects of the project cycle, and especially project design.

The Partnership Toolbox

CRS has developed *The Partnership Toolbox* that includes information on developing relationships and working with partners. This is referenced in Chapter VI.



Project Design Is Not Free

Undertaking project design requires money, people and time, so it is important to plan for these resources. Remembering the “telescoping” idea, the investment required is usually related to the scope of the planned project. Large projects may require up to a year’s worth of work on project design while smaller projects will require much less.

Good Project Design Is Organized Project Design

Quality in project design involves careful planning and organization. This requires:

- clear objectives for the design effort;
- well-structured meetings;
- building-in “learning before”, “learning during”, and “learning after” events; and
- designation of clear roles and responsibilities for each member of the design team (if a team effort is required).

Participation in a well-managed project design team is ideal training for CRS staff. It is also a good opportunity to mentor partners in project design skills.

Reflection Opportunity

Reflecting back on your experience of planning a project design effort:

1. How was this project design effort planned?
2. What went well and why? What did not go well, and why?
3. How do your answers compare to the lessons learned above?
4. What might you do differently the next time you are planning a project design effort?

PROJECT DESIGN PLANNING CHECKLIST

Relationship Building Before Project Design

- ☐ Make courtesy visits to partners and appropriate government officials or donors whenever possible.
- ☐ Regularly attend NGO-wide meetings to meet key people in other organizations.
- ☐ Visit NGO staff whose organizations work in similar sectors or geographic

regions to ask about their programs and gather relevant publications (“gray” literature) they may have.

- ☐ Meet all of the above people in informal as well as formal settings.
- ☐ Get involved in sector-focused working groups with other NGOs, government agencies and other organizations.

Relationship Building During Project Design

- ☐ Do the stakeholder analysis described in Section 2 of this chapter. This helps identify individuals, groups or others who may play a role in project design.
- ☐ Ensure that CRS staff members, partners and other stakeholders are clear about roles and responsibilities for project design.
- ☐ Show respect on field visits by contacting the community, government officials or other stakeholders ahead of time to share your objectives and obtain permission.
- ☐ Manage expectations by ensuring that community members and government officials understand that the project design assessment does not guarantee a project intervention.
- ☐ Ensure that the dates and times of field visits are convenient for men and women given their daily tasks and work.
- ☐ Plan opportunities to provide feedback to, and get reactions from, community members on the analyzed information you gathered there.
- ☐ Consider spending the night in communities rather than coming and going each day. You may be surprised to see how much you learn outside the formal assessment activities undertaken during the day!

Resources

Human Resources

- ☐ Plan on appropriate levels of staffing for project design from partners and CRS. If full time or significant time is required from a staff member, help them clear their calendar and ensure they have permission from supervisors.
- ☐ Line up consultants, if required, early in the process and assure that they are available during the required time at a cost you can afford.
- ☐ Line up technical assistance, if required, early in the process and budget for any necessary travel and hotel costs.
- ☐ Consider using the design experience as on-the-job training for staff and partners by inviting individuals to participate in a meaningful way.
- ☐ Ensure that there are written, clear and specific scopes of work for all, especially if there is a team approach.

Budget and Logistical Support

- ☐ Arrange for access to vehicles for field visits or in-town meetings.
- ☐ Provide lodging, food and water as required.
- ☐ Consider establishing an “operations center” where discussions can occur and where key documents are located, especially for a large design effort involving a team.
- ☐ Work with finance department staff to make a project design budget that carefully considers the costs of all design activities.

Workshops and Meetings

- ☐ Provide suitable conference rooms as needed.
- ☐ Provide refreshments during workshops and meetings to the team of workers as appropriate.

Organizational Issues

- ☐ Closely track upcoming opportunities for project funding.
- ☐ Read and re-read the proposal format (the donor’s or the one proposed in Chapter V) that you will be using to distill information for the project design effort. This ensures that all the information you need for the proposal is collected during the assessment.
- ☐ Clarify the objectives of the project design effort.
- ☐ Make a plan of action and schedule for the key project design and proposal development milestones, review it frequently and adjust it.
- ☐ Ensure the project design schedule includes adequate time necessary for reviews and feedback by technical advisors.
- ☐ Assign in-country staff the responsibility to do “front-end” project design work such as gathering information, making contacts or setting up appointments before the outside team arrives.
- ☐ Plan for frequent meetings among staff and others involved in the design and proposal submission (e.g. finance staff) to be appropriately involved in the discussion of findings, project analyses and reviewing tasks for the action plan and schedule. Ensure that decision-makers are present at meetings when decisions need to be made.
- ☐ Organize regular reflection sessions to capture the experiences of your design team that can be shared with others in CRS.

Other

- ❑ Please refer to the following Reflection Opportunity questions.

Reflection Opportunity

1. What checklist ideas are most helpful in your situation?
2. From your own experience, what would you change or add to this checklist?
For example, can you suggest any tips from your own particular program area, such as involving people living with HIV and AIDS in project design? In your learning community, share and discuss the different responses to the above question.
3. Develop your own Planning Project Design checklist.

FURTHER RESOURCES

CRS manuals include excellent information on working with partners, and planning project design and proposal preparation activities (see Chapter VI). These include the following resources:

- Education Proposal Resource Guide;
- Emergency Assessment Manual;
- Partnership Toolbox;
- Public Proposal Toolbox; and
- RRA/PRA manual.

Section 2

PROJECT DESIGN GUIDANCE

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis is a central and critically important component of project design. It can be done at various stages of the project cycle as new information comes to light.

In this section you will:

- define the meaning of stakeholder;
- understand why stakeholder analysis is so powerful in the project design stage;
- learn how to do a stakeholder analysis using checklists and tables.



INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

Stakeholders are individuals, groups and institutions important to the success of the project. Some obvious examples of stakeholders for a women's literacy project are the women who benefit from the literacy classes and who have given up their precious free time to attend, and the diocesan partner who develops and implements the project. Their ownership of the project is central to its ultimate success. But who else is important to this project?

In most situations, a variety of stakeholders is likely to have some level of interest in or influence over a project. Interest means what stakeholders might gain or lose in this project, their expectations, or what resources they commit. Influence refers to the power that stakeholders have over a project such as their decision-making authority, or their ability to influence project activities or stakeholders in a positive or negative way.

An expanded list of stakeholders for the women's literacy project now includes the following:

- **Husbands of Women Participants** – They may support the project if they believe that the new skills of their wives will contribute more to the household. But they may undermine the project if they feel that their traditional authority is threatened.
- **Religious Leaders** – They may exert moral authority to influence whether and how women can participate in the program.
- **The District Education Officer** – She may exert legal authority to support or undermine the project. This probably depends on her relationship with the diocese, whether she has had some role in the design of the literacy project, or how she views the use of funds for the activities.
- **Donors** – They may make decisions about funding that either support or threaten the project's very existence.

Figure 7 below illustrates potentially important stakeholders for all elements of the project cycle.

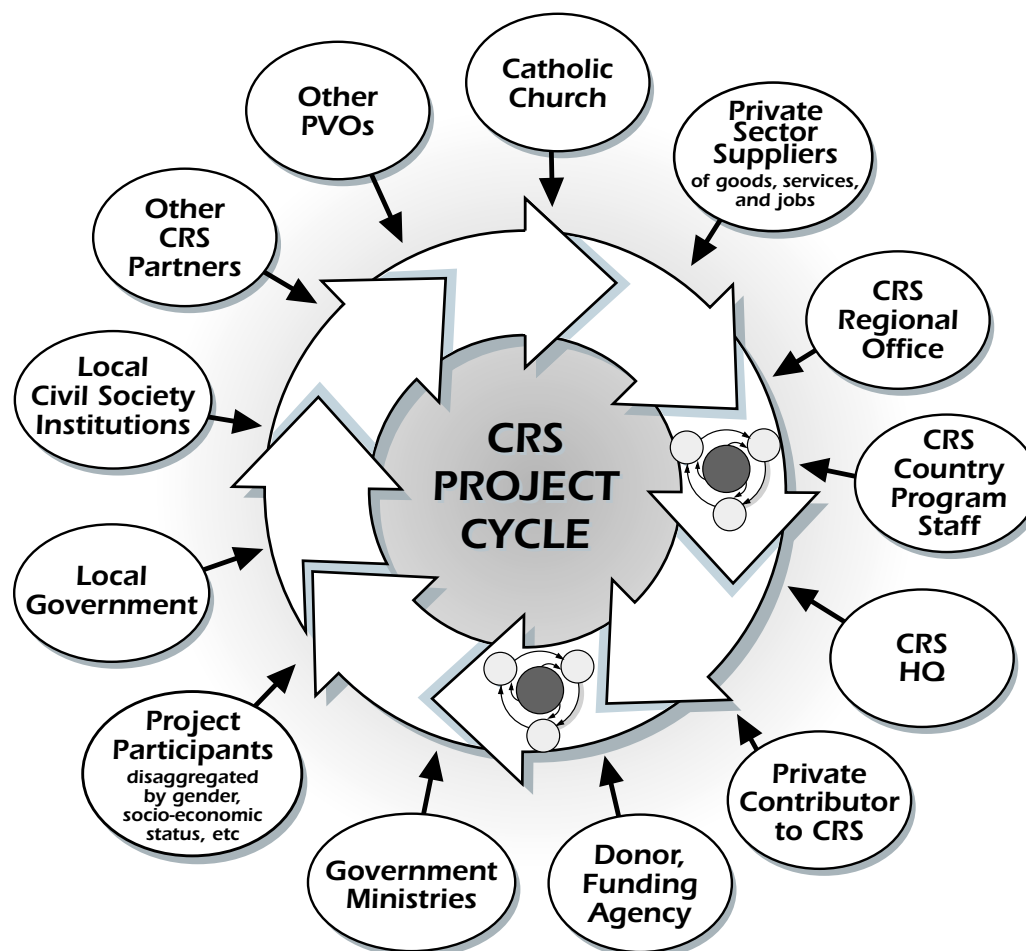


Figure 7: Projects and Possible Stakeholders

Reflection Opportunity

In your situation, what stakeholders - people, groups or institutions - would you add to or subtract from Figure 7, and why?

WHY DO STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS?

Stakeholder analysis helps you and partners think carefully about who is important to your project and their level of interest or influence. From this analysis, you can decide how they should be involved in various stages of the project cycle.

Stakeholder analysis helps you do the following:

- **create and enhance right relationships** among CRS and stakeholders that enable joint sponsorship and encourage cooperation within a project;
- **engage stakeholders appropriately so that they can participate meaningfully** at all stages of the project cycle. This requires finding flexible and appropriate ways to work together. Examples include using partners' extensive knowledge of an area to develop a concept note or holding joint meetings to identify strategies and objectives. People support what they help to create. Meaningful participation increases ownership and improves the likelihood of success. Projects may have many stakeholders so don't try to involve every stakeholder in all stages of the project design. For example, some stakeholders should be highly involved and others just need to be informed; and
- **reveal assumptions and potential risks** within the project. Understanding these risks and assumptions early on allows you to design and manage your project in order to reduce these potential threats or concerns. For example, a project that encourages women to obtain health advice from project-supported clinics might result in a loss of business and prestige for local healers so they may actively discourage attendance at the project's clinics. High-quality stakeholder analysis would reveal this potential risk to project success (defined in terms of women adopting health advice promoted by the clinics). Recognizing this possible threat, the project design team can take steps to better ensure project success – perhaps by meeting with local healers and involving them in the project in some way.

The box on the next page provides an example of how stakeholder analysis done during the project design contributes to success.

Managing Potential Project Risks Through Stakeholder Analysis

A CRS-supported project organized a district-wide NGO coalition to fight against HIV/AIDS. The stakeholder analysis revealed unhealthy competition and mistrust among the member NGOs. Knowing this, CRS' partner decided to involve a cross-section of NGO representatives in all phases of project design. They also decided to hire a respected outsider as the Coalition Coordinator who was perceived as neutral. This effort paid off when the NGOs worked together in a more collaborative manner during project implementation.

Be aware that at times stakeholder analysis involves sensitive information about power and influence. Some interests may be hidden and considered private. For example, some stakeholders may only be interested in the political benefits and high profile a project brings to their community. In other cases, stakeholders may be most interested in the project's financial resources. This knowledge should certainly inform project design, but there would be few benefits in revealing it in a public forum.

Reflection Opportunity

1. Think back to a project you have helped to design and implement. Did something happen unexpectedly because a stakeholder's interests were not addressed or because their influence went unrecognized? What happened? What problems did it cause?
2. Do you think that a stakeholder analysis might have helped to prevent or reduce these problems? Why or why not?
3. Do you think a stakeholder analysis can be considered optional or should it always be done? Justify your answer.
4. In your situation, what are some appropriate and feasible ways of involving stakeholders in project design that balance the time and costs involved?

HOW TO DO STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

An initial stakeholder analysis informed the concept note. Now that the concept note is approved, another more comprehensive stakeholder analysis may be needed. Telescoping helps you to decide on the appropriate scope for this stakeholder analysis. With experience, you and your partners will become skilled at putting together an analysis that is appropriately short or long, simple or more involved, depending on your needs. A team of people usually undertakes the steps and tools provided below for stakeholder analysis. In most cases this involves a group of staff from CRS and partners.

Reflection Opportunity

1. Identify a project you intend to develop in the near future.
2. At what critical points in the project design (assessment, analysis, strategy review, developing a Results Framework and Proframe) is further stakeholder analysis likely to be necessary? Why?

Step One: Identify the Main Purpose of the Stakeholder Analysis

Work with your design team members to define the purpose of the stakeholder analysis. One reason might be to make sure you have identified the most important stakeholders that ought to be involved in assessment and analysis activities and, later, in decision-making for project objectives and strategy. Another purpose might be that you wish to study relationships between stakeholders in order to minimize any threat to those relationships that a project might pose. In the earlier example, the relationship between women and the community's local healers might need attention during project design.

Step Two: Identify Stakeholders for the Project

After you establish the purpose, you can then brainstorm a list of key stakeholders for your project at various levels: local, regional and national. Be as specific as possible: name individuals rather than referring to vague labels. If you are in a new working environment, a more formal approach such as interviews with key informants may be useful. You can crosscheck the list by asking knowledgeable people to review it. Once you finish brainstorming your list, use the following checklist to help ensure that all potential stakeholders will be identified.

Checklist for Identifying Potential Stakeholders

- ✓ *Have we identified all potential supporters and opponents of the project?*
- ✓ *Have we presented this to others for review?*
- ✓ *Have we used appropriate tools to identify sub-groups within a broad category of stakeholders (such as women, men and youth)?*
- ✓ *Have we identified vulnerable groups, especially the poor, landless or other?*
- ✓ *When should we repeat this, if at all, to identify new stakeholders who may emerge as project design proceeds?*

Step Three: Assess Stakeholders' Interests, Influence and Relationships

Now that you have identified key stakeholders, the next step is to list them in a table to further investigate their roles, relations, interests, influence, relative power and capacity to participate in the project. Table 3.1 is proposed for this step of stakeholder analysis. This table lets you consider a wide range of issues.

There may be many rows, depending on the project and the list of stakeholders you have generated in step one. In Table 3.1, one row has been completed with an example of a possible stakeholder in a primary health care project to show the kind of information stakeholder assessments can generate.

You should feel free to adapt this table to fit the particular purpose of the stakeholder analysis and your situation.

Table 3.1. Stakeholder Assessment Table

List of Stakeholders	What is their interest in this project? How might they be affected, negatively or positively, by this project?	What is their potential influence on the project's ultimate success or failure?	What are their relations with other stakeholders? (Conflictual? Cooperative?)	What is their capacity or motivation to participate in the design of this project? When, how and where should this participation take place?	What are the practical resource requirements (financial/time) to involve this stakeholder?
Government officials 1. Mr. Pierre Clement, District Medical Officer	Oversight of all Primary Health Care (PHC) projects in the area. Possible funds for improving some of the district's services. Likely to be positive: possible funds for improving some of the district's services.	Can block or support the project through timely delivery or non-delivery of supplies or services.	Other officials in similar positions have resented the attention given to the private sector and to the partner's health project manager.	Involvement will promote ownership of this project and may improve support of PHC within district. Modest funds to support services are key to the project. Keep him informed through frequent courtesy visits; invite to workshop on final project design; involve in midterm and final evaluations; consider sending him to training workshops sponsored by project.	Courtesy visits by CRS when within district are virtually without cost and require a time investment only. Need only to budget per diem for these visits during project design.
Donor					
Partner					
Project participants (be specific)					
Other Stakeholders according to situation					

Step Four: Decision-Making for Working Together with Stakeholders

So far, you have identified your project stakeholders and explored the nature of their interests, influence, capacity and relations. Some preliminary questions have been answered on how, where and when stakeholders should be involved in various stages of the project design and project cycle and the resources needed for their involvement.


Table 3.2. helps you decide how and when these stakeholders should be most appropriately involved. These decisions are usually based on the capacities, interests, and potential influence of the stakeholders, as well as the optimal use of resources.

Considering what you have done thus far, review the definitions in the table to ensure a common understanding, and then complete Table 3.2, accordingly.

Table 3.2. Strategies for Appropriate Participation of Stakeholders over the Project Cycle

Type of participation →	Who needs to be informed?	Who needs to be consulted?	Who needs to work in partnership?	Who needs to manage this stage?
DEFINITIONS				
Project Cycle Stage ↓	Informed: stakeholder is kept abreast through copies of reports, e-mails or other	Consulted: stakeholder is more actively solicited for input (information, knowledge, decisions, etc)	In partnership: stakeholder is actively involved with a strong voice in decision-making	Manage: stakeholders are responsible for performance – getting things done
Concept Note				
Project Design Assessment Analysis and Objectives Setting Strategy Review Results Framework, Proframe and M&E Planning				
Proposal Writing and Submission				
Detailed Project Planning				
Implementation				
Monitoring and Evaluation				

Table 3.3. Stakeholder Participation – an HIV/AIDS Project

Type of participation →	Who needs to be informed?	Who needs to be consulted?	Who needs to work in partnership?	Who needs to manage this stage?
DEFINITIONS				
Project Cycle Stage 	Informed: stakeholder is kept abreast through copies of reports, e-mails or other	Consulted: stakeholder is more actively solicited for input (information, knowledge, decisions, etc)	In partnership: stakeholder is actively involved with a strong voice in decision-making	Manage: stakeholders are responsible for performance – getting things done
Concept Note	Country Representative Ministry of Health (MOH) officials	Regional Technical Advisor for HIV/AIDS	Diocese CRS Program Officer	CRS Program Officer Diocese
Project Design Assessment Analysis and Objectives Setting Strategy Review Results Framework, Proframe and M&E Planning	MOH officials (national level)	Project participants Local MOH officials Donor	Diocese Regional Technical Advisor for AIDS Country Program Officer Local employers	CRS Program Officer Diocese
Proposal Writing and Submission	Project participants	Local MOH officials Donor	Diocese Regional Technical Advisor for AIDS Country Program Officer PQSD Advisors CRS Regional Representatives	CRS Program Officer Diocese CRS Regional Representatives
Detailed Project Planning	MOH officials (national level)	Project participants Local MOH officials Regional Technical Advisor for HIV/AIDS Donor	Diocese Country Program Officer Local employers	CRS Program Officer Diocese
Implementation	Donor	CRS Program Officer	Diocese Project participants Local employers	Diocese
Monitoring and Evaluation	Country Representative MOH officials (national level)	Regional Technical Advisor	Diocese Project participants CRS Program Officer	CRS Program Officer Diocese Donor

Step Five: Linking this Section to the Project Proposal

Stakeholder analysis is a vital element in project design that should not be done superficially. Identifying important stakeholders enables the design team to decide how best to involve them, if at all, at different stages of the project. This will better ensure project success.

Be sure to record the results of your stakeholder analysis. This information will most likely inform several sections of your project proposal. In the ProPack proposal format (Chapter V, Section 3) there are specific questions that make reference to the stakeholder analysis. For example, there is a specific question about how stakeholders have been involved in various steps of the project's design; later on, you are asked to justify your choice of project strategy in light of findings from the stakeholder analysis.

As the project design effort continues and your understanding of the project environment improves, you may want to revisit or redo your initial stakeholder analysis. The information that is generated may make you think of new people or groups that have to be included as you go forward.

Section 3

PROJECT DESIGN GUIDANCE



ASSESSMENT

The concept note has identified the general situation that will be improved, the likely project participants and stakeholders, the geographic scope of the project, the range of issues that will be addressed, a possible intervention and the likely length and expenditure of the project. A more thorough stakeholder analysis has revealed which individuals, groups and institutions are important to the project and how they should be involved in its design. Now you need to gather more information for your project design work through an assessment.

In this section, there are two parts. In the first, you will:

- distinguish between assessment and analysis;
- study the importance of assessment;
- learn how conceptual frameworks such as the CRS Integral Human Development framework inform assessments;
- explore how perceptions of needs vary; and
- review assessment methods and field-based appraisals.

In the second part, you will learn how to make an assessment plan.

INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

Assessment is a process of inquiry, investigation and examination of “what is going on” that involves gathering information. The purpose of an assessment is to understand a situation in order to make decisions. The situation can include the



following aspects: geographic, political, social, economic, cultural and other. The decision can be about needs, priority problems, vulnerabilities and opportunities that affect people, ecosystems and institutions. Some organizations use other terms, such as “situational analysis” or “project diagnosis” instead of assessment.

The process of doing an assessment is as important as its technical quality. Assessments are opportunities to build right relationships when various project stakeholders work and learn together.

Reflection Opportunity

In your situation, what other terms are used to describe an assessment as it is defined above?

Assessment and Analysis – the difference

In ProPack, we distinguish between the terms *assessment* (described in this section) and *analysis* (described in Section 4). These two steps, however, are often woven together, so use your experience and judgment to decide how to manage these steps during the design of your project.

Assessment

Assessment can be visualized as a broad, “horizontal” process where a wide number of issues are explored. It shows the breadth of the situation in a particular area. Assessment is more open-ended in terms of questions and issues to be studied. The issues, problems, and opportunities uncovered by an assessment are then prioritized in readiness for further analysis.



Analysis can be visualized as a deep, “vertical” process where prioritized issues are probed in depth. Analysis investigates the underlying causes and effects of specific problems or issues and involves reflection and examination.

Figure 8: The Difference between Assessment and Analysis

Understanding the Difference: Assessment and Analysis

A parent reviews her child's school report to see how well he is doing in Math, Science, History and English (assessment). She discovers that he is doing poorly in history, so she meets with the teacher to thoroughly explore the reasons and causes for this situation (analysis). Why is this grade not as good as the others? What are the reasons? What is causing this to happen?

Assessments and Analysis — how they work together

Assessments are sometimes performed first, before analysis takes place. In most cases, however, it is wise to weave analysis into the assessment step. For example, during Rapid Rural Appraisals (RRAs) or Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs), the team will devote evenings to analyze the information collected during the assessment exercises held in the field on that day.

By combining the assessment with analysis you have much to gain. Firstly, you are constantly reviewing the assessment activities so that they become increasingly focused. Secondly, you avoid collecting too much unnecessary information. Thirdly, new issues may come up that have to be integrated into your assessment schedule. With all of these benefits, only on rare occasions should you collect all of the information before setting aside time to analyze the findings.

Assessments and Baseline Surveys

Assessments and baseline surveys are both information-gathering exercises. Assessments are, however, more open-ended regarding the themes and questions that are explored. Baseline surveys collect only data that is needed to make comparisons between the pre-project or “baseline” situation and that same situation at midterm, or at End of Project (EOP).

Assessments are part of project design whereas baseline surveys are usually undertaken after project design has been completed. It is most common to complete the baseline survey in the first year of project implementation, i.e., after the project has been approved and funded. This is for two reasons: first, baseline surveys usually require that the project has developed specific objectives and corresponding performance indicators; second, baseline surveys may be expensive and are typically funded out of the project's approved budget.

Exceptions to this might occur if the donor requires baseline survey results as part of the project proposal, or if the baseline survey information is required urgently, e.g. in an emergency situation. Emergency staff may have only one chance and little time to gather information on site. Therefore, they might decide to collect pertinent baseline

data such as the nutrition status of children under five along with other assessment information.

The Importance of Assessments

Donor deadlines and other pressures often push project designers to rush through the project assessment phase, resulting in a superficial analysis. Yet experience clearly shows the high cost of this practice: poorly designed and failed projects that may ultimately harm people who have little margin of security. Even in emergency situations where a timely intervention is paramount, specialists insist on the importance of assessment. The CRS *Emergency Assessment Manual* notes, “*The importance of accurate assessments cannot be overstated. An assessment that is incomplete, inaccurate or provides misleading data may lead to inappropriate emergency responses and costly delays.*”

Accurate and high-quality assessments do not necessarily require huge investments of time and funds. For example, there may be a wealth of published information or literature available on the topic at hand, often referring to the situation in the geographic area in question. It costs relatively little to review such documents. In areas where CRS and its partners have a long history, they may already have a significant amount of information. Use your best judgment regarding the time and resources required.

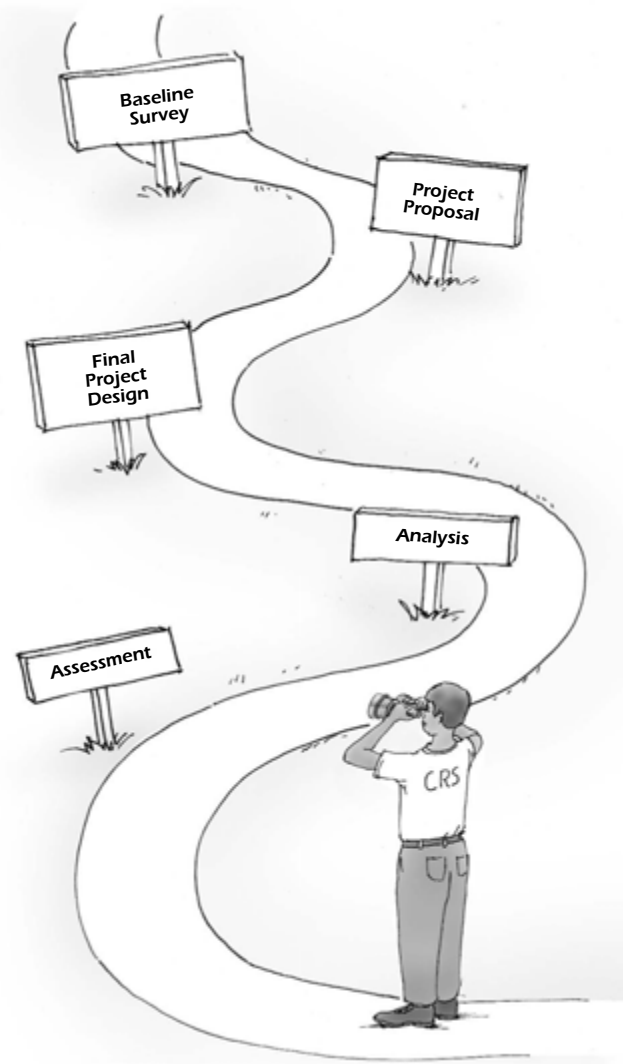


Figure 9: Assessment, Analysis and Baseline Surveys

Reflection Opportunity

You may know of a situation when an assessment was rushed and done poorly, or when it was done well:

1. What happened as a result? Can you think of any specific examples to illustrate your response?
2. How did this affect the efficiency or effectiveness of the subsequent project implementation?

HOW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS INFORM ASSESSMENTS

The poor and marginalized live in a complex world. Even if they rarely venture from their village or community, many factors affect their ability to provide for basic needs or realize their human dignity. Cyclical drought, HIV/AIDS, access to credit, floods, local governments, land ownership, globalization, local values and customs, economic systems, local market prices, soil fertility and other macro- and micro-realities affect the ability of the poor to live a full and satisfying life. Understanding these constraints and opportunities is therefore important as you assess the situation of the people CRS serves. But how do you make sense of such an involved set of issues?

Conceptual frameworks are diagrams that help you think through and understand these issues by identifying the most important factors and suggesting the relationships among them. The visual nature of conceptual frameworks helps project stakeholders to pattern a complex world so that you are better able to understand it and to think through possible strategies. They also give you a structure for gathering information and analyzing it. From this analysis, you can make good choices about project strategies.

USING THE INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

CRS' core purpose is the realization of human dignity by engaging in relationships that: alleviate human suffering; promote integral human development; change structures that undermine justice and peace; and create the realization and expression of solidarity. In this light, CRS has constructed an Integral Human Development framework (IHD) (Figure 10). It draws heavily from the livelihood security framework, but also incorporates CRS values and strategic approaches. The IHD framework helps us understand the world in which CRS works, assess the complex realities of the people CRS serves, and design appropriate and holistic strategies.

At the time of writing, CRS is just beginning to use the IHD framework. This framework is included in ProPack to introduce staff to its potential use in the assessment process. There are many other areas where it can be used (for example in evaluation). For now the agency-wide application of the IHD framework is in its infancy and a package of supporting documents to further clarify the multiple uses of the framework will be developed in the near future. However, you can learn more about the basis of the framework by reading up on the Livelihood Security Framework and the rights-based approaches to development used by CARE and UNICEF.

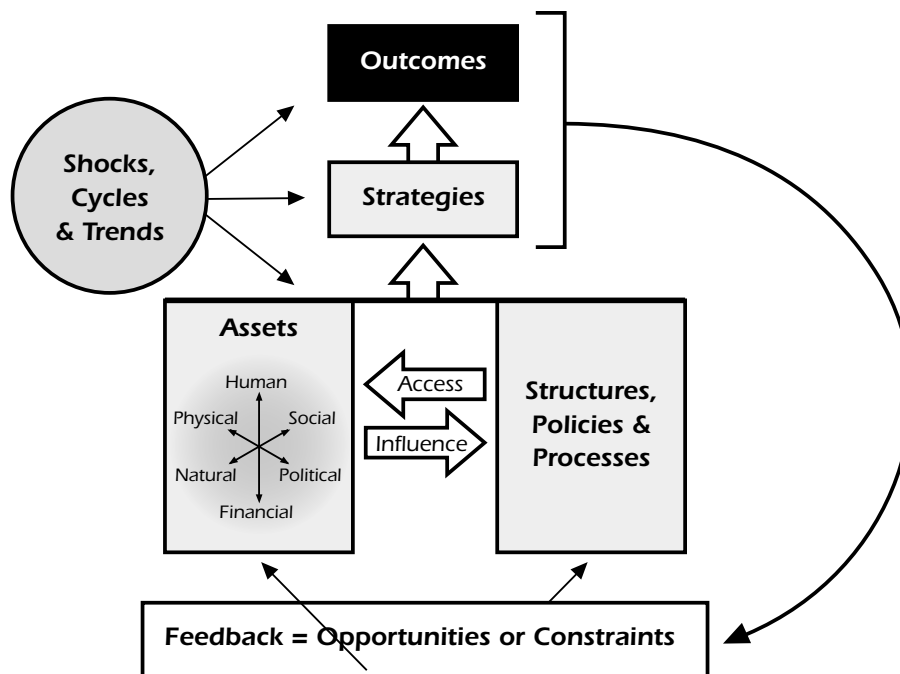


Figure 10: IHD Framework

Defining Integral Human Development

The CRS working definition of Integral Human Development (IHD) comes from Catholic Social Teaching and can be understood at two levels: societal and individual. It is a process that:

- 1) morally obliges society, including government and economic institutions, to seek justice, ensure equal opportunities for all, and put the dignity of the human person first; and
- 2) enables people to protect and expand the choices they have to improve their lives, meet their basic human needs, free themselves from oppression and realize their full human potential.

