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Guidelines

On the Provision Guidance and Monitoring of EU-funded Projects

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Guidelines on the Provision Guidance and Monitoring of EU-funded Projects

Internal Guidelines

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Guidelines on the Provision Guidance and Monitoring of EU-funded Projects

Internal Guidelines

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PREFACE

The Internal Guidelines was developed during the period September 2011 – February 2012. The process of developing the guidance consisted of six steps led by the Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) Regional Office with assistance from the national office colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[1], Serbia and Turkey, as follows:

1. *Developing the concept for the internal workshop* (September and October 2011)
2. *Selecting expert participants for the internal workshop (*November 2011)
3. *Delivery of the internal workshop (25th November, a* list of facilitators and participants is provided in Annex 1)
4. *Drafting the guidelines (December 2012 by the facilitator of the workshop,* and distributed by the TACSO Regional Office to all participants in the workshop for their comments in early January 2012.)
5. *Finalising the guidelines* (late January 2012)
6. *Distributing the guidelines* as follows:
    - By e-mail to all the TACSO national offices
    - Posted on the TACSO Web site
    - Attached to the TACSO 2 First Interim Report

[1] hereinafter referred to as Macedonia

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the European Commission's (EC) assistance has been around for a relatively long time and various M&E methodologies have evolved, aiming to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of this assistance thus contributing to its greater transparency and accountability. From the M&E system of 1999 focusing mainly on progress and aid efficiency, the EC started to move towards setting up a performance-based monitoring system. As of 2002, the performance based monitoring system or more commonly known as the "result-oriented monitoring" system is largely applied by the EC as a method for assessing the operations financed under different EC instruments, including the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

Together with evaluation, monitoring is an important part of the EU Project Cycle Management (PCM), which is used to describe the management activities and decision-making procedures during the lifecycle of a project and helps to ensure that:

- Projects are supportive of the overarching policy objectives of the EC and of development partners;
- Projects are relevant to an agreed strategy and to the real problems of target groups /beneficiaries;
- Projects are feasible, meaning that purposes can be realistically achieved within the constraints of the operating environment and capabilities of the implementing agencies;
- Benefits generated are likely to be sustainable

From the very beginning, TACSO has been assigned the important task of supporting and monitoring EU-funded grant projects and providing guidance to CSOs in all aspects of project implementation. The aim is to raise standards and performances of EU-funded projects and to improve project management and monitoring, to create learning for the design of subsequent activities and to improve CSOs' accountability to both the EU and their own project beneficiaries and constituencies. Due to these responsibilities, in 2010 TACSO developed a Toolkit (by Bill Sterland) for delivery of capacity assistance to CSOs for improved management and monitoring of IPA funded projects that provides a set of suggested training and consultancy activities, with guidance on methods and methodologies in carrying out the capacity-building interventions related to project management and monitoring.

According to the updated needs assessments conducted by TACSO national offices in 2011, the main recommendations of relevance for TACSO regarding organisational and human capacities of CSOs is to provide technical assistance for the improved capacity of CSOs/CSO networks to develop internal Monitoring and Evaluation systems, with a special focus on the development of indicators, impact measurement, baselines and reporting.

In addition, according to the TACSO 2 Terms of Reference, the TACSO team is obliged to "provide guidance to EU projects ..... and to offer assistance for monitoring and guidance visits to IPA funded projects (once reconfirmed by the EU delegations)....This assistance may only be provided for grants for which the EC is a Contracting Authority. It is expected that the monitoring and guidance will allow TACSO to provide the EC with recommendations that could be used in programming, guidelines for applicants, etc."

Taking into consideration all of the aforementioned, the TACSO Regional Office organised an internal workshop to develop internal guidelines for TACSO staff on supporting these kinds of activities/events on November 25th in Zagreb. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Jasenka Perović, Regional Office CSO Capacity Building Expert and attended by 10 participants, including TACSO staff from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey as well as outside resource persons with different kinds of expertise, experience and capacity related to provision of guidance and monitoring of EU-funded projects.

More details about the workshop participants can be found in Annex 1.

For the purpose of this document, we shall concentrate on the provision of guidance to EU-funded projects, as well as on monitoring of the same, thus excluding the evaluation.

