

# Manual for Project Planning



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# Manual for Project Planning

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## About this manual

This manual is intended for all MSF staff who deal with the design, planning and management of projects. In project countries these are country managers, medical coordinators, logistic-technical coordinators and administrators. In headquarters it is the staff of the project, medical and logistics departments.

The manual describes how to design and plan a project, using a problem tree and the logical framework. By using this manual you should be able to design projects that really focus on the core problems that MSF wants to address, and to plan these projects in a way that makes them easy to review, manage and evaluate.

The structure of this manual follows the project cycle. This means that the subjects are put in the same order as they will appear when preparing and carrying out a project. Chapters one and two give an introduction and explanation of the 'project cycle'. The background against which MSF projects take place is described in chapter three, and an assessment mission which can start off a project in chapter four. Chapters five, problem analysis and six, project definition form the core of the manual. Guidelines for writing a project proposal are given in chapter seven, and chapter eight deals briefly with the implementation of projects.

Please read the whole manual, especially if this is your first encounter with project planning. You can read the manual from cover to cover in less than one hour.

This manual covers a wide range of subjects, some of which are quite complex and abstract. Yet it is intended as a practical tool and should be easy to use. The issues are therefore simplified as much as possible. We made an effort to keep the language simple and direct. Examples are used throughout the manual. References to documents with more information are made in each chapter and are put in *italics*.

This is the first version of the manual. If you have comments on the contents or style, please address them to Lucie Blok at the medical department in Amsterdam.

# 1 Introduction

There is no shortage of guidelines and manuals at MSF. As we get more experienced and professional, we learn more about the work we do. This results in logistics manuals, treatment guidelines, security frameworks and many more. Why yet another manual?

Most manuals focus on specific activities. They describe how to carry out activities that are only a part of the whole project. This manual explains the use of a tool that can help to tie the separate activities together.

The logical framework is a tool that brings structure into the contents of a project. It does so in the planning phase and it helps to stay focused on this content throughout the implementation. At the same time use of the logical framework can facilitate and improve the management of a project. It helps to simplify tasks such as preparing proposals, budgets, workplans, reports, and conducting project meetings.

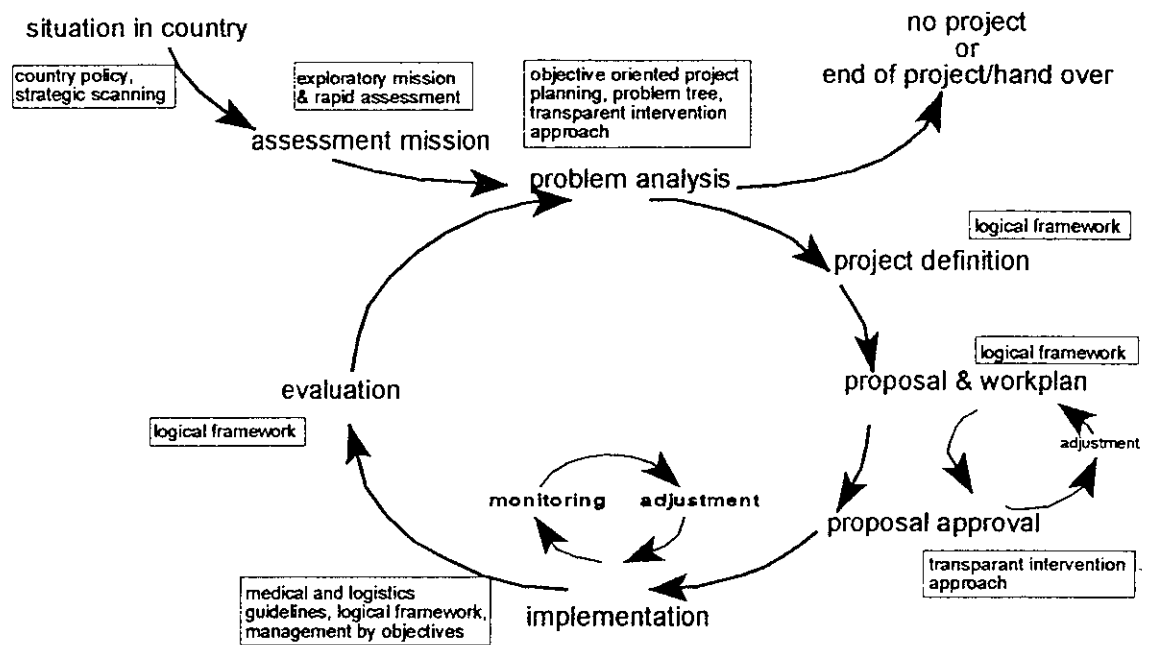
In the preparation and approval phase of a project, the logical framework is used together with the 'transparent intervention approach'. Unlike the transparent intervention approach, the logical framework does not provide arguments or guidelines for making strategic decisions. Using the logical framework does, however, help to make the data on which to base these strategic decisions available in a clear and structured way.

This may sound ambitious, especially to those who only know the logical framework as a matrix in which you have to squeeze project data. Indeed, to achieve the above mentioned advantages, more is needed than to just fill out a matrix. Using the logical framework means adopting a structured and logical approach to the planning, implementation and evaluation of a project.

In this manual we hope to show that this can be a useful approach which will result in better projects: projects which are more effective because they address the core problems, and more efficient because they are managed better.

## 2 The project cycle

Projects go through different stages between their conception and termination. The project cycle describes these stages and shows the chronology. For most of the stages there are tools which help to carry out the tasks related to that stage. In the diagram these tools are displayed in boxes. This manual briefly describes all of the stages but focuses on planning, which is done in the problem analysis, project definition and proposal writing phases.



The project cycle starts with the situation in a country which leads to an assessment mission. The data from the assessment mission form the basis for a problem analysis. If the results from the problem analysis do not justify a project, the cycle is left at the upper right corner.

If the project does not end here, it continues with the definition of a project and drawing up of a proposal and workplan. Before the proposal and workplan are approved, several adjustments may take place.

During implementation, progress is monitored and, if necessary, tactics are adjusted. During or at the end of the project period, an evaluation of the project is carried out. The results of the evaluation form the basis for a new problem analysis. This problem analysis can lead to the recommendation to stop or hand over the project. In this case, leave the cycle at the upper right corner. If the recommendation is to extend the project, another round of the cycle will follow.