More practically, this definition is better understood by looking at the kinds of desirable IHD Outcomes envisaged in the framework. These outcomes, which would be sustainable over time, would include the following:

- community members are able to meet their basic needs for food, water, health services, shelter, income and education;
- community members engage in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic as it affects their lives;
- community members live in peace, free from physical and psychological violence and the fear of war;

- community members participate in the decisions which most affect their lives and are empowered to contribute to positive social and political change;
- community members protect the environment for future generations;
- community members are less vulnerable to shocks (natural or man-made disasters); and
- community members possess full human dignity.

Such a list resonates with CRS' strategic mandate. It should provide guidance for the assessment, and should help organize assessment data collected on assets, structures and vulnerabilities. For instance, an assessment might ask what assets are available (or not) to community members for meeting their basic human needs? What structures inhibit access to health care? What makes the community vulnerable to continued conflict and war?

IHD and Assessments

Within the IHD framework, the three boxes most useful to consider when designing or conducting an assessment include:

- Assets
- Structures, Policies and Processes
- Shocks, Cycles and Trends

Assets

Assets are the resources people own or to which they have access. There are six categories of assets in the IHD framework:

- 1) **financial** (e.g. cash, regular remittances, small livestock)
- 2) **physical** (e.g. land, housing, livestock, crops)
- 3) **human** (e.g. labor available to the household, knowledge, skills, education, health, self-esteem)
- 4) **natural** (e.g. water, rainfall, forests, land)
- 5) **political** (e.g. rights, power, access to sources of influence)
- 6) **social** (e.g. networks, membership in groups, extended family)

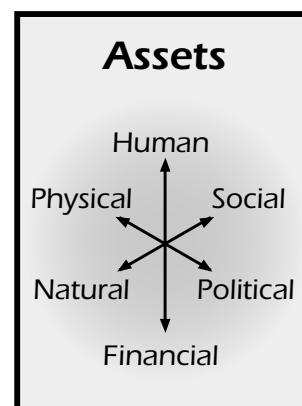


Figure 11: Assets

Assessing existing household assets can help project stakeholders to think of project strategies that protect and strengthen these assets. For example, knowledge of sound traditional breastfeeding practices is a “human asset” around which may be developed a project strategy that seeks to protect such customs; for example, by designing a project that offers practical support to men to help their wives so that they can continue to breastfeed appropriately.

Structures, Policies & Processes

Structures, Policies & Processes are the organizations, institutions, and individuals who govern or otherwise have influence and power in society. They also include the beliefs, values, policies, markets or rules that influence how organizations and society functions. By examining these policy and cultural factors, along with asset status, you can get a fairly complete picture of power structures within communities or countries and how they affect the asset base of the poor and marginalized. This includes economic (markets), social (health centers and schools), and political structures and institutions.

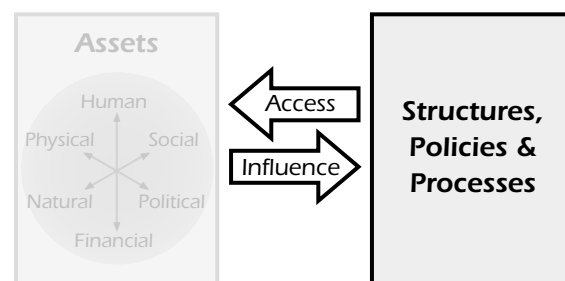


Figure 12: Structures, Policies & Processes

Shocks, Cycles & Trends

Shocks, Cycles & Trends are external factors that influence all other boxes within the IHD framework: strategies, outcomes, assets, and structures, policies and processes. Shocks are disasters or sudden events - both human and natural - such as volcanic eruption, earthquakes and civil war. Trends refer to economic recessions, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, globalization, rural-urban migration, and political change. Cycles are recurring conflict, poor crops, depressed food prices and recurring droughts or floods. Although CRS often focuses on disasters and threats, these external factors can be either negative or positive (e.g. the regular flooding of the Nile valley is good for agriculture; war can break out, but so can peace, etc).

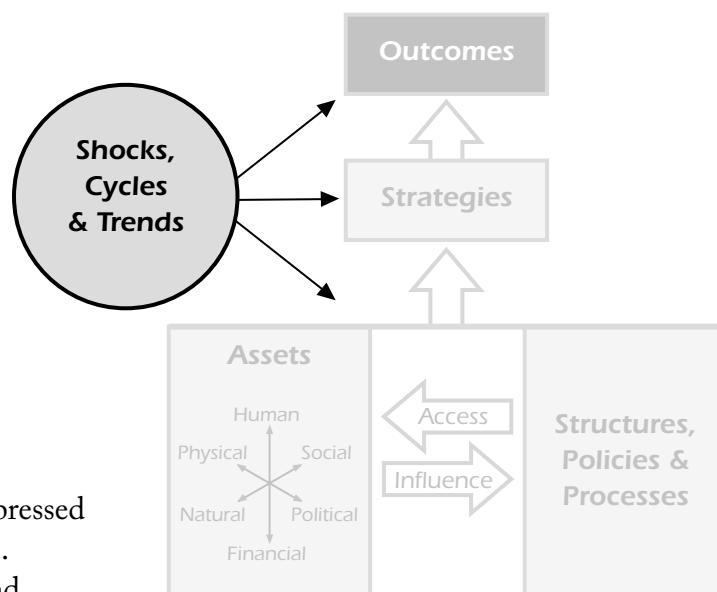


Figure 13: Shocks, Cycles & Trends

A Practical Use of the IHD Framework in an Assessment

Let us take a case where HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in a rural area. Your assessment will probably collect information on sexual behavior, cultural practices, access to health and social services, and practices in care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. These are all important topics for the assessment that can lead to a well-designed HIV/AIDS project for prevention and care. Using the IHD can help enrich this assessment in the following ways:

- studying how HIV/AIDS (a trend located in the Shocks, Cycles, & Trends box) affects household livelihood strategies. How do families cope when a member becomes ill with HIV/AIDS? Are girls forced into prostitution to pay school fees (a livelihood strategy with long-term negative consequences)?
- examining how government policy and services (Structures, Policies & Processes) protect, enhance or erode assets. For example, is Voluntary Counseling and Testing widely available? Do health services include outreach and supplies for palliative care of people living with HIV/AIDS? What is the cost of these services, and what is the effect of this cost on asset depletion?
- assessing how beliefs and norms (Structures, Policies & Processes) influence social or human assets. For example are girls exposed to sexual violence? Does the stigma around AIDS prevent people from seeking medical help?

An assessment that includes these questions may still lead to a project focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention and care, but one that may also include:

- an agriculture component (to help farm families increase and diversify their financial assets);
- an advocacy component (working with NGOs to pressure governments to put in place appropriate services in light of community realities);
- a targeted relief component (to provide food aid to community-identified families who are most vulnerable); and
- a peacebuilding component (human rights education and prejudice reduction).

The examples above show how the IHD framework helps improve the quality of projects. It:

- promotes integration of different sectors within CRS-supported projects and programs;

- highlights the interrelationship of relief, rehabilitation and development within projects that sometimes occur all at the same time; and
- opens project boundaries to better understand the influences of national and global issues, policies and other actions (macro-level) on individuals, families and communities (micro-level).

The IHD framework does not suggest that all projects should try to accomplish all things. It provides a backdrop where you can choose areas for assessment given where your project might intervene most usefully. It heightens your awareness of the presence of other factors and points out where these factors must be addressed. Even if you do not address everything, your project benefits from a clearer understanding of what it can realistically accomplish.

Chapter VI includes four websites (there are many!) you can consult for further information related to sustainable livelihoods.

DISTINGUISHING NEEDS IN PROJECT ASSESSMENTS

Assessments identify *needs* – the difference between a current, undesirable (or less preferred) situation and a desired future state. In project design, assessments seek to gain an understanding of real and perceived needs of those targeted by the project. Different stakeholders – identified during stakeholder analysis – may have differing perceived needs:

- **Felt needs** are what people say when asked, “what do you need?” Finding out felt needs requires thoughtful questioning to avoid getting a simple “wish list”.
- **Expressed needs** show what goods, services, knowledge and skills people are willing to use, seek or buy in real life. They usually demonstrate how much people care about something.
- **Normative needs** are those indicated by “expert” opinion, and which reflect more objective (e.g. national or global) standards or policy.
- **Comparative (or relative) needs** describe the level of need in a proposed project area compared to other communities (sometimes known as benchmarking).

Figure 14 shows a convergence around a village’s health needs from the four dimensions of need. There may be agreement on the need for a clinic, but the need arises from the four different perspectives shown in this figure.

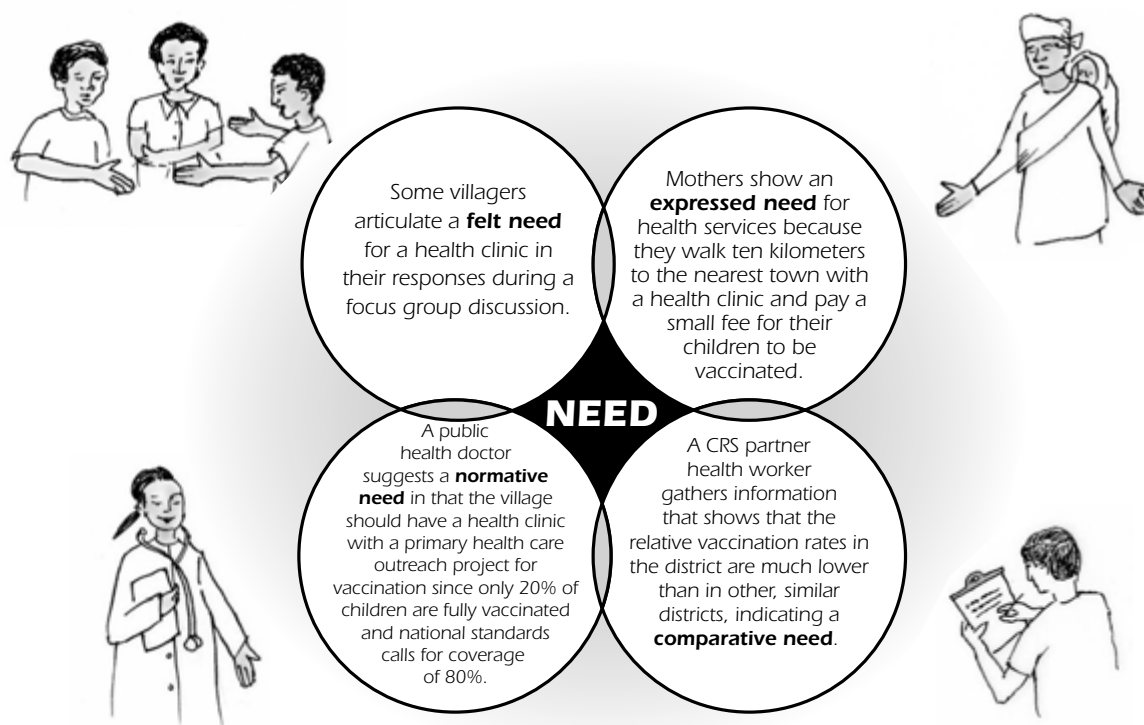


Figure 14: The Four Dimensions of Need – four perspectives of village health needs

Assessments should ensure that all four dimensions of need are explored. By analyzing how the four dimensions overlap, you promote discussion and consensus on which needs should be addressed in the project.

Reflection Opportunity

Think of a project you helped to design where the project participant needs were identified.

1. How well do you think these needs were identified for different types of stakeholders?
2. Did all of the four dimensions of need described here emerge in some way? Why or why not?
3. Did one dimension dominate? If so, why?
4. How did you reconcile potentially different perspectives of “who needs what”?

GAP ASSESSMENT

Gap Assessments show whether other actors are already meeting the identified needs in a particular geographic zone. Depending on the scope of your intended project you may look at gaps at this point during assessment, during the analysis or, lastly, as you are reviewing your strategy (See Chapter III, Section 5). It is an important step to ensure that you are not unwittingly planning to duplicate activities already underway. Gap assessment also helps ensure that your proposed activities are well coordinated with other interested parties. A case study from LACRO documents some simple rules for integrated programming that demonstrate the importance of gap assessments.

LACRO's Simple Rules for Sectoral Integration

- *Avoid duplication of services.*
- *Assess the supply of services and projects in the countries before entering.*
- *Explore the possibility of linking to another organization providing a complementary service before supporting an existing partner institution to develop a new capacity.*

Suggestions for undertaking a gap assessment are presented here, but use your best judgment to determine how and when you will do it in your design.

Information on gaps may come from existing knowledge from staff, partners or stakeholders. If you are new to a country, a more formal survey may be necessary. Assessing gaps involves gathering responses to important questions, outlined in the following table:

Table 3.4. Guideline Questions for Gap Assessments

Who?	Identifying other actors (NGOs, other organizations, private sector, governmental bodies) who have projects addressing the needs revealed in the needs assessment.
Where?	Identifying geographic areas that these actors cover.
What?	Gathering information on their existing and future project activities.
How?	Gathering information on their strategies, approaches and the project participants and beneficiaries. This includes the quality of these approaches.
Coverage?	Gathering information on the numbers of participants they work with and where this happens within the country.

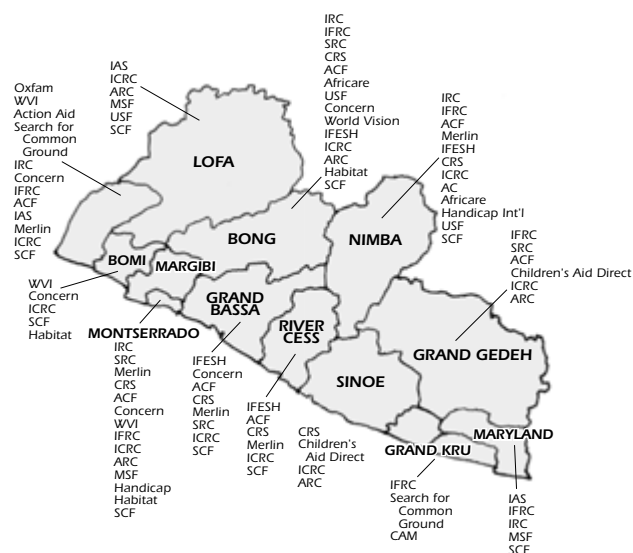
Assessing gaps is often best done through mapping information or organizing information in a table. Figure 16 is an example of a map that focuses on identifying where different NGOs are working in Liberia.

LOOKING AT STRENGTHS

In an assessment there is a danger of placing too much emphasis on needs and problems. If this is the case, you risk designing a project that looks primarily to outside resources and solutions.

Therefore, it is important to use tools that reveal the strengths of, and opportunities facing targeted communities and households. The IHD framework can help identify strengths and opportunities with its focus on assets. Project strategies can then be designed to protect and strengthen a household's or a community's existing assets.

Another useful approach that emphasizes community knowledge and strengths is positive deviance. Positive deviance studies people within a community who have unique behavioral practices that set them apart from others within the same community. In nutrition, positive deviance assessment determines how a number of very poor families were able to have adequately nourished children while their neighbors of the same economic status did not. In Vietnam, it was discovered that poor families with adequately nourished children (the positive deviants) fed their children more frequently and added small shrimps, crabs and vegetable greens to their children's diet. CORE, the Child Survival network is promoting a nutrition intervention called Hearth for recuperating malnourished children. In Hearth



Source: CRS/Liberia

Figure 15: Mapping Gaps in Liberia

Checklist for Assessments from CRS South Asia

In the CRS/South Asia region, a checklist developed using the IHD framework separates assessment questions into two categories:

- *Assets (questions probing strengths, resources and opportunities)*
- *Liabilities (questions probing weaknesses, threats, risks)*

An example of an assessment question from the assets category is: What are the most important social networks or traditions?

The checklist helps encourage project stakeholders to look at strengths and opportunities and not just needs and problems during an assessment.

Source: CRS, 2004

projects, community members are trained to teach other families about improved child feeding practices based on what the positive deviance assessment revealed.

In the language of the IHD framework, the positive deviants had more assets, in this case human assets, with their knowledge of the value of these additions to their children's diet.

Care needs to be taken, however, when using positive deviance in assessments for project design. It is important to be certain about which behavioral practices explain the higher performance of a particular household, and whether it is possible for others in the community with a different asset base to adopt them.

Reflection Opportunity

1. In your community of learning, ask a member with experience of using IHD or positive deviance to share their experiences and discuss how this affected their assessment.
2. Invite someone from outside of your group (a regional staff member or someone from another organization) with relevant experience to do the same.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

There are many different methods you and your partners can use for assessment. Which ones are best and how do you choose them? A creative and learning-oriented assessment usually includes obtaining secondary resources, interviewing and observation. It mixes quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide better understandings of the situation being assessed.

Literature Resources and Secondary Data

Most assessments begin by reviewing literature for best practices and lessons learned and collecting relevant secondary data. Other NGOs, UN agencies, international organizations and government offices might have information useful for your assessment. If secondary data does in fact answer questions, your assessment can then focus on collecting data to fill information gaps. Using secondary data can be very cost-effective but is sometimes limited by availability or access to documents, and care is needed in interpreting this information. It may be helpful for someone to summarize information from secondary resources in diagrams, tables or lists. In this form, the information is easier to understand. Use your judgment to decide how much time and money to devote to collecting and analyzing secondary data.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a series of broad, open questions that guide conversations, but allow new questions to arise as a result of the discussion. Questions are asked in a logical sequence to help the discussion flow smoothly. You also decide who should be interviewed and whether the interview is best with an individual or small group of people.

Key informant interviews are discussions with purposively selected community members such as an elected official, a teacher or a religious leader, or anyone who is knowledgeable about the situation where the project will take place. Partners are often very knowledgeable about the most appropriate key informants.

CRS' *Emergency Assessment Manual* and the *RRA and PRA Manual* contain detailed guidance and tips on interviewing.

Observation

Observation often reveals important information that cannot be obtained through secondary resources or interviewing. At times you may have noticed differences in what people actually do versus what they say they do. Examples of observation methods include mapping, transect walks² or direct observations of behaviors or service delivery patterns. See Chapter VI for more information on observation methods.

Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Quantitative measures strive for precision by focusing on things that can be counted and can be subjected to statistical analysis. Quantitative data comes from questionnaires, tests, standardized observation instruments, and program records.

In contrast, a qualitative approach seeks to capture participants' experiences in their own words, through interviews, and through observations. Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories. The data are collected as open-ended narrative unlike the typical question and answer format of questionnaires or tests.

See Chapter VI (Patton, 1997) for information about where to access more information on qualitative and quantitative methods.

² A transect walk is a tool used to trigger discussions and generate information with few members of the community as the facilitator and the group walk through a village.

Rapid Rural Appraisal/Participatory Rural Appraisal

Project design teams may decide to do a field-based Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

- RRA refers to assessments typically lasting one or more days undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of researchers. After developing assessment objectives, which may evolve during the course of the RRA, this team gathers information fairly rapidly from community members.
- PRA is, in theory, a more extended and participatory process that involves not only the collection of information but also its eventual use by the community as it plans activities. PRA manuals emphasize the process of involving the community in planning and decision-making as much, or more so, than the information collected.

There are a number of principles shared by RRA and PRA:

1. *Reversal of learning* means that the project design team learns from people directly, on site, in face-to-face dialogue. People share their local knowledge, and project design team members take the time to listen.
2. *Learning rapidly and progressively* means that project design teams do not follow an assessment plan as a “blueprint.” Instead, they skillfully sequence information gathering and team interaction to analyze information and then adapt and plan further information gathering.
3. *Offsetting biases* means that project design team members proactively seek out poorer people, neglected groups, more marginal communities and households to learn about their concerns and priorities.
4. *Triangulating* means that project design teams use a range of methods, types of information, diversity of team members and sector perspectives to crosscheck collected information, increasing its quality and validity.

When undertaken in a sensitive manner, both RRA and PRA provide powerful insights into what lies below the community label. Local communities are complex and the livelihood strategies of individuals and households are shaped by many factors: asset base, gender, wealth, age, etc. RRAs and PRAs utilize tools that are simple, yet very powerful in helping to understand the range of social and economic categories that exist within communities. These tools may include mapping, ranking, profiling, wealth or well-being ranking analysis, gender analysis or other.

RRAs and PRAs methods typically include key informant interviews, group interviews, and direct observations. Maps, diagrams, profiles and matrices are used to gather and organize information. RRA and PRA tools and techniques used well can promote

lively engagement by community members. The appraisal method you choose will usually depend on local circumstances and your creativity when in dialogue with different individuals and groups of people.

Reflection Opportunity

1. Share your experience of doing an RRA or PRA.
2. Discuss how useful, or otherwise, you found the CRS *RRR/PRA Manual*.
3. What were your most important lessons learned that you would apply to the next RRA/PRA?
4. If you have never done an RRA or PRA how do you think training should be organized?

Involving Stakeholders in the Assessment

In filling out the Stakeholder Assessment Table in the previous section, you answered questions for each identified stakeholder. *What is their capacity or motivation to participate in the design of this project? When, how and where should this participation take place?*

Involving stakeholders in the project's assessment has two obvious benefits:

- stakeholders will have more insights about their situation and have better capacity to design a project; and
- assessments will benefit from multiple perspectives, such as the differing views of women and men.

These benefits are usually not achieved in one stakeholder meeting. Ensure that assessments are designed as a series of events and think through who needs to attend which event to make what decisions and how and when is this best organized?

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues influence all information-gathering exercises. In some countries, there may be standards to ensure assessments are conducted legally, ethically and with due regard for those involved in the study. The following points will help you ensure that human dignity is being respected during your assessments:

- ensure that respondents know who you are, the agency you represent and how the information will be used. If any of the information is to be confidential, clarify this at the outset;
- ensure that respondents are not threatened or harmed, such as informants who identify sources of corruption or women who report sexual exploitation;

- receive authorization to collect information from children;
- ask permission before taking photographs and recording interviews;
- allow individuals to refuse to respond if they so wish;
- make every effort to understand the cultural and social values of assessment participants; and
- ensure data confidentiality and data protection.

How to Do an Assessment

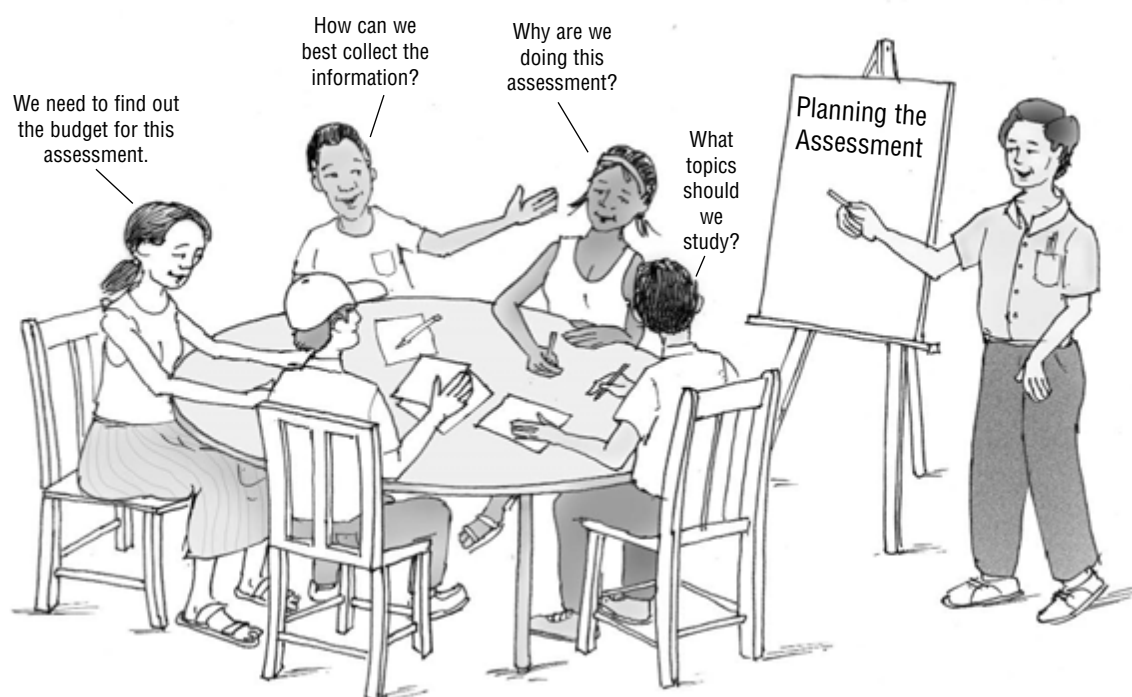
For all assessments, the first step is to develop a plan of action and a budget. Without a plan or budget, it is easy to find yourself in a situation where you may collect too much information with no clear idea of what to do with it. So to start, it is important to be clear about what resources will be available for the assessment, because this will affect how the assessment is undertaken. Following this, you need to make the following decisions.

- **Why** this assessment is being conducted?
- **What** information is needed?
- **How** the information will be collected?
- If there are other important considerations such as ensuring quality or relevant ethical issues?

The table on the following page, outlining the four steps, helps you record your decisions and plans. More information on the four steps follows the table.

Table 3.5. Assessment Planning Table

ASSESSMENT PLANNING QUESTIONS			
Budget for the assessment:			
Time available/required for the assessment:			
Logistical support required for the assessment:			
<p>Step 1: Why?</p> <p>Why are we doing this assessment?</p> <p>What are the objectives of this assessment?</p>	<p>Step 2: What?</p> <p>Which conceptual framework is most relevant?</p> <p>Given our objectives, what topics will we initially study?</p> <p>Is a gap assessment needed?</p>	<p>Step 3: How?</p> <p>What methods are most appropriate? Document review, secondary data, interviews, observations, other?</p> <p>Who needs to be interviewed or involved?</p> <p>Where should information be collected?</p>	<p>Step 4: Other Considerations?</p> <p>What did our stakeholder analysis tell us about who should be involved, when and how in the assessment?</p> <p>How will we take account of gender considerations?</p> <p>How will we ensure reliability and quality of the information we collect?</p> <p>What ethical issues might be considered in this assessment?</p>



Reflection Opportunity

1. How does this table compare with the planning for assessments that you have previously undertaken?
2. How might you modify the above table to best suit your needs for an assessment plan?

Step One: Why? Defining the Objectives and Purpose of Your Assessment

The CRS *RRA/PRA Manual* states that assessments are a bit like putting together a puzzle. The objectives can be seen as the border of the puzzle and all the information collected should fit into these set borders. Setting objectives that are too broad leads to a situation where scattered information is collected that won't make sense and won't fit together. Setting objectives that are too narrow means that relevant, interesting information may fall outside of the assessment frame.

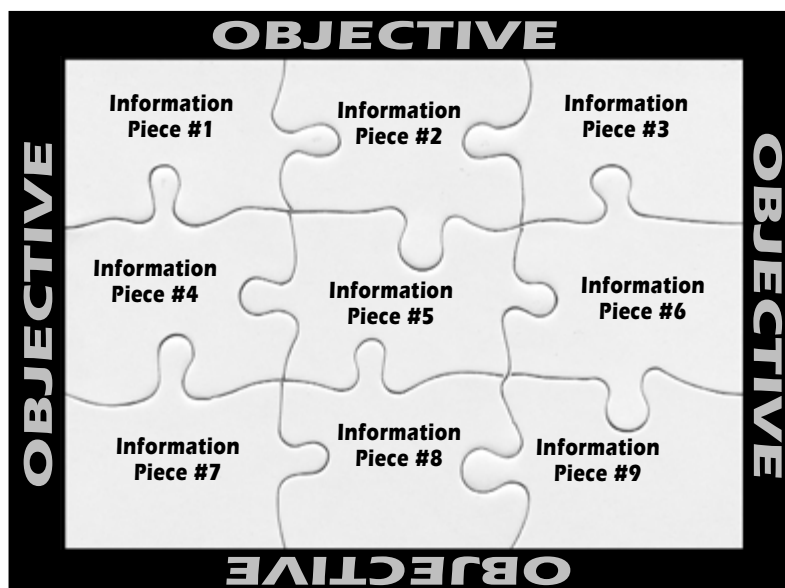


Figure 16: Assessment Objectives "Puzzle"

Examples of Assessment Objectives

Objectives for an Emergency Response Assessment:

- *To describe the magnitude of the disaster: damage and area affected*
- *To assess the number of people affected and how they are affected*
- *To determine the immediate threats to life (lack of food, water, major illnesses, weather, insecurity or violence)*
- *To determine if an emergency exists and whether further assessment is warranted*
- *To determine what response is needed to prevent loss of life*
- *To identify responses already planned or implemented*

Objectives for a Peacebuilding Assessment:

- *To determine who is involved in the conflict*
- *To figure out what motivates people to use violence or to continue conflict*
- *To identify the issues in the conflict*
- *To determine how the conflict is unfolding*

Objectives for an HIV/AIDS Project Focusing on Orphans and Vulnerable Children Assessment:

- *To establish the incidence of orphaned children both now and for the future*
- *To identify serious problems facing families and communities coping with orphans*
- *To assess the community responses to the situation of those children left with only one or no parent*
- *To assess the existing models of care, including successes and best practices*

Step Two: What? Deciding What Information is Needed

Once you have defined your objectives, you should have a pretty good idea of the kind of information you will want to collect.

For example, one of the objectives from Step One was “To identify serious problems facing families and communities coping with orphans.” The kind of information you may decide to collect in light of this objective could be obtained by asking the following questions:

1. How many families are caring for orphans?

2. How are families affected economically by having to care for orphans? How are the orphans treated within families?
3. What are the different strategies that families have adopted to cope, and why?
4. What are the current levels of support that these families receive from government? From non-governmental organizations? Are there any gaps?

The above list is certainly not exhaustive. There are many resources to help you determine what information you need to collect, given your objectives.

- The CRS *Emergency Assessment Manual* describes three types of emergency assessments: (1) Situational or Damage assessments (done ideally within 24 hours of an event); (2) Initial Assessment (describing unmet needs, potential strategies and target groups); and (3) In-Depth Assessments (responding to longer-term unmet needs).
- Check within your region or with colleagues with experience in the appropriate sector, to see if good examples of assessments exist. Refer to assessments done for recent Strategic Plans in your country to see if any of that information meets your needs for the project assessment.
- Conceptual frameworks, such as the IHD framework, can trigger your thinking about possible assessment topics that will help you meet your assessment objectives.

Consult Chapter VI for references to materials and websites that can help clarify what information should be gathered in an assessment.

Step Three: How? Defining How the Information will be Collected

Review the options and make decisions about the appropriate combination of methodologies you might use to collect information: secondary data, interviews and observation activities.

For example, if one of your assessment objectives is to study the problems facing families and communities coping with HIV/AIDS orphans, you may do the following:

- collect relevant reports dealing with HIV/AIDS orphans within your country from UNAIDS or other NGOs;
- interview experts from the Ministry of Health or UNICEF that implement or oversee various projects that focus on orphans;

- interview family and community members who are looking after orphans to see what their needs are, or what successes they are experiencing; and
- observe how the orphans are cared for in the intended project site.

A literature review for experiences, best practices and lessons learned is essential during the assessment phase.

- Gather and read written evaluation reports or abstracts for projects addressing similar problems from your own country program.
- Do a wider search for evaluation reports and abstracts from similar CRS projects around the world through the CRS Intranet site.
- Review (or re-review!) relevant program quality standards, sectoral guidelines or other strategic planning documents at the agency, regional or country program levels.

Step Four: What Other Issues Should We Address

In this step, you address issues that will ensure the quality and validity of the assessment. The following checklist can help.

Checklist for Quality and Validity

- ✓ *Who should be on the assessment team? What perspectives do they bring?*
- ✓ *What skill sets are required (e.g. interviewing skills)?*
- ✓ *How will we select sites where observation or fieldwork takes place?*
- ✓ *Who should be interviewed to ensure that the four dimensions of need are represented?*
- ✓ *Who should be interviewed to ensure that we understand the make-up of this community?*

You can also review the list of ethical considerations above. Decide which ones are most important for your assessment exercise and how you will ensure that they are addressed.