Each segment of the document related to the practical provision of support will be divided into two components:

1. **Project guidance**
2. **Project monitoring**

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of these internal guidelines is to standardise the approach of all TACSO offices when implementing activities to support EU-funded projects by providing guidance and monitoring services.

These guidelines address how TACSO sees its role and contribution, what kind of support TACSO should provide, and in what way in order to contribute to enrich projects' quality.

1.3. Key terminology

According to the EuropeAid Project Cycle Manual, the definition of monitoring and evaluation can be summarized as:

	Monitoring & regular review	Evaluation
Who?	Internal management responsibility at all levels	Usually incorporates – external inputs (objectivity)
When?	Ongoing	Periodic – mid-term, ongoing, ex-post and upon completion
Why?	Check progress, take remedial actions, update plans	Learn broad lessons applicable to other programmes/projects as an input to policy review Provide accountability
Link to Logframe objective hierarchy	Inputs, activities, results	Results, purpose, overall objective (& link back to relevance)

Main differences:

Evaluation	Assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability of aid policies and actions
Monitoring	Ongoing analysis of project progress towards achieving planned results with the purpose of improving management decision making

2. The Values that TACSO Promotes in the Context of Providing Guidance and Monitoring of EU-funded Projects

2.1. What are the quality attributes, criteria and standards we believe should be nurtured in the implementation of EU-funded projects?

The TACSO national offices should ensure that beneficiaries of this service understand that the project should aim for or should incorporate criteria and standards corresponding to the quality attributes[2] associated not only with project implementation, but also with the phase of project formulation. The main two quality attributes around which the provision of guidance to and monitoring of EU-funded projects are:

Feasible – the project is well-designed and will provide sustainable benefits to target groups *(project formulation phase)*

Effective and well-managed - the project is delivering the anticipated benefits and is being managed well (*project implementation phase)*.

In addition, it is important that beneficiaries also understand that the key factors affecting **sustainability** of project benefit streams are integrated within all project attributes, standards and criteria.

One can ask why TACSO should deal with project formulation since the project guidance is provided by TACSO after projects are approved, i.e. after the projects are designed. The practice shows that many CSOs face problems in project implementation since they realise that there are omissions in their project design..

2.2. How do we decide who will benefit from our services?

Services related to the provision of guidance and monitoring of EU granted projects can be delivered: 1) based on a Delegation of the European Union (EUD) request or 2) based on the selection of the TACSO national offices, but the bottom line is that the services are provided only to the projects whose contracting authority is the EUD or corresponding national body on behalf of the EUD.

TACSO national offices have a very little influence over the selection of the first group of projects.

When dealing with the second group of projects, selection of participants should be conducted based on an open call. There are no clear set of criteria that can be applied across all TACSO national offices, and it will very much depend on the local context. The only suggestion would be to keep diversification among recipients of such TACSO services as large as possible.

2.3. What is TACSO's position in providing guidance and monitoring of EU-funded projects?

TACSO national offices can either:

- provide guidance to the implementation of EU-funded projects:
- **pro-active** – an initiator or enabler of activities that will lead to possible modifications of the project after the project is awarded and to lay ground for the project implementation
- **reactive** – a coach or mentor to CSOs who are EU grant recipients but have difficulties in project implementation
- can conduct actual external monitoring of the EU funded projects.

[2] for a detailed list of criteria and standards corresponding to these two attributes, please refer to Annex 2 of this document

3. Putting Values into Practice

3.1. TACSO's role in providing guidance to and monitoring of EU-funded projects

In order to maximise the application of identified values when providing guidance and monitoring support, TACSO will play different roles depending on the type of support:

1. Guidance to EU-funded projects –a '**capacity builder**' in any or all aspects of project management.

2. Monitoring of EU-funded projects – an external project **monitor**.

3.2. Critical issues to EU-funded projects

Project guidance

In order to provide proper guidance to EU-funded projects, we shall concentrate on and summarise factors influencing good and successful projects but at the level where TACSO national offices can intervene once the projects have actually been awarded. Those two levels are project formulation (with limited TACSO intervention) and implementation, and the factors are:

- Overall project feasibility
- Stakeholders and partners selection and management
- Institutional/organisational capacities
- Complementary with other ongoing and planned activities
- Project implementation strategy
- Objectives' hierarchy, not affecting the basic purpose of the project
- Resources and cost requirements
- Overall project management, coordination and financial arrangements
- Monitoring, evaluation and auditing arrangements
- Risks assessment and risks management
- Effectiveness
- Sustainability (economic/financial, environmental, technical and social)

It is important to keep in mind that any suggestions to the improvement of project design have to be in accordance with Article 9. of the General conditions of the Grant contract.

Project monitoring

Monitoring should:

- Identify success and problems during project implementation;
- Inform and contribute to timely decision making by project managers to support implementation;
- Provide accountability for the resources used and results achieved;
- Ensure stakeholder awareness and participation.

Monitoring, therefore, needs to be accompanied by regular reviewing and reporting.

As stipulated by the EuropeAid PCM manual, monitoring should focus on collection and analyzing information on:

- Physical progress (input provisions, activities, undertaken and results delivered) and the quality of process (i.e. stakeholder participation and local capacity building);
- Financial progress (budget and expenditures)
- The preliminary response by target groups to project activities (i.e. use of services or facilities and changes in knowledge, attitudes or practices)

- Reasons for any unexpected or adverse response by target groups, and what remedial actions can be taken.

When conducting monitoring, reviewing and reporting it is important to:

- Keep in mind users of information
- Build on local information systems and sources
- Collect as much information as possible from available resources
- Triangulate, i.e. if possible and cost-effective, collect information from more than one source and through more than one model
- There must be a plan against which performance can be assessed

A cross-cutting critical issue to keep in mind is to avoid any potential conflict of interest that can occur in a situation where TACSO national office(s) will be requested by the EUD to conduct monitoring of an EU-funded project to which they have provided or are providing guidance to as well.

3.3. TACSO's strategies and tools in providing guidance to and monitoring of EU-funded projects

Project guidance

Strategies and tools that TACSO offices could use in providing guidance to EU-funded projects are:

Strategy	Description	Tool	When	Intervention output
PROACTIVE	Offer TACSO services to CSOs – EU grant recipients prior they run into the problem. This would create possibility to re-examine awarded project and to make possible project modifications mainly to the project formulation, and to plan and develop implementation tools.	**Presentation** on important issues for successful projects **Trainings** for interested organisations **Coaching** for interested organisations	Project Kick-off meeting Inception phase Inception phase	Changes in: - logframe - action schedules - allocation of resources - stakeholder involvement M&E system in place, and of better quality
REACTIVE	Offer TACSO services upon request of the grant recipient who has specific problem in project implementation	**Trainings** for interested organisations **Coaching** for interested organisations	Throughout the implementation of the granted project Throughout the implementation of the granted project	Improvements in reporting (narrative and financial) Improvement of project management and financial arrangements Improved project strategy

Each TACSO national office should develop its own criteria for selection of a strategy and tool(s) it intends to apply in providing guidance to EU-funded projects taking into account the resources available for this kind of support.

The criteria should be in line with these internal guidelines, while tools should be in line with the Toolkit for delivery of capacity assistance to CSOs for improved management and monitoring of IPA funded projects.

When providing guidance to EU projects the EU Project Cycle Management Manual should be used as a base document (for guiding questions you may consider using in the provision of guidance to EU-funded projects, which are generated out of the Manuals, please refer to Annex 3).

Project monitoring

TACSO national offices could provide monitoring services to EU granted projects, if it is requested by the EUD.

When providing such services, the following is suggested to be taken into consideration:

- Develop a monitoring system so it enables you to:
    - Clarify project scope – stakeholders, institutional capacities, project objectives and resources
    - Understand the nature of organisational relationships, management arrangements and capacity constraints
    - Determine the information needs of project implementers and other key stakeholders
    - Review existing information collection systems and procedures
- Use the following monitoring tools:
    1. Analyze the existing situation
    2. Examine the logframe
    3. Look for the activity schedule
    4. Look for the resource and budget schedule (for greater details related to actions from 1 – 4 please consult the session 7.2.1 of the EuropeAid PCM manual, page 102)
    5. Examine the Risk management matrix and how does it correspond to the real life project situation
    6. Apply data analysis to generate a performance indicator, type of analyses that can be used are:
        a) Planned vs. actual
        b) Percentages/ratio
        c) Trends over time and comparisons between periods
        d) Geographic variances
        e) Group variances
        f) Work-norms and standards

        Description of suggested analyses can be found in the table presented in the EuropeAid PCSM manual page 105
    7. Use a checklist when planning a monitoring meeting, use a question checklist for semi-structured interviews, and field monitoring checklist – a sample checklist can be found in the table presented in the EuropeAid PCSM manual pages 105-108.
    8. Review administrative and management records in accordance to the questions suggested on page 110 of the EuropeAid PCM manual.
    9. Examine how and suggest that the beneficiary organise regular review meetings in accordance to the procedure described under chapter 7.2.7 of the EuropeAid PCM manual page 111.
    10. Examine how and suggest that the beneficiary develops progress reports and updates plans in accordance to the procedure described under chapter 7.2.8 of the EuropeAid PCM manual page 113.
    11. Initiate monitoring assignment with a briefing meeting, and end it with a debriefing meeting with the beneficiary.

3.4. Recommendations and lessons learnt by TACSO concerning project guidelines and monitoring of EU granted projects

To learn more about needs and lessons learnt related to monitoring and evaluation specifically, please refer to the Monitoring and Evaluation Needs Assessment Report, produced by TACSO BiH.

The list of recommendations will grow and evolve throughout TACSO 2.

4. Documenting and Reviewing Support

4.1. Documenting/Recording provided support

Project guidance

It is important that TACSO interventions serve as a catalyst for change and provide a space for learning and knowledge-generating experiences; therefore it is of great importance to properly document support in order to ensure capturing and sharing lessons learnt within TACSO and with the external audience of TACSO. In order to achieve this, it is important to standardize the documenting/recording practice among all TACSO offices. It is suggested to include the following structure when documenting/recording provided support:

- Purpose of support
- Selection criteria and process applied
- Financial contribution
- Brief description of scenario
- Principles addressed
- Applied strategies and tools
- Major challenges in addressing/applying principles/strategies/tools
- Lessons Learnt
- Major achievement(s)
- Suggested follow up actions plane

Project monitoring

When it comes to the reporting document for monitoring EU-funded projects, it is often prescribed by the Delegation of the European Commission who requests monitoring services from TACSO national offices.
Good orientation documents that can be considered to be used during the monitoring task are the documents developed by the EU Monitoring Unit . It is comprised of:

- Project Synopsis
- Background Conclusion Sheet
- Monitoring Report
- Annex – contacts and interview
- List of documents reviewed.

Should TACSO staff wish to use these documents during the monitoring task, a written approval for their utilization should be obtained from the EUD.

4.2. Capturing and sharing lessons learned within TACSO

Lessons learned include both good practices, and the practices that were not successful and should be avoided in the future It is important to share both within TACSO through e-mails, consultative meetings, quarterly and interim reports, as well as during the review meeting at the consultative meeting scheduled for September 2012 (suggested in 4.3 below).

4.3. Reviewing these internal guidelines and its update

It is recommended that these guidelines should be reviewed in September/October 2012, in line with lessons learned by the national offices. This review could be implemented by the TACSO regional office, with input from the national offices at the Consultative Meeting planned for September 2012. A final review of all of TACSO 2 should be conducted by the TACSO regional office, with input from the national offices, in the last two months of TACSO 2. In parallel to its review, the guidelines should also be updated.

5. Annex 1. – Facilitators and participants at the internal workshop

Facilitators:

Name	Position and Organisation/ Institution
Ms. Jasenka Perovic	CSO CB Expert, TACSO Regional Office

Participants from TACSO:

Name	Position and Organisation/ Institution
Ms. Slavica Drašković	Resident Advisor BiH
Ms. Irena Slunjski	Project Officer Croatia
Ms. Sunchica Sazdovska	Resident Advisor Macedonia
Ms. Zorka Rašković	Resident Advisor Serbia
Ms. Neslihan Ozgunes	Resident Advisor Turkey

Participants as recourse persons

Name	Position and Organisation/ Institution
Mr. Ranko Milanović-Blank	Fundraiser, Peace Academy Foundation
Ms. Mihaela Janša	Project Manager, Strengthening Serbia EU Civil Society Dialogue Project
Ms. Lejla Kusturica	Project coordinator, Heinrich Boll Foundation
Ms. Aleksandra Hasečić	Centre for Environmentally Sustainable Development (CESD)

6. Annex 2 – Quality Attributes Criteria and Standards for Formulation and Implementation of a Project

	Quality Attributes, Criteria and Standards at Formulation
B	**FEASIBLE – The project is well designed and will deliver tangible and sustainable benefits to target groups**
6	**The objectives (Overall objective, purpose and results/outputs) and the work programme (activities) are clear and logical, and address clearly identified needs**
6.1	The project's Overall Objective is clearly linked to a relevant policy or sector objective, and thus demonstrates how the project will contribute to a long term development outcome
6.2	The project's purpose clearly specifies a direct benefit(s) that the target group(s) will derive from the implementation of the project, and is consistent with the analysis of problems facing the target group(s)
6.3	The project's results describe tangible improvements to services, facilities or knowledge that will directly support the achievement of the project's purpose
6.4	A feasible work programme (set of activities) is described which will allow project results to be delivered over a realistic time-frame
6.5	The project design is not overly prescriptive, and allows for necessary changes to operational plans to be made during implementation
7	**The resource and cost implications are clear, the project is financially viable and has a positive economic return**
7.1	The resources (such as staff, equipment, materials etc) required to implement the project are clearly described, including an analysis of resource contributions from each of the primary stakeholders (e.g. local communities, partner government institutions, other donors and the EC)
7.2	Project investment and operating costs are described and analysed in sufficient detail, including the financial contributions of different stakeholders
7.3	Recurrent cost implications are described, and an assessment made of the local capacity to meet these costs at the end of donor financing
7.4	An appropriate level of Financial and/or Economic analysis of the project's costs and benefits is provided, which shows that the project is financially viable and has a positive economic return
8	**Coordination/management and financing arrangements are clear and support institutional strengthening and local ownership**
8.1	Management responsibilities are clearly defined (including responsibilities of different stakeholder groups), build on the analysis of institutional arrangements and capacity, and promote local ownership and capacity building
8.2	The arrangements for coordinating the work of different stakeholders are clearly described and practical to implement, and allow project managers to access support from senior decision/policy makers (i.e a Governing Body/Steering Committee)
8.3	Arrangements for regular review, operational work planning and budgeting 'fit' with local systems and support the ability of managers to respond to lessons learned and changing circumstances on the ground
8.4	Financial management arrangements are clearly specified (in particular for providing an adequate level of overall internal control) and promote accountability and transparency
8.5	Audit arrangements are clearly specified (including responsibilities and coordination arrangements where

	various stakeholders are involved)
9	**The monitoring/evaluation and accountability system is clear and practical**
9.1	The project's Logframe Matrix includes a set of indicators and sources of verification (namely for the purpose(s) and results), which will allow management information to be collected and used in a timely and cost-effective manner
9.2	Adequate resources are included within the project design to support the implementation of the performance measurement (monitoring and evaluation) system
9.3	Roles and responsibilities for collecting, recording, reporting and using the information are clearly described, and build on/support existing systems (capacity building)
9.4	The information needs of target groups are given adequate priority, and include providing the means by which they can voice their opinions and concerns (local accountability)
9.5	Effective anti-corruption monitoring tools and audit requirements are proposed/in place
10	**Assumptions/Risks are identified and assessed, and appropriate risk management arrangements are proposed**
10.1	Assumptions in the Logframe Matrix highlight key factors outside the direct control of project managers which have the potential to impact negatively on the project (risks)
10.2	The importance of different risks is assessed, including the degree of negative impact they might have on achieving objectives
10.3	Arrangements for managing risks are clear
11	**The project is environmentally, technically and socially acceptable and sustainable**
11.1	An appropriate level of environmental impact analysis has been carried out, and an environmental management plan is/will be in place
11.2	The project is technically feasible, meets relevant industry standards and uses/introduces technology that is appropriate to the needs/resource endowment of target groups
11.3	Gender analysis has been carried out, and the project has a clear strategy to ensure benefits are appropriately shared by women and men
11.4	The project has a clear strategy to ensure benefits are appropriately targeted at identified vulnerable groups (i.e the poor, women, children, disabled people, the old or infirm)