### 3 Background situation in Country

The background situation is the situation that produces the circumstances which prompt MSF to assess and, maybe, intervene. Situations that require assessment and intervention do not always appear out of the blue. Often conflicts, natural disasters or epidemics can be detected early or can be predicted before they take place. The process of collecting relevant information and interpreting it to try to forecast situations that may require intervention is called scanning. See the MSF document on *strategic scanning* for more information.

The background situation also determines to a great extent the type of intervention. We operate in unstable environments and background situations change continuously. If the situation around a target population changes fundamentally during the implementation of a project, the project may have to be adapted. Often this requires a new round of the project cycle starting with a new problem analysis.

Through its presence in areas that are prone to conflicts or disasters, MSF often already has information about background situations. In countries where MSF is present a summary description of the background situation and of the MSF programmes can be found in the '*country policy*'. The country policy may also describe strategic issues such as the main objective and the focus of interest of MSF in the country.

A country policy describes the purpose of the MSF presence and the objectives and activities of the projects that are being carried out. As you will see later in this manual, the logical framework is very useful in clearly defining objectives and activities. Although this manual deals only with the use of the framework for projects, it may also help you in writing part of a country policy.

## 4 Assessment

An assessment mission can be the result of active scanning, a request for assistance, or alarming information from other sources. The main purpose of an assessment mission is to gather data that are relevant for MSF. Usually this means data on health, water, sanitation, and the nutritional and human rights situations.

Both quantitative and qualitative data should be collected. Quantitative data are data that can be measured or counted. The data are collected as numbers. Because bare numbers are hard to interpret, these data are best presented as rates or percentages. These rates can then be compared with the same rates for a desired situation. Examples: crude mortality rate, under 5 malnutrition rate and vaccination coverage rates.

Qualitative data give a value to indicators that cannot be described in numbers. The quality of health services, for instance, can be judged by an assessment team, but there is no fixed index number to express this quality. Because of this, qualitative data are difficult to present. They are important because often clues for the causes of the problem and suggestions for action can be derived from them. Examples of qualitative data are: motivation of health staff, reliability of drugs or vaccines supply lines and the security situation of the population.

Apart from these data, an assessment report should contain background information about the country, area, population and the events that have led to the crisis. This information is crucial to put the problem into its context.

The information gathered in an assessment mission has to be interpreted. This process is called problem analysis and, because of its importance, it is put in a separate chapter in this manual. Usually the assessment team is best suited to do the problem analysis.

In practice many assessment missions lead directly to the writing of a proposal or the start of an intervention. In this case do not skip the problem analysis, but perform one, however limited, as part of the assessment mission.

You can find more information on assessment missions in the *manual for exploratory missions and rapid assessments*.



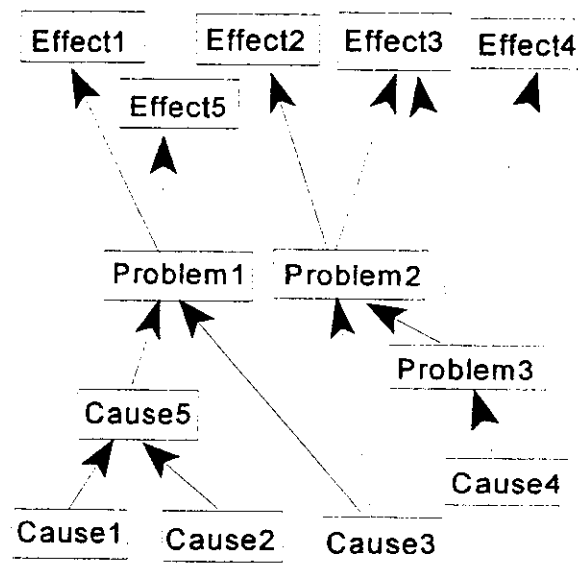
## 5 Problem analysis

Usually the events which prompt MSF to undertake an assessment mission are part of a larger process with many different causes and effects. To be able to design an effective project, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of all the factors involved, and how they relate. A systematic approach of problem analysis will help to produce this understanding.

The method of problem analysis described here is very brief. It is based on the methodology of "Objective Oriented Project Planning", but it is less comprehensive. Due to the emergency nature of MSF's work, the scope of the analysis and the participation in the analysis by the beneficiaries have to be limited. For more information on problem analysis see the *manual for the use of Objective-Oriented Intervention Planning (OOIP) by the Belgian Administration for Development Cooperation (BADC)*.

### The hierarchy of problems

An important characteristic of any set of problems is the hierarchy. The hierarchy is based on cause and effect relationships between problems. An easy way to gain insight into the hierarchy of problems is to show them in a picture. The position of a problem in the picture shows its place in the hierarchy. Problems that cause many other problems are shown down in the picture; problems that are the result of other problems are placed higher up. Relations are expressed by arrows which connect the different problems.



### Define target group and core problem

At this point in the project planning it is necessary to choose a target group and core problem, in order to limit the scope of the analysis. Using information from the assessment, try to determine which group of people is most in need of MSF assistance. Then define the most important problem of this group, which can still be addressed by MSF. The assessment team probably already started with an idea of target group and core problem, but you may have to revise this now that you have more information. The target group and core problem that you choose now only provide you with a starting point for the problem analysis. After you have completed the problem tree you may find that you can further specify the target group and core problem for your project.

## Draw a problem tree

To get a clear idea of the different problems and their causes and effects, draw a 'problem tree', which shows the hierarchy of the problems. Drawing a problem tree can be a complex task and is best done with a small group of people. This group can be the assessment team, or a team consisting of the country manager and coordinators. If possible, involve local staff in the problem analysis. Their particular knowledge of local conditions can make a crucial difference in understanding the problems. If you have limited time, try to limit the size of the group to 2 or 3 people because larger groups need far more time to complete an analysis. Constructing a good problem tree takes much discussion and rewriting. Write everything on post-it notes (yellow, sticky notepaper) to make it easier to change the position of problems on the sheet.

