

Introductory Notes about Project Cycle Management

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Project Cycle Management (PCM) obliges practitioners in project design to focus on the real needs of the beneficiaries by requiring a detailed assessment of the existing situation and by applying the logical framework method ... Right from the beginning, aspects assuring sustainability are incorporated in the project design. The strength of PCM is that project documents are structured according to a standardised format dealing with all relevant issues, including the assumptions on which the project is based. At each stage in the project cycle, these issues are examined and revised where necessary and carried forward to the next stage. This system makes the project concept and context in which it operates clear and visible, and enables therefore monitoring and evaluation."
(PCM - DG VIII)

*"A result is a describable or measurable change resulting from a cause-and-effect relationship. By Results-Based Management (RBM), we mean:
defining realistic expected results, based on appropriate analyses;
clearly identifying program beneficiaries and designing programs to meet their needs;
monitoring progress towards results and resources consumed, with the use of appropriate indicators;
identifying and managing risks, while bearing in mind expected results and the necessary resources;
increasing knowledge by learning lessons and integrating them into decisions; and
reporting on results achieved and the resources involved."*
(RBM in CIDA Policy Statement, 1996)

1 PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT & RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Each phase of the project cycle has specific priorities and requires specific inputs to produce relevant outputs for assuring sustainability of all consequent steps. Anyhow, the project cycle management concerns only the chain of inputs / activities / outputs / outcomes or documents demanded but especially concerns involvement of relevant key stakeholders, which represent an integral part both of decision-making process and of project execution.

It is necessary to set clear competencies and personal responsibilities of all project's participants from the very beginning. Whenever some hesitation or controversies occur in the preparatory stage of the project implementation, the risks of failure become substantial and it is necessary to reassess the project design or procedures.

Although specific project cycle can vary according to the project character and extent, basically three fundamental stages of project processing are to be undertaken:

- *project preparation –*
- *implementation & monitoring –*
- *evaluation.*

The fundamental phases of the project cycle are usually formulated in the six steps as follows (with the key output documents in italic):

Project preparation

- 1 Programming (Strategy Preparation) - analysis of partner country's problems, needs and opportunities with regard to donor's policies and fields of expertise, and establishment of general guidelines and principles for co-operation. The priorities for co-operation should be identified and ideas for projects and programmes broadly outlined either in strategic / policy *Country (and Sector) Strategy Papers* or in more specific *Country Indicative Programmes* for selected target regions as well as in the policy documents outlining the *Donor's ODA Strategy*.
- 2 Identification (& Formulation) - within the framework established by the Donor's ODA Strategy and Country / Sector Strategy Paper or by the Country Indicative Programme, specific objectives, expected results and necessary activities are identified, analysed and selected, and initial project ideas with key indicators are formulated in *Initial Project Proposal*.
- 3 (Preparation &) appraisal - based on selected and approved Initial Project Proposal, detailed specifications, implementation schedules and indicators are added to the intervention scheme and described in the *Terms of Reference / Project Document*. During the appraisal process, the issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and likely impacts are explored as well as the project's feasibility and internal logic / logical framework.
- 4 Financing (Commitment) - final preparatory stage of the project cycle in which the project is examined by relevant financing committee and approved for financing in an umbrella *Financing Agreement*. Afterwards, contractors or subcontractors are selected and/or confirmed and the *Contracts* (or *Contribution Agreements*) are to be signed.

Project implementation & monitoring

- 5 Implementation of the project by using the resources agreed to achieve the desired results and the purpose and goals of the project. The progress of the project has to be assessed / *monitored* to enable pertinent adjustments to changing circumstances. This phase of the project cycle can be subdivided into the inception phase (*Work Plan* and/or *Inception Report*), main implementation phase (*Progress Monitoring Reports*) and completion phase (*Completion Report*).

