Stages of project development, methodology for the consultancy process

1. Preface

The aim of this chapter is to help you organise the planning processes of cross-border projects. It is based on the experiences gathered by regional development professionals in the border region between Slovenia and Hungary managing the project cycle.

This chapter will form the methodology behind the project development carried out in the framework of the REGNET project, but is not trying to cover all issues of its topic, and it is certainly not the only best way to pursue project planning. Users are invited to adapt this approach to objectives-oriented planning to their own requirements.

When you have completed the planning process, you should be able to set out your project's objectives in a systematic and logical way.
Thus, at the end of the project development process your project should:

- Reflect causal relationships between the different levels of your project's objectives
- Identify necessary activities and assign respective responsible partners and required inputs
- Indicate how to check whether these objectives have been achieved, and
- Establish what assumptions outside the control of the project may influence its success.

More on this in a moment.

2. Two main stages of project development

Before submitting an application to any programme, future project holders need to identify and formulate an efficient goal setting, partnership and organizational arrangements for the envisaged projects receiving financial assistance from the European Union. This has to be an **analytical process** and this document is aiming to provide a **set of tools** that can be used in project development and further on, during implementation, as well.

In programmes dedicated to cross-border co-operation where good projects provide well-fit joint solutions to common challenges in two or more national states, problem and objective oriented project planning is a good tool for the development of a balanced project which has measurable objectives and takes into account assumptions and risks.

From past experience of earlier CBC programmes it is obvious, that a project is more likely to succeed and be sustainable if it is based on consensus of partners and target groups affected. The ideal situation is one where all project partners work towards a common goal for the time it takes to carry out the project. They should work on a clear understanding of what is to be done together, irrespective of all parties retaining their different interests and viewpoints.

The following two phases are carried out progressively during the identification and formulation of a project and ensure the adequacy of project design and therefore also help the project's implementation as well as its ex-post evaluation

1. **Analysis stage and**
2. **Planning stage**

The two main stages of the process are summarised in the table below:

ANALYSIS	PLANNING
Stakeholder analysis – mapping potential significant stakeholders; assessing their interest, capacities	**Developing project intervention logic –** defining project structure, building up the logic of actions and results and risks, setting measurable indicators and their values
Analysis of problems - Problem Tree that consists of key problems, constraints and opportunities; determining logical relations (causes and effects)	**Scheduling implementation –** draw up the sequencing of activities, considering their duration, interdependencies among them; assigning responsible partners to each activity
Analysis of objectives – Solutions Tree. It consists of developing answers to identified challenges/problems;	**Scheduling needed resources –** or "Budgeting". from the activity schedule, developing input schedules and project budget
Formulation of an intervention strategy - identifying different strategies to achieve solutions; selecting most appropriate strategy.	

The stage of **Analysis** shall be carried out as a learning process, rather than as a simple set of linear 'steps'. For example, while stakeholder analysis must be carried out early in the process, it should be reviewed and refined when new questions are asked and/or new information comes to light.

In the stage of **Planning,** results of the analysis are turned into an operational and effective plan that is ready for implementation. This stage is again an iterative process, as it may be necessary to review and revise the scope of project activities and expected results once the resource implications and budget become clearer.

2.1 Analysis stage

Preparatory activities

Before starting analytical work with stakeholder groups, it is essential that those involved in the identification and formulation/preparation of the project are aware of the policy, sector and institutional context within which they are undertaking their common efforts. Scope and depth of the preliminary analysis will be primarily dependent on how much information is already available at planner and partners and its quality.

Since the ETC Operational Programme for the border region for the period 2014-20 is not available yet, key documents to use and to refer to would be local and county/regional level strategies in place and most importantly the strategic document of the REGNET project, entitled „Expert Documentation". Since the REGNET project's aim is to create a development based on networks, the goal of its strategic document is strengthening of cooperation and building partnerships with concrete actions.

The strategic document of REGNET helps to avoid the situation where each project planning partnership has to undertake a 'new' analysis of problems, challenges, sector policies and institutional framework of the border area. Instead, they are provided with existing information and they can work on ensuring that the development of the project idea takes account of these elements of the planning environment. The document includes an analysis of developmental potentials of the region, the definition of main obstacles and advantages for the development, the identification of objectives and priorities within the time-frame of the project, as well as identification of specific areas in the region, most suitable for development and cooperation.

Stakeholder Analysis - aim and key steps

Normally, there will be at least four groups of project partners participating in CBC project who as stakeholders have a direct interest in the success of the project, who should facilitate the project's implementation with

supporting actions or simply showing good will, and whose own interests may be affected by the project. Stakeholders can be defined as any individuals, groups of people, institutions or firms that may have a significant interest in the success or failure of a project (either as implementers, facilitators, beneficiaries or adversaries).

tarting at the level most directly affected by a project, they include:

- Target groups, which would have specific needs that they want the project to address

- Beneficiary partners who own the project and whose functions include turning the target groups' needs into technically specific statements of requirements and providing support to the target groups in line with the requirements

- Supporting/strategic partners who have a basic interest or high relevance in the implementation of the project but are not involved with direct responsibilities in the project implementation. These partners can also be state authorities or regulatory bodies responsible for a sector or territory.