Put the core problem in the centre of your sheet. Write its effects above it and its causes below. Seek causes of the causes and identify the ultimate effects until you feel you have covered the whole problem. Try to split up the core problem into separate components in order to give your problem tree even more detail. Only work out the medical or other 'MSF related problems' in detail. Mention other factors, but do not waste time trying to get to the bottom of them.

## Be comprehensive

Do not just rely on the output of the assessment mission for components of the problem tree. Try to think of other possible causes and effects and include them in the tree. Some causes may be big issues, like 'insufficient government budget for health care' or 'a poor infrastructure'. These issues affect the whole population and fall outside the scope of work of MSF. It is, however, important to mention these causes. A successful project will have to overcome, if only at a local level, these larger issues too.

## Use precise descriptions

Effects, problems and causes are all described as 'negative states' in the problem tree. Examples of negative states are: 'high morbidity', 'poor knowledge of treatment protocols' or 'lack of pesticides for crops'. Take some time to find the correct descriptions. The description of a problem is just as important as its position in the problem tree. Try to keep the descriptions narrow.

Note, for instance, that 'lack of clean drinking water' is not the same as 'refugees use contaminated drinking water'. They seem similar, but in this case the first one is a cause and the second one is an effect. Apart from the lack of clean water there can be other reasons why the refugees use contaminated water. If you use 'lack of clean water' as the definition of the main problem, you may end up with a project which aims solely at providing clean water sources. This project may not have the impact you expect. At the end of the project refugees may still be using contaminated water. The problem was not just a lack of clean water sources but also, for example, a lack of awareness of public health issues and hygiene among the refugees.

## Check the logic!

Before finalising the problem tree, check the causal logic. There should be a clear cause and effect relationship between statements at the different levels. Starting from the top, check that each statement is caused solely by the factors mentioned at the level below it. If this is not the case, either add the missing factors or sharpen the definition of the problem.

Example: Initially 'lack of health surveillance' and three other causes were mentioned for epidemics in a refugee camp. While checking the logic of the tree, no clear cause/effect relationship was found between lack of health surveillance and epidemics. Although it is obvious that there is a relationship, health surveillance by itself does not have an impact on an epidemic. Only when the surveillance is used to detect epidemics in an early phase, and when detection is followed by a quick reaction, can health surveillance have an impact. The solution was to change 'lack of health surveillance' to 'no emergency coping capacity'. Health surveillance is part of the quick reaction system, but so are other activities that might otherwise not have been included in the project.

## Select what you will address.

If the problems of the target population are many, you may now have an extensive problem tree that covers most of your desk or wall. Although the effects at the top of the tree are usually all related to health or humanitarian rights, the problems and the causes at lower levels can be much more diverse. MSF cannot address all problems, so we have to make a selection. Where best to use MSF's scarce resources, and whether or not to address problems, are strategic decisions. The document on '*transparent intervention approach*' describes this decision making process. The following four groups of strategic questions form the core of the decision.

- **Is outside intervention necessary?**  
Are the problems serious enough and is it really impossible for the population to cope with the problems by itself?
- **Is it necessary for MSF to intervene?**  
Can an MSF intervention have significant impact, and is MSF the organisation that is best suited to address these problems?
- **Is MSF willing to intervene?**  
Are there internal, organisational or tactical reasons to intervene?
- **Is it possible for MSF to intervene?**  
Are there limiting factors such as difficult access and insecurity, and are the necessary resources available?

The problem tree now has two important functions. It shows the depth of the problem, so we are aware of all underlying causes of the problem we want to address. It also shows the scope or breadth of the problems, so we can select the problem on which our intervention will have the biggest impact.



All the practical problems that contribute to malnutrition, epidemics, lack of access to basic health care and trauma are placed at the same level in the tree. At this level it is easy to think of action that will reduce these practical problems, and therefore eventually reduce morbidity and mortality.

The causes, at the bottom of the tree, are kept simple. We could analyse the causes of the ethnic violence in detail, but since we only deal with its effects, the tree does not extend further down. The lowest level of the tree does make clear that the ethnic violence is not the direct cause of many of the practical problems. These problems result from the displacement of people, and from the fact that the camps were formed in a very short time. This shows that some problems will disappear as the camps become more organised. It also shows that an end to the violence does not necessarily mean an end to the problems, as long as the displaced persons do not return to their homes.

Fortunately MSF is not the only organisation working in the camps. WFP is preparing the transportation of food to the camps. ICRC expects to have a surgical team working in one of the hospitals in the capital within two days. For trauma cases they will provide an ambulance service between the hospital and the camps. Oxfam is looking into the water supply of the camps.

With malnutrition and trauma addressed by other organisations, MSF can focus on the lack of access to health care and the threat of epidemics. While discussing the problem analysis, the team agrees that in the short term, epidemics will have the largest impact on mortality. They agree that a project will be designed to focus on epidemic control and last for three months.

### **Involve headquarters**

With the problem analysis you lay the foundation for a project. All other project planning work is based on the problem analysis and if you make mistakes here you will have a lot more work to correct them.

To avoid unnecessary work, it is advisable to seek the opinion of people in headquarters at an early stage of the planning. This applies to the country manager and also to the medical and logistics-technical coordinators who should keep their departments updated.

A problem tree is a good way to explain a complicated situation to your counterparts in headquarters, and a starting point for discussions.

## 6 Project definition

A project definition explains **why** you propose this project, **what** you aim at and **how** you hope to achieve it. In this chapter we define a project using the logical framework for the structure, and the outcome of the problem analysis as a basis for the contents.

### The format

The main characteristic of the logical framework is that it specifies the targets of the project at four different levels, from general to very specific. The four levels are overall objective, project purpose, specific objectives and activities. The targets are also defined in four steps. These are the narrative description, indicators of success, sources of verification and the assumptions.

The relation between all these components becomes clearer when they are shown in a matrix.

The matrix is a set of four rows (for the four levels of targets) and four columns (for the four steps of describing the targets).

overall objective			
project purpose	indicators of success	sources of verification	assumptions
specific objectives	indicators of success	sources of verification	assumptions
activities	resources	costs	assumptions

Although having all information in a matrix on one sheet provides an overview, it is not essential. Especially when drafting a framework, do not waste time by trying to squeeze everything into rows and columns. Instead, just list the different components on one or more pages. In this manual we use a matrix, but only because it shows the concept of the framework more clearly. If you want to make a matrix on your computer, annex A gives tips for making a matrix in WordPerfect 5.1.