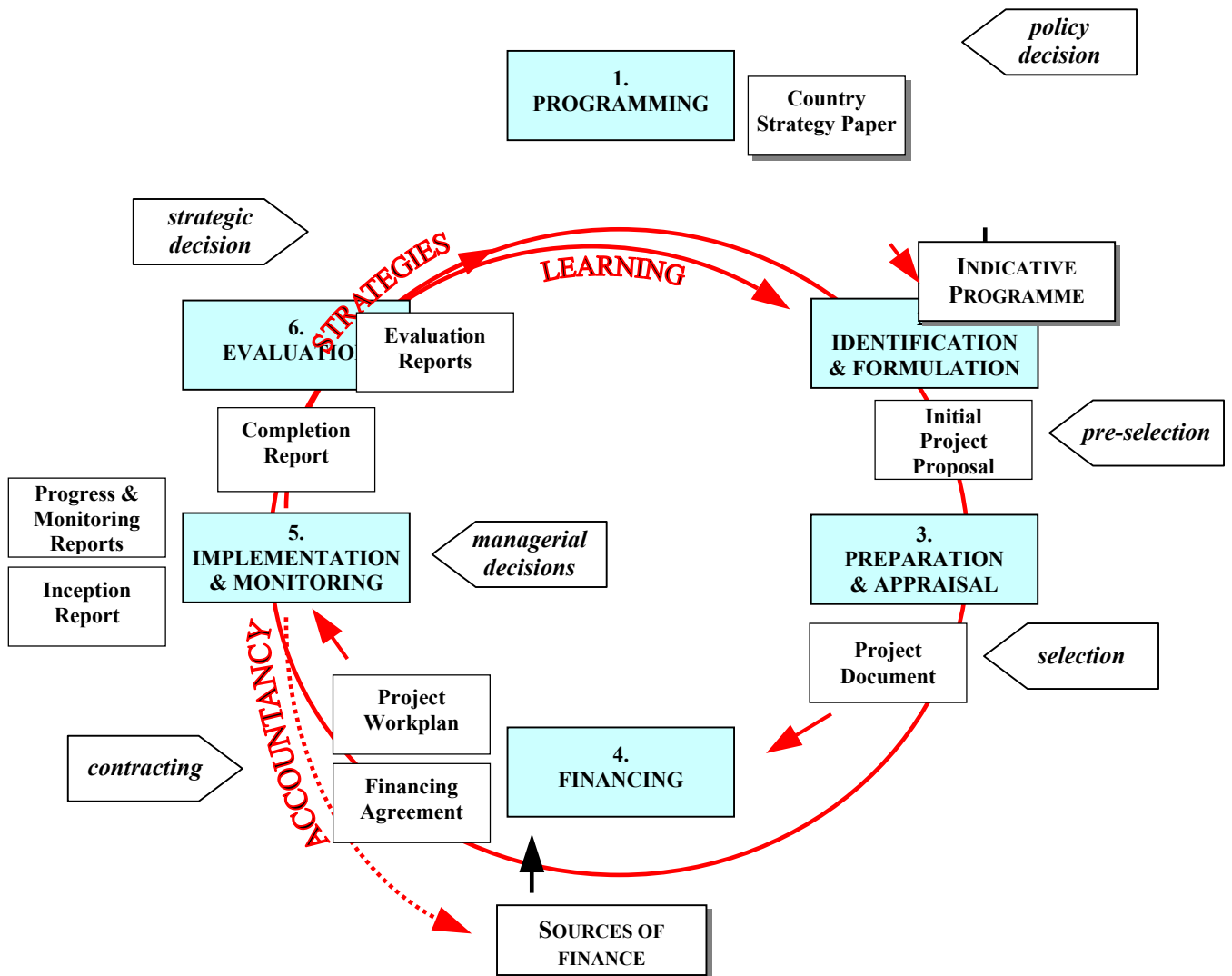
Project evaluation

- 6 Evaluation - assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of design, results and impacts of the project before, during, at the end and/or after implementation with a view to possible remedial action and/or framing

recommendations / guidance for similar development interventions in the future. The findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of this phase should be described in *Evaluation Reports*.

The Figure 1 introduces an EU scheme of the six main phases of the project cycle (including the key inputs and output documents). All six particular phases are in more details described in the following subchapters.

Fig. 1 The six phases of the project cycle



- ... Project cycle phases
- ... Key output documents
- ... Key inputs
- ... Decision making process

I-1.1 Programming / Strategy Preparation

The general guidelines, principles and overall objectives of development co-operation are set out in the national or regional programmes. These programmes are based on analysis of the problems to be tackled, they cover sectoral and thematic focuses of development assistance in a target country or region and may set out a number of ideas for projects/programmes.

The key output of this stage is the *Country Strategy Paper* and/or *Sector Strategy Paper*. These documents establish for each partner country the donor's priority areas for development assistance in the mid-term horizon. They should follow the key documents reviewing national performance and priorities, e.g. *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)* and other strategic documents and overall development objectives, like as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The consequent step can be preparation of *Indicative Programme* as a more specific framework / outline for projects and programmes. Its strategic goals and objectives ought to be relevant, clear and unambiguous and they should be clearly understood and accepted by all relevant donor and partner institutions.

This initial phase of the project cycle includes analysis of the current situation (*where are we?*), analysis of future prospects (*where do we want to be?*) and formulation of the strategy (*how will we get there?*). Once the strategy is agreed, the process continues by implementing the strategy (*getting there*) and evaluating the strategy (*did we arrive?*).

I-1.2 Identification (& Formulation)

This phase of the project cycle involves an initial formulation of project ideas (within the framework established by the National ODA Strategy and Country Strategy Paper or Indicative Programme when available) in terms of goals, outcomes, outputs and activities with the aim to decide, whether or not it is worth going ahead with designing a detailed project document.

The key output of this stage is ***Initial Project Proposal (IPP)***, specifying the basic framework of envisaged development intervention. The IPP can be either prepared by a Slovak applicant or elaborated by the ACU (if project idea is generated by the MFA, other governmental bodies or international agencies as a direct response to the partner country demands).

There are two main elements for outlining the project identification and formulation:

- Strategy update, comprising reaffirming or adjusting sectoral objectives to reflect new information on sectoral performance, taking into account changes in national policies, reflecting co-ordination with other donors and taking notice of the findings of evaluation missions or policy analysis by other donors;
- Identification and formulation of appropriate project ideas by setting relevant, clear and realistic objectives, ODA projects promotion and awareness-building, review of identified project ideas and formulating initial project proposals (or project TOR).

Suitable project identification is probably the most important and the most difficult part of the project cycle due to a wide range of possible projects and the need to tie them with overall objectives. Many possible projects can be impractical or inappropriate - too large or too small; without commitment by counterparts; short of complementary investment finance; duplicating other donors' efforts etc.

There should be clear **objective** statements for each sector corresponding to realistic goals identified by the Indicative Programme or other strategic documents and focusing on areas which are supported by development policies and are complementary to the work of other donors.

Realistic development strategy with clear objectives is a precondition for getting appropriate funding. Only after these elements are in place the project can be promoted. **Promotion** refers to the activities of publicity and awareness needed to be undertaken in order to ensure that all the key stakeholders (incl. beneficiaries) know about the ODA strategy and what the project (and overall programmes) are trying to do. Such awareness can be achieved by a mixture of publicity material, meetings and personal contacts focused on a number of stakeholders: national and regional governments, corporations, trade associations, education and training institutes, businessmen, NGOs and public. Promotional activities together with growth of partnership through existing projects should generate a stream of new project ideas.

All relevant project ideas ought to be jointly assessed and **reviewed** for their feasibility, impact and sustainability, preferably during an Identification Mission in the partner country. The interdisciplinary experts must work closely with potential beneficiaries and other key stakeholders in order to correctly analyse the problems and their cause-effect relationship; specify objectives and identify strategies how to achieve them; appraise the capacity and interest of the partner institutions; and investigate the implications for sustainable benefits after the intervention.