Reflection Opportunity

Think about a project proposal that is current. Develop an assessment plan for this project utilizing what you have learned in this section of ProPack, and discuss the following questions with members of your learning community.

1. How helpful is this planning exercise? How does it differ from what you have done previously?
2. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of your assessment plan?

Example of an Assessment Plan for Microfinance

The MAGI Planning Assessment User's Guide, produced by the CRS Microfinance unit is an excellent example of an assessment that applies the concepts and steps described in this section of ProPack. MAGI stands for the Microfinance Alliance for Global Impact, an association of high performing microfinance programs supported by CRS. This guide describes a three-day assessment exercise. The planning assessment includes:

- *clear assessment objectives;*
- *suggestions for assessment team membership that ensures triangulation, coordination and training opportunities for CRS partner staff;*
- *attention to the standards expected of the assessment (e.g. by comparing existing institutional practices with microfinance best practices);*
- *a mix of assessment methods that include observations (review of existing procedures); secondary documentation reviews (written policies, plans and guidelines for existing microfinance programs); and field visits (interviews with microfinance groups, clients and promoters); and*
- *sharing information with project stakeholders through assessment introductions and debriefing sessions.*

Source: CRS, 2000

Step Five: Linking this Section to the Project Proposal

When you write the project proposal, you will refer back to work you undertake during the assessment step in project design. You will be asked to summarize how you gathered the information that you used to make decisions about the strategy (see Chapter V). With this information, the reader can better understand how you arrived at the proposed strategy. So, it is important to ensure that assessment information is carefully documented and stored.

FURTHER RESOURCES

An *Emergency Assessment Manual* has been produced by CRS' Emergency Response Team (ERT). This manual is a reference document that provides specific guidance, steps, tools and methods for emergency assessments. The manual includes specific topics, questions and suggestions for methods for each of these kinds of assessment.

There exist many resources and websites for PRA/RRA. In particular, *Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): A Manual for CRS Field Workers and Partners* (Schoonmaker Freudenberger, 1999) is a comprehensive and well written manual. It should be consulted widely when deciding on methods or use of RRA/PRA exercises in project assessments.

Please consult Chapter VI for additional resources on undertaking assessments (Aker, 2004; Williamson, 2000); on livelihoods frameworks (Frankenberger et al, 2002; Green Abate, Charles and Neatherlin, 2003; internet references); and on Hearth (Baer, 2003; Sillan, 2001; internet references).

Section 4

PROJECT DESIGN GUIDANCE

ANALYSIS AND OBJECTIVES SETTING

You now have information and data about a particular community or situation based on your assessment and you may have already analyzed much of it. As noted earlier, it is a good idea to weave some analysis into the assessment phase to keep the assessment focused.

At some point, you need to complete the step of analysis so that you can begin to clarify the objectives of the project. Your assessment and analytical work together provide the basis for the decisions you ultimately make about project design. The link between assessment, analysis and objectives setting is very important because it enables you to respond to the question, “Why have you selected these project objectives?” Moreover, with assessment and analysis clearly linked to what you are proposing to do, you can easily justify and answer questions about your strategy such as, “Why have you chosen these particular interventions to achieve your objectives?”

In this section, you will:

- review the definition of analysis;
- understand its importance;
- consider the link between analysis and setting objectives; and
- practice using analytical tools (problem trees and objective trees).

INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

Analysis is a process where selected issues are probed in depth to gain deeper



insights, and helps project stakeholders make sense of the information gathered during assessment. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of collecting too much information during assessment that is then difficult to manage. Analysis is done using a variety of tools; some are noted in the following table.

Table 3.6. Tools of Analysis linked to Purpose

If your main purpose of analysis is to:	Consider using:
<i>Organize and classify information so that it makes sense</i>	<i>Conceptual frameworks such as those CRS uses for food security, and the IHD framework Tools such as gender analysis, capacity and vulnerability matrices</i>
<i>Sift through information gathered in an assessment to prioritize issues for project focus</i>	<i>Ranking exercises and matrices</i>
<i>Investigate underlying cause and effect relationships</i>	<i>Problem analysis tools, such as the problem tree</i>
<i>Link the effects and influences between an external or macro environment on an internal or micro environment</i>	<i>Conceptual framework such as the IHD that shows causes and effects between household assets, strategies, structures and processes, shocks, cycles and trends</i>
<i>Organize information about which agencies are providing which services and where</i>	<i>Gap assessment charts and maps</i>
<i>Promote more critical and deep thinking by project stakeholders</i>	<i>Careful sequences of open questions for group discussions, visual tools such as problem trees, force-field analysis charts or other</i>

Promoting Critical Awareness and Involving Stakeholders

You can promote dialogue, trust and ownership by involving appropriate stakeholders in your assessment effort. Stakeholders can see reality in new ways and deepen their understanding of the situation when you involve them in the analysis step. This helps to overcome any unhelpful habits of designing projects based on often hidden assumptions and beliefs rather than strong information and analysis. By participating in these steps, stakeholders can develop creative responses to address the problems and opportunities initially revealed in the assessment.

Promote critical thinking and awareness among project stakeholders by simply asking well-sequenced open questions as shown in the example below.

Using Problem-Posing Events and Open Questions to Stimulate Community Analysis

Training for Transformation (Hope, Timmel and Hodzi, 1984) describes an assessment and analysis process that builds critical awareness or analytical skills in communities. The assessment, called a listening survey, uncovers a number of issues that are deeply felt. Once identified, community members critically analyze these themes by using a problem-posing event such as a play, story or picture. After seeing the play, hearing the story or viewing the drawing, community members are invited to analyze the code through discussing a series of four open questions:

- *What do you see happening here?*
- *Why does it happen?*
- *What problems does it cause?*
- *Does this happen in your community and what should be done?*

Deep and thoughtful insights can emerge during the discussions of these four questions.

The CRS manual Hope and Healing: A Facilitator's Manual for CRS Employees and Partners on HIV and AIDS includes several exercises for analyzing problem-posing events around HIV/AIDS.

By involving stakeholders in analysis, you benefit from multiple perspectives on understanding a particular project situation. To do this, you might analyze one issue with different stakeholder groups. For example, if you are analyzing why there are low levels of child immunization in a community:

- some households might say that they are not made to feel very welcome at the health center because of their ethnicity;
- other, poorer members of the same community might say that the costs of obtaining the vaccinations is too expensive, including the bus journey to travel to the center;
- a focus group discussion might reveal that past uneven supply and poor quality services discourages households from returning to the center; and
- a local health official might say that funding shortfalls are responsible for staff shortages in the more remote centers.

Clearly, undertaking problem analysis with different stakeholders generates rich data that informs your understandings and choices about possible project interventions.

Reflection Opportunity

1. In your experience of doing assessments, did the problem of “too much information” emerge that hindered the analysis of this information? If so, how might this have been overcome?
2. How do you ensure that different perspectives are respected during analysis?

Making Decisions About Project Strategy

Problem analysis, using *problem trees*, is a popular and practical way to make the link between the first steps of project design (assessment and analysis) and the project’s objectives and strategy. One of the advantages of problem trees is that they can be easily transformed into objectives trees. Problem and *objectives trees* provide the basis for making decisions about the project’s strategy and overall design. Specific steps to construct and use a problem tree are found below.

The strategy review step (Chapter III, Section 5) also includes tools for linking decisions about project strategy back to the previous steps of project design (assessment, analysis and setting objectives). You may wish to look ahead to this section – specifically at Table 3.8 (pp. 93-94) – because as you analyze the information and set preliminary project objectives you may also develop ideas about possible project strategies. Reviewing this table now may be useful.

Throughout these steps of analysis, objectives setting and strategy review, it is important for all stakeholders to see clearly how the selected strategy links to the in-depth analysis on the community and situation.

HOW TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, DO PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND SET OBJECTIVES

In addition to reasons listed earlier, problem analysis is a basic and useful method to: (1) identify the major problems; (2) determine cause and effect relationships; and, (3) prioritize what should be addressed through a project’s strategy or intervention. This section will show you how to analyze problems using a problem tree.

Step One: Choosing Problems to Analyze

This is a crucial step! In choosing a problem to analyze always bear in mind that the ultimate purpose is to end up with project objectives and a strategy that are specifically focused on the situation in which you intend to work. Your project design will always benefit if you:

- analyze the problem in the context of the project site or local situation; and
- avoid analyzing problems solely from a national perspective (using mostly secondary data), and then leaping to decisions about a project strategy with no local analysis.

By following this guidance, you should end up with much stronger “situation-specific” project objectives and strategy.

Being situation-specific in problem analysis

A partner wants to develop a project to continue its current interventions in health care for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Yet the problem the partner analyzed in the draft proposal was the high rate of HIV/AIDS in the country. While it was a good analysis of that problem from a national perspective, it did not study the “situation-specific” problem that the partner was seeking to address.

CRS and the partner were determined to become more analytical about the specific problems and issues facing PLWHA in the context of the project site and around the health care available. They eventually defined the “situation-specific” core problem as “PLWHA in the diocese suffer from poor quality health care.” The analysis then focused on deepening their understanding of why this might be the case. Underlying causes uncovered by project stakeholders revealed a number of relevant factors that they had not previously considered in their existing interventions. These included concerns about the quality and efficiency of health care provision; access to those most vulnerable; and limited health care versus a more holistic approach. This situation-specific analysis formed the basis for a clear and focused project strategy that was extremely relevant to the care needs of PLWHA in that community.

If you started to analyze the data during the assessment process, you may have already focused in on what you think are key issues. This is now an opportunity to confirm your thinking. Regardless of how far along the assessment-analysis spectrum you are, the checklist below can help you sort through all of the information gathered in the assessment.

You can analyze more than one issue. In fact, it is often useful to repeat the analysis for a number of key issues that affect various groups within a community. Analyzing more than one issue helps increase understanding of the interconnections between them.

Checklist for Selecting Problems and Needs for Problem Analysis

- *What is the overlap among the four dimensions of need for this community or situation? In what way do felt, expressed, normative and relative needs converge?*
- *What has triangulation shown? Have different stakeholders consistently uncovered a set of problems or needs?*
- *Which problems or needs do various project stakeholders, especially the poorest and most vulnerable groups, refer to repeatedly and intensively?*
- *If you have used the IHD framework in the assessment, ask “what is stopping or preventing households from maximizing, increasing or diversifying their assets?”*

Step Two: Construct a Problem Tree

Introduce problem analysis by showing a sketch of a tree with its trunks, roots and branches. A problem statement is written next to the trunk of the tree.

This is a problem tree: a visual representation of reality. A tree is a powerful analogy for many people, especially those in rural communities. Participants in this exercise will be asked a series of questions that will help them to identify the causes of the problem (the roots) and the effects of the problem (the branches).

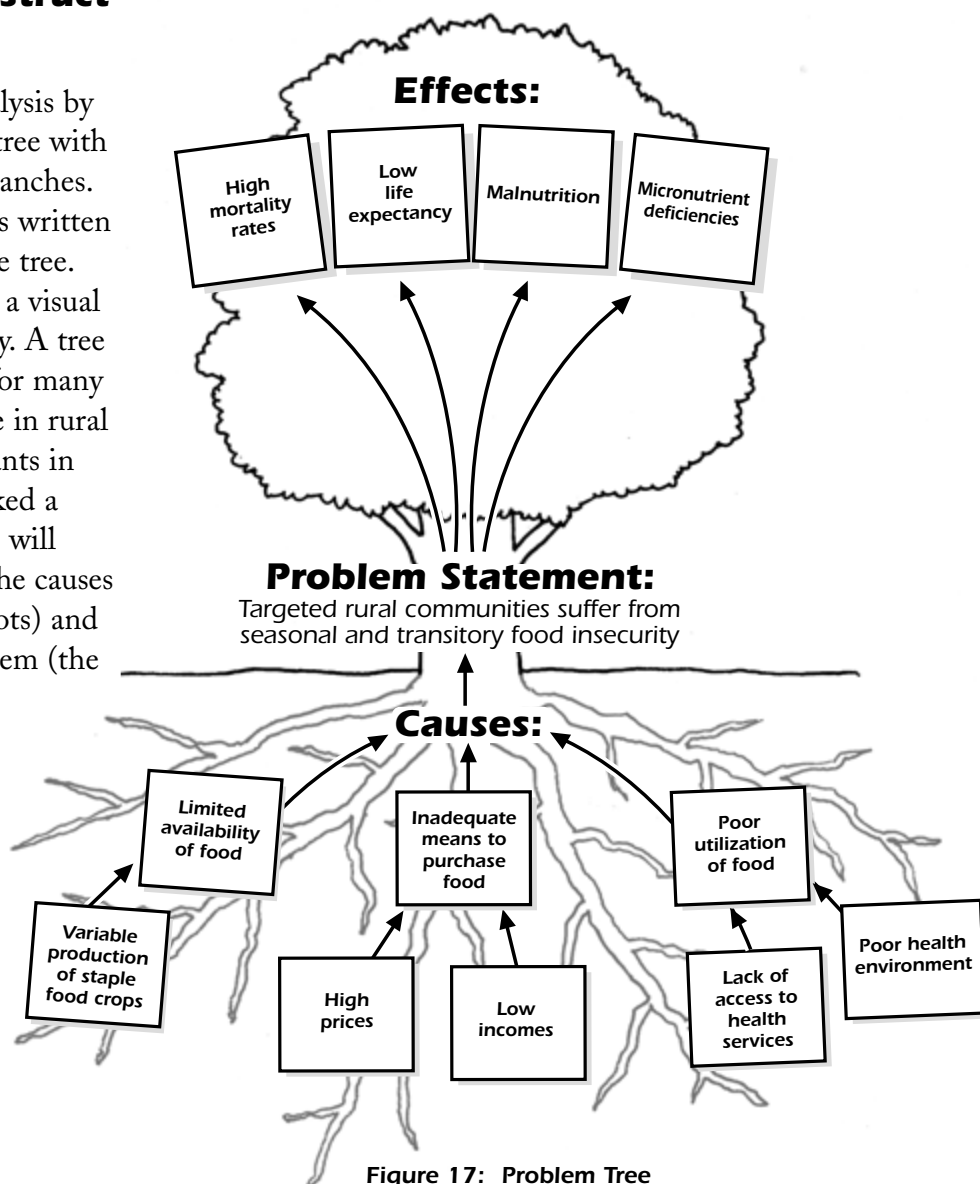


Figure 17: Problem Tree

Define the Problem Tree Terms

It is important to be clear about the terms and definitions used in the problem tree. The following definitions and examples can be used in your exercises with partners and communities.

Problem: A problem is a specific negative situation related to the human condition. A problem is not the absence of a solution because this would presuppose the type of intervention, which may or may not be the most appropriate. Problem trees use problem statements (sentences that contain a “who,” “what,” and “where”) written next to the trunk to launch the discussion of causes and effects.

A weak problem statement might look like this: *Some poor people in parts of Slavistan do not have enough money to provide good health care for their children, who suffer from diseases for which there are available immunizations.* This statement does not specify who is affected or where they are located. It states the problem as the absence of a solution rather than the presence of a problem.

A stronger problem statement is: *High measles mortality rates are found in children under five in urban Slavistan.* You now know *who* (children under five), *what* (high rates of mortality due to measles) and *where* (urban Slavistan), and the problem statement does not presuppose what is the best approach for tackling this issue.

Cause: A cause is an underlying factor that exists in the household, community, organization or external environment that has brought about the problem. Drought, inadequate maternal care, or the poor quality of medical service delivery may be causes of the problem of high mortality rates among infants.

Effect: Effects are social, environmental, political or economic conditions, usually negative, that result from the problem. One likely effect of high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among adults is large numbers of orphans. Similarly, lower primary school attendance rates would be an effect of high mortality rates due to HIV/AIDS among productive adults.

Reflection Opportunity

Consider this problem statement: “CRS staff need training in project design.”

1. Why is this a weak problem statement?
2. How would you turn this into a stronger problem statement?

Now you understand the terms included in a problem tree, you should be ready to construct one using the instructions below.

Constructing a Problem Tree in 10 Steps

1. *Draw a large outline of a tree on a blackboard, whiteboard, flip chart or other surface.*
2. *Write the problem statement agreed by those involved next to the trunk of the tree.*
3. *Ask people to identify the causes underlying this problem statement, writing each cause on one index card or Post-It Note. Knowledge of causes can come from personal knowledge as well as information uncovered during the assessment. (Note: Do this on a wall using tape and index cards that can be moved around, rather than straight onto paper. This opens the discussion up to all and prevents it from being monopolized by the person holding the pen. It is usually easiest to use large Post-It Notes if they are available.)*
4. *As causes are identified, ask “But why does this occur?” to identify other lower-level causes that contribute to this particular cause. Using tact and sensitivity, keep asking “But why?” or “What explains this?” until people feel they cannot go any deeper.*
5. *Organize the index cards or Post-It Notes to show the layers of the problem.*
6. *Use one-way arrows to show “cause and effect” relationships between the various causal statements written on the index cards or Post-It Notes. If there is no interrelationship between causes, do not draw a line.*
7. *Review the problem statement again and ask participants to identify the effects of the problem statement, again writing each one on one index card or Post-It Note.*
8. *As effects are identified, ask “And then what happens?” or “What are the consequences?” to identify other effects until all ideas are exhausted.*
9. *Organize the index cards or Post-It Notes to show the layers of the effects.*
10. *Use one-way arrows to show “cause and effect” relationships among the various effects written on the index cards or Post-It Notes.*

Step Three: Reviewing Completed Problem Trees

These questions can help people to review, correct and further analyze their problem trees.

- Does each cause-effect link (illustrated by arrows) make sense? Is each link plausible? Why or why not?
- How well have the causes gone down to the roots? Are there any unidentified root causes?
- What appears to be the relative contribution of each causal stream (causes linked by arrows leading to the core problem statement) to the problem?
- Do some causes appear more than once? Why is this?
- Which causes show significant influence?

Some practitioners encourage the identification of *key leverage points*. Key leverage points are defined as causes that show important influence or are repeatedly identified across various casual streams. Key leverage points are important when identifying potential objectives since they have the potential for greater change and more impact in resolving the problem described in the problem statement.

The idea of key leverage points is discussed in CRS/WARO's DAP Manual (Aker, 2004).

Reflection Opportunity

Take a project proposal and sketch the problem tree that is described in the proposal.

1. How does it look? Is it lopsided towards causes or effects? Why?
2. Do the review questions listed above suggest any ideas that may be missing? If yes, which?

Step Four: Transforming a Problem Tree into an Objectives Tree

An objectives tree is a mirror image of the problem tree. Negative problem statements (from the problem tree) are transformed into positive objective statements within the objectives tree. By doing this, you are taking a step towards identifying the potential strategies that are available for tackling the core problem.

Turning Problems into Objectives

For example, if the problem statement in the problem tree is “high infant mortality,” the objective tree transforms this into the positive objective statement “infant mortality rate is reduced.”

While the problem tree displays “cause-and-effect” relationships, you will see that the objectives tree shows “means-to-end” relationships as illustrated with the example below.

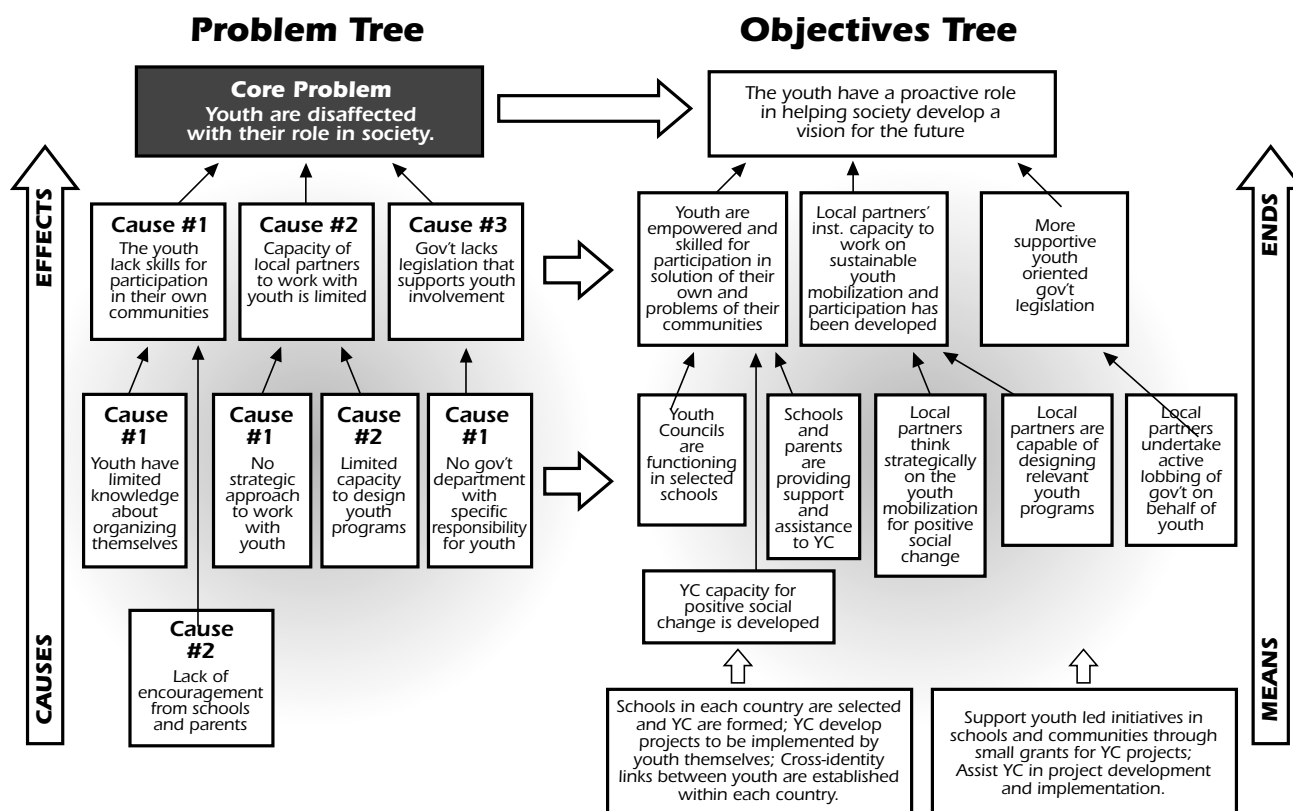


Figure 18: Transforming a Problem Tree into an Objectives Tree

In most cases, higher-level objectives (such as goals) correspond directly to the problem tree's core problem statement written next to the trunk of the tree. Other objectives that you have transformed from problems may not always fall into a logical order. You might need to re-order them to put them into a more logical sequence.

Once you have made your objectives tree, review it using the following questions:

- are the positive statements and objectives clear?
- have they been put into a logical and reasonable order that shows means-to-ends logic?
- is there a need to add other objectives?
- how do these objectives differ from those included in the original concept note or the initial Results Framework? and
- what objectives from the concept note should be retained, adjusted, or dropped in light of this analysis?

Step Five: Linking this Section to the Project Proposal

Succinct summaries or key ideas from this step of project design will feed into your project proposal, in particular as input to the “Problem Identification and Analysis” section of your proposal (see Chapter V). As in other project design steps, be sure to capture or safeguard relevant information. This will be useful as reference material for the author(s) of the project proposal. For example, keep rolled-up and labeled flip charts with constructed problem trees and objectives trees.

FURTHER RESOURCES

The CRS *Contextual Analysis Toolkit* includes a wealth of analytical tools for macro-level analysis. These are especially useful to analyze information gathered on the structures and processes of the IHD Framework. Other tools in the toolkit help to reveal the dynamics of power, inclusion and exclusion.

The Oxfam Gender Training Manual is one of the best handbooks for gender analysis tools.

Section 5

PROJECT DESIGN GUIDANCE



STRATEGY REVIEW

Your concept note included a description and rationale for the proposed project strategy. Since then, you have undertaken an assessment. You may have used problem tree analysis and objective trees to identify possible objectives for the proposed strategy. This allowed you to review and update the original concept note's objectives and results framework.

Now you need to review the concept note strategy to ensure that it is still the optimal and most appropriate way to address problems, needs and opportunities, and to achieve the stated objectives. It may be the case that the strategy identified early on is still appropriate. It may also be the case that a significant review needs to take place at this point because of things you have learned during the assessment and analysis steps. At the end of this Section (in Table 3.8) there is a set of questions that help to add rigor to this process.

In this section you will:

- define project strategy;
- understand how the theory of change underlies strategy selection; and
- examine your concept note strategy in the light of information and insights from previous steps of project design using additional matrices and tools.

Project Design Guidance

Planning the Project Design

Stakeholder Analysis

Assessment

Analysis and Objectives Setting

Strategy Review

INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

A project strategy describes the major “deliverables” (such as the services, goods, knowledge, skills, and attitudinal changes) that a project provides to address identified problems, opportunities or issues, and to achieve objectives. Other terms

that describe a project strategy are “intervention” and “approach.” Activities are those actions undertaken to ensure the timely provision of such deliverables.

Strategies are Choices

There are lots of ways to accomplish objectives. Selecting the most appropriate strategy requires critical thinking and good decision-making. Let us take one example – a water and sanitation project. Earlier analysis has identified that the community has no access to clean drinking water or sanitation facilities, and one of the objectives is to improve access to adequate clean drinking water and sanitation. You might consider the following three project strategy options to achieve this objective:

- delivering drinking water by trucking it into the village several times a week and installing ready-made latrines; or
- engaging a private contractor to drill a borehole, and another to construct VIP latrines; or
- employing community members through a food-for-work scheme to dig traditional wells and pit latrines manually.

Your choice of the most appropriate strategy to achieve the objective depends on a number of factors, such as: the costs and sustainability of required equipment; the urgency or scale of the problem; community views on which is best; and program quality guidelines for such projects.



Reflection Opportunity

1. What other factors might influence choice of strategy?
2. Which factor(s) most influences you in selecting a project strategy?

As stated above, at the concept note stage, you proposed a particular strategy for various reasons. Now that you have collected and analyzed relevant information, you will want to review your original project strategy to see if it is still the “best fit” given current circumstances.

- The stakeholder analysis may have revealed additional groups of people or organizations that should inform the project strategy. For example, you and other project stakeholders may have identified a more marginal group of households that deserves special attention in the delivery of potable water.
- Information from your assessments and analyses may have provided clearer insights into the problems, needs, resources and strengths within and outside the community. For example, you may have identified traditional community organizations that can be strengthened to take on the role of constructing the water points. The community may have expressed concerns about their ability to maintain and repair the installations of private contractors.
- Information obtained from these assessments and analyses may have led to greater understandings about possible risks and external or macro-level influences. For example, you may now understand better that the Department of Water Resources is drafting a policy on water and sanitation, so any project strategies will have to take this into account.
- Analysis of other projects or documents in the assessment may have revealed new and important information. For example, a more thorough review of best practices may lead you to add a component on community sanitation education and organization of water point committees – a component not in the original concept note strategy.
- Assessment of which agencies are already operating in the locality may have improved your awareness of what is already happening in the location you intend to work. For example, the assessment may have confirmed your earlier understanding (at concept note stage) that no other agency is working in the specific communities you are targeting.

Single Sector Intervention or Integrated?

The most appropriate strategy choice may be multi-dimensional. In LACRO, integrated programming, where appropriate, is promoted. Examples of such programming are included in the box below.

Examples of Integrated Project Strategies from LACRO

In this region, program staff aim to design traditional development sector projects as tools to transform unjust structures. For example, village banking project members receive local level advocacy capacity building; women's health groups also receive civic education on rights and responsibilities; agriculture projects include a focus on land tenure; health projects may include a national-level advocacy focus on national health budgets.

Source: Junkin et al, Undated

An Underlying Theory of Change

Choosing a particular strategy reflects your underlying theory of change. The theory of change makes clear how you and project stakeholders expect change to occur in the environment where the project will be implemented. This is also called the “means-to-end” logic or “development pathway.” For example, in an HIV/AIDS project that includes activities on prevention education, the theory of change is that prevention education leads to behavior change and eventually contributes to lowering the risk of getting HIV/AIDS.

Understanding the Idea of a Theory of Change

Suppose that a CRS country program has chosen a strategy for its agricultural project that involves training advanced farmers to act as extension agents in their own communities.

The theory of change can be explained as follows. By improving the capacity of advanced farmers with updated technical knowledge about crop production, by providing bicycles, and so on, these farmers will be able and willing to impart this knowledge to other farmers in the community, agricultural production levels in the community will rise, and in the long-run food security concerns will be lessened.

The theory of change, in this example, articulates how the design team anticipates an investment in the capacity of advanced farmers will lead to a boost in crop production.

Reflection Opportunity

Think of a project in which you are involved. What is the theory of change that underpins the project’s sense of direction?

People sometimes choose a project strategy using logic that is not very clear. Their choice might be based only on:

- beliefs about what works rather than evidence of what works;
- assumptions that current project strategies must be the best because they have survived over time;
- a desire to cling to the current strategy because of an unwillingness to take the time to consider other strategy options; and
- a fear of the risks associated with trying new approaches, leading to a reluctance to try out new strategies.

If the theory of change is not explicit, this may indicate unclear thinking or reasoning about how a project strategy will actually work. Clearly describing the theory of change allows project stakeholders to make the best decisions about the project strategy to ensure future success.

Exploring and Challenging the Underlying Theory of Change

The theory of change described in the previous example (that an investment in the capacity of advanced farmers will lead to a boost in crop production) is not a new idea and indeed seems plausible and sustainable. It has been used as a strategy in development practice over many years. So what is the evidence for this theory of change?

Although this strategy seems to have merit and may indeed work in some communities where it is applied, a number of studies have highlighted concerns that expert farmers:

- *do not necessarily make good trainers;*
- *may have few incentives to impart new knowledge since its possession gives them a competitive edge if they do not do so;*
- *may not have time to conduct training;*
- *might be “advanced” for reasons that are not transferable to other farmers, e.g. they enjoy better access to resources; and*
- *may live in a social, economic and cultural context that makes it difficult for them to mix with all farmers in a community.*

These concerns raise important questions about the potential success of this strategy. This is not to say that working with advanced farmers will not work, but that CRS and its partners should consider exploring:

- *evidence of the likely success of this strategy and its fit in their particular socio-cultural context;*
- *assumptions the strategy makes about the ability of advanced farmers and willingness to train others in improved crop production ; and*
- *options for establishing a sustainable system of incentives for those farmers giving up their time to work as advanced farmers.*

Reflection Opportunity

1. Looking back at your project experience, what has happened when the theory of change was not clearly identified?
2. Share your own story when a seemingly plausible and sustainable strategy turned out to be a poor fit with a particular socio-cultural context.

Sustainability of the Project Strategy

Related closely to the theory of change is how well a strategy reflects sustainability concerns. Sustainability implies that long-term perspectives should apply to all project interventions. Sustainability is especially concerned with project outcomes: long-term improvements in well-being and livelihoods that are generated by the project.

There are many ways to promote sustainability within a project strategy. Some examples are:

- the achievement of multiple benefits or wider effects that are diffused beyond the project at hand;
- the willingness and capacity of local institutions to assume responsibility for continuing services;
- the likelihood of communities willing to self-finance project initiatives;
- the continued utilization of newly-introduced practices by targeted individuals; and
- the adoption of policies to support the work of a project.

The extent to which sustainability issues are reflected in a strategy will depend on the nature of the project, the types of participants and partners involved, and the context or environment in which the project will be implemented.

Involving Stakeholders in Strategy Review

Strategy review is yet another good opportunity to involve stakeholders in key decision-making for the project. Many of the steps below can be done within a workshop setting where it might be easier to involve a large number of stakeholders. Some stakeholders may be more comfortable in their own community setting.

HOW TO REVIEW THE PROJECT STRATEGY

Step One: Reconsider Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Take the time to reconsider the concept note's project strategy to ensure that everyone is satisfied that the best choice has been made. Reviewing the strategy in light of lessons learned and best practices enables stakeholders to take advantage of new knowledge.