### The contents

On the following pages the various components of the logical framework are discussed one by one. They appear in the order in which you have to define them when you are filling out your own logical framework.

Most of the input for the logical framework can be found in the problem tree. In the tree, information is formulated as negative states (problems). Before you enter this information, it has to be 'translated', either into 'positive states' or into 'activities'.

The terminology used for the components of the logical framework varies between organisations. We choose the terms on the following pages because they come closest to those currently used in most MSF projects. To avoid confusion, please use only these terms when you define your project.

## overall objective

The overall objective is the higher goal to which the project contributes and which justifies the intervention. It explains **why** the project is undertaken. The overall objective is a goal that cannot be achieved by this project alone. The contribution of other factors is necessary.

A project can have only one overall objective. You can find the overall objective at the top of the problem tree. If the top of the tree is wide, and contains many different negative effects, try to find a statement that summaries them. Translate this into a positive statement, using the past participle. Example: The negative effects we want to address are high child mortality, high incidence of communicable diseases, high case fatality rate of malaria, etc. This adds up to high morbidity and mortality. The overall objective would then be 'reduced morbidity and mortality'. 'Reducing morbidity and mortality' is not correct because this describes an activity rather than a state.

## project purpose

The project purpose is the effect that the project is expected to achieve if completed successfully and on time. The project purpose sums up the intended result of all your efforts. It explains **what** the project will **achieve**.

You can find the project purpose by locating the central problem you want to address in the problem tree, and translating it to a positive state.

There should be only one purpose per project. If you find two or more, try to reformulate them into one single project purpose that encompasses both aspects. If this is not possible, the scope of your project may be too wide and it might be better to divide it into several smaller, more focussed projects.

## specific objectives

The specific objectives are the different results you need to obtain, in order to achieve the project purpose. They are a **breakdown of what** the project is supposed to accomplish. If achieved, all the specific objectives together, should be sufficient to achieve the project purpose. The specific objectives should also together cover all project activities.

To find specific objectives, look at the problem tree and translate the causes of the main problem(s) to positive states. Often each cause works out to be a specific objective, but sometimes you can put two or more together to form one specific objective. MSF projects normally have two to six specific objectives.

A cause which cannot be addressed by MSF should not be an objective. It should either be entered into the framework as an assumption (see below), or the project should be adjusted to take this problem into account.

Specific objectives should be clear and measurable. If the formulation of an objective

is too vague, it will be impossible to define indicators of success, as described in the next section. The specific objective should describe a state (the situation that you want to achieve), and not how you want to achieve it.

Incorrect: Improving the nutritional status of children under 5. (activity)

Correct: Improved nutritional status of children under 5. (positive state)

## indicators of success

Indicators of success are the targets to be reached. They not only serve to measure the progress of the project but, when achieved, also provide a justification for ending the project. Define indicators of success for the project purpose and each of the specific objectives. One or maximum two indicators of success are usually sufficient to describe the precise achievement aimed at.

Indicators of success should be 'objectively verifiable', which is the case if different persons obtain the same measurements. Monitoring of the indicators will be part of the project activities. The indicators should therefore be measurable with relatively little extra effort.

Indicators of success should measure impact and therefore should relate to objectives and not to activities. Whether or not you carry out your activities is irrelevant as long as you achieve your objective. Indicators of success should specify: target group, quantity, quality, time and place (who, how much, how well, when and where).

Incorrect: Malnutrition reduced by 25%.

Correct: Severe malnutrition (<70%WFH) among children under 5 years old (<115 cm) is lower than 5% within 3 months.

## sources of verification

Sources of verification provide the data which show whether an indicator of success has been achieved. They specify where the information can be found. The sources of verification must be realistic and reliable. You will find that many indicators cannot be used because there are no reliable sources of verification. Examples of sources of verification are: surveys, registration books of clinics, grave counts or supervision visits.

## assumptions

Assumptions are external factors, (non-)events or decisions which are important for the success of the project, but which are largely beyond the control of the project. Assumptions are conditions that have to exist in addition to the output of the project for the project to be successful. Do not confuse assumptions with preconditions, which are conditions that have to exist to be able to undertake the planned projects.

Assumptions can describe important natural or economic conditions, for instance 'an average or good harvest', or actions by others, for instance 'the government will release salaries for health staff'. They can also describe the absence of situations that

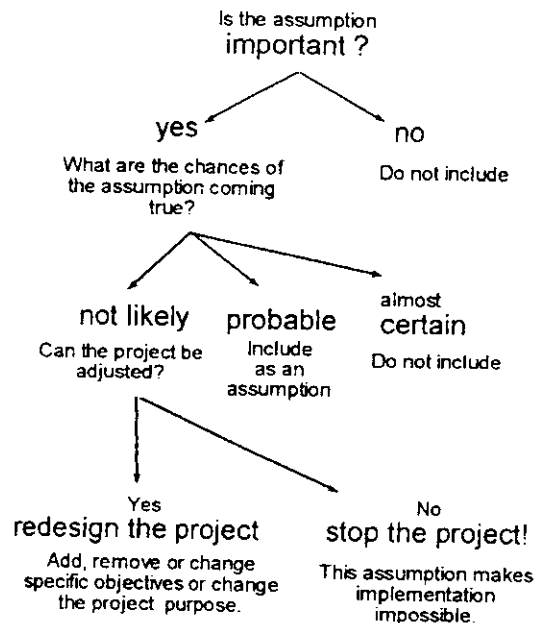


would negatively influence the project, for instance 'refugee camps are not attacked by warring parties' or 'no further earthquakes'.

Define assumptions for the level of project purpose, specific objectives and activities. An assumption does not have to be linked to one activity or specific objective. It is possible to have 3 activities and 5 assumptions related to one specific objective. All the activities, together with all assumptions at that level, should be sufficient to achieve the specific objective. All the specific objectives, together with all the assumptions at this level, should be sufficient to achieve the project purpose and the project purpose together with all the assumptions on its level should be sufficient to achieve the overall objective.

Assumptions can sometimes be found at the bottom of the problem tree, as causes that will not be addressed directly by the project but that you expect to change due to other factors.

There are of course thousands of conditions that can influence the success of your project, but you can only mention a few in the framework. The diagram shown here helps to make a selection. The first criterion is the impact of the assumption on the success of the project. Only consider assumptions with a significant impact. Second, the likeliness of the assumption occurring is a criterion. Only mention assumptions that are likely to occur. There is little use in mentioning assumptions that are (almost) certain to come true.



If you hit on an assumption that is important but not very likely to occur, you have a serious problem. This assumption blocks successful implementation. You have to adapt your project or give it up all together. You can adapt the project by adding a component that addresses this problem, or by removing the part of the proposal that depends on the condition described in the assumption. Be especially aware of assumptions that assume a change in attitude or behaviour of people as this is often difficult to achieve within the timeframe of an MSF project.

Example of a 'killer assumption':

A project aims at an improved general health status of a certain population (overall objective) by improving the health care in the area (project purpose). The health care will be improved by ensured availability of essential drugs (specific objective 1),

improved infrastructure and new facilities (specific objective 2) and improved quality of work by the health workers (specific objective 3). The activities of specific objective 3 include supervision visits, introduction of registration methods and training in standard treatment protocols. All these activities involve extra work for the health workers. One of the assumptions is that the health workers are willing to do this extra work.

Unfortunately, the experience of other organisations and the impression of the assessment team indicate that the motivation of the health staff is very low. This assumption is a 'killer assumption'. If nothing is changed, most of the effort put in specific objective 3 will be wasted and the project purpose will not be achieved. The options are either to forget the whole project or to adapt it. Adapting the project can be done by avoiding the assumption or by addressing it. Avoiding the assumption means removing specific objective 3. This will have consequences for the project purpose, as the two remaining specific objectives are not sufficient to achieve 'improved health care'. Addressing the assumption can be done by including activities that will improve the motivation of the staff to participate in the improvement of health care. This can, for instance, be done by providing a salary or incentive for the health workers.

### layout of the framework

If you use a matrix it is often impossible to show all the project data on only one page. To have enough space to specify activities, make a separate sheet for each specific objective.

specific objective					
activities	resources			cost	assumptions
	staff	materials	transport		

### activities

The work that has to be carried out is defined in the activities. Activities explain **how** you will achieve your targets. Each activity must be linked to a specific objective. All the activities together should be sufficient to achieve the specific objective.

You can find your activities in the problem tree, one level below the specific objectives. If the problem tree was not very extensive, you may not find enough activities. Always check if you have included all necessary activities by asking yourself if the activities mentioned are sufficient to achieve the specific objective.

You can describe activities in detail, or summarise them by the overall result of the activity. Do not give more details of activities than are necessary for the planning of time and resources. Three to ten activities per specific objective is normal.

### **resources**

Resources are the inputs required in terms of staff, materials and services (such as transport) to carry out the activities. A detailed description of resources can be useful in preparing a budget for the project, and for ordering materials and hiring staff. The framework becomes clearer when the resources are grouped according to their nature, for instance staff, transport, materials, etc. When you use the matrix, you can group the resources in different columns as shown above.

Since many activities do not require a person, vehicle or aeroplane for the full period of the project, it can be useful to calculate resources by the number of nurse-days, car-months, flights, etc. You can add these up to show the total resources necessary per specific objective or for the whole project. When listing resources, do not forget to include the resources needed for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

### **costs**

Sometimes it is necessary and possible to calculate the cost per activity or specific objective. More often this is not necessary and a general calculation of the project costs, based on the total resources, is sufficient. The *Estimate of Project Expenses*, a spreadsheet in PlanPerfect, is the standard MSF tool for calculating the total costs.

### **preconditions**

Preconditions are the conditions which have to exist for you to be able to carry out the project activities. Just like assumptions, preconditions are outside factors that influence the success of your project but which you are unlikely to be able to influence. If your assumptions are not fulfilled, you can implement your activities but outside factors will affect the result of your actions. If preconditions are not fulfilled, you cannot even carry out your activities because of outside factors.

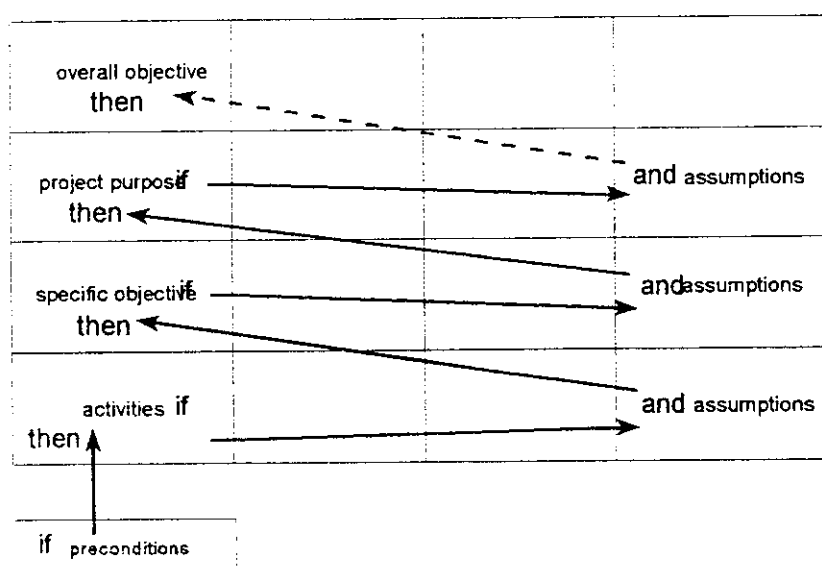
In general you can say that in emergency projects where the objectives are simple but the circumstances difficult (insecurity, difficult access), preconditions play an important role. In rehabilitation or development projects, where the problems are more complicated and the circumstances are easier, the assumptions have a larger impact on your project.

Some preconditions apply to a particular activity. For instance, if you want to construct a clinic, a precondition is that you find some skilled construction workers. Other preconditions apply to the whole specific objective. For instance, 'the security situation allows travel in the area'. There is no space in the logical framework for preconditions, so mention them at the bottom of the page under the activities.