In an ideal case, all of the project partners work together already in the analysis stage to develop a common understanding on the situation the project will respond to. The more precisely they do it, the better! Again, experience shows that a project is more likely to succeed if it is based on consensus.

The main assumption behind undertaking a stakeholder analysis is that different organisations, groups have different interests, concerns, competency fields and capacities, thus that these need to be explicitly clear and understood during the process of problem identification, goal setting and strategy definition. Basically, the following two questions are asked by the stakeholder analysis:

- „Whose challenges are being analysed?"

- „Who will gain or loose on the outcomes of proposed project, and how?"

There are suggested key words to be used to differentiate between different types of stakeholders. A summary of the **terminology** is provided below:

1. Stakeholders: Organisations, institutions (or even individuals) that might – directly or indirectly, positively or negatively – affect or be affected by a project or programme.

2. Beneficiaries: Are those who benefit in whatever way from the implementation of the project. Distinction may be made between:

(a) Target group(s): The group of organisations or people who will be directly positively affected by the project at the level of the project objective.
(b) Final beneficiaries: Those organisations or people who benefit from the project at the level of the economy or society.

3. Project partners: Those who implement the projects in-country (who are also stakeholders, and may be a 'target group').

4. Strategic partners: Partners who have a basic interest, competence or other high relevance in the implementation of the project but are not involved with a budget, or direct implementation responsibilities in the project implementation

How to conduct the stakeholder analysis

Working on the analysis stage of project development may initially take the form of a brainstorming session. Generally, brainstorming and similar events have been found suitable for consolidating information, crystallising a common understanding of a given situation, underlying interests and viewpoints, and deciding on the practical steps to be taken. They have also proven successful to clarify needs and strategies with the directly affected people, or to inform funding organisations on pending decisions and major results of the planning. From experience, there are some rules for conducting such events.

Therefore we strongly suggest to conduct the analysis and planning stages in participatory brainstorming sessions, where the two stages – after sufficient preparatory work and all necessary partners involved - can be even merged into a one day event.

The first rule for productive brainstorming is that all participants may openly formulate concerns, ideas, opinions, or proposals, without having to face immediate criticism. A neutral moderator should guide the debate on stakeholder analysis, on which challenges (opportunities or problems) are to be tackled with the project. He or she would be responsible for maintaining a positive atmosphere, and channeling the discussion into a productive direction. The moderator can be an independent expert or consultant, who may later on also assist in the finalisation of the project plan.

The circle of project partners might include the representatives of the target group, representatives of the beneficiary partners that will be carrying out the project, strategic or co-financing partners if any, national and/or regional authorities, businesses or non-governmental organisations. It is important to strike the right balance between involving all relevant organisations and at the same time selecting knowledgeable people with a cooperative attitude.

Among different existing tools of stakeholder analysis the stakeholder analysis matrix and SWOT analysis are among the most widely used. In using any of these tools, the quality of information obtained will be directly determined by the scope and depth of information collection. Again, that is why the effective use of participatory methods and group facilitation tools can help ensure that all the interests, concerns, views and perspectives of each relevant stakeholder are clearly and adequately represented, mutually understood and considered.

As illustrated in the example table below, the stakeholder analysis table contains the basic characteristics of the stakeholders, their interests and how they are affected in the challenges the project aims to address, their capacity and motivation to bring about change, and possible actions to address their interests.

The type of information collected, analysed and presented in table below can be adapted to meet the needs of different projects. Additional columns can be added to specifically deal with the different interests of women and men, with different stages of the intervention or to underline linkages between stakeholders and their interests. Later on, when analysing potential project objectives greater focus should be given to analysing the potential benefits and costs of a proposed intervention to different stakeholder groups.

An example for farmers and local food producers can be seen below:

Stakeholder and basic characteristics	Challenges How is the stakeholder affected by the challenges	Interests, possible actions to address them	Competence, capacity and motivation to bring about change
Farming families: families, low income earners, small scale family businesses, organised into informal cooperatives, women actively involved in farming or food processing, marketing	Lack of demand/market access is affecting quality and quantity of production.	Maintain and improve their means of livelihood Support capacity to organise and lobby Joint cooperation activities: product development,, quality management, marketing activities	Limited economic influence caused by weak organisational structure High interest in market access measures
Large scale agricultural and food processing producers Retailers of agricultural and food products Strong marketing powers, Influential lobby groups, Poor social responsibility	Some concern about public image Concern about costs Food and agri-environmental regulations enforced	Maintain/increase profits Raise their awareness of social and local/regional economic impact Mobilise political pressure to influence industry behaviour Strengthen and enforce food- and agri-environmental laws	Have financial and technical resources to cooperate with local product producers/product lines Limited motivation currently
Rural Development Groups (Leader, etc.)	…	…	
Agrcultural Chambers			
State authorities responsible for agricultural production, food processing,, etc.			

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) is used to comprehensive situation analysis, that is, the internal strengths and weaknesses of an organisation/partnership and the external opportunities and threats that it faces. It can be used as a tool for general analysis, and more specifically to look at how an organisation/partnership might address a specific problem or challenge.

When developing cross-border projects it is highly advised to involve all relevant stakeholders from both sides in the SWOT analysis and to make sure that the different national/regional/local perspectives are considered

The quality of information derived from using this tool depends on who is involved and how the process is managed – it basically just provides a structure and focus for discussion. This information is most often reflected in a table format as in the example below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Knowledge on local species, traditional methods	Limited lobbying and marketing capacity
Focused on the specific concerns of a relatively homogenous group	Agri-environmental management skills
State provides a basic small scale credit facility	Lack of formal cooperations or cooperatives
Men and women both represented	Legal status is mixed
	Weak linkages with other organisations
Opportunity	**Threats**
Growing public/political concern over healthy food	Economic influence of sectoral lobby
The area is known as a healthy and well preserved natural environment – positive image	Groups who are opposed to tighten agricultural and food regulations
New markets local agricultural and food products : development of regional cross-border transport links, population in urban centers nearby	New regulations may impact on usage of traditional species/methods

The stakeholder and SWOT analyses both serve to analyze the initial situation they can be used alternatively and parallel to each other.

All subsequent steps required to prepare the intervention strategy and the goal setting of our project should also be related to the stakeholder analysis and/or the SWOT, making them a point of continuous reference.

The stakeholder and SWOT analyses are iterative processes that evolve throughout the stages of the project development. Whenever the project plan needs to be changed the stakeholder analysis should also be reconsidered, as the roles and interests of stakeholders involved in the project also can change and evolves over time. **Thus, stakeholder and SWOT analyses shall be isolated analytical efforts, but processes.**

Problem Analysis

The problem analysis identifies the negative aspects of an existing situation and establishes the 'cause and effect' relationships between the identified problems.

The problem analysis can be considered the most critical stage of project planning, as it then defines all subsequent planning and decision-making on objectives. Again, brainstorming sessions with stakeholders are best suited for the problem analysis. It is vital to make sure that the basic root causes are also identified and not just partial problems or symptoms of a bigger problem.

These sessions should be properly prepared. It is advisable that before the meetings all participants are brought to the same level of understanding about the project idea. The initiator of the discussion – most likely one of the the beneficiary partners– should supply them with written material about the relevant development plans of the government, sectoral or regional authorities, analyses of the project's environment, statistical and financial data, or a summary of past or on-going activities that may be a starting point for the new project. If funding will be sought from external sources, information about the overall aims and operating principles of the funding agencies should be provided, so that the project can be accurately targeted.

A brainstorming communication amongst the project partners will be important from two perspectives:

- It will facilitate the analysis of the problems that are to be resolved through the project, and the determination of an effective strategy for this purpose

- The dialogue between the partners – whose interests or opinions will not necessarily be in line with each other – will create an atmosphere of co-operation that can help to overcome difficulties and find universally acceptable solutions.

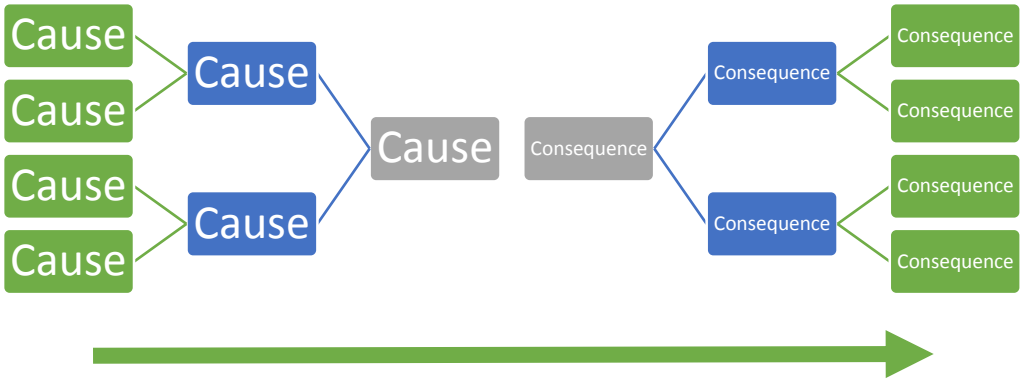
A detailed discussion could easily take several hours, even one or two days! That is why the project planning session could be efficiently organised in a somewhat remote, out-of-the-way location, such as a dedicated conference venue or other meeting place.

All this may cost money, but it is money well spent. Even in the area of non-refundable grants, a good project must start with an investment of human and material resources. There is nothing more expensive than a bad project plan, which will in most cases result in a waste of time, money, and human effort.

As mentioned before, depending on the complexity of the situation to be addressed by the project, preliminary technical, socio-economic studies or assessments might be useful and should be provided to the participants. During problem analysis, problems identified are arranged in a 'problem-tree' by establishing the cause and effect relationships between the negative aspects of an existing situation.

Workshop communication is improved when hearing is supplemented by seeing. Simple visualisation techniques have proven very successful. For instance, participants could be asked to note down their statements on coloured cards that would then be posted on pin boards or the walls of the discussion room. Use at least A4 size cards and thick pens in bright, colours. For the moment, you should keep one side of the papers blank. The statements should not longer than 4-5 words and should clearly visible to everyone. Visualisation prevents any thoughts from being forgotten, and raises the chance that attention will be paid to opinions and viewpoints of participants who would otherwise not speak up.