	Quality Attributes, Criteria and Standards at Implementation
C	**EFFECTIVE and WELL MANAGED _ The project is delivering the anticipated benefits and is being well managed**
12	**The project remains relevant and feasible**
12.1	The project remains consistent with and supportive of current policy and programme priorities
12.2	The project strategy and objectives remain relevant to the needs of beneficiaries (target group and ultimate beneficiaries), including women and men and vulnerable groups such as the disabled
13	**Project objectives are being achieved**
13.1	Results are being delivered as planned, are of good quality and the project's target group find them relevant to their needs
13.2	The results being delivered are contributing effectively to the achievement of the project purpose
13.3	The project is likely to contribute to the overall objective, and there is evidence that the project's ultimate

	beneficiaries will indeed benefit from the project (including women and men and particular vulnerable groups such as the disabled)
14	**The project is being well managed by those directly responsible for implementation**
14.1	Inputs are being provided on time and within budget
14.2	Activities are being implemented on time
14.3	Relevant information on project achievements/results is being collected and used, and is accessible to stakeholders in an appropriate format and language
14.4	Operational plans and budgets are reviewed and updated on a regular basis (including risk management plans), and reflect lessons learned from experience on the ground
14.5	Transparency and accountability systems (including financial management systems and independent audit) are adequate and effective in identifying/deterring corrupt practices
15	**Sustainability issues are being clearly addressed**
15.1	Financial sustainability issues are being addressed (e.g. affordability, govt. budget commitment, cost-recovery mechanisms, private sector management, etc)
15.2	The technology being used/promoted by the project is appropriate and can be maintained
15.3	Issues of environmental and social sustainability are being appropriately assessed and managed
15.4	Institutional strengthening and capacity building activities (e.g. policy and systems development, training of trainers) are being effectively carried out, and skills transferred
15.5	There is a plan for the phase out of any external assistance/TA, and the handover of any management responsibilities they may have
16	**Good practice principles of project cycle management are applied by EC Task Managers**
16.1	Terms of Reference for EC funded studies/work are clear and comprehensive, and understood by concerned staff
16.2	The project is appropriately assessed through the project management cycle, using agreed/relevant Quality Assessment processes and criteria
16.3	The quality of key project documents (e.g. Financing Proposals, Operational plans, Progress reports and Mid-term evaluation reports) is assessed and meets established quality standards
16.4	Use of the Logical Framework Approach and its associated tools are being appropriately applied through the project cycle to support analysis and decision making
16.5	Contracts are being effectively managed, including the production of high quality contract documents, briefing of contractors, review of reports and timely payment of certified invoices

7. ANNEX 3. – GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF GUIDANCE TO EU-FUNDED PROJECTS.

Analysis of stakeholders and partners selection and management

- Who are the stakeholders and what are their basic characteristics?
- What are their interests and how are they affected by the project problem(s)?
- What is their capacity and motivation to bring about change?
- What are the actions that will address stakeholder interests?

Assessment of Institutional/organizational capacities

- Are the institutional capacities of the implementing organisations known to the organisation itself - here we are talking about the structure of formal and informal rules and regulations, linkages between organisations, influence of the policy framework, laws, culture and convention?
- Can institutions (organisation/stakeholders) manage desired change foreseen under the project?

Please refer to the checklist provided in the EuropeAid PCM manual pages 96-98 as an indication of questions that need to be considered.

Project implementation strategy

- Does the suggested project strategy correspond to the institutional capacities?
- Does the project promote empowerment, capacity building, effectiveness and efficiency?
- Does the project promote participation and facilitation (for specific facilitation and participation requirements please refer to chapter 8 of the EuropeAid PCM manual, page 118)

Assess Objectives' hierarchy

- Intervention logic
- Is there clear 'means-end' logic?
- Does the intervention logic sound coherent and connected when read from the bottom up, and vs. applied if/then principle?
- Is it viable that the project managers can have control over the inputs, activities and results stated in the logframe?
- Are the indicated inputs sufficient for the activities?
- Would implemented activities lead to the indicated results?
- Does it seem that the results, once produced, are sufficient to achieve the project purpose, i.e. specific objective?
- Is the overall objective wide enough, but still it is clear that the project purpose will contribute to the achievement of the overall objective, but it is not the only condition that needs to be met?
- Is there a clear distinction between the project results and contracted outputs?

Assumptions (for assessing the assumptions please consult Figure 30 in the EuropeAid PCM manual, pg 80.)

- Are the identified assumptions really external factors that can influence the project?
- Are all identified assumptions realistic?
- If there are unrealistic assumptions, then most probably something is wrong with the project design.
- Are there any 'killing assumptions' identified, or possibly unidentified?
- When reading objectives and assumptions, could the following be read as correct – activities + assumption at the level of activities will lead to the results; results +assumption at the level of results will lead to the specific objective (project purpose); specific objective (project Purpose) + assumption at the level of the specific objective will lead to the overall objective?

Indicators, objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs)

- Who is going to use the information? - It should not be for a donor, but should be owned by the local stakeholders, so are the indicators defined based on their needs?
- Is the OVI specific to the objective it is supposed to measure?
- Is the OVI measurable (either quantitatively or qualitatively)?
- Is the OVI available at an acceptable cost?
- Is the OVI relevant to the information needs of managers?
- Is the OVI time-bound – does one know when it can be expected when objective/target is to be achieved?
- Are the OVIs at each level of the objectives' hierarchy independent from each other?
- Are the OVIs at the level of the overall objective stated as the impact indicators?
- Are the indicators at the level of the specific objective (project purpose) stated as outcome indicators?
- Are the OVIs at the level of activities stated as output indicators?
- Would information collected under each indicator be the same regardless of who will collect it?

Sources of verification (SoV)

- Who is going to use the information? - It should not be for a donor, but should be owned by the local stakeholders, so does the local information system support the provision of information needed?
- Does the SoV indicate how the information will be collected, who should collect it, and when/how regularly?
- Does the collection of information relay on the existing system, or it requires the creation of parallel systems or the implication of unnecessary costs?
- If the information of an indicator is found to be complicated or too costly, then it should be suggested to change the indicator.

Resources and cost requirements

- Is the activity schedule clearly linked to the delivery of project results?
- Is it possible to identify main activities within the activity schedule?
- Are the main activities broken down into manageable tasks?
- Is there clarity in sequencing and dependency?
- Is the order of undertaking of activities clear, logical, viable?
- Is the dependence of the beginning of some activities over the completion of others justifiable and accurate?
- Is there omission among Activities and tasks?
- Is there sufficient independence between activities?
- Is there a resource competition (are some experts or equipment scheduled to do different tasks at the same time)?
- Do milestones provide sufficient measure of progress or are they positioned at the sufficient target level for the project team to aim?
- Is the action plan feasible given the human resource indicated?
- Does the allocation of tasks take into consideration the capabilities, skills and experiences of each member of the team?
- Does the team understand what the requirements from their side are?
- Is the level of details with which the relevant tasks are specified sufficient?
- Are the estimated costs based on carful and thorough budgeting?
- Is the allocation of costs between the different funding sources clear?
- Is the net recurrent costs implication clearly specified, so it is clear to the implementing partner what future impact it will have to its budget upon project completion?

Monitoring, evaluation and auditing arrangements

- Is there a monitoring system in place that:
- Clarifies project scope
- Understands the nature of organisational relationships, management arrangements and capacity constrains
- Determines the information needs of project implementers and other key stakeholders
- Reviews existing information collection systems and procedures
- Are there perhaps developed and documented monitoring system guidelines and formats
- Are there plans to provide training and resources to support systems development and implementation?
- Is there an evaluation system in place that ensures impartiality and independency, credibility, participation of stakeholders, and usefulness?

Risks assessment and risks management

- Is there a proper risk management matrix in place (please refer to Figure 42 of the EuropeAid PCM manual, pg. 104 for example format of the Risk management matrix)?

Overall project management, coordination and financial arrangements

- Is the project administration in accordance to the specific and general conditions of the grant contract?
- Do the financial and narrative reports correspond to the set annexes of the grant contract?

Contact details

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