Once identification has been completed, the preparatory (tendering) process continues by means of **formulating** the project TOR and/or tender requirements for the "Call for projects" or "Call for Contractors" appeals.

I-1.3 Preparation & Appraisal

On the basis of approved initial project proposal and consequent assessment of feasibility, details are added to the project intervention and issues of institutional capacity, financial viability and sustainability are explored. Once the project terms of reference or project document are finalised, the partner institution is asked to confirm its agreement with the project in a formal Statement of Endorsement. An internal examination of the merits of the project and the way it fits in with sectoral policies is then undertaken by the **ACU and TFSC**. This leads to a decision whether or not to endorse the project.

Terms of Reference (TOR) for tendering process and **Project Document** - as a response to the tender requirements of the "Call for project" or "Call for Contractor" - are the key output documents of this phase of project preparation.

Preparation and appraisal involves:

- Specification of goals, outcomes, outputs and inputs and relevant indicators;

- Assessment of impacts and sustainability;
- Assessment of environmental, social, gender and other cross-cutting issues;
- Review of the project logical framework and feasibility, incl. assessment of institutional capacities, risks and assumptions.

Preparation of the terms of reference serves two main purposes. In addition to providing tendering instructions and guidance to applicants (future contractors), they provide operational details to the project plan, and can involve a re-examination of the issues identified in the initial project proposal or in indicative programme document. One of the common criticism associated with project TOR is that they are prepared too hastily, often well in advance of implementation. The result is that the TOR do not reflect the situation on the spot at the time of project start-up. Considerable effort in project redesign is then necessary by the project operator during the inception period.

Terms of reference are prepared by the *ACU*, assisted as required by external experts, in the period between completion of the indicative programme and the commencement of the tendering process. After consultations with all parties involved, the final version of the TOR is to be approved by the *TFSC*.

I-1.4 Commitment to Financing

Before projects can be implemented, the action plan with financing mechanism has to be agreed.

Commitment to financing is the final preparatory phase of the cycle in which the prepared projects are examined and approved for financing, and contractors / implementing organisations are selected, when using the system of the "Call for Contractor" tender or confirmed when an application is approved in the "Call Applicant for Project" tender.

The phase of commitment to financing involves:

- Agreement to provide inputs by all the parties involved
- Selection / confirmation and contracting of the implementing agency or project manager.

The key output is the final approval - ***Financing Memorandum / Agreement*** and consequent ***Contract Documents*** (or ***Contribution Agreements***) with included project work plan and budget.

There are several levels of financing agreements, in particular:

- international memoranda between donor and partner country authorities as an umbrella commitment to cooperation and/or mid-term framework for programme based cooperation (e.g. the Slovak - UNDP Trust Fund and the ODACE programme of the CIDA);
- bilateral or trilateral agreements on specific development interventions;
- international commitments to support multilateral programmes or multinational development agencies (UNDP, UNIDO, OECD, WB, EU);
- national agreements (e.g. Slovak ODA Strategy, governmental resolutions on ODA budgeting);

- individual international and national memoranda of understanding / cooperation, contracts or contribution agreements for specific development interventions (projects).

In the Slovakia, the ODA financing / contracting system follows the general rules of *UNDP* and *MFA*. The competencies of final approval and signing financial agreements belongs to the *TFSC* representing the donor institution, the tendering and contracting procedures are carried out on behalf of the *TFSC* by the *ACU*.

FINANCING AGREEMENT usually consists of three components:

- *the FINANCING AGREEMENT that states the grant funding will be made in accordance with the project document, up to a stated total budget, and gives the duration of the agreement and its expiry date;*
- *annex with the ACTION / WORK PLAN (including itemized budget and timetable);*
- *annex with GENERAL RULES applicable to financing agreement.*

I-1.5 Implementation & Monitoring

Implementation is the major phase in the project cycle, when plans are transformed into reality. During this period partner institutions and contractors have to work closely together to overcome problems and manage the provided resources towards the project objectives. There are few formal procedures to be followed, but the implementation team - as the key player in the field - must utilise good management practises to be effective.

This **executive phase** of the project cycle follows all preparatory and start-up activities and can consists of the Inception phase, Main Implementation phase and Completion phase:

- **Briefing and Pre-Startup** - preparation in both countries prior to the arrival of the contractor; this stage begins as soon as the work plan / contract is agreed; from this point onwards, much of the project processing is undertaken at the *ACU* and contractor's headquarters - however the project manager should involve the partner institution in order to ensure that all the parties remain fully committed to the project;
- **Start-up** - time after the arrival of the contractor, when the project team is formed and mobilised and settled into the country location;
- **Inception** - the inception period is to review the project context and objectives and, if necessary, revise the implementation plan to fit with the current situation on the spot - specific objectives should not change, but the means of achieving them can be adjusted to take into account the changes since the terms of reference were drafted; the inception report is also an useful opportunity to identify key individuals for the project activities (e.g. to select the right trainers and target group for training);
- **Main implementation phase & monitoring** - covers the core part of the project cycle; larger projects should have steering committee, long-term projects are generally found to be more effective when they minimise the number of different short-term consultants. Progress towards a planned objective must be measured at different levels (project work team / managers, the *ACU* and *TFSC*, partner institution, external monitor) by comparing actual results with planned targets using the specified indicators - it is inevitable to use regular and timely reporting, to ensure that the management team is aware of all relevant issues. The final Completion report then includes a summary of progress since the start and a section on lessons learned. It should also answer the comments made by the task manager, *ACU* / *TFSC* and external monitors.

Review of the **key output documents** during implementation phase:

After approval of the **Work Plan** or **Inception report** with modified/actualised time schedule and/or budget, the main implementation can start. **Progress reports** with updated work plan and **Monitoring reports** reviewing progress towards the project results indicators - are to be regularly (at least yearly) written and assessed to enable remedial activities if need be. Steering committee or control day on the spot may be called before significant decisions are to be made. Project **Completion report** is the final document of the implementation phase.