Logical order of causes and consequences



Steps of a problem analysis	
1	Identify major existing problems, based upon available information. Openly brainstorm problems which stakeholders consider to be a priority. Write down each problem on a separated visual support (paper/cards)
2	Select an individual starter, a focal problem for analysis.
3	Look for related problems to the starter problem: identify substantial and direct causes/effects of the focal problem
4	Begin to construct the problem tree by establishing a hierarchy of cause and effects relationship between the problems: Problems which are directly causing the starter problem are put below -- Problems which are direct effects of the starter problem are put above
5	All other problems are then sorted in the same way – the guiding question being 'What causes that?' If there are two or more causes combining to produce an effect, place them at the same level in the diagram.
6	Connect the problems with cause-effect arrows – clearly showing key links
7	Review the diagram, verify its validity and completeness and make necessary adjustment: Ask yourself/the group – 'are there important problems that have not been mentioned yet?' If so, specify the problems and include them at an appropriate place in the diagram.
8	Copy the diagram onto a sheet of paper to keep as a record, and distribute (as appropriate) for further comment/information

Project actions must be based on the real needs, rather than on the untested a priori assumptions or prejudices of the project partners. Often a useful first step towards the project plan is a discussion of the overall problems of cross border relevance identified in the REGNET strategic document that partners would like to resolve.

Start by assembling the project partners in the same room. Make certain that all have studied the information material provided. Then ask them to express in short, clear statements why the prevailing situation represents a problem from the perspective of overall CBC goals. Avoid rushing them to conclusions on how best to solve the

problems. Take your time for an open discussion, and allow ideas and plans to be shaped by the contributions of all participants.

Using a practical example from a recent programme, the information available might have suggested that secondary education is a high priority throughout Hungary, yet in a given region or among a certain minority group many students do not complete their secondary studies. The question of where the project has to focus is answered from the analysis of why this is so. In this case, it emerged from the discussion that dropout candidates had a certain mind-set and a certain way of behaving, but secondary school teachers were ill prepared for an early identification of both, and did not know how to deal with them. If a project could help to bring about changes in these areas, it would probably remedy a major constraint on the path towards the overall goal of stronger social cohesion.

In principle, no problem statements brought up by the participants during a brainstorming session or a workshop should be thrown out. To this rule, there is, perhaps, a single exception: A problem is often expressed as the lack of resources to solve the problem: We could change the world, if we only had the money and the people to do so. Beware of such formulations! The discussion should lead to specific, well-defined initiatives. For a well-reasoned project, funding or staffing possibilities can be found. The disadvantaged situation of a partnership should never be the main argument behind a project – there are much more effective ways to promote an idea.

The gathering of problem statements should be continued until participants seem to run out of ideas. For an average project, some 15 to 20 problem-statements are needed to describe the situation well. It will be possible to divide some of them into several smaller components, or sub-problems. Stated differently, problems may be part of other, more complex issues. From experience, many problems can be divided into 2 to 4 sub-problems.

When they are on the table, some screening can take place. It is possible that a participant has submitted something very irrelevant. These ideas can be moved to a separate field on the pin board or to a different wall, if the majority of the participants agrees to do so.

There may also be problems whose solution clearly exceeds what can be solved with the project. Such statements should also be kept: They will be very useful when defining the external circumstances of the project, the so-called project environment.

Furthermore, when the problems are on the table it will be possible to arrange them into a structure, where the most complex problems are put at the top, and the most elementary ones at the bottom. The structure can be established by arranging the sheets with the participants' statements into a tree-diagram, well known from mathematics. The diagram is often called a problem tree. An ideal problem tree will have 3 to 5 different levels.

At project planning workshops, ask the participants to do the selecting. What, in their view, is the most complex issue, which should be put to the top of the structure. Then the group should select the problems that are the immediate causes of this main problem, and put them one level below, one next to the other. Subsequently, the next level of problems should be defined, and each statement should be put directly under the relevant higher-level problem – until all sheets are arranged.

When the tree is ready, the participants should verify that it is complete and logically coherent. Starting from the bottom of the tree, read out a group of problems that are connected to the same problem at the next level above.

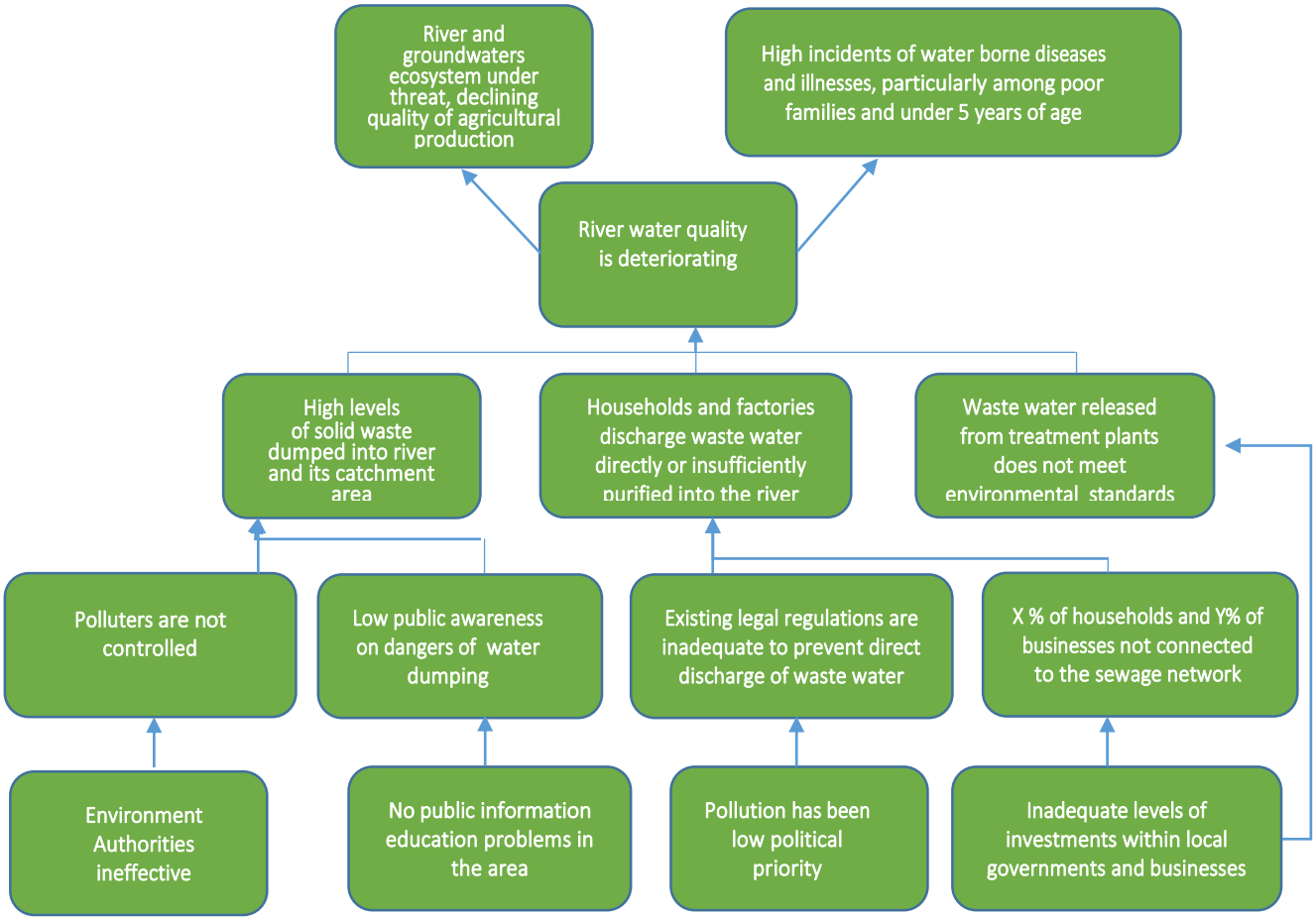
Suppose now that all problems in the problem group are solved, and answer the question: Does this mean that the higher-level problem is also solved? If the answer is yes, you can go on to the next group of cards. If the answer is no, you will have to extend the group of sub-problems with additional problems statements, which the participants should name now. If you have done that, check the problem group again. If the logic is now okay, you should go on to the next groups, and then to the next levels, right until the top of the tree.

A good problem tree can provide a surprisingly clear and convincing analysis of complex situations. It can show that even complicated issues can be divided into smaller problems, which are easier to tackle.

Taking one step after the other, discussing possible solutions to one sub-problem after the other will contribute to the defining the solution of the overall problem. That is how a number of small projects pointing into the same direction can contribute to the achievement of an overall development goal.

Once such starting points have been identified, the next planning step will be to specify the project objectives, strategy, and inputs.

An example for a problem tree of a hypothetic river pollution is illustrated bellow:



Analysis of Objectives

It is understood that a good project plan will not only define problems, but also show a practical way out. If the problems justifying a project intervention can be organised into a hierarchical structure, the objectives of the project should also be presented in such an order. Helpfully, the problem tree can be converted almost automatically into a tree of objectives that will clearly show what and how one should aim for. When stakeholders have identified challenges or problems that the project shall contribute to eliminating, it is time to develop the objectives, to make an objective tree/analysis. If care has been taken on the problem analysis, the formulation of objectives shall not result in any difficulties. The objective analysis is the positive reverse image of the problem analysis.

At a planning workshop, the recommended approach is to take the problem statements one after the other, turn around the sheet, and write on the other side of the paper the opposite of the problem statement, formulated as an action, or as the desired result of the action. Reading the tree from the top to the bottom, complex development objectives can be broken down into immediate goals and results that are to be achieved by specific activities. Read in the opposite direction, it becomes visible what must be accomplished to reach the overall goal. We will show you how to do this.

Perhaps, this is the point where bad project plans are easiest to identify. In a badly prepared project plan, problems, objectives, means, and activities are confused. The rationale behind the individual solutions and the connection between the problems and the proposed solutions will be difficult to understand. If the problem tree included problems outside the scope of the project, there will also be statements of objectives, which are beyond the reach of those who will carry out the project.

