**SIMPLY ABOUT THE COMPLEX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SOCIAL PROJECTS.**

PRACTICAL GUIDE

Almaty, 2021

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Developed by the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia with funding from Tengizchevroil LLP, this guide is part of the ‘NGO School’ program to support Atyrau-based civil society groups.

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**FOREWORD**  
RATIONALE FOR THIS HANDBOOK

NGOs¹ in Kazakhstan receive funding from various sources, including government agencies, corporate foundations, international organizations, and large companies. In line with their missions, NGOs develop and implement social projects to address the needs of their target audiences. Some organizations, particularly charitable ones, rely on crowdfunding through public donations.

Regardless of funding sources, organizations must evaluate² the quality of services provided, the extent to which goals are achieved, and the efficiency of resource allocation. Projects funded through grants invariably require financial reporting, which entails assessing results and the effectiveness of expenditures. Evaluating social projects helps NGOs: Build public trust by demonstrating transparency. Improve project design to better serve beneficiaries. Secure future funding by proving impact to sponsors.

Why Do Social Projects Often Fall Short? Many projects struggle to demonstrate measurable outcomes because NGOs either fail to establish or incorrectly define key performance indicators. A primary reason for public skepticism toward NGOs is their lack of transparency and accountability³. Most NGOs report on outputs⁴ (e.g., number of services delivered) rather than outcomes⁵ (e.g., tangible changes in beneficiaries' lives). For instance, an NGO might show how many people received services but fail to demonstrate how those services improved beneficiaries' circumstances.

This practical handbook combines: Theoretical frameworks for developing robust project logical frameworks⁶.Hands-on exercises with field-tested tips. Designed for NGO teams, it serves both as:. A reference tool for specific evaluation challenges.

A skills-building workbook for direct project applicationThe guide equips organizations to transition from tracking activities to measuring real impact—a critical shift for securing funding and maximizing social value.

While numerous Russian-language project evaluation guides exist—primarily by Russian authors—we identified a critical absence of practical handbooks in Kazakh featuring local case studies and context-specific insights. This need has become increasingly urgent as: 50%⁷ of social projects are now implemented in Kazakh. Kazakh-speaking beneficiary communities continue to grow.

With support from Tengizchevroil LLP under the NGO School program for Atyrau Region, the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (EFCA) is proud to bridge this gap through the publication of this guide—the first of its kind tailored to Kazakhstan’s unique operational landscape.

HISTORY OF PROJECT EVALUATION AND MONITORING IN NGOS

Project and program evaluation was introduced in post-Soviet countries in the 1990s through international organizations such as UNDP8, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank, along with their initiatives. Globally, program evaluation has been practiced since the mid-20th century. In the nonprofit sector, it was adopted from the business world, where financial audits are common.

¹ NGO - Non-governmental organization  
² Evaluation - Systematic assessment of a project's design, implementation, and results  
³ Transparency issues often cited in Kazakhstan's 2022 Civil Society Index  
⁴ Output - Direct products/deliverables of activities (e.g., training sessions conducted)  
⁵ Outcome - Medium-term changes resulting from outputs (e.g., improved skills/behaviors)  
⁶ Logical Framework - Strategic planning tool mapping inputs→activities→outputs→outcomes→impact

⁷ Reference to Kazakhstan’s 2021 language policy reforms increasing Kazakh-language requirements for social initiatives

⁸ UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

In the government sector, evaluation takes the form of budget expenditure audits conducted by the Accounts Committee. In Kazakhstan, mandatory evaluations—as we define them in this guide—apply primarily to large-scale government programs that receive international funding and involve technical consultants. These programs have evaluation standards established from the outset.

In the NGO sector, periodic external evaluations are typically initiated by grant-making organizations, which engage evaluation specialists approximately every 5-7 years. Evaluations are also conducted upon project or program completion to assess effectiveness and impact.

According to international standards followed by major funding organizations, evaluation budgets typically range from 1% to 10% of total project costs. These funds are allocated by the implementing organization itself. For such evaluations, specialized evaluators are engaged.

The Ministry of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan reports that in 2021, government funding for the NGO sector totaled 16.2 billion tenge, supporting 1,851 projects—averaging 8.75 million tenge per project. As these are public funds financed by taxpayers, the government conducts selective monitoring of expenditures through financial reporting by grant-receiving NGOs.

The Role of Logical Frameworks. The most widely used and accessible tool for developing strong projects and outcome-level reporting is the Logical Framework (LogFrame). This approach: Establishes clear indicators for measuring achievements. Serves as both a monitoring tool during project implementation. Provides the foundation for subsequent evaluation.By employing Logical Frameworks, NGOs can improve project effectiveness while ensuring they meet the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements demanded by major donors, including corporate sponsors and international foundations.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION: HOW TO TELL THEM APART?

MONITORING It is a process

EVALUATION It is a one-time action

**Monitoring** is the ongoing process of tracking a project's predefined indicators to assess its progress and performance.

**Evaluation** is a targeted analysis that measures the extent to which actual results align with (or diverge from) intended goals and objectives.

Monitoring refers to the continuous process of tracking and recording predefined indicators to assess a project's progress.  
Practical Example: Monitoring vehicle speeds involves using cameras to record traffic speed data and maintaining statistical records over time.

Evaluation represents a comprehensive analysis that measures effectiveness by comparing results against intended objectives.  
Practical Example: Evaluating speed camera effectiveness requires analyzing the difference in accident rates before versus after installation. Evaluation typically involves either: Comparing baseline and endline data on the target issue, or Comparing outcomes between a target group (project participants) and control group (non-participants).

In simple terms, monitoring involves systematically collecting and recording reliable, objective, and factual data to later assess a project. Evaluation, on the other hand, is about using that data to analyze the project’s effectiveness, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

9 Asian Development Bank standards for evaluating government programs.  
10 Information obtained through an official request.  
11 Monitoring tracks the key indicators selected early on to measure a project’s progress.  
12 *M&E stands for Monitoring and Evaluation.*

EVALUATİNG SOCİAL PROJECTS

Evaluation can be conducted at different levels and take various forms:

EXTERNAL   
Conducted by:

Funding organizations

Regulatory bodies

Independent auditors

Other external stakeholders

EVALUATION

INTERNAL   
Conducted by:

Project management

Board of trustees

Internal accounting audits

Evaluation of Social Projects.Evaluation can be classified as either external or internal relative to the organization being assessed: External Evaluation  
Occurs when initiated and conducted by:Project sponsors/donors,Regulatory bodies,External audit firms,Other third-party entities.Internal Evaluation  
Occurs when initiated and conducted by:The organization's management,Board of trustees,Internal audit department.

Evaluation by Focus Area.Evaluations may target different aspects, including: Large-scale government programs, policies, and strategies,Resource allocation (financial and human),Project results and outcomes,Client needs assessments,Impact evaluations,Staff performance evaluations Scope of This Handbook.This guide focuses specifically on evaluating social projects using the Logical Framework approach - the most commonly requested methodology by donors and one of the simplest evaluation tools to implement.

Practical Tips14

When preparing your proposal include local statistics about the issue you're addressing – this shows donors your work responds to documented community needs.Share real-life examples of how the problem affects beneficiaries – demonstrating your direct connection with those you serve.For ongoing projects, highlight achieved results (outcomes) and long-term impacts – proving funds create measurable change.

THE VALUE OF SOCIAL PROJECT EVALUATION FOR NONPROFITS

[Figure 2]

• Confirm real impact - Verify your project truly benefits the people you serve  
• Assess team performance - Understand what your staff does well and where to improve  
• Strengthen funding proposals - Clearly demonstrate why donors should support your initiative over others  
• Enhance project quality - Continuously refine your approach based on solid evidence

13 Clients, Beneficiaries, Recipients - Specific population groups that NGOs work with through projects, providing them with social services (either paid or free of charge).

14 Authors' Notes

15 Impact - The profound and long-term changes in:The project's target audience.Their living environment or circumstances and other relevant aspects

WHEN SHOULD YOU EVALUATE A PROGRAM OR PROJECT?

Evaluation is needed when:  
• Deciding whether to launch a project  
• Deciding whether to expand a project  
• Deciding whether to continue funding a project  
• A long-running project needs to document achievements and make adjustments.

TO LAUNCH OR NOT TO LAUNCH?

YES | NO  
ARGUMENT 1  
ARGUMENT 2  
ARGUMENT 3

Evaluation is a management tool used at all project stages. Project managers should consistently consider and apply available evaluation methods and results. Below, we'll introduce several evaluation tools applicable at different project phases.

According to Project Management Institute (PMI) standards, projects consist of the following process groups: When progress toward goals encounters obstacles.

PROJECT STAGES:  
16Initiation

Planning  
17Implementation

Monitoring & Control  
Closure

16 Initiation - Early conceptualization and team formation  
17 Implementation - Actual project execution

EVALUATION AT THE INITIATION STAGE

At the initiation stage, the project idea is evaluated for its alignment with the needs of the target audience - the specific population groups who will benefit from the project - and with sponsor interests. At the very beginning of a project, evaluation determines whether the project will effectively address a social problem and whether the proposed solutions are optimal. The weakest aspect of NGO project funding applications in Kazakhstan is the lack or insufficiency of client and beneficiary needs assessment, which leads to ineffective and unsustainable project ideas.

Our experience proves that regular consultations and meetings with the community, as well as beneficiary surveys, are the best sources of ideas for social projects. Discussing the project idea with beneficiaries helps improve the project's design and quality, while also gaining future support from participants. Incorporating feedback from clients, beneficiaries and stakeholders significantly enriches project proposals with valuable ideas.

HOW TO EVALUATE IDEAS & BENEFICIARY NEEDS?

Conduct brainstorming sessions with beneficiaries in focus group format (8-12 people)

RANKING IDEAS

Conduct interviews with key stakeholders: government representatives that clients interact with; representatives of other NGOs working in the same field; representatives of potentially interested sponsors (2-4 people)

Create "problem trees" and "solution trees" in focus group format (8-12 people) Problem Tree  
Branches - represent consequences  
Trunk - represents the core problem  
Roots - represent root causes

Conduct interviews with the most active beneficiaries (5-7 people)

18 There are numerous tools for generating ideas, with one of the most popular current approaches being so-called "design thinking."  
19 Focus group (FGD) - a qualitative method for researching audience opinions

EVALUATION AT THE PLANNING STAGE

At the planning stage, we evaluate risks and determine quantitative performance indicators that will be used to assess the project's success. Risk evaluation involves: Creating a list of potential risks.Determining the probability of their occurrence.Ranking the risks, and Developing strategies for how you will respond if they occur. This applies to both external and internal risks.

Exercise 1.  
Project Risk Assessment

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RISK NAME | RISK TYPE | LIKELIHOOD | RESPONSE STRATEGY |
|  | Internal  External | High  Medium  Low | 1.Proactively eliminate the risk 2. Reduce likelihood of occurrence 3. Actions if risk materializes |
| Budget overrun | Internal | High | 1. Cost-avoidance measures 2. Budget utilization plan 3. Contingency adjustments if exceeded |
| Epidemiological situation | External | Medium | 2. Shift events to online format 3. Adapt activities to restrictions |
| Lack of qualified local staff | External | Low | 1. Train staff at own cost 2. Implement work-payback contracts |

The quantitative outcome indicators for a project (OUTCOME) are determined based on the project's scope, scale, timeline, and budget, as well as past experience from similar projects implemented by your or other NGOs. We recommend formulating project goals in measurable terms—this helps clarify how effectiveness will be assessed: either 1) by comparing indicators at the beginning and end of the project, or 2) by comparing the target beneficiary group with a control group (a similar group of potential beneficiaries in comparable conditions where the project was not implemented). For the second approach, it's particularly important to develop a clear methodology for measuring or obtaining the specific indicator.

Next, you should develop indicators for project activities and deliverables (OUTPUT). These will reflect the tangible outputs produced: number of campaigns conducted, training sessions held, brochures and posters distributed, social media and media publications20, and other concrete results.

mpact-level indicators (IMPACT) typically represent long-term perspectives. These relate to evaluations conducted over extended periods, usually 5 to 10 years, and apply to large-scale, comprehensive programs capable of transforming societal issues. Impact indicators may include regional or local statistics—for example, on road safety, overall security, or mortality and birth rates.

The two foundational types of indicators—outcomes (OUTCOME) and outputs (OUTPUT)—form the basis for project monitoring and evaluation.

20Media-mass media(newspaper, TV,radio,online news)

EVALUATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

During the implementation phase, we track and monitor all types of indicators, compare progress against plans, and assess how close we are to achieving our goals. Below is how you can do this on your own.

MOST ACCESSIBLE / POPULAR EVALUATION TOOLS

* Field Visits & Observation and attending project events or service locations
* Observe activities and take notes on participant engagement
* Media & Social Media Analysis and tracking all project mentions in news and social platforms²¹
* Conduct regular surveys and interviews with: Team Discussions
* