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Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework

Abstract
{Excerpt} The designand monitoring framework is a logic model for objectives oriented planning that structures the main elements in a project, highlighting linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results.

Logic models (results frameworks) neither guarantee a good project (or program) design nor replace other instruments of project management. But they help to analyze problems; identify desired outcomes; establish a logical hierarchy of means by which the desired outcomes will be reached; identify clusters of outputs; determine how accomplishments might be monitored and evaluated, and planned and actual results compared; flag the assumptions on which a project is based and the associated risks; summarize a project in a standard format; build consensus with stakeholders; and create ownership of the project.

Keywords
Asian Development Bank, ADB, poverty, economic growth, sustainability, development

Comments
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Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework

by Olivier Serrat

The design and monitoring framework is a logic model for objectives-oriented planning that structures the main elements in a project, highlighting linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results.

Logic models (results frameworks) neither guarantee a good project (or program) design nor replace other instruments of project management. But they help to analyze problems; identify desired outcomes; establish a logical hierarchy of means by which the desired outcomes will be reached; identify clusters of outputs; determine how accomplishments might be monitored and evaluated, and planned and actual results compared; flag the assumptions on which a project is based and the associated risks; summarize a project in a standard format; build consensus with stakeholders; and create ownership of the project.

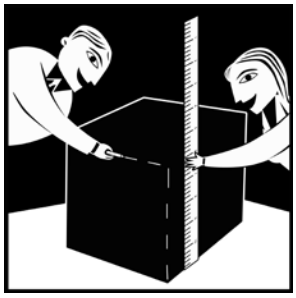

Table 1: The Design and Monitoring Framework

Design Summary	Performance Targets and Indicators	Data Sources and Reporting Mechanisms	Assumptions and Risks
Impact: The broader impact of the project at a sectoral and national level	Measures of the extent to which the project has contributed to the impact	Sources of information and ways to gather and report it	Assumptions and risks at the impact level are beyond the control of the project but essential to attainment of the impact
Outcome: The expected outcome at the end of the project	Conditions at the end of the project indicating that its outcome has been achieved	Sources of information and ways to gather and report it	Assumptions and risks at the outcome level are those that relate to attainment of outcome targets
Outputs: The direct results of the project (works, goods, and services)	Measures of the quantity and quality of outputs and the timing of their delivery	Sources of information and ways to gather and report it	Assumptions and risks at the output level are those that are external and beyond the control of the project implementers but essential for successful attainment of the outputs
Activities with Milestones: The tasks executed to deliver the outputs identified			**Inputs:** The various resource categories required to undertake the project should be identified

Source: Author.

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They also support creative analysis. It is a rare project that unfolds exactly according to plan. During project implementation, one must pay close attention to the cause-and-effect relationships between inputs, activities with milestones, outputs, outcome, and impact. Repeatedly, one must make certain that inputs for activities are deployed successfully. Or one must adjust the means of attaining the outcome, including the definition of outputs, the mix of activities, and the indicators needed to measure accomplishment of the newly defined performance targets. Administration can become complex and it helps to have structure. Because of this, it is useful to deepen and extend typical logic models, for example, using the tool depicted below. (It lists only two targets per output). For each output, one can examine methodically whether targets are being achieved, how the activities are being implemented, and how activities might be improved. One can then itemize individual action plans, which should be monitored constantly.

Table 2: Analysis of Output Accomplishment and Improvement of Activities

Output			Nº
Targets			Nº
			Nº
Is the output being accomplished?	Yes	Partially	No
Are the targets being achieved?			
Nº			
Nº			
How are the targets being implemented?			
Strength		**Weakness**	
Nº	Nº		
Nº	Nº		
How can the activities be improved?			
Proposed Change		**Justification**	
Nº	Nº		
Nº	Nº		
Action plan to improve the activities			
Action		**Target Date**	
Nº	Nº		
Nº	Nº		

Source: Author.

Systematic analysis of output accomplishment leads to telling improvements in relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, thereby achieving impact. It clarifies materially the chain of causality in a design and monitoring framework.

Further Reading

ADB. 2007. *Guidelines for Preparing a Design and Monitoring Framework*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/guidelines-preparing-dmf/guidelines-preparing-dmf.pdf

For further information

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Asian Development Bank

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