## Check the logic!

A logical framework is not ready until you have checked and, when necessary, corrected the cause and effect linkages between the different components. To check the matrix, read it from the bottom up, and from left to right. Enter the framework at the bottom with the preconditions: **If** the preconditions are fulfilled **then** the activities can be carried out. Next check the level of activities: **If** each activity is successfully and timely completed **and** all assumptions are fulfilled **then** the specific objective should be achieved. One level up, check the specific objectives: **If** each specific objective is achieved **and** all assumptions are fulfilled **then** the project purpose should be achieved. At this level other factors not included in the logical framework also play a role.

Note that the last cause-effect arrow in the diagram is dotted. Having the project purpose and the assumptions fulfilled does not necessarily mean that the overall objective is achieved. At this level other factors not included in the logical framework also play a role.



## Example of a logical framework

The following example of a logical framework is based on the situation described in the problem tree on page 12. Keep in mind that it is just an example. You might want to make a different, more thorough, logical framework yourself for a similar project.

<b>Overall objective:</b> Improved health status of the 30,000 persons in the two camps in the capital.			
<b>project purpose:</b> Mortality due to epidemics reduced.	<b>indicators of success:</b> Total mortality due to dysentery, measles, cholera and other communicable diseases below 1/10,000/day within one month.	<b>sources of verification:</b> Deaths registration / population estimate.	<b>assumptions:</b> - Sufficient food supply. - No fighting in the camp.
<b>specific objective 1:</b> Good sanitation in the camp	- 1 latrine/100 persons. - No evidence of defecation outside latrines in the camp.	Weekly monitoring reports (MSF).	- Oxfam provides sufficient, clean drinking water within 2 weeks. - No large influx of new refugees.
<b>specific objective 2:</b> Measles outbreaks prevented.	Vaccination coverage among children of 6 m - 12yr > 90%, within 2 weeks.	Vaccination records / estimated population <12yr	
<b>specific objective 3:</b> Early warning system in place.	- No. of cases of main epidemic diseases reported daily from each camp. - Outbreaks recognised within 2 days from reaching treshhold.	- Daily health surveillance records & graphs (MSF). - Registration books clinics - Outbreak reports (MSF).	
<b>specific objective 4:</b> Adequate response to epidemics.	Treatment, case finding and if necessary isolation centres, operational 2 days after an outbreak notification.	Health surveillance data and weekly activity reports.	

Below each of the specific objectives. The costs per activity are not calculated. In this case the staff was the limiting factor, so a separate column for staff was added.

<b>specific objective 1:</b> Good sanitation in the camp.			
<b>activities:</b>	<b>resources:</b>	<b>staff:</b>	<b>assumptions:</b>
Construct 100 communal latrines	20 roles of plastic, 200 slabs, 10 m3 timber, 100kg nails, tools, 2 pick-ups x 3 months.	logistician x 3 months 14 labourers x 3 months	Population willing to use latrines.
carry out health education campaign	40 pairs boots & gloves, 3 megaphones, posters.	nurse x 1 month 30 CHW's x 1 month	

**Preconditions:** Soil is suitable for digging latrines.

<b>specific objective 2: Measles outbreak prevented.</b>			
<b>activities:</b>	<b>resources:</b>	<b>staff:</b>	<b>assumptions:</b>
Recruit and train 2 vaccination teams.	stationery, furniture, 2 trigano tents.	1 nurse x 1 week 20 health worker x 1 week	Population willing to have children vaccinated.
Conduct vaccination campaign	vaccines, cold chain equipment, injecting materials, furniture, tents, landcruiser x 3 weeks.	nurse x 2 week, logistician x 2 weeks, 20 health worker x 2 weeks	

<b>specific objective 3: Early warning system in place</b>			
<b>activities:</b>	<b>resources:</b>	<b>staff:</b>	<b>assumptions:</b>
Make case definitions & forms	computer and printer, photocopier, generator.	1 med. coord. X 1 week	Trained and recruited health staff continue to work in the camp.
Recruit and train health staff for home visits.	14 pairs of boots, education materials, stationery.	1 nurse x 1 week, 14 health workers x 3 months	
Daily collection of data.	1/7 land cruiser x 3 months (1 hour/day)	1/7 driver x 3 months	
Interpretation of data, supervision, weekly reports	see activity 1	1/7 nurse x 3 months (1 day/week)	

<b>specific objective 4: Adequate response to epidemics.</b>			
<b>activities:</b>	<b>resources:</b>	<b>staff:</b>	<b>assumptions:</b>
Prepare intervention scenarios for most likely epidemics.	library kit, extra copies MSF guidelines, stationery	med. coord. x 1 week logistician x 1 week	
Train staff in interventions.	Educational materials, stationery	nurse x 1 week, logistician x 1 week	
Calculate and prepare emergency stocks.	Drugs, cholera kits, chlorination kit, plastic, water bladders, tents, safe storage.	Logistician x 1 month 4 guards x 3 months, storekeeper x 3 months	
Identify and prepare treatment / isolation sites.	10 Shovels & pickaxes, plastic, 100 fencing poles, barbed wire, 20 empty barrels.	1 logistician x 2 week 10 labourers x 2 week	
Active case finding.	megaphones, boots	nurse x 1 week, 20 CHW's x 1 week	
Intervene when necessary.	Drugs, furniture, stationery, landcruiser x 2 weeks.	nurse x 2 week, logistician x 2 week, 20 CHW's x 2 weeks	

**General preconditions:** Security situation allows travel by MSF staff to and from camps.  
UN is willing and able to transport MSF staff and materials by plane into the capital.

## 7 Proposal

A project proposal has to serve many purposes. Initially, it is submitted to MSF head quarters for comments and approval. If approved, it is used to justify a request for funding, either from MSF's own funds or from another donor. Finally the proposal is used to inform, and get approval and cooperation from (local) authorities and counterparts. These different purposes require different proposals. For practical reasons try to limit the number of proposals and keep them as similar as possible. If you want to provide a recipient of a proposal with specific information, consider mentioning it in the covering letter or in an annex, instead of changing the proposal. Writing a proposal can be a lot of work, especially if you have to make many corrections and alterations. You can reduce these by sending a copy of your logical framework to headquarters as soon as possible. This way you may already receive valuable comments before you have finalised your proposal.

### **detailed or vague?**

The information that you give in the proposal should not be just a reflection of your knowledge on the subject. It should be adapted to the purpose of the proposal. The project purpose and specific objectives are the backbone of your proposal. In addition, the justification for the project, given in the background information and problem analysis/project justification, is important to obtain approval and funding. Do not go into details in the background information. Information on how the project will be carried out is mainly reviewed to see if the project is feasible and if the requested budget is justified. Do not include a detailed workplan in the proposal; this will limit your possibilities for changing implementation tactics later. If you are uncertain about implementation tactics, or if you foresee a need for changes, include a (mid term) evaluation and resulting adaptation of the project.

### **short!**

Keep your proposal short. The people to whom you submit your proposal receive many documents each day. If your proposal is too long they will not read it, or will only read parts of it. Normally proposals for MSF projects are between five and ten pages long. If you have important background information, summarise it in the proposal and present the full version as a separate document.

### **the outline**

The outline of a standard proposal is given below. If the proposal is for a small or simple project you can combine the paragraphs on background and problem analysis and throw implementation, time schedule and resources together.

#### **Project summary**

(1 page)

Should give a clear overview of the main characteristics of the project on one page. List the title, location, period, target population, project purpose, specific objectives (and sometimes activities), total budget, submitting agency (MSF) and contact person.

**Background**

(1- 2 pages)

Give a brief description of:

- area (size, geography, climate, economy, politics)
- population (size, distribution, tribes or nationalities, sources of income, urban/rural, refugee/settled/nomadic/displaced)
- history (especially the events that led to the current situation)
- health situation (main problems, facilities, ministry of health activities)
- position of MSF in the area (past and present activities)
- exploratory mission, if applicable (date, type of information gathered)

**Problem analysis / project justification**

(1/2 page)

This section should justify the project. Use the information from the problem tree to describe the main problems, their effects, causes and the way they are related. Give a brief summary of the strategical considerations for selecting these problems: seriousness of the problems, capacity of the population to cope, assistance given by other organisations/government, and expected future developments.

**Project description**

(1-2 pages)

Describe the contents of the logical framework:

- target group
- overall objective
- project purpose (including indicators, sources of verification and assumptions)
- specific objectives (including indicators, sources of verification and assumptions)
- activities (per specific objective)

**Implementation strategy**

(1 page)

Describe how you will execute the activities, including the role of other organisations, counterparts and beneficiaries. Briefly explain the arrangements for logistics and administration. Mention how the project will be managed, who will get reports and at what intervals and how the project will be monitored and evaluated. If the project has different phases, explain the structure and reasons for phasing the project.

**Time schedule**

(1/2 page)

A proposal needs only a very general time schedule. Use a table, listing the main activities in the left column and days, weeks or months in the top row.

	january	february	march
vaccination			
sanitation			
em. preparedness			



**Resources**

(1 page)

This paragraph should provide the link between the project and the budget and should justify the budget. Group the resources according to their nature, preferably following the same categories as in the budget. Briefly explain why the resources are needed and what they will be used for. Describe which resources are already available and where they come from. Do not forget to mention resources made available by MSF or other organisations.

Some donors have specific wishes regarding purchasing. If you will follow these particular rules, mention them here. If necessary, also mention the destination of project assets at the end or handover of the project.

**Budget**

(1 page)

Enter all the resources needed and their prices into the *Estimate of Project Expenses (EPE)* spreadsheet in order to calculate the total budget. When submitting a proposal to MSF headquarters, include the whole EPE. When submitting a proposal to a donor, include only a budget summary giving the totals per budget line. The EPE has a summary on the first page, but usually this has to be adapted.

Some donors have different and very specific wishes about the way they want to have the budget presented. If this is the case, you will have to recalculate the budget according to the budget lines of the donor. Be sure to mention the currency, and to include a contingency of between 5 and 15%. Again, different donors have different rules regarding contingency.

**Annexes**

Most of the modern readers will appreciate a map of the area, which can be brought in an annex. Other annexes could include relevant data and graphs.

**Approval**

Send the first draft of the proposal, a strength and weakness analysis and the EPE to the project manager in Amsterdam. The project manager will submit them to the different departments and will relay their comments, together with his/her own comments, back to you. It may take several adjustments before proposal and budget are approved. Here it will pay off if you have kept head- quarters up to date on developments and if the medical and logistics-technical coordinators already have agreement from their departments. The head of operations gives the final approval. You can introduce the proposals to donors and, if necessary, to local authorities and counterparts after you have this approval from headquarters.

The time this procedure takes depends on the urgency of the project. Emergency projects should be approved (or rejected) within 48 hours after submitting. For large, long term or rehabilitation projects, the approval process will take one week at the most.

## 8 Implementation

In managing the implementation of a project, (specific) objectives play a key role. Management based on the objectives means that performance is measured only against achieving the objectives. If this is done strictly, it will help to show flaws in the project design (impossible objectives) or implementation (practical constraints) at an early stage, when it is still possible to make adjustments. It is the explicit responsibility of the MSF team in the project country to achieve the objectives. Monitoring project progress is done through meetings, reports and visits. The country manager is responsible for ensuring that monitoring is carried out.

### workplan

Make a workplan based on the logical framework. Divide the workplan according to each objective, making separate sheet for each one. For each objective, assign a responsible person. This can be the project coordinator for most objectives or, for instance, a nutritionist for a feeding component, or a logistician if an objective focuses on water and sanitation.

List the activities in chronological order, and give more detail than when preparing the logical framework. For each objective, list the resources and staff required.

specific objective			
Activity	resources	resp. person	deadline

Put a deadline on each activity. In large projects, assign a person to be responsible for timely execution of each activity.

Part of the workplan should be a detailed time plan. List all the activities from the above mentioned sheets, and add columns for days, weeks or months. As you plot out the time needed for each activity, pay attention to overlapping activities that depend on the same resources or staff. You will find that some activities can only start after others have ended, which will slow down implementation.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
train. mat.		■	■	■				■				
select CHWs				■	■			■				
training						■	■	■	■	■		
MOH exam								■			■	

Other limiting factors to consider are rains which limit transport, seasonal economic activity (harvests), migration, holidays, elections etc.