BASIC FORMAT OF THE PROGRESS / MONITORING REPORTS
(for full content with explanations see Annex 3)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2. PROJECT SYNOPSIS
3. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS SINCE THE START
 - 3.1 Achievement of objectives
 - 3.2 Monitoring and measuring the results
 - 3.3 Review of activities and outputs
4. ASSUMPTIONS
 - 4.1 Assumptions and risks at different levels
 - 4.2 Need to modify the project
5. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORT
 - 5.1 Accountancy data
 - 5.2 Review of involved experts and institutions
 - 5.3 Review of material and equipment supplies
 - 5.4 Review of sub-contracts and services
 - 5.5 Review of training activities
 - 5.6 Another relevant and important information
6. SELF EVALUATION
 - 6.1 Evaluation of project outcomes and impacts
 - 6.2 Evaluation of project relevance and of quality of outputs
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
 - 7.1 Specification of the work plan for the next period
 - 7.2 Recommendations of remedial action

APPENDICES

- List of acronyms*
- Monitoring records (e.g. lab protocols, minutes of the meeting, proceedings)*
- Financial records when appropriate*
- Other relevant documentation (e.g. photographs, newspaper articles)*
- Bibliography of references (list of information sources)*

I-1.6 Evaluation

Evaluation should bring an analysis of design, results and impact of the project before, during, at the end or after implementation with a view to possible remedial action and/or to framing the recommendations for similar projects in the future (*lessons learned to influence future action or policy decisions*). If the financing agreement provides for a number of implementation phases, the start of the next stage will normally depend on the conclusions of the evaluation of the previous stage.

Evaluation is closely linked to monitoring, but these two activities are distinct and usually undertaken by different people at different times. The most widely acknowledged definitions come from the OECD/DAC:

"Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specific indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds."

"Evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going or completed development intervention - project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impacts and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors."

There are five strategic evaluation questions, concerning:

- *Relevance* - the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent (or still appropriate given changed circumstances) with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partner's and donor's policies.
- *Effectiveness (doing right things)* - the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relevant importance.
- *Efficiency (doing things right)* - a measure of how economically resources / inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
- *Sustainability (continuation without outside help)* - continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits.
- *Impact* - positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

There are different types of evaluation, depending on the use, client demand, time or extent issues: ex-ante, formative (during the project) or summative (at the end or after completion), self-evaluation, internal or external, participatory, formal or informal, evaluation of project design, of procedures or impacts, evaluation of organisation performance, etc. Also the information sources and methods of data collection can be different and it is inevitable to combine them (triangulate) at any evaluated project level: review of documents, interviews, focus groups, observations, questionnaires,

diaries, expert reviews, surveys, case studies, opinion poll, etc. Each method then needs a specific data analysis and interpretation as well.

The *TFSC*, using technical support of the *ACU*, should be the main user of evaluation findings and therefore the main stakeholder responsible for evaluation plan, scope, focus and strategy.

The output document of this phase of the project cycle is an *evaluation report*, but the real outcomes should be an effective *communication of results* and a consequent *decision* based on the lessons learned. Therefore, it is evident, that the evaluation report format should follow its specific use requirements, type / character, timing and extent of evaluation as well. Some evaluations or specific evaluation findings may be communicated only in a verbal form.

OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT (EXAMPLE)

(for full content with explanations see Annex 4)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (SYNOPSIS OF THE REPORT)
 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND / PROFILE
 - 2.1 Development context
 - 2.2 Project overview
 - 2.3 Achievements/milestones
 - 2.4 Performance measurement information
 - 2.5 Resourcing
 3. EVALUATION BACKGROUND / PROFILE
 - 3.1 Evaluation overview
 - 3.2 Methodology
 - 3.3 Evaluation team
 4. EVALUATION FINDINGS
 - Response to the evaluation questions / issues
 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
 - 5.1 Overall performance assessment
 - 5.2 Listing of recommendations
 6. LESSONS LEARNED
 - 6.1 Developmental / strategic lessons
 - 6.2 Operational / managerial lessons
 - 6.3 Lessons learned for evaluation
- APPENDICES
- List of acronyms
 - Evaluation terms of reference
 - (Revised) logical framework of the project
 - Logical Framework of evaluation
 - Bibliography of references
 - List of consultations
 - Minutes of the key meetings
 - Photographs, maps and other base or evidence documents
 - Statistic data, analytical results
 - Other technical records

I-2 PROJECT THEORY / LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH

I-2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH (LOGFRAME)

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) was developed in the late 1960s in order to assist in planning, management and evaluation of development activities, and has been used by a variety of development agencies. The method consists of an analytical process (*analysis phase*) and a way of presenting the results of this process (*planning phase*). This makes possible to set out systematically and logically the project/programme's objectives and the causal relationships between how to check whether the objectives can or have been achieved and how to establish what assumptions outside the scope of the project may influence its success.

During the *analysis stage* of the LFA the existing situation is analysed to develop a vision of the future desired situation and to select the strategies that will be applied to achieve it. The key idea is that projects are designed to address the problems faced by the target groups and their needs and interests. This stage basically consists of:

- Problem analysis - identifying key problems, constraints and opportunities; determining "cause and effect" relationships;
- Stakeholder analysis - all individuals, groups of people, institutions or firms that may have a relationship with the project should be identified; stakeholder analysis and problem analysis are closely connected - without people's views on a problem, neither its nature, nor their needs, nor eventual solutions will become clear;
- Analysis of objectives - developing objectives responding to the identified key problems; identifying "means to end" relationships;
- Strategy analysis - identifying the different strategies to achieve objectives and selecting the most appropriate strategy; determining the overall objectives and project purpose.

During the *planning phase* the project idea is further developed into a practical operational plan. In this stage, the logframe is drawn up, and activities and resources are defined and scheduled:

- Logframe - defining the project theory / structure, testing its internal logic, and formulating reachable objectives in measurable terms;
- Activity schedule - determining the sequence and dependency of activities; estimating duration, setting milestones and assigning responsibilities;
- Input and cost schedule - from activity schedule, developing input schedules and a budget.

There are close links between the logical framework and the basic document format, above all in the section describing overall goals and objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities, means and costs, assumptions and indicators. A critical analysis of quality and sustainability factors may lead to adjustments to the project internal logic including assumptions or to the more detailed specifications of indicators.

The logical framework is used for project management, as well as for its design and evaluation. During project identification the framework should be drawn up,

although it cannot be completed at this stage. That will happen gradually in the ensuing phases of full project document formulation (appraisal), financing, implementation and evaluation so that the logical framework becomes the tool for managing each phase of the project cycle and a “master tool” for creating other tools, such as the detailed budget, the breakdown of responsibilities, the implementation timetable and a monitoring or evaluation plan.

Project logic models provide concise description of how projects will improve health, social or economic conditions within target population. They provide a clear and logical argument demonstrating how project activities will produce intended outcomes, noting important casual mechanism. The major concept in project logic models is **cause and effect** (if X, then Y). The complexity of any logical framework scheme should however reflect the complexity of the project being planned and implemented.

Fig.2 Simplified matrix scheme of the Intervention Logic

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Goals (impact)				
Outcomes (effects)				
Outputs (results)				
Activities	←	Means	Costs	
				Preconditions

In this matrix form, the first column of **Intervention logic** covers the logic structure of:

- **goals** (overall objectives) - long-term impacts for beneficiaries to which the project itself (beside other projects) should contribute by means of achieved ☒
- **outcomes** (project purpose) - specific (immediate and mid-term) objectives of the project which should bring sustainable benefits / recognisable effects for the target groups and which should be met by combination of produced ☒
- **outputs** (results) - products of undertaken ☒
- **activities** - the things that must be done to achieve the results.

In the second and third columns, **objectively verifiable indicators** and **sources of verification** must be identified at different levels of project intervention. That means that goals, outcomes and outputs must be described in operationally measurable terms (e.g. quantity and quality, target group, time and place) and must be tailored to the needs of the operation during the implementation phase to allow for effective monitoring (with its costs are taken into account as well).

The sources of verification are documents, reports and other sources providing information that makes it possible to gauge actual progress towards planned results and objectives (e.g. result of governmental survey at impact level, project evaluation report at the outcome level, and project progress report at the output level).

To undertake the planned activities, the physical and non-physical *means (inputs)* are necessary; as a source of verification at this level can serve "economic review" (e.g. information on number of participants in comparison with the *costs* of training).

Finally, under the fourth column the ***assumptions (and risks)*** should be identified - external factors that are outside the direct control of the project, but crucial for undertaking the activities and achievement of outputs, outcomes and expected impacts. Assumptions should be formulated as the achieved desired situation - that way they can be verified and measured. On the other hand, the risks are the negative factors that can endanger progress or success of the project.

The ***preconditions*** have a special position in intervention logic - these conditions must be satisfied before project activities can start up (e.g. official approval of organizational set-up).

It is necessary to assess and evaluate importance and probability of assumptions:

- if external assumption is not important or will be almost certainly realised, it should not be included in logical framework;
- if important assumption will not be likely realised, it is necessary to redesign the project if possible, in order to influence the external factor (e.g. by added activities and/or results or by changed project purpose); if it is not possible, such assumption is a "killer" one and the project is no more feasible;
- if necessary external factor is likely to come, it should be included in logical framework as assumption.

The same approach is necessary for assessing the negative factors - *risks*. Only significant and only probable risks should be included in logical framework; the factors endangering the project progress that will definitely come have the same "killing" potential as an improbable assumption.

In order to describe the internal logic of the project in a relevant, clear and understandable way (preferably in an one-page graphical scheme), the applicant / project manager has to identify the issues of a real significance and the most important causal relationships. Therefore, the logical framework does not serve only as a way of presentation the project ideas and procedures to the "appraisal committee" but, in particular, as an irreplaceable managerial tool / internal feedback for the project manager.

I-2.2 LIMITATIONS OF LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The logical framework is a set of related concepts that describe in an operational way the most important aspects of an operation. It provides a way of checking whether the operation has been well designed and facilitates improved monitoring and evaluation. A tool, however, good it is, cannot alone guarantee successful results. It also depends on the sincerity and the know-how and organisational skills of the people using it.

The logical framework is to be used for those who prepare and implement projects to structure and formulate better their ideas and set them out in clear, standardised form. If the policy is misconceived or if the criteria are badly chosen, the logical

framework will reveal the contradictions and oversights, but it cannot of itself change or replace the policy or criteria.

One of the misunderstandings that needs to be addressed is that the establishment of a logical framework and adoption of the integrated approach is merely a formal, technocratic exercise based on the blueprint principle. It should never be forgotten that each logical framework is the fruit of an analysis made at a certain moment in the project cycle, using the integrated approach format at a given moment in the cycle and reflecting the knowledge and concerns at that moment. Consequently, these tools have to be adapted to the changing situation.

Before a logical framework can be drawn up, sufficient reliable data ought to be gathered and an analysis of the real situation has to be made. The analysis of the problems is crucial for a correct description of the background and for defining realistic objectives of the proposed operation.

I-3 INTRODUCTION TO EU EVALUATION PRACTICES

I-3.1 DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION PRACTICES

A focus on results is a central element in recent public sector reforms in OECD countries. Evaluation of development assistance is important in a results-oriented environment because it provides feedback on the efficiency, effectiveness and performance of public policies and can be critical to development aid policy improvement and innovation. In essence, it contributes to accountable governance.

As a part of its work on Performance Management, the EU Public Management Service has studied evaluation in Member countries in order to identify key issues and practices to improve the use of evaluation and consequently has prepared the manual containing Summary of "**Best Practices Guidelines for Evaluation**". The aim of the Guidelines is to identify key issues and practices that OECD Member countries should consider when seeking to improve the use of evaluation. They focus on management of evaluation activities in government and management of individual evaluations rather than on methodological questions. It must be emphasised that there is no single right way to organise and conduct evaluations. The choice of the most relevant methods depends on several factors, including the objectives of evaluation, the role of evaluation in a wider performance management framework, and institutional and political considerations. It is not the role of any guidelines to determine when evaluation is the most appropriate input to the policy-making and performance management process. That decision will best be taken by each country individually according to the concrete situation.

I-3.2 GETTING THE MOST FROM EVALUATIONS

Evaluations are analytical assessments addressing results of public policies, organisations or programmes, that emphasise reliability and usefulness of findings. Their role is to improve information and reduce uncertainty; however, even evaluations based on rigorous methods rely significantly on judgement. A distinction can be made between ex-ante evaluations (or policy reviews), and ex-post evaluations.

The main **objectives** of evaluations are to facilitate / improve decision-making, transparency and effectiveness of the resource allocation and accountability. This can

be achieved through informing the public about key decision-making processes and encouraging ongoing organisational learning. Evaluations must be **part of a wider performance management** framework. They can supplement and improve it, but not replace it.

Successful evaluations are based on **collaboration between key participants** (evaluators, users and stakeholders), under the leadership of a "client". The **client** plans the evaluation, monitors its progress, receives the evaluation report, and makes decisions about further action. Clients may be ministries or central government agencies (e.g. the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs or TFSC in Slovak case) or independent evaluation and audit organisations.

Evaluators are those organisations or individuals collecting and analysing data and judging the value of the evaluated subject. On the other hand, **users** of evaluation may be policy-makers, the budget office, auditors, policy or programme managers and staff, users of services, etc. **Stakeholders** are those individuals or organisations that have an interest in the policy or programme / project being evaluated and the findings of the evaluation. Stakeholders and users are often the same actors.

Benefits of evaluations should outweigh their costs and limitations. Both costs and benefits can be affected by careful management of evaluations and by choosing the appropriate evaluators and evaluation methods. The key value of evaluations is that they allow for **in-depth study of performance** and independent assessment of effectiveness of other performance management instruments. Potential benefits are the greatest for large policies or programmes. On the other hand, experience shows that evaluations have often been too costly and time-consuming compared to their real use and effect. There is also a risk of evaluations being used to slow the process of decision-making and justify inaction.

I-3.3 ORGANISING THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Support for evaluations is demonstrated through willingness of politicians, policy managers and central management agencies (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Government itself), to make effective use of policy advice generated in evaluations.

Demand for evaluation needs to be generated, specified and articulated by internal and external stakeholders. Evaluations without "ownership" by stakeholders are unlikely to have an effect. Institutional barriers to evaluation such as internal resistance can be reduced through consultation, aiming at creating mutual trust.

The government can support an **evaluation culture** that encourages innovation and adaptation to a changing environment. The basic message should be that to stay relevant, organisations need to continue learning from feedback about results. *Training and professional dialogue*, competent evaluators, well-informed clients and enlightened and enthusiastic users all contribute to an evaluation culture.

Organisation of evaluation should correspond to needs and priorities in different policy areas. It may be appropriate to systematise and institutionalise evaluations in key policy areas where the costs of collecting data is high and information limited. However, a more flexible approach will often produce better results and prevent evaluations from becoming paperwork exercises. Special attention should be given to evaluation of activities that cut across many organisations. Central government agencies play an important role in managing the evaluation process; however, the actual evaluations can be decentralised to different actors.

Development of evaluation skills in different organisations ensures the necessary **range of evaluation methods and perspectives** (e.g. drawing from both internal and external evaluators), and that each evaluation is designed in accordance with its unique set of issues related to objectives, focus, credibility and intended use. *Special funds* for financing evaluations can serve as an important incentive for evaluating public policies; however, they may also serve to encourage use of evaluation when other performance management approaches may be more appropriate.

Lack of **credibility** undermines the use of evaluation findings. Factors influencing credibility include the competence and credibility of the evaluator, mutual trust between the evaluator and those evaluated, consultation and involvement of stakeholders and processes for communicating findings. Professional and ethical standards and *methodological quality* of evaluation (encompassing issues such as relevant criteria, adequate data and evidence and reliable and clear findings) also have an effect on the credibility of evaluation.

I-3.4 BUILDING EFFECTIVE EVALUATIONS

Evaluation information can be an important factor in **policy formulation** to improve the quality of policy intervention and in the budget process to support priorities and savings. Relevant evaluations address issues that are significant for political, budgetary, management and other strategic reasons.

Objectives of evaluation determine location, methodology and use of evaluation. The proposed use of evaluation should be clearly defined. Evaluations should be tailored to the characteristics of a policy intervention and evaluation methods should match the objectives of the evaluation, taking constraints such as costs and time into account. Building requirements for evaluations into policies from the very start, and defining their objectives clearly, will improve the usefulness of evaluation and facilitate planning.

Planning improves management and quality of evaluation. The client is responsible for planning evaluations, including defining objectives, criteria, data collection and analysis methods. Timing is important, but the decision-making cycle is often unpredictable and decisions are often taken before evaluations have been finalised.

Self evaluation by an organisation is appropriate when the main objectives are organisational learning and improved implementation. However, the time and skills of staff may be insufficient, the range of issues covered may be limited and the credibility of findings may also be questioned.

Evaluation by **central management agencies** is appropriate when the objective is improving budget priorities and when it is important that the evaluator has close links with decision-making processes.

Evaluation by **external evaluators** (e.g. research bodies and independent consultants) is appropriate when the objective is to provide new perspectives on public policies or when there is a need for specialised evaluation skills. However, these evaluators may have limited understanding of the substance and the culture of the evaluated policy or organisation and offer theoretical evaluations.

Independent evaluation is appropriate when the objectives are to improve accountability and transparency. However, policy managers, or the administration in general, may be reluctant to accept the findings and recommendations. Performance

audits are often similar to evaluations. Their key features include independence of the auditor and a focus on accountability rather than learning and future improvement.

Stakeholders, including staff, can be appointed to evaluation commissions or involved through steering or advisory groups. Participatory evaluation methods can be used to create consensus and ownership for a change process. Dialogue with users and staff improves understanding and responsiveness to their needs and priorities. Participation must be managed due to the costs, time constraints and the risk of capture from processes.

Presenting evaluation findings openly increases credibility and creates pressure to act upon findings. Public availability of reports and meetings are useful to present and stimulate dialogue on findings. Judgements and recommendations based on clear criteria attract attention and promote subsequent action. Judgements should focus on overcoming problems rather than on assigning blame.

I-3.5 IMPROVING EVALUATION PRACTICES

Evaluation of development interventions is pursued to improve decision-making to provide decision-makers with better information, and to enhance the accountability of public policies and programmes. It does not aim to resolve or replace judgements in making decisions, but it can ensure a degree of feedback about results of development interventions that can be used to improve their design and implementation.

When outlining the priorities for public sector reforms, the OECD Public Management Committee has pointed out that a well-performing public sector should continuously evaluate policy effectiveness. There are signs that interest in evaluation as a management tool is increasing. Compared with previous evaluation efforts there are now more realistic expectations, more widespread acceptance of less rigorous methodologies and greater understanding about utilisation in organisations. There is also a strong emphasis on more systematic, outcomes (results) oriented evaluation with linkages to the programming and identification process, with a focus on participatory approach and on learning aspects instead of simplified accountancy approach. For the above process a special background papers have been prepared with a number of illustrative examples of evaluation practices in various OECD countries (e.g. Australia, Canada, Finland, Sweden, USA) as well as in multinational agencies (e.g. OECD/DAC, EC, UNDP, World Bank).

EXPLANATIONS AND REFERENCES

III.1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Action (Indicative) programme Define sectoral development strategies to be followed, identify the main actions and projects to be supported and the funds allocated. There are two main types of Action Programme - country programmes for each individual partner country (which may also concentrate on certain geographic areas) and multi-country

programmes in which several partner countries participate. Action Programme usually form the basis for a Donor Commission (later only "Commission") financing decision and a Financing Memorandum to be signed by the partner country.

Activities The action taken or work performed (training staff, preparing reports, etc.) through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other type of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs/results (related term: development intervention).

Appraisal An overall assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential impacts and sustainability of a development intervention prior to a decision of funding (related term: Ex-ante evaluation).

Assumption An important external factor - i.e. event or action which must take place, or an important condition or decision which must exist, if a project is to succeed, but over which project management has little or no control.

In a broader sense hypotheses about factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of a development intervention.

Attribution The causal link of one thing to another; e.g. extent to which observed (or expected to be observed) changes can be linked to a specific intervention in view of the effects of other interventions or confounding factors.

Beneficiaries The individuals, groups, or organisations, whether intended or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention (related terms: Reach, Target group).

Commitment (to financing) A commitment is a decision taken by the Commission to set aside a certain amount of money for a particular purpose. No expenditure can be incurred or authorised in excess of the authorised commitment.

Contract The document stating the terms of agreement between the contractor and the Commission. There are two main types of contracts - service contracts and supply contracts (*Note: Contribution Agreement can replace Contract in case of cost-sharing with implementing organisation*).

Contractor The public or private organization, consortium or individual with whom the contracting authority enters into a contract.

Country Strategy Paper A document produced by the donor institution, reviewing the situation in the partner country, proposing sectoral priorities and outlining strategies and programmes for development co-operation with the partner country.

Development intervention An instrument for partner (donor and non-donor) support aimed to promote development. Examples are policy advice, projects, programmes.

- Development objective** Intended impact contributing to physical, economic, institutional, social, environmental or other benefits to a society, community, or group of people via one or more development intervention (related terms: goal, impact).
- Effect** Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.
- Effectiveness** The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Also used as an aggregate measure of the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with a positive development impact ("doing right things").
- Efficiency** The "productivity" of the implementation process - a measure how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to outputs/results.
- Evaluation** An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going or completed development intervention or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into decision-making process of both recipients and donors.
- Evaluation phase** The sixth and final phase of the project cycle during which the project is examined against its objectives, and lessons are used to influence future actions.
- Financing phase (Commitment)** The fourth phase of the project cycle during which projects are approved for financing, and contractors for implementation are selected.
- Follow-up** Actions taken or scheduled in order to utilise information gained or lessons learned from the monitoring or evaluation process.
- Goal** The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute (related terms: development objective, overall objective).
- Identification & Formulation phase** The second phase of the project cycle. Initial elaboration of project idea in terms of objectives, results and activities with a view to determining whether or not to go ahead with designing the full project document. It is the process by which the ODA strategy is to be linked to specific projects through the indicative programme.

- Impact** Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- Implementation phase** The fifth phase of the project cycle during which the project is implemented - the process from signed financing agreement to completion of the project.
- Inception report** The report which defines a project's plan of operation (or workplan) to fit to the current local conditions verified after the inception mission on the spot.
- Indicative programme** Describes the strategic direction and defines sectoral or regional objectives and priorities for co-operation in each partner country. So that indicative programmes can support each country's medium-term reform objectives, they are usually designed to cover a three-year period, on the basis of these, annual action programmes can be adopted (related term: Action programme).
- Indicator** Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.
- Inputs** The financial, human, material and time resources used for the development intervention.
- Integrated approach** The method for managing different phases of a project cycle. It takes account of the six phases of the cycle through an analysis of all the main elements in each phase and application of the same criteria of consistency and sustainability throughout the cycle. It describes the documents for each phase applying the standard format, that will provide the basis for decisions.
- Intervention logic** The different levels of objectives, from activities through outputs and outcomes up to goal. If the project is designed well, realisation of each level of objectives in the hierarchy should lead to fulfilment of the project goal.
- Lessons learned** Generalisations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.
- Logical framework (Logframe)** Management tool used to improve the design of interventions. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success or failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development intervention.

Logical Framework Approach An analytical, presentational and management tool that involves problem analysis, stakeholder analysis, developing a hierarchy of objectives and selecting a preferred implementation strategy. It helps to identify strategic elements (see Logframe) (related term: results based management).

Means The various inputs required in order to do the work (human, material and financial resources).

Means of verification The expected sources of information that can help answer the performance question of indicators.

Monitoring A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specific indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. The immediate objective of monitoring is to provide a regular reporting mechanism to the outside bodies and to assist timely decision-making, ensure accountability and provide basis for evaluation and learning.

Monitoring report A report produced (by internal or external monitor) for the task manager, summarising progress against the project's workplan, and highlighting key problems demanding action by the task manager or other non-project bodies.

Objective A specific statement detailing the desired accomplishments or outcomes of a project at different levels (short to long term). A good objective meets the criteria of being impact oriented, measurable, time limited, specific and practical. Objectives can be arranged in a hierarchy of two or more levels.

Outcome The likely or achieved short-term or medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs (related terms: result, output, effect, impact)

Outputs The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (see also Results).

Overall Objectives Objectives or wider sectoral or national programme, to which the project is designed to contribute (see also Goal, Development Objective).

Partner organization or institution Organizations or institutions in partner countries with whom Donor Agency works on programmes or projects. They are autonomous organizations which exist without Donor Agency funding. They include ministries, government departments, financial or other institutions, foundations, chambers of commerce, unions, universities, training centres, regional or local organizations, and civic groups.

- Precondition** External factor that have to be present and decisions that have to be taken before the project can start.
- Preparation & Appraisal phase** The third phase of the project cycle during which Terms of Reference / Project Documents are prepared and appraised and the Statement of Endorsement is to be signed.
- Programme** An ongoing development effort or plan, which may contain one or many projects.
- Programming phase** The first phase in the project cycle. It is a general plan of action which sets out the course and direction which a donor organization will take. Strategy is the process by which focal and priority sectors are selected, and national and sectoral goals and objectives are set over in the Country Strategy Papers and Indicative Programmes, usually for the three or five years period.
- Progress report** An interim report on progress on a project submitted by the contractor to the partner organization and the Commission within a specific time frame (quarterly, yearly).
- Project** An activity in which resources are expended in order to create assets from which benefits are derived. A project has specific objectives, a beginning, quantified resources and activities, and an end.
- Project Cycle Management (PCM)** A methodology for planning, implementation and evaluation of projects/programmes based on the logical framework approach. Two key features are its focus on project beneficiaries and its integrated approach to documentation.
- Project document** A document describing a development intervention in terms of planned and interrelated activities designed to achieve defined objectives within a given budget and a specified period of time, and explaining rationale, strategies and means of implementation, including important external factors.
- Purpose** The publicly stated objectives - the positive improved situation of the project beneficiaries that a project is accountable for achieving. It does not refer to the services or goods provided by the projects (these are outputs), but to the utilization of these outputs by project beneficiaries (see also outcomes, immediate objectives).
- Reach** The beneficiaries and other stakeholders of a development intervention (related term: Beneficiaries).
- Relevance** The extent to which objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies (*Note: retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances*).

- Results** The measurable output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive or negative) of a development intervention (related terms: output, effect, impact).
- Risks, Constraints & Assumptions** External factors which could affect the progress or success of the project, but over which the project manager has no direct control (see also Assumptions).
- Stakeholders** Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in development intervention or its evaluation, or who affects or are affected positively or negatively by the implementation and outcome of it.
- Statement of Endorsement** A document which is signed by a representative of the partner institution in which the institution confirms the nature of its involvement in the project and an overall endorsement of the project.
- Sustainability** The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The likelihood that the positive effects of an intervention (such as assets, skills, facilities or improved services) will persist for an extended period after the external assistance ends.
- SWOT analysis** Analysis of an organisations Strengths and Weaknesses, and the Opportunities and Threats that it faces. A tool used for appraising the partner institution during project planning.
- Target group** The specific individuals or organisations for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken.
- Terms of Reference (TOR)** Precise definition of the requirements and objectives of the services requested under the terms of a contract or tender, including the methods and means to be used and/or results to be achieved.
- Triangulation** The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate assessment (*Note: by combining multiple datasources, methods, analyses or theories, evaluators seek to overcome the bias that comes from single informants, single methods, single observer or single theory studies*).
- Work plan** A detailed document stating which activities are going to be carried out and by whom in a given time period, how the activities will be carried out and how the activities relate to the common objectives and vision. The work plan is designed according to the logical framework and contains a description of each activity and output, its verifiable indicators, the means of verification and its assumptions.

III-2 LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACU	Administrative and Contracting Unit
AOS	Administrative and Operational Services
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIP	Country Indicative Program
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training (WB, Carleton Univ.)
IPP	Initial Project Proposal
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODACE	Official Development Assistance Central Europe (CIDA Programme for CE)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMES	Department of the International Economic Co-operation (Slovak MFA)
OMU	Operational Management Unit
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSD	Programme Support Document (UNDP Programming Manual)
RBM	Results-Based Management
RSC	Regional Support Centre (UNDP)
SWOT	Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats (analysis)
TF	Slovak - UNDP Trust Fund
TFSC	Slovak - UNDP Trust Fund Steering Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

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