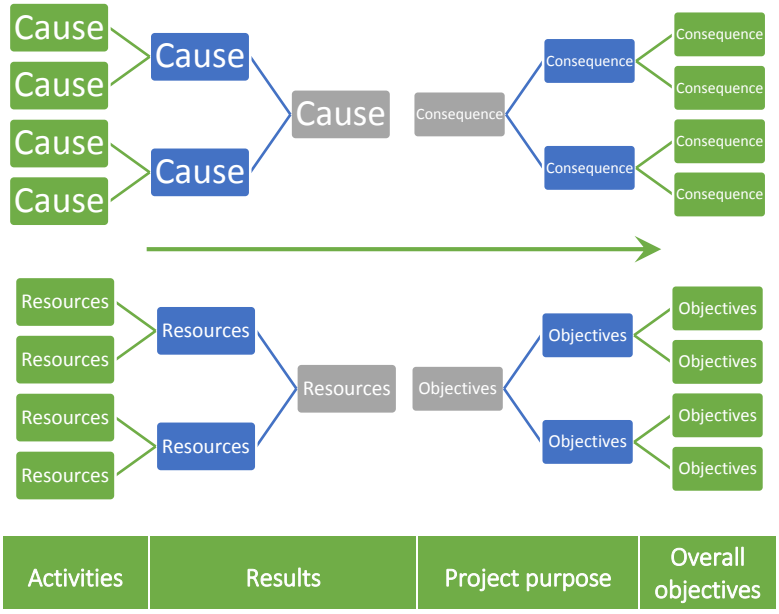
The analysis of objectives is a good method that helps to:

-- Describe the situation in the future once identified problems have been tackled; -- check the logical connections of objectives; and

-- Helps to visualise the relationships in simple a diagram.

The 'negative situations' of the problem tree are converted into solutions and expressed as 'positive achievements'. These positive achievements are in fact objectives, and are presented in a diagram of objectives showing a means to ends hierarchy. It is a tool to aid analysis and presentation of ideas. Its main strength is that it keeps the analysis of potential project objectives firmly based on addressing a range of clearly identified priority problems.

How to turn problems to objectives



Project logic

Activities	Results	Project purpose	Overall objectives

Steps of the objectives analysis with an objective tree	
1	Reformulate all negative statements of the problem analysis into positive ones that are realistically achievable or desired
2	Check the means-ends relationships to ensure validity and completeness of the hierarchy (cause-effect relationships are turned into means-ends connections)
3	Work from the left to right to ensure that all cause-effect relationships become means-ends relationships.
4	Draw connecting lines to indicate the means-ends relationships

The tree of objectives needs to be checked the same way as the problem tree. Each group of statements of objectives should be taken, one after the other, and examined whether achieving them would automatically ensure achieving the objective at the next higher level they are all directly related to. If necessary, it is possible to revise statements made even during the problem analysis (do not forget, this is a learning process) or to add new objectives if these seem to be necessary to achieve the aim at the next level. It might be also relevant to delete objectives which do not seem suitable or achievable.

Keep in mind that a conflict between the overall objective and the more concrete objectives (purposes) and interest of the different stakeholders may exist. Therefore, the analysis of objectives should be undertaken through appropriate consultation with key stakeholder groups. Once complete, the objective tree provides a summary picture of the desired future situation, including the indicative means by which ends can be achieved. Similar to the problem tree, the objective tree should provide a simplified but relevant summary.

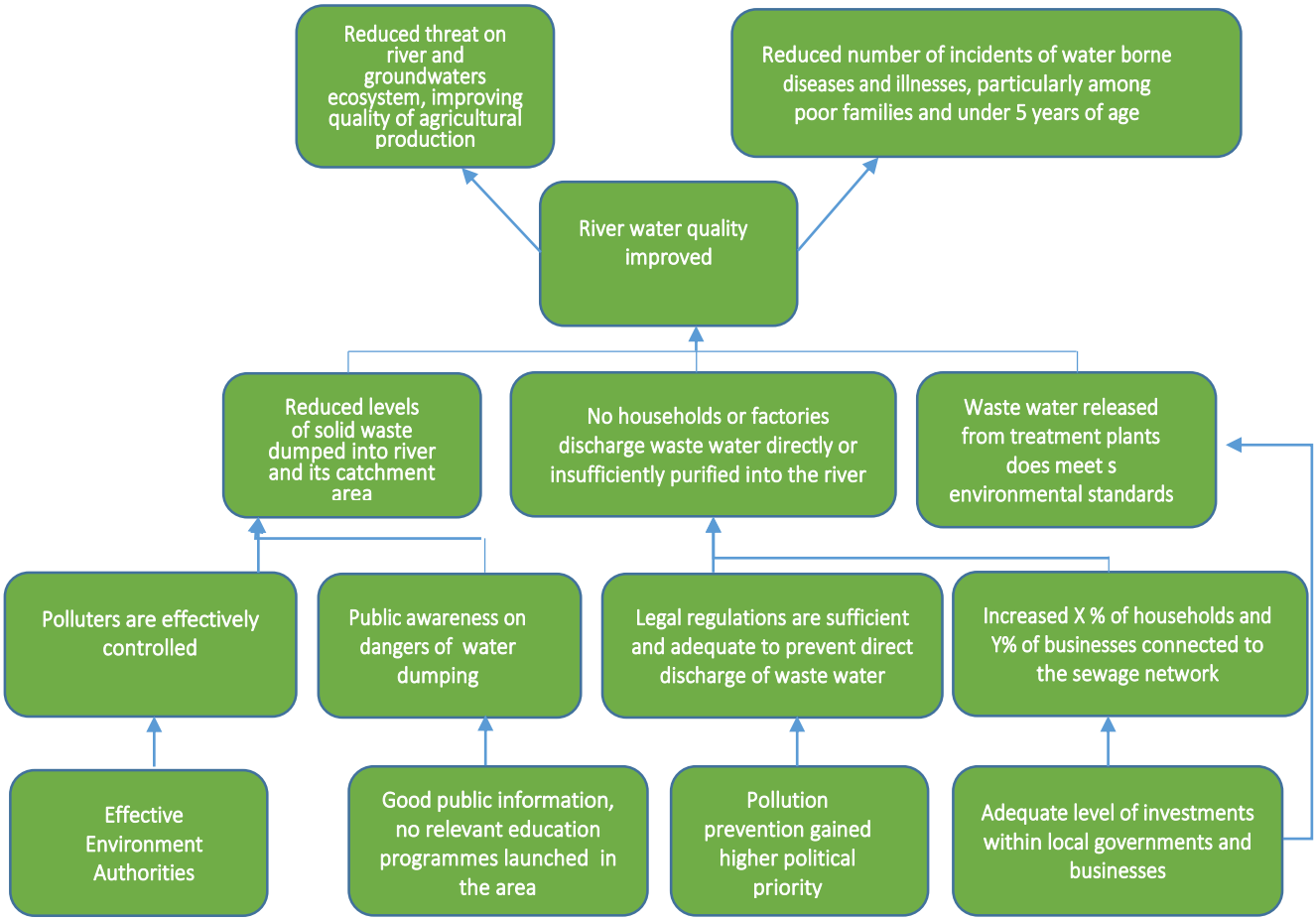
As no project is isolated from its environment, factors outside the control of the project are to be expected anyway. In a good project plan, they must be systematically treated as well. Factors outside the control of the project are called risks and assumptions.

- Risks are factors, whose occurrence will have a negative effect on the project

- Assumptions are factors that must materialise if the project is to succeed.

For off-project risks and assumptions, the project partners can take no responsibility although they are important for the outcome of the project. If risks have a high likelihood, and assumptions are unrealistic, the project itself is called into question.

There may be also risks inherent to the project itself. One such on-project risk exists when the participating partners do not agree and pull in different directions. Another on-project risk is that the partners are unwilling to provide agreed inputs. These self-made reasons for failure can be avoided only by openness, and by always keeping grips on reality. Of course, all partners must fully back the project concept and must really consider it necessary to invest what has been agreed.


Reduced threat on river and groundwaters ecosystem, improving quality of agricultural production
Reduced number of incidents of water borne diseases and illnesses, particularly among poor families and under 5 years of age
River water quality improved
Reduced levels of solid waste dumped into river and its catchment area
No households or factories discharge waste water directly or insufficiently purified into the river
Waste water released from treatment plants does meet s environmental standards
Polluters are effectively controlled
Public awareness on dangers of water dumping
Legal regulations are sufficient and adequate to prevent direct discharge of waste water
Increased X % of households and Y% of businesses connected to the sewage network
Effective Environment Authorities
Good public information, no relevant education programmes launched in the area
Pollution prevention gained higher political priority
Adequate level of investments within local governments and businesses

2.2 Project planning stage - finding the feasible strategy for your project

After drawing up the logical sequence of our means and objectives, the next step is to identify possible alternative options/strategies, to assess the feasibility of them and agree upon one project intervention logic.

The Objective Tree usually shows different clusters of objectives that have an inherent means -end linkage. Out of these possible strategies of intervention the most feasible one shall be selected on the basis of a number of criteria. The most important factors are relevance, likelihood of success, and availability of financial and human resources.

This is can be the most difficult and time-consuming part of project development since a number of compromises often have to be made to balance different partner/stakeholder interests, social or economic demands and resource availability.

Of course, this step is made easier if

- the analysis of problems and objectives happened with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and
- if there is a previously set list criteria against which to assess the merits of different intervention options

Criteria for how to draw up a feasible project

Strategic: Expected contribution to key objectives defined during the analysis of objectives (highest levels of the objective tree), complementarity with other projects or programmes

Effects on target groups: Benefits to target groups, local involvement and motivation, market suitability

Financial/economic: financial sustainability and ability of partners to finance operation costs. Economic return, cost effectiveness, etc.

Institutional: Activities and outcomes can be clearly linked to responsible partners, who have or will gain the sufficient human resources and will have the necessary processes in place (internal procedures, coordination arrangements, etc.)

Environmental: Environmental impact, environmental burden/expected costs or benefits

These criteria should be considered in terms of alternative options for selecting branches of the objective tree for the scope of our project intervention. The alternatives should be assessed and ranked in a simple way (Y/N or bad/good/best). The hardest agreements to achieve can be to decide what should or cannot be included into our project, the above criteria can help this decision.

The work can start with identify different branches of “resources-objectives” in the tree, as alternative options for project components. The participants then can discuss to eliminate objectives which are not feasible by the partners’ activities, have lower priority or are tackled by other projects or programmes. Further on, participants shall examine the effects of the planned activities and respective outcomes for affected stakeholders and target groups.

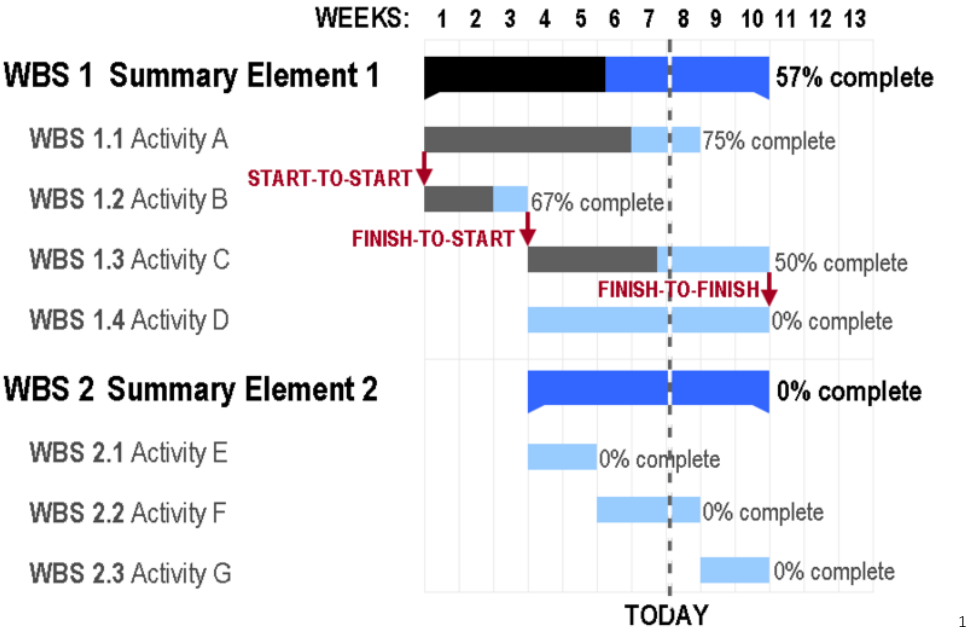
In the optimal case, there should be one project goal defined, would it be necessary to select or formulate more of them, the project can be split into more components with the component goals contributing to a single project objective. In this case, special attention shall be given to establish a sequencing of the different components identifying coordination needs and responsibilities between the components.

Based on the above decisions and findings, participants shall draw up an overall assessment of the feasibility of different alternative solutions. This can happen by selecting one of them as the project’s intervention logic (strategy) or continue working on the most popular alternative option by including additional elements from the objective tree.

Suggested form of simple project presentation (similar to a simplified logframe matrix):

Project strategy	Responsibilities/coordination arrangements	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Risks and assumptions
Overall Objective(s) -			
Project goal(s) - -			
Project results - - -	**Responsible partners per project result**		
Activities - - - - -	**Responsible partners per activity**	**Means/ Costs**	
			Preconditions

In addition a simple implementation schedule using a GANTT-type diagram can be used to draw up the sequencing of foreseen project activities, giving at least a quarterly plan. This chart illustrates the start and finish dates of the elements of a project. This is a basis of the work breakdown structure of the project. More sophisticated Gantt charts also show the dependency (i.e. precedence network) relationships between activities.



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[1] Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GanttChartAnatomy.png

3. Identification of potential partners, joint project development

One of the outputs of the REG-NET project is the map of project partners in the border area Slovenia-Hungary. This database will be very useful for all those starting project development work. The Partner Map can be used to identify potential stakeholders, target groups representatives, possible project partners and relevant state authorities. The map contains contact data, current activities and past experiences of these organisations. An additional help is provided by the Stakeholder analysis carried out in the framework of REG-NET. This document is analysing past project activities and beneficiaries/stakeholders in the border area.

As described in previous chapters, the development of a good project, especially in the area of cross-border cooperation shall be a joint process with relevant stakeholders involved from both side of the border. The analysis of stakeholders, challenges (problems) and objectives as well as the agreement on project content is ideally done together in the frame of one or more facilitated workshop sessions.

In a cross-border case, during the preparing such a session, special emphasis and efforts have to be dedicated to find all potential stakeholders and convince them to come and participate. Organisations that are responsible for various fields of regional, social or economic development (e.g. chambers, agencies, NGOs) can help you to make this happen. These organisations have also been included in the REG-NET Partner Map.

A very important policy context is the overall goal of fostering cross-border cooperation. Basically, all projects supported by a CBC programme have to contribute to this objective. Therefore, during joint project development, we suggest to consider the following categories of possible project results and overall objectives (potential impacts):

Potential CBC project results, that can be achieved directly by the project:

Cooperation networks/partnerships created – classified according the intensity of cooperation:

- Informal cross-border connections created
- Ad-hoc or non-recurring cross-border forums created
- Newly created regular cooperations
- Newly created formal cross-border cooperation structures

Jointly elaborated results of common activities:

- Joint touristic/Local craft/traditional food products
- Joint curricula and training sessions
- Joint marketing efforts
- Joint cultural events
- Increased mutual knowledge of cultural elements of the other side of the border

Potential overall objectives or impacts that projects can contribute to:

- People-to-people connections - the project is successful if participants and target groups consider it to be a driving force of creating new interpersonal relations on both sides of the border. (This can be measured by counting the connections that would have been created later or not at all without the project.)
- Partnership and networking effect - the project is successful if participants consider it to be the primary driving force of creating new cross-border cooperation networks or formal structures. (This can be measured by counting the networks or structures that would have been created later or not at all without the project.)
- Raising competency levels - the project is successful if it has raised the knowledge/competencies/skills of the participants or the target group.