Based on the overall workplan and time frame, you can now make detailed workplans

for separate components, for instance a training course or construction work. It can also be useful for team members to make a personal plan and time schedule based on the overall workplan. Be sure to reserve time for activities like travel, report writing and vacation in the individual workplans.

## Meetings

Conduct regular project meetings in which all the persons responsible for the implementation of the project come together and discuss progress. You can have project meetings monthly, weekly or even daily in short, fast changing projects.

A lot of time is lost in meetings which do not have a clear structure or purpose. You can use the specific objectives to structure the meetings. In a project meeting, review all the objectives. The person responsible for the objective presents the progress and explains how this compares to the workplan and time schedule. Try to get an understanding of the constraints and how they can be overcome. If necessary, take the decision to change activities and the tactics of implementation right there in the project meeting. This is only possible for activities; you cannot change specific objectives or the project purpose without approval from headquarters and donors! End each meeting with a review of the project purpose. Is it still possible, given the progress made so far, to achieve the project purpose on time? If not, make suggestions for changes to the project and discuss these with headquarters. A fixed format like the one below will help to keep meetings structured.

project:	date:	location:
introduction:		
security/politics/.....:		
objective 1:	responsible person:	
progress:	constraints:	action points:
objective 2:	responsible person:	
progress:	constraints:	action points:
project purpose:		
progress:	constraints:	action points:

## Reporting

Many different types of reports circulate in MSF. With regards to projects there are the 'internal reports' between staff working in the project and the coordinators, and there are 'external reports' that are sent to headquarters, donors and counterparts.

The format of internal reports and the frequency of reporting depends on the size and type of project. Often volunteers and key local staff report monthly to their coordinator. This can be the medical or logistics-technical coordinator, the project coordinator or the country manager. These reports should contain a summary of the activities of the past period, a description of problems encountered and a plan for the next period. Attached to these reports are data and statistics such as malnutrition rates, clinic attendance figures or stock levels. The narrative part of these reports should be about one A4 page long.

The person who has overall responsibility for the project (project coordinator or country manager) prepares regular project reports. Depending on the type of project and donor requirements, they are written every month or three months. The reports contain background information about the project area, new developments and such relevant topics as security or politics. The core of the report is an overview, according to each specific objective, of activities in the past period, constraints encountered and what has been done to overcome them, and the plan for the next period. Changes in implementation tactics or in the time schedule should be mentioned explicitly.

The reports are sent to the project manager, who distributes them to the relevant departments in headquarters. Sometimes donors or counterparts in the project country require a project report. Make sure you edit the report to remove internal MSF matters, politics and other sensitive issues before distributing it.

## Evaluation

During an evaluation the impact of the project is reviewed. This requires more than just recording the execution of activities and the progress made towards reaching the objectives, which is already done during regular monitoring. An evaluation also looks at external factors that can influence the impact of the project. Since the recommendations made as the result of an evaluation will determine the future of the project, an evaluation should also contain information on expected developments, both in the project and in the external matters. The logical framework is a good basis for the evaluation. The outcome of an evaluation usually relates to the specific objective or project purpose, rather than the activities. An evaluation however should also address the relevance of the programme in the light of the total needs of a population and the context in which it takes place. A midterm evaluation can lead to an adaptation of the project purpose or specific objectives. An evaluation at the end of the project period will either contain or lead to a new problem analysis. The outcome of this analysis will determine whether the project should be extended, handed over or stopped.

## Logical framework layout in WP5.1

The layout of the logical framework is not half as important as its contents. Nevertheless, many people get stranded, trying to produce a nice looking framework on their computer. Below, some brief tips that may help you.

To be able to make a logical framework you have to be able to do 3 things: turn your page sideways (landscape position), reduce the size of your letters (so you can fit in a bit more) and make a nice table.

We assume here that you are using Word Perfect 5.1 under DOS (the standard MSF set up), that you have no mouse and that you have only a basic knowledge of WP. First a few general points about WP:

- Each command that you give becomes valid from the point where your cursor is at that moment. It stays valid until you give an opposite command.
- If you cannot remember a command press **F3** twice, to get an overview of the function keys. **Spacebar** takes you back to the document screen.
- Usually pressing **escape** gets you out of trouble.

### Turn your page sideways.

Position your cursor at the top of the page. Press **Shift F8, 2, 7**. Use the arrow keys to select one of the possible paper sizes. Select a 'landscape' size, like A4-land. Press **enter** three times to get back to the document screen.

### Switch to a smaller font

First type the title and all other text that you want to add at the top of the framework in a normal size. Then position your cursor where you want to start your framework. Press: **Control F8, 1** (size), and **4** (small) or **5** (very small).

### Construct a table.

Without moving the cursor, press: **Alt F7, 2** (table), **1** (create), fill in the number of columns: **4**, **enter**, fill in the number of rows: **2+one** for each specific objective, **enter**.

A table appears on your screen, with an explanation of the commands at the bottom. This is the table edit screen. You can now change the appearance of your table, but you cannot work on the contents. A short overview of edit commands:

**Control + arrow**: changes the width of the selected column.

**Insert**: inserts another column or row from the point where the cursor is.

**Delete**: deletes the selected column or row.

**3**: gives another menu where you can edit the lines that border the selected column. There are many more possibilities and you should experiment a bit to get acquainted. Press **F7** to leave the table edit screen, and start work.

## Put text in the table

You will see that the table does not fit on your screen anymore, because you are now working on a 'page on its side'. You can jump from one cell to the next with the **tab** key. **Shift tab** makes your cursor jump the other way.

The height of the cells will be adapted automatically as you type in more than one line of text. If you want to adjust the width of rows, you have to go back into the table edit screen. Do this with **Alt F7** while the cursor is on the table. Use **F7** to leave the screen.

You can look at the result of your work by pressing **Shift F7, 6**. Use the numbers **1, 2** or **3** to zoom in or out. In this preview screen you cannot edit the text or table. Return to the document screen by pressing the **spacebar** twice.

If you want to put text under the table you may want to return to the original letter size again. Put the cursor under the table at the bottom and press: **Control F8, 1, enter**.

To add another table with, for instance, one of the specific objectives or a time schedule change the font, and construct a table as described above.

Good luck.