You should have already done a literature review for best practices either at the

concept note phase or during the assessment and analysis phase. This is the time to bring those best practices and lessons learned to this review of your proposed strategy. You will be gathering information from the following sources.

- Evaluation reports or abstracts for projects addressing similar problems from your own country program.
- Evaluation reports and abstracts from similar CRS projects around the world through the CRS Intranet site.
- Relevant program quality standards, sectoral guidelines or other strategic planning documents at the agency, regional or country program levels.
- Relevant donor guidance (e.g. Office of Food For Peace, 2003).

Now, ask yourself, “What do the literature and standards tell us about the best strategy (or combination of strategies) that is most likely to bring about the change desired in our project?”

Step Two: Gap Analysis

You may already have appraised existing gaps in the provision of services during the previous assessment (or analysis) phase. Perhaps at this point, you are looking at strategies that are new. Before you design new interventions, you want to be sure that no other agencies – government or non-government – are already providing them in the locality you have targeted. Please refer to Chapter III, Section 4 for more information on assessing existing gaps in service delivery to communities.

The following table helps organize collected information on what services and support is already being provided by other agencies, and what gaps may exist. One row has been filled in as an example.

Table 3.7. Gap Analysis Checklist

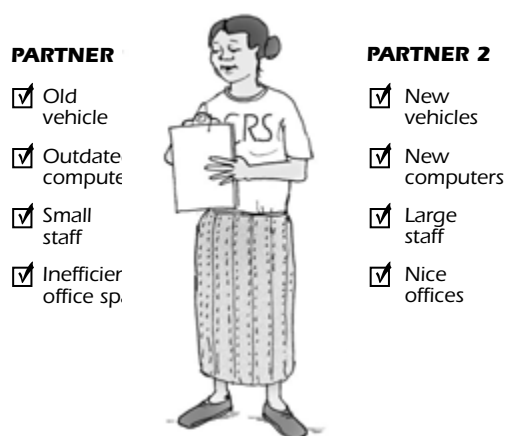
Organization	Strategies/ Approaches	Geographic Area	Project Participants	Comments of the quality of the organization's programming
PATH	HIV/AIDS Peer Education Program	Urban Mombasa and rural areas in Western Kenya	Workers in parastatal companies; sexually active youth and adults in rural areas	Positive reports; an opportunity to provide complementary programming support

Step Three: Undertake a Capacity Analysis

A capacity analysis measures the ability of CRS, partners and the community to implement a particular strategy and related activities. CRS works closely with partner organizations to design, implement and evaluate projects. This calls for careful reflection about what level of material, financial, human and managerial capacities are required for project strategy options. Capacity is defined as the ability of individuals and organizational units to perform functions effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner. Capacity analyses are also referred to as “organizational assessments.”

In general, the purpose of a capacity analysis is to answer the following three questions:

- what material (vehicles, computers), financial, human and managerial capacities already exist and are sufficient to implement the proposed project strategies?
- which of these capacities already exist but need to be increased or expanded to implement the proposed project strategies? and
- are there additional capacity-building objectives that need to be included in the project design, either to implement the proposed project strategies, or as stand-alone objectives?



You may have already done a partial capacity analysis for your concept note, or as part of your assessment process, that you now wish to develop further. You might include a full capacity analysis as one of the activities or plan for training CRS staff, partners and communities as part of the project. You can use that information to answer the questions above. If you need to “dig deeper” you can gather information from evaluation summaries or undertake an organizational assessment. See Chapter VI for more information about the tools for conducting a capacity analysis (e.g. CARE NEPAL, 1997).

Step Four: Complete the Strategy Review Checklist

In the light of the information and insights from all your earlier assessments and analyses, you are now in a better position to validate the strategy that was originally proposed in the concept note and, if necessary, to make modifications. The strategy review checklist (Table 3.8) provides questions that make it easier to critically review your strategy. You may want to add questions to take into consideration locally-important issues.

This process of challenging your thinking and assumptions will help add rigor to the final project design. As stated in Section 4, we recommend you review Table 3.8 earlier in the process so you and your partners do not find yourselves with an ill-advised strategy at this point. At this stage, Table 3.8 should just be a final check on your strategy choices.

Table 3.8. Strategy Review Checklist

Strategy Review Questions
<p><i>Interests and Influences identified during Stakeholder Analysis</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What assumptions does the project strategy make about interests and influence of each key stakeholder? For example, is it assumed that community members will freely and enthusiastically volunteer as peer educators for an AIDS project? Is it assumed that husbands will fully support their wives' participation in this project?</i> 2. <i>What negative responses might be anticipated around the project, given the interests and influence of project stakeholders. For example, might there be a backlash among parents or Church leaders if children are educated on the prevention of HIV/AIDS?</i> 3. <i>Do any of these assumptions or possible negative responses pose risks to the project's success? Which ones? How should the project strategy take these into consideration? Do any of these potential negative responses pose risks to the project's success? If so, how should the project strategy take this into consideration?</i> 4. <i>How will men, women, girls and boys benefit in this strategy? How does it promote their ability to participate and to make decisions?</i>
<p><i>Information derived from the Assessment</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>How well does the project strategy strengthen, diversify or maximize household or community assets?</i> 6. <i>How well does the strategy address the effects of macro-level policies or structures that influence household or community assets? Should another project objective be added? Should an integrated strategy be considered?</i> 7. <i>How well does the strategy consider current or future trends, shocks or risks that increase household or community vulnerability?</i> 8. <i>How will the strategy contribute to strengthening household or community livelihood strategies?</i> 9. <i>How does the strategy fit the assessment's identified needs (felt, expressed, normative and relative)?</i> 10. <i>How does the strategy take advantage of the strengths and opportunities revealed during the assessment?</i> 11. <i>How does the strategy take into consideration appropriate collaboration and partnerships with other organizations?</i>

(cont.)

Strategy Review Questions

Understandings developed during Analysis and Objectives Setting

12. Does the strategy respond to the stated central problem?
13. Should all identified objectives be tackled, or just a few?
14. What are the most important causal streams shown in the problem tree? How does this strategy address these?
15. How are root, structural causes shown in the problem trees addressed by the strategy?

Choices suggested in the Strategy Review Underlying Theory of Change

16. What are we assuming here? Why does it have to be done this way?
17. What are the boundaries to our thinking within this strategy?
18. What are the either-or approaches here? Should we seek “both-and” solutions?

Feasibility

19. Is the strategy technically feasible?
20. Is the strategy financially and economically viable?

Sustainability

21. If the strategy includes the provision of goods and services, how will the supply of these be continued after the project has ended?
22. How does the strategy deal with future coverage of any recurrent costs?
23. If the strategy includes working with volunteers, or establishing new community administrative structures, how will their work be sustained once the project ends?

Capacity and Organizational Analyses

24. Does the proposed project strategy leverage CRS and its partners’ strengths and capabilities?
25. Should the strategy include another objective and/or activity to strengthen the organizational capacity of one of the project stakeholders?

Step Five: Linking this Section to the Project Proposal

Information on your strategy review decisions will be central to your project proposal. This material is specifically requested in the “Strategy, Results Framework and Proframe Description” section of your proposal (see Chapter V). This part of your submission is critical since it is the explanation and justification of the proposed intervention.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Chapter VI contains both tools and additional information for reviewing strategies.

Tools

Chapter VI contains two other analytical frameworks that offer you the opportunity to review your strategy from two different perspectives.

There are also two tools that have been used in CRS/WARO that might assist you in undertaking an organizational capacity assessment. There are many other organizational capacity assessment tools, so it is advisable to seek guidance from your DRD/PQ and the Capacity Building Adviser, should you require additional assistance.

Additional Information

The CRS Justice Lens Case Studies: Reflections on Justice, Solidarity and Peacebuilding in CRS Programming enable the agency to explore strategies for promoting justice in overseas programming; identify the opportunities and challenges in doing so; and synthesize the implications and policy issues which emerged.

Creating Partnerships, Educating Children is a document that contains eight case studies from CRS' experiences in working through partnerships to improve educational access, quality, and relevance around the world. Three themes are addressed: redefining the role of communities in improving education, strengthening civil society through education, and fostering partnerships to shape education policy.

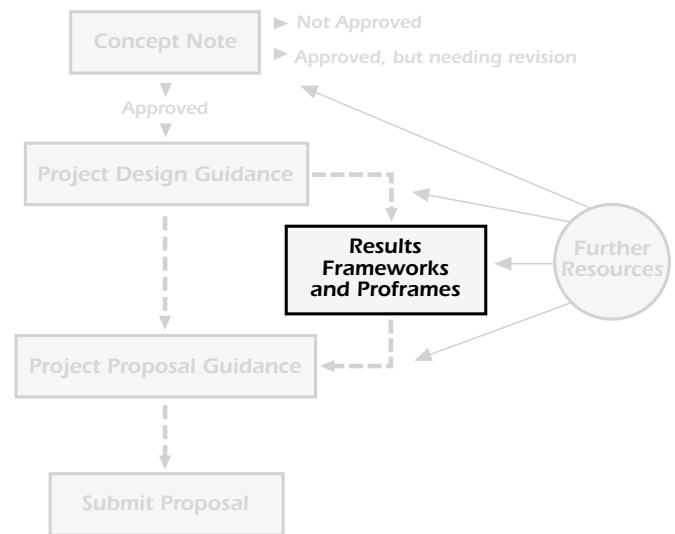
CHAPTER IV

Section 1

RESULTS FRAMEWORKS, PROFRAMES AND M&E PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Well done – you are almost at the finish line of project design! What remains before you start writing the actual project proposal is to refine your Results Framework, or RF (recall the RF you initially drafted to accompany your concept note discussed in Chapter II), construct a Proframe, and draft your monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans for the project.



The information, analysis and decisions from all earlier steps of project design are the raw material for constructing the RF and the Proframe. The purpose of these frameworks is to integrate and synthesize all previous work, and also to reveal any oversights in that earlier work.

Together, a RF and a Proframe summarize the key elements of your project via an *objectives hierarchy*. Each objective level is a “means” to an “end” up to the level of Goal. For example, Activities are the “means” for achieving the Outputs “end”, and so on. You may notice that this hierarchy, illustrated in Figure 19, looks very similar to the means-to-end logic that you developed in your Objectives Tree. You are correct – it is!

Proframe shows a logical and hierarchical relationship among five levels of objectives



Figure 19: The Hierarchy of Objectives in Proframe

In this section, you will:

- review the definitions of a Results Framework (RF) and a Proframe;
- review definitions of related M&E planning tools;
- learn why these tools are so useful; and
- understand the basic concepts and caveats (warnings that prevent misunderstandings) behind them.

DEFINITIONS

Results Framework

Originally developed by USAID, a Results Framework is an easy-to-read diagram that gives a snapshot of the top three levels of a project's objectives hierarchy. This makes it simple to understand the purpose of the project. A RF is required for all project proposals submitted to USAID.

Figure 20 shows an example of a fairly complex, multi-sectoral project with three Strategic Objectives and seven Intermediate Results. Less complex projects might have only one SO and a couple of IRs.

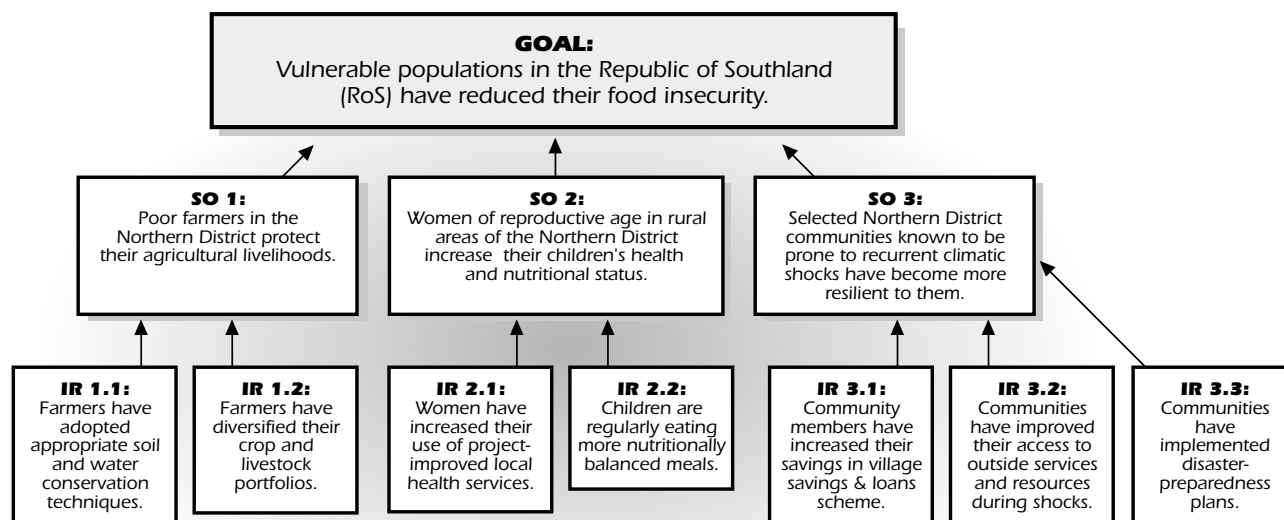


Figure 20: A Completed Results Framework

Proframe

CRS defines the Proframe as a logical planning tool for generating a Project or Program Framework. ProPack discusses how this framework is used within projects. However, note that the Proframe can also be used at a program level. For example, a country program might wish to develop a Proframe to guide its program quality improvement efforts. The Proframe can also be used for strategic planning, as part of a regional SPP for example.

		Objectives Statements	Performance Indicator Statements	Measurement Methods/Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
Evaluation & Learning		Goal			
		Strategic Objectives			
		Intermediate Results			
Monitoring & Learning		Outputs			
		Activities			

Figure 21: The Proframe Matrix

The Proframe combines the RF with an older tool known as the Logical Framework or Logframe, which is used by most international development organizations worldwide. The RF is a snapshot of the higher-level objectives; the Proframe provides information about Outputs and Activities, the performance indicators, and the critical assumptions that have been made about project performance and plans. In Section 4 of this chapter, you will learn about various M&E planning tools that help you fill in the Proframe and plan for your M&E activities.

The Proframe differs from a Logframe in that it employs:

- an additional row, or objective level, called Intermediate Results; and
- slightly different names or terms from those used in some Logframes.

For a translation of the terms used by CRS in its Proframe to the different terminology used by donors, see Chapter V (pp. 166-167) for the table “Master Translator: Comparison of Logical Planning Frameworks.”

Intermediate Results

What exactly are Intermediate Results (IRs)? They are a crucial bridge or “intermediary” between what a project will provide (the Outputs) and the purpose of the project (the Strategic Objective). Hamida’s story below illustrates this idea.

Hamida’s Story

Hamida manages a CRS health project in which one of the Strategic Objectives (SOs) is a lower incidence of acute childhood diarrhea. The project has both a Proframe and a functioning M&E system. Hamida also recently attended CRS training in M&E, so she now understands the steps that will help ensure a successful project – in this case, success is measured by fewer cases of child diarrhea seen at the area clinic. Hamida and her team have also chosen an Intermediate Result for this SO, in order to track changes in how parents treat their children’s diarrhea.

Six months into the project, Hamida and her team reviewed IR data and saw that although training was delivered on time and correctly, trainees were not using the oral rehydration therapy (ORT) taught to them for treating children with diarrhea. After questioning project participants further, Hamida discovered that training emphasized messages on ORT, but without any hands-on practice for parents themselves to mix and administer ORT solutions to infants, using locally familiar measures and containers.

Hamida helped trainers revise the curriculum according to these IR findings. This was done at almost no extra cost. At the next review, IR indicators showed much higher levels of ORT use by parents. Hamida and her team are now confident that the midterm evaluation will show that the project’s Strategic Objective of reducing acute childhood diarrhea will almost certainly be met.

In other words, IRs help to ensure that as soon as possible after implementation has started, project Activities and Outputs are helping those involved to achieve the related Strategic Objectives (SOs).

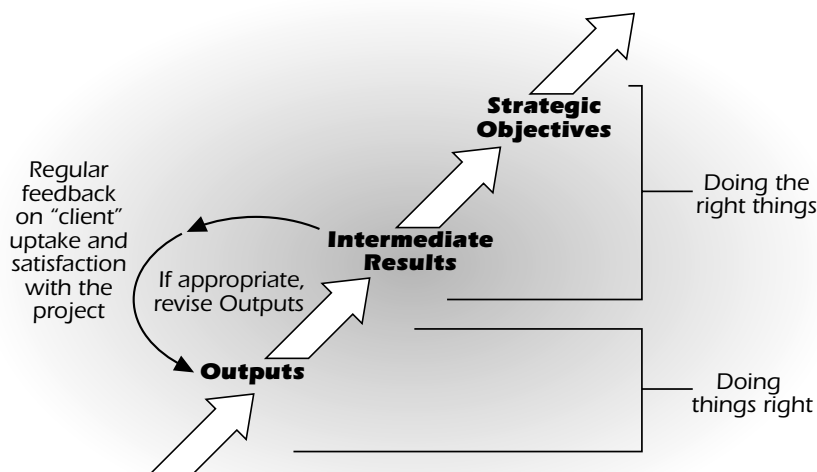


Figure 22: Intermediate Results Help Managers to Manage for Results

For instance, Hamida did not wait until the midterm evaluation to learn of project difficulties. By tracking her IR indicator soon after Output delivery, she was able to adjust project Outputs and Activities (here related to the training curriculum) promptly, and resolve the problem discovered at the IR level – that is, whether trainees were applying their lessons in real-life ways envisioned by the project. The fact that the project was experiencing difficulties did not make Hamida a bad manager. To the contrary, her handling of them showed her to be an active and responsive manager.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How does Hamida's story compare to your own project implementation experiences and the tracking (or non-tracking) of IRs?
2. Drawing from your own experience, what story would you tell to a partner to explain the importance of IRs?
3. How do IRs affect the kind of feedback a supervisor might give to project implementing staff?

M&E Planning Tools

There are several M&E planning tools that help you fill in the Proframe and think through your plan for M&E. They are defined here, and further explained in Section 4 of this chapter.

Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet: In most cases, you will be required to collect some data for the performance indicators in the project. The *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet* is a tool to help you think through some of the important issues for collecting the data. Once you fill out a worksheet for each indicator, you then transfer the information in summary form into column 3 in the Proframe.

Performance Indicator Tracking Table: This matrix summarizes the targets that you establish for each of the performance indicators, usually on an annual basis. Progress in achieving these is the information you use in progress reports. A number of donors, notably USAID, require this table.

Monitoring Responsibilities Worksheet: As you are working through the *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet*, you will also need to consider who will be responsible for the M&E functions, including the collection, analysis and reporting of data. The *Monitoring Responsibilities Worksheet* is an M&E planning tool that will help you to determine roles and responsibilities for M&E, and any budgetary implications (e.g. purchase of computers, staff and partner training in M&E).

Baseline Survey Worksheet: The *Baseline Survey Worksheet* assists you in thinking through what, and who, might be involved in undertaking all the different tasks involved in completing the baseline survey work. It is useful to have discussions on this topic during project design because of the possible costs (time, money and staff) of any decisions you make about the baseline survey.

M&E Calendar: The *M&E Calendar* encourages staff to think about when project M&E data will be required. For example, M&E information might be required for decisions about the country program's APP, or for a midterm evaluation team that is scheduled to arrive, or for a half-yearly meeting with USAID, and so on. By first determining the timing of these key decisions, it is then possible for the project design team to ensure that all necessary M&E activity is properly scheduled.

WHY ARE ALL THESE M&E INSTRUMENTS SO POWERFUL?

RFs, Proframes, the accompanying M&E planning tools can help in many ways.

- **Improve project design.** The process of sketching out an RF and then fleshing it out in a Proframe promotes critical and clear thinking about your proposed project interventions. This process helps you determine:

- 1) whether the interventions you are considering are feasible and realistic;
 - 2) whether you have enough information even to make the above judgment at the time of project design; and
 - 3) what risks and assumptions might affect the likelihood of project success.
- **Strengthen project implementation.** Once implementation begins, the Proframe helps provide evidence of how well your project is working, thus allowing you and partners to adapt or change things accordingly.
 - **Communicate the essence of the project to stakeholders.** RFs and Proframes respectively provide basic and fuller at-a-glance overviews of the key ideas of a project. This is very useful for stakeholders who may not have the time to read a full project proposal.
 - **Incorporate monitoring and evaluation (M&E).** Proframe encourages consideration of M&E aims and approaches early on in the design process. With the aid of the M&E planning tools, Proframe outlines the basic building blocks for constructing meaningful and cost-effective M&E plans and systems.
 - **Link project design more clearly to the proposal, budget, and implementation plan.** Armed with a Proframe that has been completed using the M&E planning tools, you will be able to write a clear and succinct proposal. After that, it will also be much easier to develop a detailed implementation plan (DIP), a more refined M&E plan that corresponds with the Proframe, and a budget.
 - **Furnish an easy outline for reporting.** Similarly, report writing is easier because Proframes lay out the categories that focus on the progress of key objectives. This avoids long descriptive reports that do not convey important information.
 - **Facilitate organizational learning within CRS.** The use of a common approach and terminology for RFs and Proframes throughout CRS is another step that will improve organizational learning. Staff can more easily share their project design and implementation experiences with other country programs because all will work through the same process.

Of course, RFs, Proframes and the M&E planning tools are not “magic machines” that automatically produce well-designed projects! But they certainly help you organize and review all the hard thinking and analyses undertaken during the preceding steps of project design. Moreover, you will find that “proframing” often reveals where analyses may have been incomplete, and so more background information is needed to complete the design.

MYTHS ABOUT RFs AND PROFRAMES

Despite the many advantages of these tools, some people worry that they are top-down, and one-size-fits-all blueprints focusing mainly on donor needs. But most Proframe users discover that:

- when stakeholders are involved in constructing RFs and Proframes, community and partner knowledge informs project design, and helps assure a bottom-up approach;
- while donor needs are served, other stakeholders also benefit. For example, a Proframe can help managers better respond to the specific needs and concerns of project participants as the project unfolds;
- frameworks are just that – a structure upon which to design and manage a project. All of the information within these frameworks should reflect and respond to local conditions; and
- Proframes are not written in stone. It is important to make revisions as circumstances change, and as implementation experiences are gained. Regular reviews and revisions of Proframe can be part of the annual planning processes of partners and country programs. Many donors are willing to accept revisions when the reasons are well founded and changes will lead to a more successful project.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How would you describe attitudes of staff and partners toward RFs, Proframes, or Logframes generally?
2. Why do you think these attitudes exist?
3. Which of the bullet points above (regarding what most Proframe users discover) might help transform any negative attitudes into something more positive in your situation? Why?

Section 2 RESULTS FRAMEWORKS, PROFRAMES AND M&E PLANNING

THE PROFRAME MATRIX

In this section, you will:

- explore each column of the Proframe matrix in detail; and
- learn about M&E issues in relation to each column.

COLUMN ONE: OBJECTIVES STATEMENTS

All five boxes under the first column of the Proframe Matrix are called Objective Statements. At each level, one or more objectives must be achieved. Together, they make up the objectives hierarchy because of the means-to-end relationship between different levels of objectives.

Activities describe the functions to be undertaken and managed in order to deliver the project's Outputs to the targeted beneficiaries and participants.

Sample Activity

...for an agricultural intervention	...for a peacebuilding intervention
<i>CRS and partner staff to organize and deliver training for women rice farmers about more productive, environmentally sound techniques of rice cultivation.</i>	<i>CRS and partner staff to organize a workshop to bring together two conflicting ethnic groups to identify a tangible activity of mutual interest.</i>

Outputs are the goods, services, knowledge, skills, attitudes and enabling environment that are delivered by the project (as a result of the Activities undertaken). Importantly, Outputs should also be demonstrably and effectively received by the intended beneficiaries and participants, as you can recall from Hamida's story. Outputs arise from the successful completion of Activities.

Sample Output

...for an agricultural intervention	...for a peacebuilding intervention
<i>Women rice farmers have demonstrably increased their knowledge and skills about the improved rice cultivation techniques.</i>	<i>The two ethnic groups have formally agreed on a plan to implement a tangible activity of mutual interest.</i>

Intermediate Results state the expected change(s) in identifiable behaviors by participants in response to the successful delivery and reception of Outputs. IR-level responses may show themselves by:

- changes in the rate project participants adopt new behaviors or skills promoted by the project;
- expansion of project reach or coverage;
- new ways of organizing or managing systems;
- alterations to policy; or
- anything else that shows project Outputs being used – and correctly or perhaps also innovatively so – by the targeted groups.

These responses are called “intermediate” because progress at this level is a necessary step towards achieving the SOs.

Sample IR

...for an agricultural intervention	...for a peacebuilding intervention
<i>Women rice farmers are using the improved cultivation techniques.</i>	<i>The two ethnic groups have begun effectively to implement their agreed-upon activity.</i>

Strategic Objectives describe the noticeable or significant benefits that are actually achieved and enjoyed by targeted groups by the end of the project (EOP). These benefits are achieved thanks to the changes that have taken place at IR-level as a consequence, in turn, of the Outputs from well-done Activities. Each SO expresses an aim that is realistic, specific to the project, and measurable. SOs are really the central purpose of the project – that is, why it was designed and implemented in the first place!

Sample SO

...for an agricultural intervention	...for a peacebuilding intervention
<i>Women rice farmers have increased productivity of their rice crop in environmentally sound ways.</i>	<i>The two ethnic groups have reduced tensions between themselves.</i>



The Goal describes the longer-term, wider, development change in people's lives or livelihoods to which the project will contribute – perhaps only in a given region, or perhaps in the nation as a whole. Think of the Goal as a larger, longer-term hope or aspiration.

Sample Goal

...for an agricultural intervention	...for a peacebuilding intervention
<i>The families of women rice producers in the most vulnerable regions of the nation are less food-insecure.</i>	<i>Inhabitants of the region experience greater levels of personal security.</i>

When developing your objectives hierarchy, don't blindly copy examples from other projects because they may not fit the reality of your situation. Your objectives statements should reflect the specific conditions where the project is to be implemented.

One thing that makes Proframe a useful and flexible tool, but a bit difficult for beginners, is that any particular objective statement can shift levels in the Proframe depending on the project's scope, size, and context. (Likewise for accompanying indicators.) Consider the following two cases.

Considering the Context

Take, for example, an area with a fairly strong government extension system, organized community-based farmer groups, but a weak government seed service. The SO for a large, well-funded, five-year agricultural intervention in this area could be formulated as: "Resource-poor farmers in four districts of the country have improved their sustainable production of pulses and root crops." The associated IR is: "Farmers have planted certified seed and cuttings of hardy and low-labor varieties (of these crops)." Key Outputs are: "The government seed unit provides adequate quality control," and "Farmer groups produce and disseminate the improved planting materials."

In this context, simply by strengthening the relevant government services and the farmer groups through training, it is realistic for the project SO to aim for improved production – something that could hardly be accomplished if less time and fewer resources were available.

In another context, however, the SO of an agricultural intervention might read merely: "Farmer groups produce and disseminate improved planting materials for hardy and low-labor pulses." This much more modest SO may be appropriate because government extension and seed services are shaky, no organized farmer groups as yet exist in communities, the project timeline is only 3 years, and root crops that might otherwise have been included are unfamiliar in the area or stigmatized as "poor people's food." In this context, the stated SO better represents what is realistically achievable in a first go-round project with these limitations.

In sum, setting objectives is very context-specific. Although the example just given is at the SO level, this principle applies to all levels of the objectives hierarchy.

COLUMN TWO: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STATEMENTS

Performance indicator statements do not simply repeat their associated objectives statements. For example, if an objective relates to increased trust between two ethnic groups, the indicator will try to identify what specific change will provide evidence for this. For example, the indicator may describe the two groups are collaborating in:

- a forum, such as a PTA, a water-users' association, a village health committee, or an agricultural marketing cooperative; or
- an activity that is of mutual interest and benefit, such as school improvements, well-digging, organizing to sell their agricultural products in bulk at a more favorable price, or joint advocacy work.

Along with their particular Measurement Methods and Data Sources (Section 4), Performance Indicator Statements:

- ▶ define more clearly the essence of the associated objective statements; and
- ▶ provide the complementary “S.M.A.R.T.” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound) elements to each objective statement; in order to
- ▶ suggest evidence of how much or how well objectives are being or have been achieved; and thus
- ▶ verify the project’s underlying “theory of change”; in order to
- ▶ determine whether the project is on track or whether course corrections need to be made; and so
- ▶ enable managers to make timely and better-informed decisions.

An ideal performance indicator statement normally specifies seven elements of change – albeit not in any particular order. This is the “gold standard”, but it may not be possible in every instance. When developing a performance indicator consider these seven elements, but then use your own best judgment as to what is appropriate given your situation.

- 1 Nature** – What, fundamentally, is the core of the planned change or achievement at each level?

Example: Use of water.

- 2 Quantity** – What quantities or levels in the nature of the indicator are involved?

Example: Increased use of water.

- 3 Quality** – To what national, international or other standards will this change hopefully be achieved?

Example: Clean water, perhaps as defined by the World Health Organization’s standards.

- 4 Beneficiary subgroup** – Which subgroups will benefit from the change? While it depends on the objective level and the project, subgroups usually include households (single-female-headed, poor, landless, pastoralist, living with HIV/AIDS, etc.) and individuals (women, men,

Since gender sensitive programming is important to CRS, many donors and the communities we serve, it is important to disaggregate performance indicator statements by sex, where appropriate.

youth, children of certain ages or sexes, etc.). Also, CRS, partner, community groups and government agency staff might be recipients of training and resources.

Example: Rural households in the Eastern District.

- 5 **Target** – What is the planned improvement across the total life of the project in terms of people or resources for this indicator? Setting targets is likely to be informed by local knowledge and any secondary baseline information you have.

Example: 10,000 rural households.

- 6 **Timeline** – When is it expected that the target will be achieved?

Example: By October 2007.

- 7 **Baseline** – It is important to mention the comparison with the baseline in the indicator statement, if in fact baseline data will be collected. Often baseline measures are not known when proposals are submitted; in this case a baseline survey is planned as a first year activity (Table 4.1, Example 3). In some cases, a baseline measure can be estimated from available secondary data or from your past experience with similar work. This may help to set appropriate targets for project achievement.

Example: Additional to what exists at the time of the baseline or project start-up.

Final indicator

By October 2007 (timeline), 10,000 (target) additional (baseline) rural households in the Eastern District (beneficiary subgroup) enjoy increased (quantity) use of (nature) clean (quality) water (nature).



Table 4.1. Performance Indicator Statement Examples

Objective Statement	Performance Indicator Statement
<p><i>Example 1: An IR for a sustainable Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (Ag&NRM) project; or perhaps an SO for a purely environmental protection project:</i></p> <p><i>“Farming communities in the project have adopted sustainable NRM practices.”</i></p>	<p><i>By the End of Project, 50 percent of the farming households have correctly applied at least two project-promoted NRM practices to croplands.</i></p>
<p><i>Example 2: An IR for a civil-society project; or maybe an SO for a project to strengthen partner skills so that in subsequent projects they can mount sustained advocacy efforts on behalf of civil-society concerns:</i></p> <p><i>“CRS’ core partners have the institutional skills to stimulate wider civil-society advocacy.”</i></p>	<p><i>By the project midterm, four CRS partners have demonstrated an improvement between the pre- and post-assessments of their respective institutional capacities for advocacy.</i></p>
<p><i>Example 3: Depending on the project context and aims, could be at any level of the objectives hierarchy:</i></p> <p><i>“CRS partners are more financially sustainable.”</i></p>	<p><i>By the End of Project, seven CRS partners are covering 80 percent of the operating costs from other donors as compared to baseline.</i></p>

As these examples show, indicators can be quantitative, qualitative, or more commonly, a mixture of both.

Some people try to label indicators as “output,” “process,” “impact,” or “outcome” and other such terms. It is more useful to name and think about indicators in terms of the objectives hierarchy, e.g. a Goal-level and SO-level performance indicator statement for the particular project in question, rather than some generic “impact” or “outcome” indicator. Having said that, for most major donors, the Proframe’s SO-level performance indicators are usually equivalent to impact or outcome indicators, while IR- and Output-level performance indicators may usually be thought of as the indicators you would collect during project monitoring.

Selecting Performance Indicator Statements

For some project settings and sectors, there exist some internationally standardized and research-backed indicators and indices (with accompanying Measurement Methods/Data Sources). This is especially true in long-established areas of development assistance such as agriculture and natural resource management (Ag&NRM), education, health and nutrition, and organizational capacity building. It is less true for relief and emergency services or other, newer kinds of interventions

like advocacy and peacebuilding. This is because the state-of-the-art in M&E research has not yet caught up with developments in these program areas.

When available and feasible, however, such proven and standardized indicators are strongly recommended for CRS use. This is because they make comparison of data across multiple projects much easier. Comparison may be both internal and external – something that is of great importance to donors and CRS. Most likely, a number of these internationally-defined indicators exist for long-established sectors in projects that your country program implements.

Local knowledge and experience from past projects can often supply uniquely meaningful indicators, particularly where there are few established international standards. Actually, in the published literature on local knowledge about Ag&NRM, examples of such indicators abound. For other sectors, such indicators can sometimes come from shared project experiences. For all sectors, local knowledge is very appropriate when it comes to selecting situation-specific indicators that are meaningful for communities and partners. But you should be aware that it may be more difficult to aggregate and compare such indicators across similar projects in different contexts.

A few examples of indicators based on local knowledge are listed below. (They focus only on the “nature” element, so as to capture the broader idea of local or experiential indicators.)

Examples of Indicators Based on Local Knowledge

***Ag&NRM:** When it comes to halting or reversing environmental degradation, farmers and herders are able to cite and sometimes even quantify clear indicators of recovery, such as: recession of visible salt deposits along furrows in previously salinized croplands; decrease in environmentally-related livestock (and human) diseases; reappearance of beneficial plants or healthy vegetative communities; or retreat of noxious plant species; and the return of particular insect, bird, or even mammalian species to their formerly degraded habitats. Very often, scientists and outsiders are ignorant of such geographic-specific indicators.*

***Education:** When asked what, in local terms, would be good indicators of success for an education project that involved primary-school construction and staffing, community members said clear evidence for them would be: (a) “whether our children are able to read us a short article from the newspaper or a letter;” and (b) “whether our children can write a short message or letter that we dictate.”*

***Food Security:** Often, a good indicator of improved food security is whether households have been able to: increase their frequency or quantity of consumption of foods that are considered luxurious, e.g. guinea pigs at Andean Indians’ wedding feasts, or a well-fattened ram to celebrate the end of Ramadan in Moslem societies.*

(cont.)

***Health:** For a child healthcare project that focused on constructing, staffing, and equipping rural clinics, mothers said that good measures of success would be their own estimation of whether their children were “eating and playing normally,” specifically that the children had a good appetite and were not lethargic.*

***Disasters and Conflict Resolution:** A project dealing with post-disaster reconstruction and conflict resolution among differing religious groups discovered that a good indicator of its advances was if – as a result of various project interventions – families from two or more of these groups helped each other rehabilitate their houses.*

***Peacebuilding:** One project found that a practical indicator of its success was that formerly warring groups agreed to share in the use and maintenance of cattle dips on disputed lands.*

Reflection Opportunity

1. What would you add or challenge to what has been stated above on the role of performance indicator statements?
2. What are some examples of locally or experientially inspired indicators that you have seen?

Revising Performance Indicator Statements

Do not become obsessed with indicators or, as some people might say, too “indicator blinkered.” Indicators are not intended to tell the whole story of project success since they are really only proxy measures of change (i.e. substitutes for the whole reality), and thus limited in how much information they provide for decision-making.

Unanticipated Events

Always keep in mind that unexpected responses to project interventions typically occur. These may be positive or negative – or even both, depending on different stakeholders’ views! It is important that the M&E Plan helps you detect and document these kinds of unexpected responses during ongoing monitoring, site visits, or whenever the opportunity arises. CRS and partner staff should always be asking, “Did anything unexpected happen because of the project, whether good or bad?”

If an unanticipated event does occur and is important for signaling project success, an unusual course, or potential failure, then you may decide to add an indicator (and related monitoring measures) into the Proframe in order to keep track of this effect.

In making the decision to include an additional indicator, you will need to weigh the additional costs of tracking the information against the significance of the unanticipated effect. At a minimum, you may want to document such findings even if you don't add an indicator. Consider the following example.

Always Watch for Unanticipated Positive and Negative Effects

A water and sanitation project supported communities to build, financially manage, and maintain local waterworks consisting of a well, pump, and standpipe providing potable water, plus an attached community laundry facility with cement sinks and built-in washboards. Along with other interventions in health, hygiene, and business-management training, anticipated benefits included:

- *improved sanitation and lowered incidence of various diseases, due to people's close access to clean and running water. Women and girls no longer had to trek to or stand in distant, mosquito- and disease-ridden rivers or dirty ponds to fetch water or do laundry;*
- *a lightening of women's and girls' workload, freeing them to engage in more productive tasks and community-improvement groups, or to attend school; and*
- *practical experience for community leaders and members of both sexes in launching, managing, and maintaining a local development project and facility (with a bank account for user fees, spare parts, etc. and a formal contract with the provincial office of the Ministry of Public Works for major maintenance needs), on which the community could draw for future initiatives.*



All these benefits were realized by EOP, but so were many others. These came to light in site visits by project and partner staff. For instance, in one community, male members diverted the runoff from the facility to manufacture adobe bricks alongside the waterworks. Across many communities, women cited other surprise payoffs:

- *a decrease in back problems and other pains, from no longer having to bend all the way over while laundering;*
- *a greater sense of security, because when laundering at the riverbank, women worried about their smaller children's wandering off and drowning;*
- *the chance to chat more worry-free and comfortably, and to meet more community members;*

(cont.)

- *increased income, not only from more time to engage in petty trade but also from a completely new profession that arose – that of taking in laundry from wealthier community members; and*
- *enhanced family pride and esteem, from being able to provide clean clothes to their children, particularly their school-age children and husbands, to wear in public.*

However, at some facilities, both men and women users also pointed out a few unanticipated negative effects. These were mostly linked to faulty construction – later discovered to be due to the inadequate project technical capacity to oversee engineering plans and subcontractors:

- *drainage was sometimes so badly engineered that runoff made standing pools of water where mosquitoes bred;*
- *in one community, runoff even threatened to wash away down-slope homes; and*
- *at another facility, the patio on which the waterworks rested was poorly leveled and smoothed. This left sharp, moss-slimed foundation rocks sticking up everywhere, such that users (and project visitors too) were in real danger of slipping and suffering a broken bone!*



Clearly, in this example there were many unanticipated effects, both positive and negative. If these effects were noted during project implementation, the project manager would have to decide which are important enough to monitor on a regular basis and then assign indicators to track them. This decision would depend on whether they represent a significant additional benefit, or if they pose a serious threat to the project's ultimate success.

Reflection Opportunity

1. In the past, what unanticipated positive or negative effects have occurred in projects that you know?
2. How did you capture this unexpected information?
3. What did you do with this information? (For example, did you add, subtract or change indicators, or re-design parts of the project as a consequence?) In what way did this help your project?
4. How are indicators you develop informed by gender or sustainability concerns? What do you think you should continue or do differently in the future?

Innovative, Privately-funded Programming

There may be rare occasions when indicators are difficult to predict in advance. This might be where the programming is very innovative and nobody is really sure how an intervention will unfold. In such instances, an alternative to establishing indicators is to adopt a more open-ended approach. After an appropriate period of project activity, key stakeholders would be asked about any changes in the lives of their families or community; in-depth dialogue would seek to find out in what way the project may have contributed. Ideas for possible indicators of change would surface during the course of such discussions. This approach is more likely to be applicable to small-scale, innovative projects supported with CRS private funds.

Reflection Opportunity

1. What kinds of open questions might you ask for small-scale, innovative projects to measure change?

COLUMN THREE: MEASUREMENT METHODS/DATA SOURCES

This column includes a description of:

- the **measurement method** the project will use to track each of Column Two's performance indicator statements; or alternatively,
- the precise non-project **data source** the project will access instead – such as regular surveys and reports by other national and international organizations. Non-project data can be used as a measurement method as long as it is comparable to the project data.

No matter what, a performance indicator statement is fairly meaningless unless there is a uniform method for collecting the information that makes up the indicator. This consistency is critical for high-quality M&E.

This is why Column Three of the Proframe, and its accompanying *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet* (Section 4) are so important. Furthermore, Column Three should always be considered at the same time as Column Two. The

Data Consistency

“Performance indicators should be framed and defined in clear terms so as not to be open to broad and varied interpretation by sector specialists. Particularly in the case of qualitative indicators, clear and comprehensive definitions help ensure a reasonable level of objectivity and comparability over time.”

US Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Tips, 1998, No. 12

dotted line between these two columns means that they are interconnected and even inseparable.

Where the project intends to rely on existing data sources, all you need to do is identify the particular elements that you will use from the sources being relied upon. Examples of those sources include: periodic government ministry censuses or statistics; regular FAO, World Bank, UN documents; or other reports. It is critical that you name and reference the particular report(s) you intend to use.

When it comes to formulating measurement methods for data that – in the absence of other sources – must be defined and collected by the project itself, the *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet* a useful tool for well-considered Column Three entries. Having thought through what is involved in capturing data for a particular indicator, you then have to judge whether it is within the capacity of CRS and its partners to gather the required data. If not, you need to include funds in the budget to contract out the data-collection work. If neither option is feasible, you will need to re-think the indicator you first selected.

Selecting Measurement Methods/Data Sources

Experiences from many past projects show that designers often write performance indicator statements without first asking how, realistically, they are to be measured and analyzed, what resources it will take to do so, and who will be responsible for coordinating and managing this work. This leads to situations where indicators are never used because:

- the information was never collected in the first place – because it was technically too difficult or too expensive and time-consuming to measure. This is poor M&E design work.
- the information was never collected in the first place because – although it was technically and financially feasible – it was never clear whose job it was to collect the information in the first place. This is poor assignment of M&E responsibilities.
- it was collected but left unused because no one had the skills to analyze it, or, because no funds for consultants to perform analysis had been budgeted. This is poor project design overall.
- it was analyzed somehow, but not in a form or at a time that was suitable for key decision makers. This is all of the above!

When the project itself must collect data (i.e. not use existing data sources) the following questions will help you choose the best indicators that are feasible, relevant, measurable, and analyzable.

What We Really Need to Know – Utilization-Focused M&E

- *What does the project manager need to know in order to judge that the project is on its way to achieving (or has achieved) its objectives at each level of the Proframe? Indicator selection should be utilization-focused. That means it provides the minimal amount of information that can meaningfully inform management decisions, clarify options, and identify implementation improvements. Note that project-level M&E is different from research in that it focuses on what you need to know versus what would be nice to know (but is not essential for management decision-making).*
- *What will other stakeholders need to know, and why? Partners and community groups involved in the project may require certain types of information for the same reasons as CRS project managers. Donors may require that some indicators be tracked in order to justify expenditures.*
- *When do the different stakeholders require the data? This is critical for making sure that any M&E data that are collected, analyzed and reported are useful to those who need the information.*
- *What is the most cost-efficient method for collecting and analyzing what we really need to know? The more complex the data-collection methods (random-sample surveys, for instance) the higher the cost, and the more time-consuming it will be to collect, analyze and present the data. Furthermore, you must consider organizational capacity: Do the required staff, partner, or consultant skills, time, and budget exist to collect and analyze this information?*

With regard to the last question above, Figure 23 below shows the trade-offs in cost and complexity among different methods of data collection.

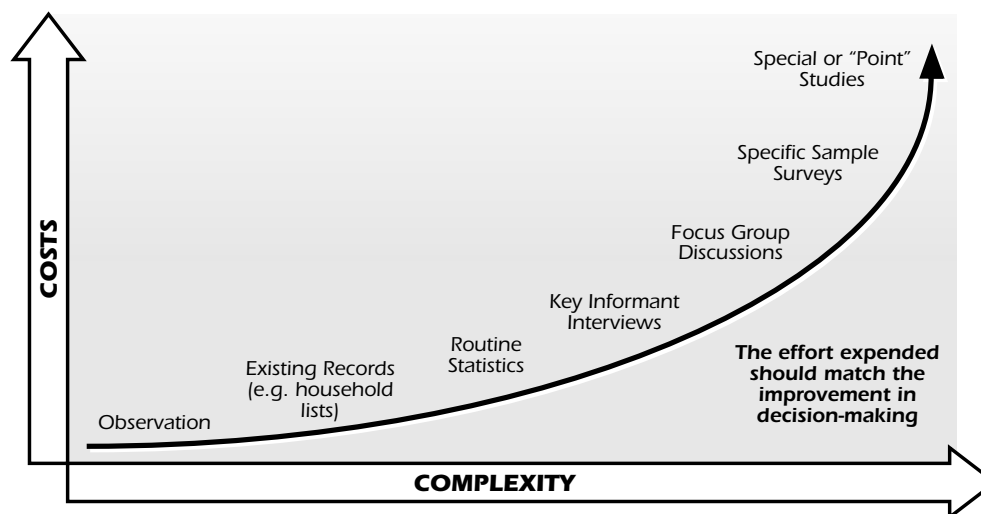


Figure 23: Cost and Complexity Issues in Data Collection

Reflection Opportunity

1. In your experience, how well are indicators used for project decision-making? What explains this? How does it compare to the problems described above?
2. Review Figure 23. Now, from your own project experience, what are examples of data sources used to measure SOs? An IR? An Output? An Activity? At which objective statement level are they more costly and complex? Less costly and complex? Why?

COLUMN FOUR: CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

What is a Critical Assumption?

Critical assumptions are factors that project designers cannot (or choose not to) control, but that could endanger success if the assumptions are incorrect. Critical assumptions include expectations that are fundamental to the working of the objectives hierarchy. Think of them as possible risks, but not probable ones like “There will be no droughts or earthquakes” in specific regions where such natural events are historically known to occur.

It is difficult to describe in the abstract what kinds of assumptions to look out for because most are very context-specific. However, longtime project experience suggests a few common categories of assumptions that almost always have to be examined during design.

- Government plans, policies, and actions – whether historical, actual, or anticipated.
- The plans, policies and actions of other relief and development organizations (UN agencies, other PVOs, NGOs) operating in the project area.
- Trends in national and international markets (supply, demand, prices, credit, etc.), and also plans and policies of pan-regional or international trade bodies.
- The possibility (but again, not the probability) of human-made or natural difficulties and disasters, including war or civil strife.

Some examples of the above follow. Once again, the key phrase is: “Consider the context.”

Recognizing and Dealing with Critical Assumptions

Example 1: In many CRS projects, community groups and members (PTAs and other committees, extension workers, teacher aides, traditional birth attendants, etc.) are expected to volunteer as a vital part of implementation. Hidden in such expectations are the assumptions that community members have sufficient interest, motivation, time, and economic resources (for out-of-pocket expenses and opportunity costs) to participate in this manner.

Since CRS especially targets poor and marginal people, such assumptions must be dealt with before the design proceeds by: 1) confirming the validity of this assumption beforehand with community stakeholders themselves; 2) altering the initial design to incorporate some type of support that encourages volunteers to participate and ensures their continuing participation; 3) deciding to work through government or partner field agents rather than unrecompensed community volunteers, and assigning resources accordingly; or 4) if none of the foregoing strategies are feasible, possibly dropping the particular intervention altogether.

Example 2: Often, projects are planned around existing or promised government regulations, laws, policies, and actions. Common cases are: subsidies on basic crop-production equipment and inputs, vital medical or veterinary equipment and drugs or certain construction materials. Other examples include government maintenance of basic infrastructure like major roads and power grids.

Project designers should verify government activity in every way possible and seek to revise the project accordingly if conditions are not met.

To take one, real-life case, a CRS project was designed on the assumption that existing government subsidies for the foot pumps essential to the project's small-scale irrigation objectives would continue indefinitely. Having identified this critical assumption, designers then planned for replacement subsidies from CRS and reduced, prioritized areas for irrigation.

Example 3: Often, success of a project – as initially designed – may be assumed to depend on the absence of civil strife or natural disasters. However, critical assumptions to the effect that “Fighting will not be renewed” or “The rains will come on time” and “There will be no prolonged drought during the project period” are nothing more than poor excuses for bad design in areas where it is in fact highly likely that such assumptions will not hold.

For instance, where the best information available at the time of project design indicates that fighting could well start again, designers must speak to this with backup plans targeted to the parts of the project area most likely to be affected. To take another example, when it comes to drought-prone areas you should design an agricultural project with the expectation of mixing early and late crops and promoting drought-tolerant crop and livestock varieties, species, or breeds; or perhaps community-level drought preparedness strategies.

Identifying these kinds of assumptions during design helps you decide whether your proposed strategy is reasonable or whether it is based on unrealistic optimism, inadequacies in assessment and analysis, or problems in negotiation with other stakeholders at the time of design. It will also prevent you from simply filling in



the empty boxes in the Proframe matrix without thinking through all the possibilities of project success or failure.

“Killer assumptions” are important ones that are very unlikely to be true. In such cases, the project must be redesigned to remove them. If not, they will “kill” your project!

Example of a Killer Assumption

One CRS project determined that access to water at primary schools was critical for its proposed strategies to: teach students about good hygiene and plant schoolyard gardens. These gardens would replace Title II food aid in provisioning school canteens, while at the same time demonstrating new and more sustainable cultivation techniques to both students and parents.

Project designers made the assumption that “Government will provide piped water to the targeted schools,” even though they knew that the Government department legally responsible for doing so did not have the budget required. Yet if the water was not somehow provided, the project would be “killed,” no matter how good the other contributions to hygiene and gardening curricula, teacher training, soap and seed supply might have been.

The “if-and-then” logic of Proframe links the objectives statements and critical assumptions columns.

Assumptions are written as positive statements about the conditions that need to be met if the project is to stay on course towards achieving the objectives one level up in the hierarchy and, ultimately, its SOs. This represents the “if-and-then” logic of the Proframe.

- **If** Activities are done as planned, on time, within budget and to an acceptably high standard, **and** the respective critical assumptions hold, **then** the resulting Outputs will be delivered.
- **If** appropriate and quality Outputs are delivered **and** the critical assumptions hold, **then** the IRs will be attained.
- **If** IRs are attained, **and** critical assumptions hold, **then** SOs will be achieved.

Assumptions are important only when they describe conditions that – if they do NOT occur – will almost certainly jeopardize the project as designed. When critical assumptions are identified, an important decision is whether to minimize their risk

by, wherever possible, building some of them into the project and so keeping more control over them.

In other words, project designers are responsible firstly for identifying critical assumptions as fully as possible. This should be done by verifying the best information available to them at the time of design. Secondly, designers must take steps to bring truly critical assumptions under project control in order to minimize risk. In the event that the assumptions fail to occur, project managers must be prepared to revise the project to achieve expected results.

Reflection Opportunity

A health project intends to increase rural health services. At present, only government personnel are allowed to staff rural health clinics. Yet you know that government salaries for such staff are often paid late, if at all. Would you simply treat the payment of salaries as an assumption (that the government will somehow deal with this issue)? Or would you try to redesign the project? If the latter, how?

Critical Assumptions in Relation to Project Control and Accountability

Once they have been formulated, project managers should monitor any critical assumptions that have been included in the Proframe. This will allow managers to check that they are in fact borne out, as implementation progresses. This monitoring should be done with a “light touch,” and not requiring substantial amounts of project resources. For example, it may just involve checking back with the various stakeholders to see if things are happening as expected. If an issue emerges, then managers will need to decide whether to invest additional project resources to crosscheck that this is indeed an issue, or to redesign the project as needed.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How frequently do you think critical assumptions should be monitored and reported?
2. Suppose that “peer educators are willing to work on a voluntary basis” was a critical assumption for your HIV/AIDS project. If this critical assumption was found to be incorrect, what do you think is an appropriate response by the project manager?

The importance of critical assumptions cannot be overemphasized because they relate directly to project control and accountability. Managers' direct control over the achievement of objectives decreases at each higher level in the objectives hierarchy. Thus the number of critical assumptions may increase at these higher levels. This is because external factors begin to have more and more importance as you move upwards from Activities and Outputs (over which the project can exercise more internal control) to IRs, SOs, and the Goal (over which the project has diminishing control). Figure 24 below illustrates this idea.

What does this sliding scale of management control mean? Within CRS, project managers are **contractually bound** to work with partners to produce the planned Outputs via well-managed Activities. Outputs are what project managers commit to delivering when they sign the project agreement. Although IRs and SOs lie outside project managers' direct control, managers are nevertheless **accountable** for attaining them. Final evaluations will focus on SOs because these truly reflect the contribution of the project to the targeted groups' well being.

Accountability means that – in addition to delivering good-quality Outputs – managers are also responsible for using IR feedback to check that their projects are on-track towards achieving the SOs. See again Hamida's story in Section 1.

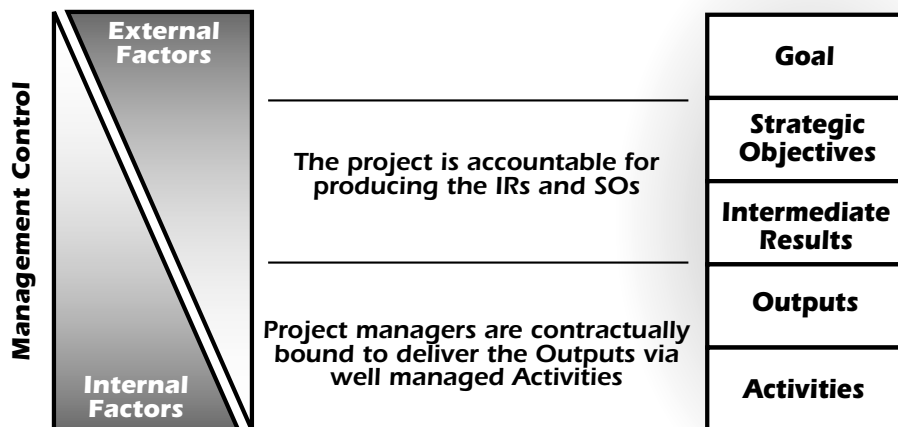


Figure 24: Accountability in Project Management

Section 3

RESULTS FRAMEWORKS, PROFRAMES AND M&E PLANNING

HOW TO CONSTRUCT A PROFRAME

In this section, you will:

- learn how to work through each of the five levels and four columns of the Proframe matrix; and
- review tips for developing various elements of the Proframe.

THE PROFRAME ROADMAP

Constructing a Proframe follows a general pattern. That said, proframing is also a very interactive and dynamic process. You will probably find that you develop many draft Proframes before finalizing one. The basic steps of proframing are the following.

1. Develop Column One of the Proframe, working down from the Goal to the Activities. Use your Results Framework, if you have one, to get a head start!
2. Once the objectives statements have been drafted, then start working upwards by completing Column Four. You do not need to consider the critical assumptions box at the Goal level. Again, while trying to write these statements you may begin to realize some of the unconscious assumptions behind your thinking. In other words, you should draft Columns One and Four more or less at the same time. After that, crosscheck your thinking by verifying the “if-and-then” logic, ideally with large-group input.

You might not work down from Goal to Activities in a perfectly linear fashion. It may be easier to skip around among different levels to some extent. That is fine, because in fact, it is the way proframing sometimes proceeds!

	Objectives Statements	Performance Indicator Statements	Measurement Methods/Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
Goal	↓			
Strategic Objectives	↓			↑
Intermediate Results	↓			↑
Outputs	↓			↑
Activities	↓			↑

Figure 25: Planning Down, Thinking Up!

- Once Columns One and Four are drafted, next address Columns Two and Three for each level in the objectives hierarchy. It is better to start from the top, Goal and SOs. This is because, in the process of selecting measurement methods (especially home-made ones), you may find that you want to refine your objectives statements at the upper levels. And that may entail revising others lower down on the matrix. Often, this process also suggests a need to collect more information before you can finalize your Proframe.
- Finalize your Proframe now, and correct your draft RF to coincide.

A USER'S GUIDE TO THE ROADMAP

Step One: Decide Who to Involve

Discussing the RF's visual map of the main ideas of initial project design with selected stakeholders is a good place to start. The broader and more graphic nature of the RF makes it easier to grasp than the more detailed Proframe. In particular, stakeholders who are unfamiliar with the Proframe often find it easier to raise key questions or offer specific ideas for it by first examining the RF.

In any case, not every stakeholder needs to understand the mechanics of the Proframe in order to make useful contributions. There are other ways you can present and seek feedback on the intervention logic of your Proframe. For instance, many groups have found it useful to perform Step Two using facilitation techniques that encourage discussion among partners and other stakeholders present

Often, proframing starts by involving a large group of stakeholders, then in smaller sector or technical groups as initial ideas are refined and revised. For the large group, you should have in hand a RF, or even a very tentative Proframe, to shape the discussion.

(for example, writing individual objective statements on index cards and posting them on a wall).

Step Two: Fill in Column One

Work down Column One of the Proframe matrix, as described in the following substeps.

1. Use Past Work

You are not starting over! You can refer to your concept note's Results Framework, the objectives tree and other work from the strategy review to begin developing the objectives statements and their hierarchy in this column. Objectives at the trunk of the tree and on the higher levels of the roots usually correspond to the project Goal and SOs, although it would be too simplistic to expect this in all cases. Other statements from your objectives tree may fit into the Proframe by checking the "if-and-then logic" described in Section 2 of this chapter and Step Four below.

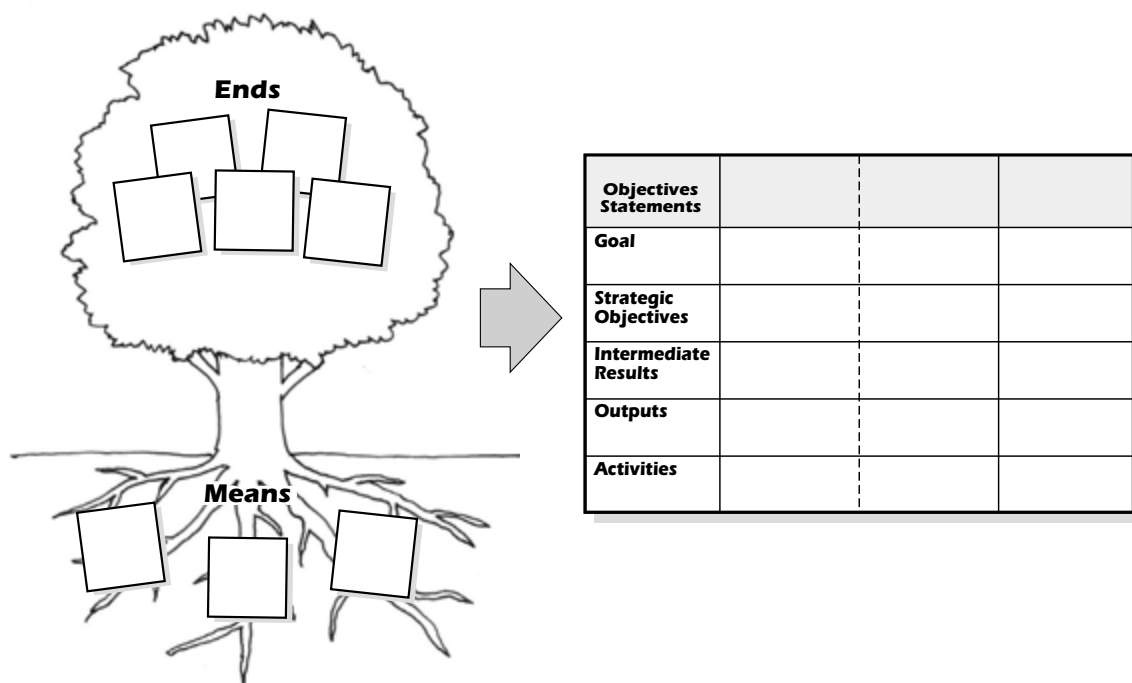


Figure 26: Using Past Work in Proframing

Apart from at Goal level, clear, specific objective statements are a sign of good, practical thinking — what is realistically achievable, not hazy dreams.

As you work through different versions of your Proframe, your draft objective statements should increasingly be refined in terms of how they are written.

2. Write Strong Objectives Statements

A few general rules for writing strong objectives statements help to clarify your thinking. They are:

- include only a single purpose, aim, end-product, or result for each statement;
- similarly, avoid compound statements (...and...) and subordinate clauses (e.g. starting with “by,” “through,” “via”). These subordinate clauses usually relate to the next level down in the objectives hierarchy;
- write all objectives (except Activities) in full sentences as if the objective has already been achieved;
- use the active voice;
- as the active subjects of these sentences, name the precise participant sub-groups expected to implement or benefit from the objective;
- use strong verbs that are action-oriented to describe observable or measurable behavior, e.g.: “increase” rather than “enhance,” “produce” rather than “promote,” and so on; and
- for Activities, however, write these as infinitives (the “to...” verb).

Unlike other objectives statements, Goals are usually rather general and abstract, and they describe a desired state that occurs beyond the life of the project.

3. Review and Edit Draft Objectives Statements

Review your draft objectives statements against the checklist below. Edit them accordingly if they show any of these common problems:

- defining overly ambitious SOs, given local conditions and available resources and capacities;
- expressing objectives statements so vaguely that it is unclear how to measure or implement them, or what will be achieved;
- using poor logic as to why particular Activities are needed for a certain Outputs, or particular Outputs for a certain IR;
- overlooking key Activities and Outputs that are needed to achieve higher-level objectives; or
- confusing different levels of the hierarchy – for example, putting what is really only an Output or an IR at the IR or SO level.

It is always helpful to define the duration of your proposed project. This will certainly help you to be realistic in finalizing your SO, i.e. what is achievable by the end of project.

4. Count Objectives: How Many Are Enough?

At the Goal level, projects nearly always have only one goal. Beyond this, however, there are no hard and fast rules about how many objectives are enough at each level of the hierarchy. You must use your best judgment for the context. However, some general tips are as follows:

- **SOs:** Smaller, simpler projects often require only a single SO. Larger, more complex projects (like DAPs) may need two, three or, at most, four SOs. However, in general, the fewer the SOs, the better, as this suggests a project with a clearer focus. For example, a DAP may have a single SO, such as any one of those shown in Figure 20. But even a single SO still leaves a lot of freedom and flexibility for decisions on how to address it.
- **IRs and Outputs:** IRs should have at least one contributing Output and may often have up to four or five. However, take care not to clog up the Proframe with too many IRs and their associated Outputs and Activities.
- **Activities:** Only major Activities or categories of Activities should be listed in the Proframe, especially for large projects. You can give more detail about Activities in the Implementation Schedule to be included in the project proposal, and again in the Detailed Implementation Plan you will develop once funding has been obtained but before implementation begins.

Step Three: Fill in Column Four

Although it may seem somewhat out of order, after filling in Column One of the Proframe Matrix, you should skip to Column Four's critical assumptions. This saves time in the long run. There is little point in embarking on the more technically demanding work of writing performance indicator statements (Column Two) and developing or selecting sound and cost-effective measurement methods or data sources (Column Three) for them, unless you have first checked that your proposed objectives make sense in terms of the context.

1. Use Work from the Project Design

Assumptions are very context-specific. To better understand the particular situation, draw on stakeholders' local knowledge of the situation in the country and zones where the project proposes to work and secondly, on other general and published knowledge of the situation. Use the information collected during the problem analysis, and gap and capacity assessments to define assumptions.

2. Write Clear Assumptions for Each Objective Level

Start by reviewing the Activities you have listed in Column One. Review the discussion in Section 2 on critical assumptions. Then read the tips below and fill in the Activities-to-Outputs box in the critical assumptions column.

- Remember, critical assumptions are factors that project designers cannot (or choose not to) control, but that could endanger success if the assumptions are incorrect.

- Ask “What conditions (internal, but especially external) must exist to achieve the next level up in the objectives hierarchy?”
- Write any answers out in full sentences as desirable positive conditions.
- Check that you are fairly confident these conditions will be realized, and also can be lightly monitored by project managers.

You do not need to have an assumption at each level in the final draft of your Proframe; this is not an exercise to fill in all of the boxes!

Next, do the same for the Outputs-to-IRs assumptions. Continue moving up your Proframe in the same way to fill

Objectives Statements			Critical Assumptions
Goal			
Strategic Objectives			SOs-to Goal
Intermediate Results			IRs-to-SOs
Outputs			Outputs-to-IRs
Activities			Activities-to-Outputs

Figure 27: Applying the “If-And-Then” Logic to Draft Critical Assumptions

in the assumptions for the IRs-to-SOs, and the SOs-to-Goal assumptions. This gives you a complete set of draft assumptions. The Goal level assumptions box remains blank.

You can also use the Decision Tree (Figure 28) to help check your draft assumptions to see if they lie completely outside the control of the project, or if you could do something to lessen their risk to the project.

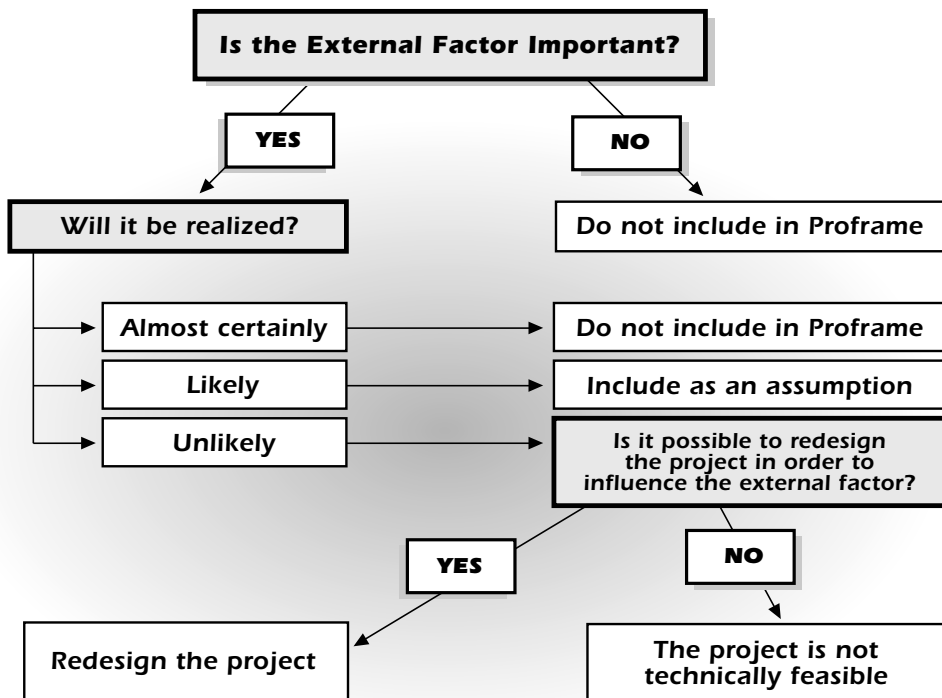


Figure 28: Decision Tree for Critical Assumptions

Example of How to Use the Decision Tree

A Child Survival project has an IR that “Mothers have their children under the age of 3 fully immunized.” The related Activities and Outputs focus on training health-post personnel about the immunization regime and (along with mothers) its importance. A draft assumption to achieve the IR is that “Government health services will provide immunizations in a timely fashion.”

Situation A:

Is this external factor important? Yes, because training alone cannot immunize children! Will it be realized? Likely so, because the government has provided vaccines and services fairly well in the past in other parts of the nation. However, sometimes there are occasional shortages of vaccine stocks (and where needed, syringes) due to imperfect supply chains. So, it is wise to include this assumption in Proframe. During implementation project managers should periodically check to see if medical supplies are keeping pace with increased demand from the trained healthcare personnel – and that the SO linked to this IR will actually be achieved.

Situation B:

For the same reasons as in Situation A, this factor is important. But it is unlikely to be realized because a recent war in Situation B has left government health services in shambles, and medical supplies of all sorts are often lacking. So, the question is: can the project be redesigned to influence this external factor? In this case, designers have verified that funding for and delivery of vaccines and related equipment can be coordinated through UNICEF.

3. Review and Edit Draft Assumptions

To do this, walk back through Columns One and Four of your Proframe using the “if-and-then logic” outlined in Section 2 of this chapter. Starting with the objective statements at the Activity Level: “**If** (read out your Activity category) are undertaken **and** (read out your critical assumption) holds, **then** (read out your Output) will be delivered.” Work your way on up through the higher levels of Proframe using the same questions.

If any project funds are budgeted to be spent on ensuring (not monitoring) an assumption is valid, then what you have is not an assumption, but a misplaced piece that belongs somewhere in Column One instead.

4. Count Assumptions: How Many Are Enough?

If you find you are including a large number of assumptions at any or all levels of the Proframe Matrix, this is a strong signal that you may need to go back to the literature, your previous design work, or conduct more consultations with stakeholders in order to verify that you are not making killer assumptions. You should explore, but not necessarily insert assumptions at each level of the Proframe.

It is important to monitor critical assumptions during implementation. Your M&E Plan should include this responsibility.

Step Four: Fill in Columns Two and Three

Now that you and the project stakeholders are pleased with your initial work on your objective statements and critical assumptions, it is time to fill in the remaining two columns of the Proframe matrix. As noted in the introduction to this section, it is best to start from the top (Goal and SOs).

Be warned that this is often the most challenging part of the Proframe and careful consideration is required. This is usually because specialized technical knowledge may be needed in the sector or theme in question (think about the example in section 2 for good quality and quantity of water supply according to WHO standards) and, if necessary, M&E assistance on associated measurement methods.

1. Use Past or Existing Work

Although Columns Two and Three may constitute the most technically difficult part of the Proframe, the table below offers some broad, general tips that can be helpful in drafting indicator statements and their associated measurement methods or data sources for each objective level. These are distilled from many different project experiences.

Table 4.2. Tips on Performance Indicator Statements and their associated Measurement Methods/Data Sources

Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Performance indicator statements and associated data are drawn from appropriate, already-existing sources such as Amnesty International, FAO, Freedom House, IFPRI, Transparency International, World Bank, UN, national government reports, etc.</i>
SOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>SO indicators reflect the benefit(s) expected to occur for beneficiary subgroups by EOP as a result of behavioral change(s) at IR-level prompted by successful delivery and receipt of the project's Outputs.</i> ■ <i>To measure these benefits against the targets set, EOP results are always compared with the corresponding baseline findings (whether from primary measurement methods or other data sources) at the time of final project evaluation.</i>

(cont.)

IRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>IR indicators focus on demonstrable evidence of a behavioral change, such as adoption or uptake, coverage or reach of Outputs.</i> ■ <i>IR indicators normally can only be collected by the project itself – because they are specific to behavioral changes in response to interventions by/in the specific project and its action area. Secondary sources rarely exist at this level.</i> ■ <i>Tracking IR indicators begins as soon as Outputs have begun being delivered and have had a reasonable amount of time to take effect.</i> ■ <i>Start with “light” monitoring. Then do more, or more targeted monitoring depending on your findings. At midterm, do a formal evaluation of IRs to that point, and promptly make any course corrections indicated by the evaluation (which will include interpretation of any qualitative and quantitative data).</i>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Output indicators allow project management to track what is to be delivered, when, and, most importantly, to what effect.</i> ■ <i>They are generally measured in terms of immediate effects of goods and services delivered, such as pre/post-training scores on tests (written or verbal) or practical assessments; for organizational development, creation of certain structures, documents, systems; kilometers of roads or number of schools rehabilitated, and so on.</i>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Activity indicators are the easiest ones to formulate and collect because they focus on implementation progress as reflected in project and partner staff workplans, project events, and corresponding budget expenditures.</i> ■ <i>They answer basic questions like: Was the Activity completed with acceptable quality? Was it completed as planned regarding numbers and types of items purchased and distributed? Were the meetings held? Were the numbers and gender of people in the target groups trained or otherwise involved?</i> ■ <i>Activity indicators are typically measured through administrative, management, trainer, and financial tracking and record-keeping systems, supplemented with written summaries and reports by trainees, partners, and other participant groups about the problems and successes and overall quality of the Activities.</i>

Beyond this table's general guidance, you can take the following steps to think about which indicators can most efficiently give you and key stakeholders what you really need to know:

- find out what internationally recognized and standardized indicators already exist that might be relevant to your particular project (e.g. Sphere Project, 2004; see also the references to websites for indicator information in Chapter VI);
- access CRS best practice information on common project strategies; and
- be confident that selected indicators are feasible and cost-effective to collect given the specific situation and context of your project.

This could save a lot of time and trouble in coming up with “homemade” indicators and measurement methods. To do this, you can access leading websites on state-of-the-art M&E for the sectors and themes in question (see Chapter VI).

Wherever feasible, standardized or best practice indicators (and their accompanying measurement methods) are strongly recommended for CRS use. Remember that such indicators pertain mainly to Goal, SO, and Output levels; however for certain sectoral interventions or relatively new programmatic themes, they do not exist at all!

2. Write Clear Indicator Statements using Measurement Methods and Data Sources

To be useful, an indicator statement must be clear enough to be measurable. You can write clear statements by first making sure that you have defined all the elements of change specified in Section 2: nature, quantity, quality, beneficiary subgroup(s), targets, timelines, and the baseline comparison, if available.

A further word may be in order about setting **targets** in performance indicator statements. If donors require these during project design, then you should canvass the following sources of benchmark data to inform your definition of reasonable targets²:

- national- and perhaps also international-level statistics: do these show any pre-project trends, whether upwards or downwards?
- reports from past projects of CRS, other PVOs, or donors: in the country or, if you are dealing with a totally new intervention in the country, then in other nations.

² The best way to think of the difference between a *target* and a *benchmark* is as follows: suppose you are promoting messages about improved sanitation to a rural community. Ideally, you would like all the families to adopt the practices you will be recommending, but experience from elsewhere – the *benchmark* – suggests that an uptake among 50% of families is more normal. However, given that this is a new location in which you are operating, and it will take time to build up right relationships with the community, you decide that you will aim – your *target* – for an adoption rate of 30% by end of project.

- stakeholders' own expectations: what do partners and communities say can realistically be expected? What do the relevant ministries say about this?
- within your own country program: what do CRS staff think about their own and partners' staff availability and knowledge and skills to achieve particular targets?

All of the above can provide some benchmark data and insights from which to make a reasoned “guesstimate” as to targets at the time of project design. When such data and insights are lacking or you are not confident about your ability to set targets in advance, then you should dialogue with donors about why this is difficult.

Always be realistic in setting targets. Support your arguments for the ones you do set (ideally from benchmark data), and also for the ones you can't!

When it comes to thinking about measurement methods and data sources, there is little better guidance available than the *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet* described in Section 4 of this chapter. This worksheet will help you remember to address some of the important issues in drafting your measurement method for each indicator.

3. Review and Edit Your Draft Indicator Statements and Corresponding Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet Forms

Now, bring together all the relevant management, technical, and M&E staff to review the results of the first two steps. Together, this group needs to determine that: 1) the indicators are technically sound; 2) that they will tell managers, donors and stakeholders what they really need (not just want) to know; and 3) that the skills and budget exist to collect the relevant data.

How many indicators? Stick to the “less is more” principle.

4. Count Indicators: How Many Are Enough?

To avoid a long laundry list of indicators that are not relevant, go back to the four questions outlined in “What We Really Need to Know – Utilization-Focused M&E” in Section 2.

Include an indicator only if someone is clearly going to use it. Aim for a limited set of coherent indicators that are carefully selected and that, together, provide everyone concerned with the most telling information for their purposes.

Step Five: Finalize the Proframe and Correct the RF Accordingly

The following ideas can help you to review your RF and Proframe to ensure that they meet the delicate balance of being sufficiently detailed, but not excessively so!

Reviewing Your Proframe

1. *Identify different ways to involve stakeholders in project review and adaptation. Build in flexibility to respond to unplanned opportunities.*
2. *Focus especially on establishing clear Strategic Objectives since these essentially represent the purpose of the project investment.*
3. *Focus on clear Outputs since these are the deliverables that underpin behavioral change at IR-level, and achievement of the SOs.*
4. *Be clear in your IR statements about what changes you expect to see among those you are targeting.*
5. *Do not over-specify activities. This can cause you to spend less time on the more important elements of the Proframe (SO, IR and Output level objectives).*

Step Six: Linking the Results Framework and Proframe with the Project Proposal

The Results Framework and Proframe are fundamental to your proposal and should be inserted along with the Executive Summary at the beginning of the document. These frameworks provide a marvelous “at a glance” opportunity for readers to understand exactly what is being proposed along with the underlying rationale for the strategy.



OTHER M&E PLANNING TOOLS

As you are working on the project Proframe, it is important to be very clear about what you are attempting to measure and to outline an M&E plan that will allow you to measure and report on performance indicators in the most effective and efficient way.

In this section, you will:

- examine some M&E planning tools; and
- understand how working with these tools will help you complete the M&E Plan section of your project proposal.

M&E PLANNING

You have used some of the tools in this section to complete your Proframe. Now that the Proframe is complete, you can also use these tools to develop your M&E Plan. The M&E planning tools help ensure that your proposed M&E activities are both achievable and useful. You don't want to commit project implementers to

M&E activities that are neither feasible nor relevant.

M&E planning will ensure that you are aware of the resources, knowledge, and technical skills that are required.

The M&E Plan needs to be written in full awareness of the resources (staff, financial, material) available for its implementation.

As with the other elements of project design (see Chapter 1), you will need to use your judgment to appropriately telescope your M&E planning effort. For example, a large,

USAID-funded project might require an M&E Plan that includes a baseline sample survey, quarterly progress reports, midterm and final evaluations, and hired consultants for analysis and evaluation; a smaller, privately-funded project might only require annual and final reports, a CRS staff visit to the project site, and simple analysis of improvements to baseline data.

The M&E Plan includes the overall learning events planned for the project. These events will eventually include baseline studies, project implementation monitoring activities, midterm and final evaluations. The plan should also try to include a brief commentary that shows recognition of the importance of:

- tracking any critical assumptions that have been identified;
- recording significant unanticipated events and effects; and
- allowing for specific studies as the need arises during implementation.

The overall M&E Plan draws upon a variety of other tools, including:

- Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet;
- Performance Indicator Tracking Table;
- Baseline Survey Worksheet;
- M&E Calendar;
- Monitoring Responsibilities Worksheet; and
- Other M&E Planning Commentary.

Don't let this list scare you! At this step in project design, you are not expected to write the M&E operations manual for the project. More detailed "technical" thinking about implementing your M&E Plan will occur once the project is up and running.

Use your judgment about what level of detail to include in the main body of the proposal, and what is more appropriate to leave for the annexes. In many instances, this may be determined by donor requirements. As a general rule of thumb, however, use the various completed worksheets as the basis for writing a more concise summary for the proposal.

A GUIDE TO THE M&E PLANNING TOOLS

Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheets

You will already have used this worksheet in selecting appropriate measurement methods and data sources for Column Three in Proframe. This worksheet is useful for generating more detailed information relating to the collection of performance indicator data, and for deciding how best to monitor any critical assumptions.

Entries in the Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet during this step in project design will need to be revisited, and specified in even greater detail once the project has been funded and implementation has begun.

Table 4.3. Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet

Consideration	Guidance	To be completed by project design team
1. Performance Indicator Statement	Taken from Proframe Column 2.	
2. Indicator Definition	Define any terms in the performance indicator statement that are unclear.	
3. Data Collection Method/Data Source	Specify the method/data source that will be used for capturing the indicator data.	
4. Frequency of Data Collection	State how often data collection needs to occur across the life of the project.	
5. Timing of Data Collection	Data may be collected at specific points during the life of the project. If the data need to be compared, note any timing issues.	
6. Other Considerations	<p><i>For example:</i> Spell out the formulae to be used for calculating the indicator data, or say where these are to be found.</p> <p>Note any sampling issues that will need to be considered.</p> <p>Note any complementary or triangulating methods, special concerns, etc.</p> <p>Other...</p>	

The worksheet contains a guidance column, but below are a few additional points to help you work with it so that it is useful for your M&E planning discussions.

Performance Indicator Statement: Simply insert the statement that is in your current draft of the Proframe.

Indicator Definition: It is important to make sure that you are clear about the terms you have used in your indicator statement. For example, if your indicator refers to “orphan children”, which orphan children do you mean? Children under a certain age? Children living with relatives? Children living rough on the street? Rural or urban children? Being clear about what you mean will help you visualize the data collection tasks and the resources required.

Data Collection Method/Data Source: There are many different data collection methods. Examples of common methods include the use of: censuses; field surveys, random walks; focus groups, key informant interviews; ranking, scoring, or indexing

techniques; periodic site visits or records review; monthly or quarterly beneficiary or trainer reports; and so on. Alternatively, this is where you will indicate the source of the secondary data that you will be using.

Frequency of Data Collection: Determine how often the indicator data are to be collected, e.g. monthly, annually, and so on. This is important since it will help you determine the level of resources required, and what is feasible for your project.

Timing of Data Collection: Here, the specific timing of data collection is stated so as to prevent collection of data that cannot be compared. For example, consider how the following could affect the data you might be collecting: crop planting and harvesting schedules; preferred processing and marketing times; the school year; annual immunization campaigns; government budget allocations; and so forth. As with other factors, the season or timing of data collection may have practical and resource implications to consider before committing yourself to a particular M&E Plan.

Other Considerations: This might include noting how indicator data are to be calculated, e.g. raw numbers, percent, ratio, score, index; or some evidence that sampling issues have been considered. Another consideration might be whether you need to include other measurement methods or data sources, so that you can crosscheck your M&E data. Although you may not be in a position to have all the precise details – in some cases, specialist technical advice may be required – the purpose of this entry is to show that you have thought carefully about issues of data validity and quality that affect your M&E Plan.

As you complete the *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet* you may find that you are adjusting your initial idea for an indicator. You may have found that it is simply too difficult to collect the information, so that you need to consider an alternative.

You will not include word-for-word entries from your *Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet* in the project proposal, but you may find that a summary of some of the key points you have considered helps you describe your M&E Plan.

Going back-and-forth between your performance indicator statement (as listed in the Proframe) and the Measurement Methods/Data Sources Worksheet is a sign that you are thinking carefully about selecting indicators!

Performance Indicator Tracking Table (PITT)

This table provides a summary of the annual, midterm and End of Project targets for each indicator. Some donors require a completed PITT in the project submission. Even if donors don't require it, it is still recommended for use as part of your M&E Plan.

Table 4.4. Performance Indicator Tracking Table

Indicator	Baseline	Project Year 1			Project Year 2			Midterm Evaluation (MTE)				Project Year 3			Project Year 4			End of Project (EOP)		
		Target	Achieved	Achieved v. Target	Target	Achieved	Achieved v. Target	MTE Target	MTE Achieved	Achieved v. Target	Revised Indicator or Target?	Target	Achieved	Achieved v. Target	Target	Achieved	Achieved v. Target	EOP Target	EOP Achieved	Achieved v. Target
SO1																				
IR1.1																				
Output 1.1.1																				
Output 1.1.2																				
IR1.2																				
Output 1.2.1																				
Output 1.2.2																				
Output 1.2.3																				
SO2																				
IR2.1																				
Output 2.1.1																				
Output 2.1.2																				
SO3, etc.																				

Set targets that are realistic. Discussion on setting targets should be informed by local knowledge, lessons learned elsewhere, and with reference to any baseline data that may have been gathered, or later collected.

Any decisions about appropriate targets should involve those with responsibility for their achievement.

Once the project is underway, you will report on achievements on these targets, and any variation between them. If a baseline survey is to be undertaken, data thus generated will be included in the PITT at the earliest possible opportunity. The points shown below are worth noting when completing the PITT.

Understanding Indicator Terminology: The language surrounding indicators may vary from donor to donor. For most major donors, the Proframe's SO-level performance indicators are equivalent to "impact" or "outcome" indicators, while IR and Output-level performance indicators can be considered as "monitoring" indicators.

Target setting: If an annual target is not warranted for a performance indicator, then shade out the appropriate boxes in the above table. This is the case for SOs, and often for sequential IRs and Outputs. For example, you may have a case where the IR is dependent on delivery of several Outputs and that these outputs be in place for a while. In such a case, it may not be until year two that the IR can be measured, so shade out the appropriate box in year one to indicate that nothing will be measured during the first year.

Annual and Cumulative Indicators: Beginning with Year 2, for each performance indicator it is critical to note whether the target and reported achievements shown in the table are cumulative or annual. Otherwise, great confusion can arise in the PITT. Both kinds of counts can occur in the same PITT depending on the character of the performance indicator. To note this status, you can just add a (c) or an (a) annotation underneath each target or achieved figure given. All EOP counts are cumulative.

Presentation Considerations: For presentation purposes, group the performance indicators according to SO and IR, thus: SO1, IR 1.1, Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, etc. – as shown in this table.

Variance: The difference between Achieved and Target is the variance. It shows whether you are under- or over-shooting your targets. It is calculated by subtracting the number or percentage achieved for the period in question from the target set for that period. For example, if the amount achieved was 5 and the target was 10, then $5 - 10 = -5$. If the amount achieved is 15 and the target set was 10, then $15 - 10 = +5$.

Implementation Progress and PITT Amendments: Provide a clear explanation for any changes. Also be aware that, at least for USAID, you are also required to seek donor approval if changes are proposed in any existing SO or IR performance indicators. That includes any downward revision of SO or IR targets, even if the performance indicator statements themselves remain unchanged. Once you have won approval in

writing for any and all such changes, then as per USAID guidance, clearly mark them with an asterisk (*) on the PITT. Do likewise for any related changes in associated Output indicators.

Activity data are normally of interest only to CRS staff and partners. This is because they are the ones responsible for project implementation, and their project managers use these data to make timely course corrections.

Baseline Survey Worksheet

The project proposal should describe a comprehensive and realistic plan for completing the baseline survey. You have already started to think about how indicator information is to be captured, and whether your initial ideas for particular indicators are feasible. Similarly, it is important to think in advance about the baseline survey.

The *Baseline Survey Worksheet* helps provoke your initial thinking about how the baseline survey is to be conducted, and related resource implications. Again, your task is not to develop a detailed baseline methodology. Instead, your task is to consider baseline survey issues in sufficient depth to allow you to make informed decisions and commitments that will be documented in your project proposal.

Table 4.5. Baseline Survey Worksheet

	Issues to consider	Commentary
Data collection	What data need to be collected, and when?	
	Who is responsible for collection?	
	Who is responsible for supervising collection?	
Data analysis	Who will analyze which data, how and when?	
Data reporting	Who will report the analysed findings, to whom, and when?	
Budgetary implications	What will it all cost? Use Table 4.6 to help you think about baseline survey costs.	

The *Baseline Survey Worksheet* prompts you to consider questions about data collection, analysis and reporting, all of which have implementation and cost implications. Consideration of the baseline survey during project design is important since you will want to include funds in your project proposal for this work. Funds are likely to be required whether you plan to undertake the baseline survey using in-house resources, or with the assistance of external consulting support. Table 4.6 will help you make sure you have thought about the main cost elements.

Table 4.6 suggests some useful areas to review when estimating budgetary needs for the planned M&E activities. This table is equally useful for consideration of baseline survey costs.

Table 4.6. M&E Cost Considerations

Human Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>% of salaries of CRS staff time, as per position titles, to be devoted to the various substantive M&E tasks</i> ■ <i>% of salaries for partner staff likewise employed</i> ■ <i>payments in cash or kind for data collection undertaken by community members</i> ■ <i>consultant fees</i> ■ <i>purchase of any other out-of-house human services, such as statistical services, data-entry or -analysis</i>
Physical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>lodging and per diems</i> ■ <i>equipment like computers and software, calculators, weighing or measuring equipment for the field</i> ■ <i>stationery, other office supplies, and photocopying for M&E work</i> ■ <i>vehicles, mileage, or transport-cost reimbursements for M&E-related travel</i>
Transactional and Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>phone, fax, Internet, postage, etc. amongst all parties involved</i> ■ <i>in the case of external consultants, possibly airfare, visas, immunizations, SOS/MEDEX</i> ■ <i>if reporting goes beyond reports to donors and CRS HQ, funds for preparation and production of special kinds of reports and reporting formats for national and local government, partners, and community groups</i>

M&E Calendar

A concern for the “intended use” of M&E information by “intended users” makes an *M&E Calendar* an important element in the M&E Plan. The purpose of the calendar is to make sure that information is available at the time it is needed by different users. Users might include: project evaluators, donors, CRS and partner staff, project participants and other stakeholders. An example of an *M&E Calendar* for a three-year project is provided in Table 4.7; this format can be adapted to suit your local needs.

CRS has adopted a “utilization-focused” approach to all its M&E activities. Attention must always be paid to “the intended use by the intended user” of any data that are collected, analyzed and reported.

Table 4.7. M&E Calendar

M&E Events	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Responsibilities
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Project Steering Committee Meetings			x		x		x		x		x		CRS Project Staff
1. Baseline Survey													CRS Project Staff/ Consultant Team
1.1 Appoint consultant team	xxx												CRS Project Staff
1.2 Design	xx												Consultant Team
1.3 Data collection		xxx											Consultant Team
1.4 Data analysis		xx	xx										Consultant Team
1.5 Data dissemination to key stakeholders			xx	xx									CRS Project Staff/ Consultant Team
Half-yearly Reporting to Stakeholders			x		x		x		x		x		CRS Project Staff
2. Monitoring system				xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	CRS Project Staff
2.1 Design/pilot system	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx										CRS Project Staff
2.2 Mainstream monitoring system				xxxx	xxxx								CRS Project Staff
Project Evaluations						x						x	CRS Project Staff/ Consultant Team
3.1 Draft SOW					xx						xx		CRS Project Staff
3.2 Appoint consultants					xx						xx		CRS Project Staff

The *M&E Calendar* ensures that there is good coordination between staff who are responsible for M&E data collection and project managers who have to make decisions based on these data at critical moments during the project cycle. *The*

It is good practice to include opportunities in the M&E Calendar to share M&E information with targeted community members in order to get their reactions.

M&E Calendar establishes critical deadlines for M&E reporting. The scheduled events that help establish the timing of M&E reporting activity include: regular quarterly review workshops, annual APP meetings (including a review of the project’s Proframe), midterm evaluations, donor monitoring missions, and so on. Allowing for other “learning during” events (cf. Figure 1) may be something to include in an *M&E Calendar*.

The *Monitoring Responsibilities Worksheet* prompts a brief description of the responsibilities for different phases of M&E activity, and flags the budgetary implications of monitoring activity. It provides a tabulated summary of who is responsible for the collection, supervision, analysis and reporting of all performance indicator data.

A general rule of thumb stated in the global literature on M&E is to plan five to ten percent of the overall project budget for M&E in terms of all the costs above. For small projects, however, this figure might be only three to seven percent.

[illegible]

Other M&E Planning Commentary

It is difficult to include all the M&E planning information in a meaningful way into a single matrix representing the M&E Plan, without running the risk of being superficial. Ideally, you can strengthen any matrix representation of your M&E Plan by summarising the above more detailed work in an accompanying brief narrative.

As you write the text for your M&E Plan, use the information you have generated with the M&E planning tools described above as the starting point for your narrative. This will ensure that the M&E Plan explains how you will report on the performance indicators included in the Proframe, and will enable you to obtain a draft budget for this activity.

In addition, it is important in the M&E narrative to show how the project will:

- respond to the needs of different stakeholders for different forms of data and information presentation;
- track information relating to critical assumptions;
- use M&E data to adjust project implementation (cf. Figure 1), if necessitated by the findings, or in the event of unforeseen events and outcomes. You can indicate that the Proframe will be revisited and, if necessary, revised each year. Such a statement can also suggest when and with whom this will take place. The *M&E Calendar* is useful in planning for this work; and
- report on issues concerning project sustainability. There may be performance indicators in the Proframe that provide clues to help you address this issue. For example, what is the level of uptake of the “technologies” introduced by the project? If it is high, then it may suggest that the change that has occurred will continue after EOP. You may also consider the feasibility of including plans for low-cost, follow-up monitoring activities that occur after project completion. Post-project monitoring can provide rich information on what helps or hinders sustainability and provides invaluable information for use in future projects. Such work may be particularly appropriate for innovative, privately-funded programming.

Linking this Section to the Project Proposal

Your project proposal needs to contain information about your M&E Plan (see Chapter V, Section 4). The work you have undertaken using the tools presented in this section will provide you with a good basis for writing the M&E planning part of the project submission. It is a matter of judgement regarding how much detail you should provide, although the donor may provide you with clear guidelines to follow.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Tools

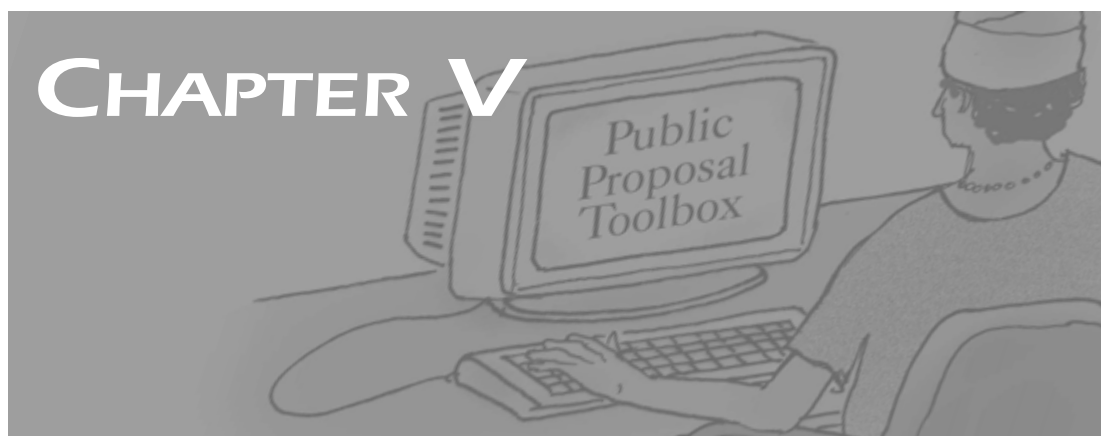
“Cheat Sheet” guidance for working with Proframe for CRS staff and partners is presented as Table 6.5 in Chapter VI. Essential points to bear in mind when drafting a Proframe are summarised in this table.

Additional Information

There are many sources of information about conventional logical frameworks. Although Chapter VI includes a reference to the logframe, ProPack readers should remember that the inclusion of the IR-level objectives in Proframe is a small, yet significant, advance. Together with the “cheat sheet,” samples of completed Proframes can be found on the PQSD intranet site.

Chapter VI also includes information on where to start looking for guidance on performance indicators:

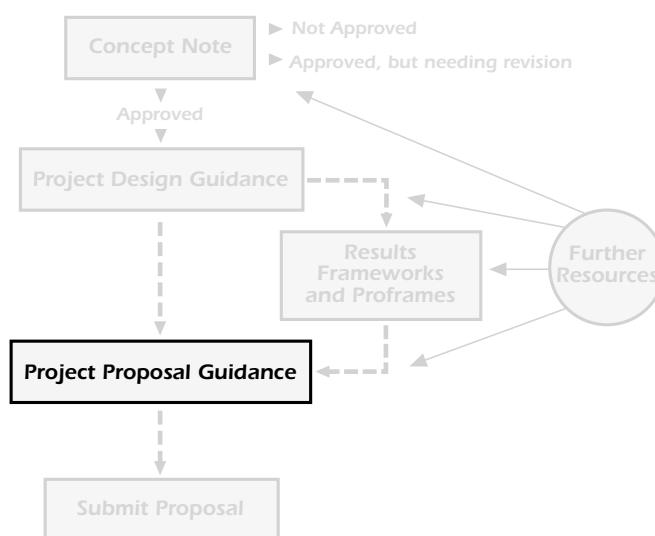
- the US Center for Development Information and Evaluation has developed a series of “Tips” sheets that are recommended for your review;
- the Sphere Project has developed minimum standards for humanitarian action that may help you to consider appropriate indicators for an emergency response situation; and
- two internet sites (FANta and the World Bank) where you will find helpful information about indicators covering a range of different sectors.



PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDANCE

At this point, you and your partners have completed all of the steps in the project design process: you have established a good dialogue among project stakeholders, developed a concept note, completed the detailed project design work, filled in the Results Framework and Proframe, and filled out various M&E planning worksheets.

There are a few items that are required in the project proposal that were not described in the preceding chapters. These can now be thought through and decided upon, if you have not attended to them before.



- What are the **human resources and organizational structures** required to support the proposal? Section 5 in this chapter lists what should be written in the proposal to address these concerns.
- How is **capacity building and community participation** going to be addressed in the project? You have probably started to address these issues as you were deciding on the strategy. Section 6 of this chapter lists what should go into the proposal.
- **Budgeting** for M&E was mentioned in the previous chapter. More general information on the proposal budget is in Section 8 of this chapter.

With all of the information you have, it is now time to pull it all together in a concise and clear document.

In this chapter you will:

- learn how to plan and write an excellent project proposal, capturing relevant and appropriate information from all the steps of project design; and
- review a generic project format for a well-presented project proposal. This proposal format is to be used for all CRS projects unless a specific donor format is required.

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of a project proposal is to provide a structured, well-argued, and clearly presented document to CRS managers and donor audiences to obtain approval and funding for a proposed project intervention. The proposal also stands as the agreement among the relevant stakeholders about the analysis of the situation and the resulting strategy. It is often appended to any Project Agreement between CRS, donors and partners.

Project stakeholders sometimes confuse the purposes and processes of project design and project proposal writing. The table below shows some of the main differences.

Table 5.1. Differences between Project Design and Proposal Writing

Project Design	Proposal Writing
<i>Assesses needs, identifies opportunities, problems and issues, and develops strategies that respond.</i>	<i>Documents and captures the results and other appropriate information from the project design process. The proposal makes clear all aspects of the why, what, how, and when of a project strategy.</i>
<i>Usually undertaken as a team and benefits from involving other project stakeholders.</i>	<i>Written by a few people familiar with the requirements of the prospective funding source.</i>
<i>Emphasizes an idea-driven, creative, participatory process.</i>	<i>Emphasizes a clear, concise communication of ideas.</i>
<i>Design team usually determines project design methods.</i>	<i>Project proposal format determined by donor or CRS.</i>

(cont.)

Project Design	Proposal Writing
<p><i>Project design knowledge, skills and attitudes include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>creative and analytical thinking;</i> ■ <i>respect for others' perspectives;</i> ■ <i>ability to listen;</i> ■ <i>technical knowledge of the project subject matter;</i> ■ <i>experience or local knowledge of the project environment and participants; and</i> ■ <i>team facilitation.</i> 	<p><i>Project proposal writing knowledge, skills and attitudes include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>understanding a donor's perspectives;</i> ■ <i>knowledge of proposal format requirements;</i> ■ <i>competence in using a donor's terminology;</i> ■ <i>strong logic and writing skills; and the</i> ■ <i>ability to meet deadlines.</i>
<p><i>Ends with development of the Results Framework, Proframe and various M&E planning worksheets.</i></p>	<p><i>Includes the Results Framework, an appropriate version of Proframe, an implementation schedule, a detailed budget, and other key elements listed in the PTS Project Summary Sheet in Section 1 of this chapter.</i></p>

Project Proposals are not Project Implementation Plans

Project stakeholders also sometimes confuse the purposes and processes of project proposals and the in-depth implementation plans.

Project proposals do not contain the level of detail needed by project managers for project implementation and should not be used for this purpose. Once funding is obtained, comprehensive work planning takes place. Some organizations use the phrase “detailed implementation plan” (DIP) for the document that will guide managers in project implementation. DIPs usually include updated implementation schedules, detailed performance indicator tracking tables and monitoring plans, and other management aids for smooth project implementation.

Also, at this point, the Results Framework and Proframe may require some final revisions to Activities, Outputs, critical assumptions or indicators and targets.

Reflection Opportunity

1. How do you or your staff understand the differences between project design, proposal development and detailed project implementation planning? What is the same or different from what is described above?
2. How should your effort be divided among these three elements?

Responding to Public Donor Proposals

Although ProPack is for use with all CRS proposals, if you are responding to a public donor (US or other government) solicitation or funding opportunity please consult the OSD website on the CRS intranet. Here you will find the *Public Proposal Toolbox* that has been developed by the Public Resource Group. The following is a summary of the Toolbox.



1) Proposal Development Tips

Education Proposal Resource Guide: Developed in 2003 by an external consultant under the guidance of the PQSD Education Technical Advisors, with input from the Business Development Team (Sullivan-Owomoyela, 2003). Although this guide focuses on education it is an extremely useful reference for public proposals for all sectors. Detailed assistance is provided in the preparation of USAID, US Department of Labor, DFID, and EU (among others) proposal submissions. It consists of three sections:

- pre-proposal activities that explain how to lay the groundwork to prepare for these competitive solicitations;
- the actual proposal development activities that outline how to write a solid winning proposal with all the necessary components; and
- post-proposal activities that offer guidance on how to respond to donor (mostly USAID) requests for follow-up.

Deciding to Pursue a Public Funding Opportunity: Regional processes for deciding whether or not to pursue public funding opportunities.

Human and Financial Resources for Proposal Development: Breakdown of a typical proposal development team, sample SOWs, Human Resources consultant biodata, and information about Growth Funds.

Technical Application Section Samples: Samples of all sections of winning CRS proposals.

Cost Application Section Samples: Samples of all sections of winning CRS proposals.

Review and Approval Process: Regional review and approval processes, general proposal review tips, and a proposal review checklist.

After Submitting the Proposal/Lessons Learned: Examples of proposal development lessons learned.

2) Winning and Pending Proposals

Winning Proposals: Examples of all types of CRS public donor proposals.

Pending Proposals: Examples of submitted CRS proposals with an emphasis on competitive solicitations (Annual Program Statements [APSs], Request for Applications [RFAs], and Request for Proposals [RFPs], etc.).

3) Public Donor Information

General and funding information on the following public donors: USAID, USDA, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department for International Development (DFID-UK), United Nations and the World Bank.

4) Type of Solicitation

General information on APSs, RFAs and RFPs.

PLANNING THE PROPOSAL WRITING

The following checklist includes general lessons learned, suggestions and tips that will help you turn your project design into a winning proposal. Some of these are generic, and some are specific to writing proposals for donors.

Plan Ahead

Plan ahead and build in adequate time to develop and write the proposal. For example, you need time for the proposal writers to write and edit, time to get required signatures or supporting documents, and time to submit the proposal to the prospective donor.

Think forward about the other information that is required in the proposal that is not part of the project design. Allow plenty of time for developing the staffing plan, obtaining necessary CVs and other biographical data, and for compiling past performance references. This information is particularly important for public donors; check their guidance to see what is required.

Involve all those who will have a contributing role in the design and proposal writing process right from the start. For example:

- do not give your finance department a surprise, last-minute task of helping to develop the budget. It is important that finance staff be part of the team right from the start, so that they can identify any finance-related concerns from the outset of project design. They can begin to collect financial information that may take time to access, and to ensure the right staff are available to prepare the final budget in an informed manner.



Involve any M&E expertise you have early on, as they can (and need to) contribute to the design work in order to prepare an appropriate M&E Plan.

- Assign clear roles and responsibilities. You should designate one person as proposal coordinator who will ensure that the process moves ahead and all tasks are completed on time.
- Sequence tasks of the people involved in developing the proposal. Remember, if you ask your finance officer to develop the budget, they first need the project design and list of activities coming from the Proframe!

Learning from Others

Contact OSD's Business Development Team or Regional Public Resource specialists, or consult the Public Proposal Toolbox on the intranet. This will allow you to obtain examples of well-written proposals for specific donors or lessons learned by other Country Programs in managing proposal development.

Review lessons learned in writing proposals for your particular donor including, if they are available, the reviews of other proposals submitted to the same donor. Check the Public Proposal Toolbox or contact the Business Development Team or Regional Public Resource specialists.

Consult reviews of other proposals submitted to the same donor, if available.

Contact the donor with a clear list of questions if necessary. For competitive bids, the donor may set specific time limits and processes for answering questions. Be sure you understand any special constraints donors might have in responding to your questions.

Style, Language and Format

Regarding the proposal format: *Read the directions, read the directions, read the directions!* You may not agree with some of the directions or you may find some of them repetitive, but follow them – if you want to obtain funding! This also ensures that you do not make mistakes such as requesting funds for things that are clearly not approved by the donor as specified in the proposal directions. You can come up with a fabulous, innovative project design, but if it doesn't respond to what the donor is asking for you will not get funded and you will have wasted time and money.

Give writing responsibility to a staff member or a consultant who has proven, excellent writing skills.

Show that you believe in your project and its ideas. Let your pride and confidence in your organization and project design show throughout your project proposal.

Use catchy titles for proposals help catch the donor's eye and memory. Compare "Integrated Health Project for Women" to this: "WAND: Women's Action for Nutrition and Development."

Emphasize that your and your partners' management style is results-oriented, responsive and proactive.

Write using a factual and specific style of convincing language. Do not write using generalities or emotional terms. Be able to substantiate all statements in your proposal. Otherwise do not make them.

Highlight what your project will achieve and how, not what should be done in general to address the identified problems or issues.

Use the Results Framework and Proframe to structure your narrative of what the project will achieve. These frameworks provide a ready-made outline around which the proposal can be written.

Write using language that is easy to understand. Do not overuse abbreviations, initials, non-English expressions (unless translated) or jargon.

Define acronyms when they first appear in the text and provide a glossary.

Choose powerful and energetic action words when writing your proposal. A few examples are “achieve,” “analyze,” “define,” “learn,” “search,” or “refine.” Avoid passive verbs such as “was” and “were” that hide the agent of action. Use assertive language. Instead of saying “CRS intends to” say “CRS will.”

Format your proposal to be clear, easy to read, legible and attractive. Use headings, subheadings and text boxes systematically. Tables, charts, diagrams and even drawings can clearly and quickly communicate complex ideas and make them easier for donors to understand.

Edit and Check Again

Edit, edit and edit! Spelling, grammatical and formatting errors make your proposal look unprofessional.

Check among sections for consistency. For example: ensure that the Proframe’s objectives are worded exactly the same, everywhere they appear; ensure that headings and subheadings are consistent; check that page numbers correspond to what is in the Table of Contents; verify that all acronyms appear in the List of Acronyms if you have one.



Ensure that the budget section shows that funds are budgeted for all activities described and that numbers add up correctly.

Review your draft proposal against each section of the donor’s proposal format, ticking sections off to ensure that your proposal has responded to each and every question or item.

Invite an outsider to read through your proposal and mark unclear sections.

Stick to the specified number of pages. Extra pages may either be removed or even disqualify your proposal from being considered.

Ensure you submit the requested numbers of proposal copies.

Ensure the cover page of the proposal is completed with all requested information.

Reflection Opportunity

Think back to your own lessons learned about developing successful proposals.

- What would you change in the checklist above?
- What would you add to the checklist and why?

PROJECT PROPOSAL FORMAT

Outline and Use of the Project Proposal Format

The Project Proposal Format includes nine sections including an optional section for any annexes you may wish to include. This format should be used for all CRS project proposals unless there is a required donor format.

The following pages will guide you through each of the nine sections, beginning with a brief introduction, including definitions. The suggested number of pages for each section is included in a small graphic, although there may be specific donor requirements in this regard which you should follow. Questions or instructions to help you write the section are then listed. The proposal sections are listed below.

Section 1: PTS Project Summary Sheet

Section 2: Executive Summary, Results Framework and Proframe

Section 3: Project Design

- A. Problem Identification and Analysis
- B. Strategy, Results Framework and Proframe Description
- C. Sustainability Considerations

Section 4: Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

Section 5: Project Organizational Structure and Staffing

Section 6: Capacity Building and Community Participation

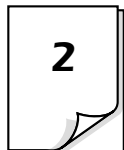
Section 7: Project Activity Scheduling

Section 8: Budget

Section 9: Project Proposal Annexes

SECTION 1 PTS PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

This two-page PTS Project Summary Sheet is a snapshot with selected, critical data about the project. The sheet feeds directly into the CRS Project Tracking System (PTS). The PTS is a database that provides a central location for information about all CRS projects around the world. The PTS will be accessible to all staff, both overseas and at headquarters, via the intranet. The system will roll-up from country to regional and agency-wide databases.



Suggested Page Length

Table 5.2 PTS Project Summary Sheet

PTS Project Summary Sheet					
Project Number: Project Title:					
Project Summary: Start Date: End Date: Direct Participants: (Beneficiaries) Type of Direct Participants: Indirect Participants:					
Location: <i>(Enter the name of the site(s) where project activities will be implemented, i.e. name of the State, Department, Province, or other geographic designation.)</i>					
Partners Information					
Name	Address	City	Country	Postal Code	Type

(cont.)

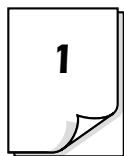
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SECTION 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND PROFRAME

The Executive Summary conveys the heart of the project's design, its coherence and the logical relationship of the problems, needs and opportunities to the objectives and strategy.

The Executive Summary gives readers a view of the entire project on no more than one page of narrative plus the Results Framework and Proframe, and should be a stand-alone document. It provides a succinct summary of the project to proposal readers and may be used by headquarters to convey essential facts and figures about the project to outsiders. This section should obviously be written last in order to summarize information contained elsewhere in the narrative.

It is important that you follow closely any donor instructions concerning the Executive Summary. If they exist, they will determine what you should include in this section of the project proposal.



Suggested Page Length (not including the Results Framework and Proframe)

1. State the project title and location.
2. If appropriate, briefly describe how this project links to the agency, regional and country strategies.
3. State the problems or issues and the underlying causes, needs and opportunities, succinctly summarizing data or analysis used to support this.
4. Briefly describe the main elements, and expected benefits of the project's design:
 - a. attach the Results Framework and Proframe showing the appropriate objective levels (Goal, Strategic Objectives, Intermediate Results, Outputs and selected key Activities); and
 - b. include a brief narrative of the project strategy contained in the Proframe.
5. Briefly describe the important project stakeholders including:
 - a. beneficiaries, and other participants including the key distinguishing socio-economic characteristics (e.g. sex, socio-economic status, occupation, etc) that are relevant to the content of the proposed project;
 - b. project partners; and
 - c. other donors or partner organizations.

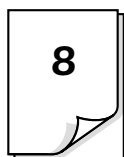
6. Provide the following figures:
 - a. total cash budget;
 - b. cash request from donor;
 - c. any cash contributions of partners and beneficiaries;
 - d. in-kind contributions from other donors (e.g. WFP commodities, UNICEF supplies); and
 - e. in-kind contributions of partners (such as staff time or vehicle use).

SECTION 3 PROJECT DESIGN

This section of the proposal is the nucleus of the project. It distils, rather than describes, the information and decision-making that has occurred during project design: stakeholder analysis, assessment, analysis and objective setting, strategy review (Chapter III), Results Framework and Proframe and M&E planning documents (Chapter IV).

Here your Proframe will be of great value. The Results Framework and Proframe summarize the hard thinking underpinning your project design. This provides you with the basis for writing about the purpose and content of your project in this section of the proposal.

Project design should also address sustainability, i.e. the longer-term improvements in well-being and livelihoods that are generated by the project. This aspect of strategy selection should be highlighted in this section of the proposal.



Suggested Page Length

The Project Design Section has three sub-headings, as shown below.

A. Problem Identification and Analysis

1. State clearly the specific and central problem that will be addressed by this project. Describe the underlying causes, including what injustices exist that are associated with these lower-level causes. If you used the problem tree, the central problem is stated in the trunk and the roots of the problem give you information for describing underlying causes (Chapter III, Section 4).
2. Briefly describe the geographic location (including the total population) of the proposed project. Include a map if necessary.
3. State the number of direct beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex. Describe pertinent socio-economic characteristics of the targeted beneficiary groups, using information derived from any diagnostic work you may have undertaken with the IHD Framework (Chapter III, Section 3). The description may include factors such as ethnicity, gender, age, religion, caste, ownership of, or access to different types of assets, and resulting livelihood strategies.
4. Succinctly describe the methods used to collect data and information during the assessment stage, and the type of information collected.
5. Briefly describe what methods were used in the problem analysis to generate this information. Describe when various stakeholders were involved in the assessment and analysis phases.

B. Strategy, Results Framework and Proframe Description

Refer to the project's Results Framework and Proframe (included in the Executive Summary) for the following descriptions.

1. Briefly describe the overall thrust of the project, including SOs, IRs and Outputs.
2. Describe the project strategy to achieve all of the above that ultimately will contribute to the Goal. Include a brief description of how the achievement of objectives at lower levels will contribute to the successful attainment of those at higher ones. Briefly discuss the Activities envisioned under this project, focusing on those that are most important.
3. Justify why this strategy was selected over other potential strategies drawing from your work during the concept note development and strategy review. In particular, note the way the proposed strategy fits with:
 - needs, problems and opportunities revealed during the assessment and analysis;
 - lessons learned from past experiences, evaluation abstracts or other sources;
 - appropriate agency, regional and country program strategies or technical standards;
 - other relevant plans or policies, such as government policies;
 - findings from the stakeholder analysis regarding potentially important stakeholders;
 - findings from the capacity analysis regarding CRS' and partner's resources and expertise with this strategy; and
 - findings from the gap analysis about what is already taking place in the locality, and what is not.

C. Sustainability Considerations

Projects must demonstrate that increasing degrees of sustainability will be achieved over time. So it is important to note in the proposal any issues regarding the sustainability of anticipated project benefits.

1. Discuss what sustainability strategies are envisioned given the nature of the project, the types of beneficiaries and partners involved, and the context or environment in which the project will be implemented.
2. Describe specific sustainability measures related to project service delivery or continued application of technologies over the long-term.
3. If volunteers or in-kind labor by participants are to be involved, explain how the project will sustain this participation once funding ends. (An example of

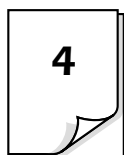
in-kind labor is work done by volunteer community health workers. In-kind labor does not include work such as plowing or weeding one's own fields).

4. If community administrative structures have been established (e.g. Water User Associations, Village Development Committees, etc), indicate how you believe these will be self-sustaining once the project ends.
5. Describe the financial sustainability of recurrent or other project costs.
6. Discuss and justify the cost : direct beneficiary ratio. This ratio represents the total project costs divided by the number of direct beneficiaries.
7. Show and discuss any analyses of the cost-effectiveness of the project interventions.

Consider including plans for low-cost follow-up monitoring activities at least 12 months after project completion. Such tracking will provide rich information on what helps or hinders project sustainability.

SECTION 4 PLANNING FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This section describes the plans to monitor and evaluate the performance indicators and report on the degree of achievement of performance targets. This plan will include the overall learning events planned for the project that are likely to include baseline studies, project implementation monitoring activities, critical assumptions tracking, recording any significant unanticipated events and effects, midterm or final evaluations and occasional quantitative and qualitative studies.



Suggested Page Length

A. M&E Plan

The overall M&E Plan comprises, and draws upon, a variety of sources including the:

- **Proframe** – for the different levels of objectives and performance indicator statements;
- **Measurement Methods / Data Sources Worksheets** – for more detailed information relating to the collection of performance indicator data;
- **Performance Indicator Tracking Table** – for a tabular summary of the annual, midterm and EOP targets for each indicator;
- **Baseline Survey Worksheet** – for more detailed information about how the baseline survey is to be conducted, and related resource implications;
- **M&E Calendar** – for an annual scheduling of M&E activities, including reporting deadlines, to coincide with the key decision-making events of the main intended users of M&E data (project evaluators, donors, CRS and partner staff, and project participants);
- **Monitoring Responsibilities Worksheet** – for an assignment of the responsibilities for different phases of M&E activity, and to "flag" the budgetary implications; and
- **Other M&E Planning Commentary** – to reflect an awareness of:
 - the purpose of monitoring critical assumptions;
 - the possibility of unanticipated events and outcomes, both positive and negative, arising during project implementation;

- the value of revisiting Proframe and, if necessary, revising it each year. Such a statement can also indicate when and with whom this will take place;
- the needs of different intended users for different media and formats for data and information presentation;
- the importance of providing appropriate feedback to communities and other project stakeholders from the M&E findings;
- the role of M&E data to effect changes to project implementation, if necessitated by ongoing learning; and
- the mechanisms for reporting on issues of project sustainability.

Use your judgment about what level of detail to include in the main body of the proposal, and what is more appropriate to leave for the annexes. In many instances, this may be determined by donor requirements. As a general rule of thumb, however, use the various worksheets as the basis for writing a more concise summary for the proposal.

B. Master Translator

The Proframe uses specific terms for each objective level; different donors may use other terms. Regardless of which model and terms are used, the underlying principles of the objectives hierarchy and management accountability still apply. The following table compares Proframe terms to those used in other logical frameworks. This table will help you to translate Proframe's language into a set of terms preferred by a particular donor.



Table 5.3. Master Translator: Comparison of Logical Planning Frameworks

	Wider or Long Term Effect	End of Project Effect	Intermediate Effect	Outputs	Interventions	
USAID Results Frameworks	Goal	Strategic Objective	Intermediate Results	(Outputs)	(Activities)	(Inputs)
AusAID	Scheme Goal	Major Development Objectives		Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CARE	Program Goal	Project Final Goal	Intermediate Goals	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CIDA	Overall Goal	Project Purpose		Results/Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CRS Proframe	Goal	Strategic Objective	Intermediate Results	Outputs	Activities	
DANIDA	Goal	Purpose		Outputs	Activities	
DFID	Goal	Purpose		Outputs	Activities	
European Union	Overall Objective	Project Purpose		Results	Activities	Inputs
FAO and UNDP	Development Objective	Intermediate Goals		Outputs	Activities	Inputs
GTZ	Overall Goal	Project Purpose		Results/Outputs	Activities	Inputs
World Bank	Goal	Development Objective		Outputs	Component Activities	Inputs

Source: Adapted from CARE original.

C. Evaluations

For a good, general guide to both midterm and final evaluation planning, see the FANta publication (Bonnard, 2002) referenced in Chapter VI.

C.1 Midterm Evaluation

1. Briefly describe the purpose and process of the planned midterm evaluation, and the funding required. Ideally, a midterm evaluation should be programmed approximately mid-way through the project period:
 - to provide an assessment of progress in project implementation;
 - to serve as a management tool to refine program Outputs and Activities; and
 - to improve internal management of the project.

2. Ensure that midterm evaluation targets for each performance indicator are summarized in the Performance Indicator Tracking Table.
3. Depending on the levels of achievement vis-à-vis the targets, it may be necessary in some cases to seek revisions to the target levels.

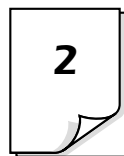
C.2 Final Evaluation

1. Briefly describe the purpose and process of the planned final evaluation, and the funding required. Ideally, an external final evaluation should be planned for the final year of the project:
 - to provide an account of the impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, with particular emphasis on the achievement of SO-level objectives; and
 - to feed into CRS' organizational learning processes (cf. Figure 1).
2. Ensure that EOP targets for each performance indicator are summarized in the Performance Indicator Tracking Table.

SECTION 5 PROJECT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

This section focuses on the human resources and organizational structures necessary to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, report and learn. It allows proposal reviewers to understand who (personnel) is responsible for the various project phases and how (organizational structures) these human resources will be managed or linked to other stakeholders. It gives a picture of the staffing positions required; the qualifications for these positions; where these positions are located in an organizational structure; any short-term or long-term technical assistance required; and the communication and decision-making links envisioned.

This information should show clearly how the proposed human resources and organizational structures contribute to the project's objectives. The justification for these decisions comes from the project design's assessment and strategy review, especially the capacity analysis.



2 Suggested Page Length

Key Staff Positions and Qualifications

1. Identify the key staff positions for the project and the qualifications required for each and how they link to the selected project strategy. Present this information through an organizational diagram with accompanying text, if possible.
2. State which project objectives each staff person will work on and the approximate percentage of their time is allocated to this project.
3. State whether these positions are to be funded by this proposal or by another source and ensure that funding of project staff positions is congruent with the budget information on staffing included elsewhere in your proposal.
4. State whether existing staff will be used or new staff will be hired. Describe either the relevant experience of existing staff to the project in the form of one-paragraph biographical statements, or the job descriptions for new staff positions. Focus on the key project positions such as overall project manager, subject-matter specialists, or others.
5. Describe any plans for upgrading key staff skills over the life of the project. If this effort is significant it should be reflected in the Proframe and the project budget.

6. Describe how project staffing represents diversity in terms of sex, creed, ethnicity or other issues relevant to the overall agency goals.
7. If volunteers are providing services, describe their main duties and how much time they are expected to devote to the project.

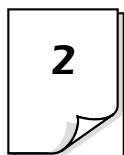
Organizational Structure

8. Briefly describe the organizational structures that will support the project:
 - a. describe how the project will be supported within the CRS organizational structure;
 - b. describe how the project will be supported within the partners' organizational structure; and
 - c. describe any community structures or groups with which the project will work and their role.
9. Include a chart showing supervisory, communication and decision-making linkages to illustrate the description in item 8 above.

SECTION 6 CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This section responds to concerns about whether all partners, including CRS, are capable of implementing the project. It describes their existing organizational capacities or the planned strategies to build them. It also describes how community participation will be promoted. Significant efforts to build capacity of partners and communities should be reflected in the Proframe, and should be presented within the objectives of the project.

Some information or justification for these decisions will come from the work you have already done during project design: stakeholder analysis, assessment and strategy identification, and especially the capacity analysis.



Suggested Page Length

Current Organizational Capacity and Project Strategy

1. Describe partners' (or other relevant project stakeholders') current organizational strengths and weaknesses as they relate to management of this project (drawing from your capacity analysis done during project design).
2. Describe project strategies or plans to increase partners' project management, technical, and organizational capacities. Refer to any specific project objectives for capacity building as described in your Proframe:
 - a. describe how this project will contribute to the overall or long-term capacity strengthening and relationship building plans for this partner;
 - b. describe how this project will strengthen partners' commitment to and capacity in crosscutting project issues such as gender, peacebuilding or other; and
 - c. describe how this project will strengthen partners' skills in maximizing community participation.
3. Justify how project strategies and plans described above address CRS' Partnership Principles.

Inputs for Strengthening Capacity

4. If training is to be a key activity, describe the overall training plan including needs assessment, topics, methodology, duration, and monitoring of training effectiveness.

5. Other than training, describe other capacity building activities planned in this project.

Community Participation

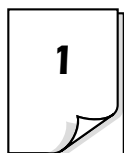
6. Describe how targeted communities are expected to be involved and participate in the project. Make clear how demands on community members' time or other resources have been well-considered and addressed to ensure participation is likely to be sustained following project completion.
7. Briefly describe any community structures or CBOs to be involved in the project.

SECTION 7 PROJECT ACTIVITY SCHEDULING

This section presents project activities, identifies their logical sequence and highlights linkages or dependencies existing among activities. This is illustrated within an activity schedule.

The purpose of including a project activity schedule in the project proposal is:

- to show that what is being proposed can realistically be achieved; and
- to prepare an accurate project budget.



Suggested Page Length

Activity Scheduling from the Proframe

The broad summary set of activities presented in the proposal's Proframe is used as the basis for developing a more comprehensive activity schedule. This is an opportunity to show how the broad categories of activities are broken down into more specific actions. The aim here is not to write a detailed implementation plan – that will come later once the funds have been awarded. Instead, the purpose is to present a holistic picture of project activities over the project life to show that careful consideration has been given to the project's responsibility for delivering the specified Outputs.

Upon award of the funds, the activity schedule will be revised, updated and drafted with greater precision, at least for the initial period of the project, in the form of a detailed implementation plan. The activity schedule that you developed for the project proposal is the starting point for this work. Detailed implementation plans are usually done on an annual basis with the partners, and are an excellent way to launch a project, once it has been approved for funding.

For the proposal, use the following information to complete your activity schedule.

■ Step One: Activity Definition

Take the main activity headings included in the Proframe and copy them into an activity schedule. An example format is presented in Table 5.4; you can also make up a similar table or format that better suits your needs. The format can be adapted to fit with the expected duration of the project in question.

■ Step Two: Activity Sequencing

Estimate the time required (or duration) for each broad area of activity and determine the most logical sequence or timing of events. Put these activities in the best order given the relations or interdependencies between activities. In other words, determine which broad areas of activity must be completed before others can be started.

■ Step Three: Activity Scheduling

Indicate the start and finish scheduling for each of the broad areas of activity. The first year's activities can be specified in more detail (showing the start and finish of activities to an appropriate level of detail for the project proposal) while subsequent years' scheduling is more approximate, perhaps relying on past experience in CRS project management.

It may be useful to add narrative to highlight any critical events or assumptions that underpin the successful implementation of these activities.

■ Step Four: Schedule Control

Determine how decisions to change the schedule will be made and how to manage these changes. Ensure that this is integrated into the M&E Plan.

Table 5.4 Example Format for an Activity Schedule

Activities	Year 1												Responsibilities
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1.1 Establish Management Unit	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx										Lead: CRS Project Manager
1.1.1 Set up offices and equipment	xxxx												
1.1.2 Identify and recruit staff		xxxx	xxxx										
1.2 Liaison with relevant government departments		x[1]xx	x[2]xx	xxxx	x[3]xx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	Lead: CRS Project Manager supported by technical specialists once appointed
1.2.1 Convene Project Steering Committee (PSC)		xx											
1.2.2 Hold regular PSC meetings			x			x			x			x	
1.3 Undertake planning studies				xxxx	x[4]xx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx			Lead: CRS Head of Programs
1.3.1 Agree with government on priority areas for studies													
1.3.2 Convene working groups to undertake planning studies				xxxx									
1.3.3 Undertake planning studies					xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx			

Copy broad Activities from Proframe

Milestones

1. Agreed membership of PSC includes senior representatives from all relevant Departments.
2. ToR and schedule for PSC agreed, etc.

Define Milestones

SECTION 8 BUDGET

The project's budget represents the conversion of project activities into monetary values. Cost estimates must be based on careful and thorough budgeting. Project activities should be carefully reviewed to ensure that the financial resources needed for their implementation have been considered where necessary.

Careful attention to budgeting has a significant influence on both how your project proposal is viewed and then approved (or not!). It also influences the smooth implementation of the approved project. For example, budgets should plan for eventual risks such as inflation or currency devaluation.

Using the list of activities from your activity schedule, specify the required inputs required for each activity, and their associated costs. This information should be presented in a format that your finance department recommends, or that is specifically requested by the funding agency. In the absence of a specific format from the donor, it is advisable to work with your

Finance Officer in adopting the Budget Template Format (BTF) used to upload project budgets into Sun System to be able to track expenses. It is important that program managers are familiar with, and utilize the BTF, including the CRS Chart of Accounts. Use of the BTF for budget development will facilitate financial reporting down the line.

It is vitally important to involve your finance manager from the project design stage!

CRS is moving towards defining an agency-wide policy on cost accounting. In the interim, in consultation with the DRD/MQ, you are encouraged to "direct cost" as much of their shared expense as appropriate. For example, where feasible, a portion of expenses such as rent, utilities, support staff salaries and other shared costs should be built into your project budget, at a rate defined by your country program cost allocation formula.

Detailed and categorized budgets and budget notes are required. The budget should be presented by year and show local currency (if required by the donor) in detail, and US dollars for summary cost roll-up categories. It should provide the exchange rate of local currency to US dollars at the time the budget is developed. In a multi-year project, the budget must forecast both the rate of inflation in the local currency and the expected change in currency valuation. You will then have an accurate translation of the total project funding needs in US dollars.

The final budget for an approved project will be loaded into the accounting system. Thus the budget details should be prepared using the CRS Chart of Accounts and CRS roll-up categories.

Budget notes explain how major budget line items have been calculated and justify any unusual cost. Budgets must be based on current, up-to-date costs. The budget

notes are also useful to project stakeholders as a tool to plan utilization of resources such as project staff. If the budget includes a cash grant for a loan fund or for the purchase of capital assets that will have use beyond the life of the project, the budget notes must indicate the planned disposition of these funds or other assets at the end of the project.

The allocation of overhead (NICRA or otherwise) is included in projects for which it is applicable – currently US government grants, in most cases. The current provisional rate should be used.



Project Budget

1. Present the project's budget, using an appropriate format, which shows account detail and roll-up over the project life:
 - a. ensure that both local currency (if required by the donor) and US dollar equivalents are shown on the budget; and
 - b. ensure that proper account codes are used.
2. If multiple funding sources are utilized, ensure that the budget is broken out by donor source (fund).
3. For projects that extend over several fiscal years, the budget should show the proper amounts expected in each fiscal year from each funding source:
 - a. ensure that appropriate inflation is built into expenditures in local currency;
 - b. detail the expected future currency exchange rates relative to US dollars; and
 - c. show the expected translation of local currency expenditures back into US dollars at the prevailing rates, to detail the overall budget in terms of US dollars.
4. Provide details on the staff positions to be charged to the budget:
 - a. assign employee benefits to the project consistent with employee wage costs. For multi-year projects, make sure to include estimated annual wage increases;
 - b. include a severance reserve for all positions or termination benefits of contracts, if required;
 - c. staff vacation time should be budgeted and the funding source should be explicitly mentioned in the budget notes;
 - d. include consultant or professional fees that, in addition to direct-hired staff,

- will be required by the project. Define both resource time requirements and rates (cost per hour, per day, etc.);
- e. if the project requires expatriate staff, make sure to budget for salary, fringe benefits and overseas allowances. Currently, an agency-wide percentage is calculated annually for the expatriate staff fringe benefits – contact CRS/HQ for the percentage; and
 - f. make sure that sufficient staff development and training resources have been built into the project budget.
5. Provide detail on the non-staff expenditures to be incurred by the project including facilities, materials and supplies, travel, training, capital expenses and others.
 6. Cost share – the donor may require a cost share, or you may determine that it is desirable to formally document CRS' contribution. If a cost share (otherwise known as “match”) is required by the donor, you should only include those expenses that can be quantified in your APP through a separate project budget (in the DNS 1550) and reflected in monthly financial reports. Currently, CRS is not set up to report on in-kind contributions (outside of depreciable capital assets) or partner contributions. It is very important to refer to OSD guidance on cost share contained in the “Overseas Operation Policy Manual” (CRS, 2004).

Budget Notes

7. Present appropriate budget notes to accompany the budget submission. Explain how major budget line items have been calculated and justify any unusual items.
8. Briefly describe the functions and responsibilities of budgeted staff positions, cross-referencing information from Section 5 on Project Organizational Structure and Staffing:
 - a. explain the wage rates assumed, especially if they are not consistent with the rates normally paid to comparable positions;
 - b. define the mechanism to be used for tracking and charging actual efforts during the project life to the appropriate donor source or fund. These include time sheets, allocation methods or other; and
 - c. if applicable, discuss why human resources other than direct-hired staff are planned. Justify the number of hours required and the cost of these services.

9. Discuss other expenses and the assumed costs:
 - a. discuss the purpose of travel expenditures;
 - b. identify any training seminars, fees or other related training costs;
 - c. for facility costs, identify office space locations, rent rates, basis of cost allocations if space is shared and other relevant information; and
 - d. define particular capital and vehicles needs, identifying all capital items required in excess of \$5000.
10. Identify the expected value, if any, of in-kind contributions:
 - a. describe the contributor;
 - b. detail the basis that is used to value the contributions; and
 - c. check with the donor to see if they can provide the value of the donated goods and services.
11. Describe the various sources of funding for the project.
12. If appropriate to the situation, identify any sources of financial risk to the project. Examples of financial risk include currency valuation, cost overrun or contingent liabilities. Describe plans to mitigate these areas of risk, or to respond to the cost contingencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

13. CRS/HQ Finance Department's strategic planning includes the development of guidance for country programs on roles and responsibilities.

SECTION 9 PROJECT PROPOSAL ANNEXES

This last annex allows you to include any additional information that you have chosen not to include as part of the main report.

If you are submitting a proposal for public funding, you may find that the guidance on what can and cannot be included in the proposal is quite strict. If there are no restrictions on what may be included in the annexes, then this is a useful place to present any of the preparatory work that you think will help to explain your proposal.

But be aware that the donor may not read any annexes that have not been specifically requested, therefore be sure that all essential information is incorporated in the proposal body or requested annexes.

FURTHER RESOURCES

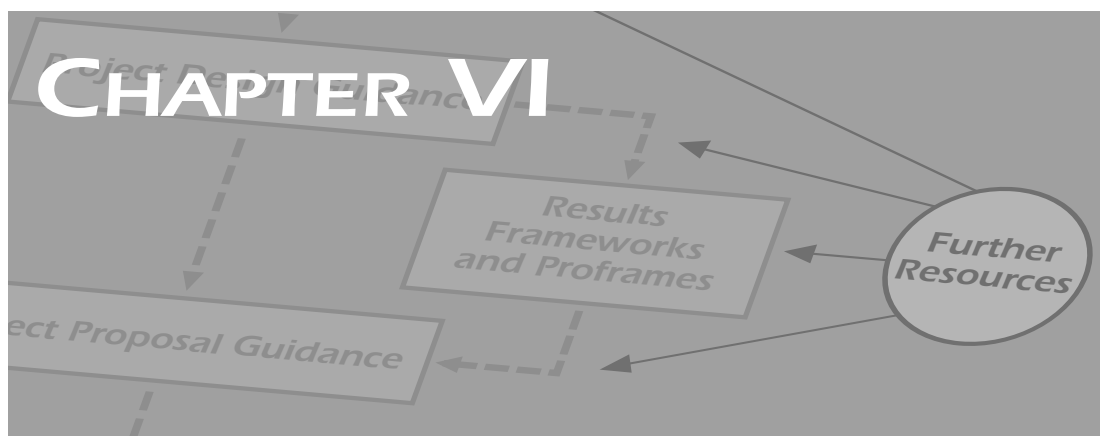
Tools

Chapter VI includes an example used by SARO that explains sequentially the role of programming and finance staff in preparing the budget submission. Table 6.6 is not intended as an agency standard. Nevertheless, if such a table does not already exist for your office, SARO's approach might provide you with a good basis for developing your own version

Additional Information

Chapter VI offers further references to help you with preparing a project proposal:

- various CRS materials including the *Project Proposal Guidance* for its comprehensive appendix covering a wide variety of topics; the *Education Proposal Resource Guide* containing suggestions that have an applicability beyond just the education sector, and OSD's expanding set of intranet-based resources;
- FANta information about what to consider when planning an evaluation, in this case for a Title II submission; and
- an American Red Cross manual on proposal writing.



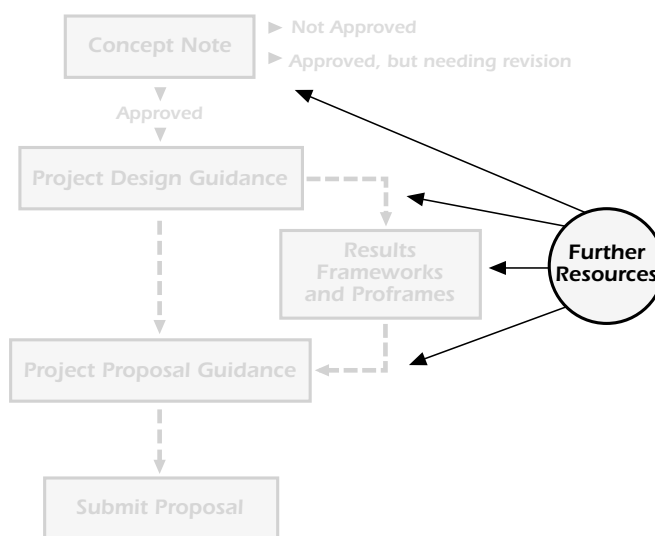
FURTHER RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Chapter VI includes all references cited in the earlier chapters of ProPack plus some additional easy-to-access sources of information.

Included in this chapter are:

- a definition of terms used in ProPack for easy reference;
- some additional tools and a Proframe “cheat sheet;” and
- a reference list of sources used to write other chapters and sections of ProPack.



DEFINITION OF TERMS

Activities – a Proframe term for the functions that need to be undertaken and managed to deliver the project’s *Outputs* to targeted beneficiaries and participants.

Activity Schedule – a format for presenting project *Activities* in a way that identifies their logical chronological sequence, and highlights linkages or dependencies that exist among them.

Assessment – a broad process undertaken as part of project design where a wide number of issues are explored showing the breadth of the situation in a particular area.

Assets – an important element in the *Integral Human Development Framework*. Refers to the range of resources people own – physical, social, natural, financial, political, and human – or to which they have access.

Baseline Study – information on the pre-project status of beneficiary conditions against which *Performance Indicators* will be compared either at midterm or end of project.

Capacity Analysis – carried out as a part of project design to assess the ability of CRS, partners and the community to implement a particular *Project Strategy* and related *Activities*.

Community of Learning – an informal peer support system, or network, set up to reinforce learning in project design, proposal development and any other matters relating to the *Project Cycle* as effectively as possible.

Concept Note – initiates the project design and proposal development process. Its purpose is to foster dialogue among partners, CRS staff in country programs and regions, and donors before there is a large investment in project design.

Conceptual Framework – a tool, sometimes visual, that explains a concept (e.g. food security, Integral Human Development) to help us understand the constraints and opportunities of a community by identifying key components, and suggesting the relationships among them.

Critical Analysis – a process in project design in which prioritized issues are probed in depth. It investigates the underlying causes and effects of specific problems or issues and involves reflection and examination.

Critical Assumptions – factors that project designers cannot (or choose not to) control, but that could endanger success if the assumptions are incorrect.

Evaluation Summaries – written reports, lessons learned and program or management quality assessments of previous programs by CRS and partners that are relevant to the *Project Strategy* that should be reviewed in the project design phase.

Gap Assessment – a project design process to identify whether identified needs are already being addressed by other agencies (government or non-government), or if they remain unmet.

Goal – a *Proframe* term for the longer-term, wider, development change in people's lives or livelihoods to which a project will contribute.

Influence – refers to the power that *Stakeholders* have over a project such as their decision-making authority over key components, or their ability to sway project activities or other stakeholders in a positive or negative way.

Integral Human Development Framework – originating from Catholic Social Teaching it can be understood at two levels: societal and individual. It is a process that morally obliges society to seek justice, ensure equal opportunities for all, and places the dignity of the human person first; it enables people to protect and expand the choices they have to improve their lives, meet their basic human needs, free themselves from oppression, and realize their full human potential.

Interest – what *Stakeholders* might gain or lose as a result of a project intervention, their expectations, or what resources they commit.

Intermediate Results – a crucial bridge between lower- and higher-level *Objectives Statements* in a *Results Framework* and *Proframe*. Learning processes are explicitly built-in to project implementation. Feedback is received from project beneficiaries after implementation has commenced to ensure that the project is on track towards achieving its *Strategic Objectives*.

Key Leverage Points – causes that appear multiple times in a *Problem Analysis*. They demonstrate significant influence on the problem, and therefore have the potential to bring about positive change.

Killer Assumptions – *Critical Assumptions* that are very unlikely to be true, and that can prevent project success if redesign is not undertaken.

Measurement Methods/Data Sources – an important component in *Proframe*. For each performance indicator statement, a brief statement of the project's approach to capturing information is provided. This also serves as a "reality check" on the proposed *Performance Indicators*.

Needs – the difference between a current, undesirable (or less preferred) situation and a desired future state. The four dimensions of need are "felt," "normative," "expressed" and "comparative."

Objectives Hierarchy – the vertical arrangement of different levels of *Objective Statements* in a *Results Framework* and *Proframe*. One objective level is seen as the means to achieving the end which is the next higher-level objective.

Objectives Statements – the first column of the *Proframe* matrix. They provide a concise commentary on what the project is aiming to achieve, and how it intends to do so.

Organizational Assessment – a process in project design to measure the capacity of CRS and its partners (organizational structure, resources and staffing) to carry out the proposed project.

Organizational Learning – systems and processes that enable an organization to capture, share and act upon its experiences. It is sometimes known as “knowledge management.”

Outputs – a *Proframe* term meaning the goods, services, knowledge, skills, attitudes, enabling environment or policy improvements that not only are delivered by the project (as a result of the *Activities* undertaken), but also are demonstrably and effectively received by the intended beneficiaries and participants.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) – an approach to *Assessment* and *Problem Analysis* that empowers local people by valuing their knowledge through its incorporation into project design.

Performance Indicators – something observed or calculated that acts as an approximation of, or proxy for, changes in the phenomenon of interest.

Positive Deviance – an approach to assessment that identifies people within a community who have unique positive behavioral practices that set them apart from others within the same community.

Problem Analysis – a useful method for identifying the major constraints facing an individual or community which enables cause and effect relationships to be determined, and thereby different options for developing a *Project Strategy*.

Problem Statement – a sentence that contains the “who,” “what,” and “where” of a specific negative situation related to the human condition that enables *Problem Analysis* to take place.

Problem Tree – used in *Problem Analysis* as a visual representation of reality. A tree is sketched with the problem statement written next to the tree trunk. This facilitates a discussion of possible causes and effects.

Proframe – “Project or Program Framework”, a planning tool to assist project design, implementation and M&E. It is derived from an older tool known as the Logical Framework or Logframe.

Project Accountability – the notion that managers are responsible for using *Intermediate Results* as feedback to check that their project is on-track towards achieving the *Strategic Objectives*.

Project Cycle – the set of actions (design, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluating, reporting and learning) in all phases of a project. These actions are interrelated and are roughly sequential.

Project Proposal – a structured, well-argued, and clearly presented document to CRS managers and donor audiences to obtain approval and funding for a proposed *Project Strategy*. It stands as the agreement among the relevant *Stakeholders* about the analysis of the situation and the resulting plan of action.

Project Strategy – an intervention approach that is adopted to achieve a particular *Strategic Objective*.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) – in the project design phase, RRAs are “quick and dirty” *Assessments* that typically last one or more days undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of project design *Stakeholders*.

Results Framework – an organigram that gives a snapshot of the top three levels of a project’s *Objectives Hierarchy* in a way that makes it simple to understand the overarching thrust of the project.

ProPack Roll-out – describes how the ProPack will be disseminated within CRS and how such staff become empowered to enable their partners to benefit from it. It will include training workshops, on-the-job training, and electronic means using materials included in the ProPack document.

Secondary Resources/Data – information from other NGOs, UN agencies, international and academic organizations and government offices that provide information useful for the project *Assessment* or *Baseline Study*, and subsequent project M&E purposes.

Shocks, Cycles and Trends – external factors that influence all other elements of the *Integral Human Development Framework*.

Stakeholders – individuals, groups and institutions important to, or with influence over, the success of the project.

Strategic Framework – the term used by CRS to describe its agency-wide, multi-year strategic plan.

Strategic Objectives (SOs) – the central purpose of the project described as the noticeable or significant benefits that are actually achieved and enjoyed by targeted groups by the end of project.

Strategy Statement – the term used by CRS to describe its regional and country program long-term strategic plans also called “SPPs” for Strategic Program Planning.

Structures, Policies and Processes – an important element in the *Integral Human Development Framework*. Included within this heading are the organizations, institutions, and individuals who govern or otherwise have influence and power in society. They also include the beliefs, values, policies, markets or rules that influence how organizations and society functions.

Telescoping – planning for the use of resources in the project design phase so that the investment required correlates with the scope and size of the planned project.

Theory of Change – an articulation of how a proposed *Project Strategy*, will lead to the achievement of the project’s *Strategic Objectives*.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

Chapter III, Section 5

Other Analytical Tools

Table 6.1 links the *Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace* framework with corresponding elements in ProPack; Step 5 in this table provides a more detailed checklist of questions for analysing the potential impact of your project.

Table 6.2 encourages you to address issues of gender planning in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner. This framework was developed for the Oxfam Gender Training Manual (Williams et al, 1994).

Table 6.1. Comparing the Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace Framework and ProPack's Project Design Guidance

Do No Harm's Steps	are similar to	ProPack's Project Design Guidance
Step 1	Understand the context of Conflict	ProPack's Stakeholder Analysis and Assessment
Step 2	Identify and Analyze Dividers	ProPack's Assessment and Analysis
Step 3	Identify and Analyze Connectors	ProPack's Assessment and Analysis
Step 4	Outline Relief/Development Project	ProPack's Objectives Setting and Strategy Review
Step 5	Analyze Project's Impact on Dividers and Connectors	ProPack's Strategy Review Matrix
<p>Checklist of questions for Step 5:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does our project strengthen existing dividers, weaken them or have no impact? How? Why? 2. Does our project strengthen existing connectors, weaken them or have no impact? How? Why? 3. Are we missing opportunities to reinforce existing connectors? Why? 4. Does our project create new dividers? How? 5. Does our project create new connectors? How? 6. If our project is strengthening dividers between groups, what options do we have to redesign our project to fix this problem? 7. If our project is weakening connectors between groups, what options do we have to redesign our project to fix this problem? 8. If our project is overlooking opportunities to strengthen connectors (i.e. local capacities for peace), can we redesign them and build on these community strengths? 		

Table 6.2. Gender Planning Table

Project Title/Number	The project focuses on which roles?			Which set of gender needs met		Policy Approach (Welfare? Anti-poverty? Efficiency? Equity? Empowerment?)	Further information Or comments
	Reproductive	Productive	Community	Practical	Strategic		

Definition of terms:

Reproductive: care and maintenance of the household and its members including bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water and fuel collection, shopping, housekeeping and family health care. Crucial to human survival ; seldom considered “real work”. In poor communities, reproductive work is for the most part manual and labor intensive and time consuming.

Productive: production of goods and services for consumption and trade (farming, fishing, employment and self-employment). When people are asked what they do, the response is most often related to productive work, especially that which is paid or generates income. Both men and women are involved but usually functions and responsibilities will differ according to the gender division of labor. Women’s productive work is often less visible and less valued than men’s.

Community: collective organization of social events and services (ceremonies, celebrations, community improvement activities, participation in groups and organizations, local political activities). This type of work is seldom considered in economic analyses of communities but involves considerable volunteer time and is important for the spiritual and cultural development of communities and as a vehicle for community organization and self-determination.

Practical gender needs:

- Respond to immediate perceived necessity
- Formulated from concrete conditions
- Derived from women’s position within the given gender division of labor
- Do not challenge the subordinate position of women although they arise out of it
- Needs arising from and reinforcing women’s reproductive and productive role

Examples: water provision; health care; income earning; housing and basic services

Strategic gender needs:

- Formulated by an analysis of women’s subordination in society
- When addressed they should lead to the transformation of the gender division of labor
- Challenge the nature of the relationship between men and women
- Aim to overcome women’s subordination

Examples: changes in sexual division of labor; alleviation of burden of domestic labor and child care; removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination such as land or property-owning rights; access to credit and other resources; measures against male violence and control over women

Organizational Assessment

There are many tabulated checklist questions that will help you to assess the capacity of CRS and the partners in terms of organizational structure, resources and staffing to undertake the proposed project strategy.

Table 6.3 is one such organizational capacity checklist. It provides an example of a checklist used by CRS/WARO. The table offers suggestions for how you might consider rating organizational capacity across some key issues.

Table 6.4 is a similar organizational assessment checklist but organised instead on a sector-by-sector basis.

To gauge CRS country program capacity, information may also be available from the report generated by the Management Quality Assessment tool (CRS, 2003) or from the SPP document.

Table 6.3. Organizational Capacity Checklist

Dimension of Organizational Capacity	Very Limited Capacity in Place	Basic Capacity in Place	High Level of Capacity in Place
STRATEGY			
Does the organization have a strategy?	No strategy	A strategy, but not necessarily clear	Clear strategy with priorities
Does the strategy express commitment to food security and alleviating human suffering?	No commitment to food security	Food security is mentioned, but not explicitly	Strategy focused upon food security and the alleviation of human suffering
Funding: Is the organization dependent upon a few funding sources, or relatively diversified?	Highly dependent on only a few funders	Multiple types of funding	Highly diversified funding
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS			
Performance: Does the organization have M&E systems for project performance?	Limited M&E system; organization collects data on activities and outputs, but not on impact indicators	M&E system in place; collects data, but not necessarily impact indicators	Strong M&E system in place; collects data on activities, outputs and impact
Does the organization have systems to develop project proposals or strategies?	Limited ability to develop strategic plan or project proposal	Ability to develop strategic plan and project proposals, but outside assistance needed	Ability to develop a strategic plan and project proposal without assistance
Does the organization effectively build relationships with a variety of parties?	Limited use of partnerships or partner relations	Early stages of building relationships with other organizations	Built and maintained effective partnerships that are anchored in stable, mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships
Local community presence and involvement	Organization's presence not recognized by the community or not regarded as positive	Organization's presence recognized and generally regarded as positive	Organization well-recognized, and perceived as engaged and highly responsive to community needs
Fundraising	Generally weak fundraising skills and lack of expertise	Main fundraising needs covered by internal capacities and external support	Fundraising covered by internal skills and expertise
HUMAN RESOURCES			
Staffing levels	Many positions are unfilled	Positions are filled, but turnover or vacancy problems	Positions are filled; no turnover or vacancy problems
Staffing experience	Staff drawn from narrow range of experience/ interests; staff only have experience in one area	Staff have variety of backgrounds, experiences and capabilities; staff have experiences in several areas	Staff have very diverse backgrounds and bring a broad range of skills
SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE			
Knowledge Management	No formal systems to capture and document knowledge	Systems exist, but aren't user-friendly or comprehensive enough	Systems are well-designed, user-friendly and document and disseminate internal knowledge
Physical assets (vehicles, computers, etc)	Has building but only one vehicle that is used by many staff; typewriters	Has sufficient vehicles but not well managed; computers and printers but need upgrading	Has good system for managing and maintaining vehicles; new computers with well trained staff
Financial support	Ledgers for financial records	Computerized finance system but not accurate reports	Well managed finances
OTHERS			

Table 6.4 uses the same headings to summarize organizational capacity within sectoral programs or themes.

Table 6.4. Organizational Assessment Checklist by Sector

Sectors/Themes	Very Limited Capacity in Place	Basic Capacity in Place	High Level of Capacity in Place
Agriculture (staple food crop production)			
Agriculture (marketing)			
Peacebuilding			
Emergency response			
Food distribution			
Education (literacy)			
Education (skills training)			
Education (formal education)			
Microfinance/financial services			
Health (maternal/child health)			
HIV/AIDS			
Advocacy for good governance			
Road construction/rehabilitation			
Water/sanitation (hardware)			
Water/sanitation (software)			
Community development			
Small enterprise development			
Other			

Chapter IV

A summary of some of the key points to consider when drafting a Proframe are summarized in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5. “Cheat Sheet” for Working with Proframe

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicator Statements	Measurement Methods / Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
<p>Goal:</p> <p>This describes the longer-term, wider, development change in people's lives or livelihoods to which the project will contribute – perhaps only in a given region, or perhaps in the nation as a whole.</p> <p>Think of the Goal as a larger, longer-term hope or aspiration.</p> <p><i>How to write: Write as a full sentence, as if already achieved. Put the general population of intended beneficiaries as the subject of the sentence.</i></p>	<p>Performance Indicator Statements and associated data are drawn from appropriate, already-existing sources such as Amnesty International, FAO, Freedom House, IFPRI, Transparency International, World Bank, UN, national government reports, etc.</p>		<p>It is not necessary to complete this box.</p>
<p>Strategic Objectives (SOs):</p> <p>These describe the noticeable or significant benefits that are actually achieved and enjoyed by targeted groups by the end of the project (EOP). These benefits are achieved thanks to the changes that have taken place at IR-level, as a consequence, in turn, of the Outputs from well-done Activities.</p> <p>Each SO expresses an aim that is realistic, specific to the project, and measurable.</p> <p>SOs are really the central purpose of the project – that is, why it was designed and implemented in the first place!</p> <p><i>How to write: Write it in a full sentence, as if already achieved. Put the targeted primary beneficiary group(s) as the subject of the sentence.</i></p>	<p>SO indicators reflect the benefit(s) expected to occur for beneficiary subgroups by End of Project (EOP) as a result of behavioral change(s) (achieved at IR-level prompted by successful delivery and receipt of the project's Outputs).</p>	<p>SO indicators are generally monitored and/or evaluated via field visits, and mid-term and final evaluations.</p> <p>To measure these benefits against the targets set, EOP results are always compared with the corresponding baseline findings (whether from primary Measurement Methods or other Data Sources) in the final project</p>	<p>SOs-to-Goal</p> <p>Assumptions that will affect achievement of the Goal concern:</p> <p>(a) the longer-run sustainability of the project;</p> <p>(b) the contributions of national governments and/or other organizations that may be critical to achievement of the Goal.</p>

(cont.)

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicator Statements	Measurement Methods / Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
<p>Intermediate Results (IRs):</p> <p>These state the expected change(s) in identifiable behaviors by participants in response to the successful delivery and reception of Outputs.</p> <p>IR-level responses may show themselves by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in the rate project participants adopt new behaviors or skills promoted by the project; • expansion of project reach or coverage; • new ways of organizing or managing systems; • alterations to policy; or • anything else that shows project Outputs being used – and correctly or perhaps also innovatively so – by the targeted groups. <p>These responses are called "intermediate" because progress at this level is a necessary step towards achieving the SOs.</p> <p><i>How to write: Write it in a full sentence, as if already achieved. Put the targeted primary beneficiary group(s) whose behavior is expected to change as the subject of the sentence.</i></p>	<p>IR indicators focus on demonstrable evidence of a behavioral change, such as adoption or uptake, coverage or reach of Outputs.</p> <p>If the achievement of IRs is less than expected, project managers are accountable for understanding the reasons, and making any necessary changes to project implementation.</p>	<p>IR indicators are generally monitored and measured via regular, on-going data collection, including evaluations (baseline + mid-term and final).</p> <p>IR indicators normally can only be collected by the project itself – because they are specific to behavioral changes in response to interventions in the specific project and its action area. Secondary sources rarely exist at this level.</p> <p>Start with "light" monitoring. Continue with this light monitoring or, depending on your findings, more targeted monitoring or even special studies. At midterm, do a formal evaluation of IRs to that point, and promptly make any course corrections indicated by the evaluation (which will include interpretation of any qualitative and quantitative data).</p>	<p>IRs-to-SOs</p> <p>Assumptions at this level are those that emerged from the initial diagnostic work that resulted in the chosen design.</p> <p>If the IRs do indeed show uptake / adoption of the Outputs, what assumptions still underpin achievement of the SOs?</p>

(cont.)

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicator Statements	Measurement Methods / Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
<p>Outputs:</p> <p>These are the goods, services, knowledge, skills, attitudes, enabling environment that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivered to... demonstrably and effectively received by... <p>...the targeted primary beneficiaries (as a result of the Activities undertaken).</p> <p>There may be more than one Output for each IR.</p> <p><i>How to write: Write it in a full sentence, as if already achieved. Put the targeted primary beneficiary group(s) receiving the Outputs as the subject of the sentence.</i></p>	<p>Output indicators remind project management what/when the project is contracted to deliver.</p> <p>Output indicators allow project management to track what is to be delivered, when, and, most importantly, to what effect.</p> <p>Project management is directly accountable for delivering the Outputs to those targeted.</p>	<p>They are generally measured in terms of immediate effects of goods and services delivered, such as pre/post-training scores on tests (written or verbal) or practical assessments; for organizational development, creation of certain structures, documents, systems; kilometers of roads or number of schools rehabilitated, and so on.</p> <p>Sources for monitoring and evaluating Output indicators typically include programmatic, administrative and management record-keeping systems.</p>	<p>Outputs-to-IRs</p> <p>Assumptions at this level are those affecting uptake/adoption of the Outputs that are outside the control of project management.</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>These describe the functions to be undertaken and managed in order to deliver the project's Outputs to the targeted beneficiaries and participants.</p> <p>There may be more than one Activity for each Output. To avoid over-complicating the Proframes of large projects, only major categories of Activities need be indicated.</p> <p>A complete Activity Schedule or Detailed Implementation Plan should be provided elsewhere in the project document.</p> <p><i>How to write: Put the specific CRS or partner staff (or other actors) responsible for doing the activity as the subject of the infinitive – e.g. CRS Health staff to do "X".</i></p>	<p>Activity indicators are the easiest ones to formulate and collect because they focus on implementation progress as reflected in project and partner staff's workplans, project events, and corresponding budget expenditures.</p> <p>They answer questions like: Was the Activity completed with acceptable quality? Was it completed as planned regarding numbers and types of items purchased and distributed? Were the meetings held? Were the numbers and gender of people in the target groups trained or otherwise involved?</p>	<p>Concentrate on the most important Activities for project management purposes, rather than wasting time and resources collecting unnecessary detail.</p> <p>Activity indicators are typically measured through administrative, management, trainer, and financial tracking and record-keeping systems, supplemented with written summaries and reports by trainees, partners, and other participant groups about the problems and successes and overall quality of the Activities.</p> <p>Activities are generally monitored and evaluated via progress reports and disbursement data.</p>	<p>Activities-to-Outputs</p> <p>The assumptions concern conditions outside the direct control of project management, but that must nevertheless be met for the Outputs to be delivered.</p> <p>The project itself should not be spending money to achieve any of these external conditions. If any project funds are allocated to addressing them, then they should be included as Activities.</p>

Chapter V, Section 8

Table 6.6. Budgeting Roles and Responsibilities – a SARO Example

Document Process	Finance Department	Program Department
Budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Review budget guidelines from PM 4. Provide PM with required information (e.g. salary, office rent...) 6. Review draft budget (GL code, administrative cost, NICRA calculation...) 10. Review revised draft budget (administrative cost, NICRA calculation...) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review budget guidelines from Donor and share it with Finance Department 3. Provide Finance Department with list of information required to do the budget (salaries, rent...) 5. Prepare a draft budget by using a BTF as a starting process. A final budget using donor's template should be prepared based on the BTF (rolled up with donor's approved line items) and send it to Finance and CR for review 7. For other private and public donors, send copy of draft agreement and budget to Finance HQ for review 8. Update the budget figures based on comments from Finance HQ 9. Submit revised budget to Donor for review and consolidation. Give copy to finance department for information 11. Update and re-submit budget to Donor based on comments 12. Share approved and signed budget and project agreement with finance department

Acronyms:

BTF: Budget Template Form
 CR: Country Representative
 GL: General Ledger
 NICRA: Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate
 PM: Program Manager

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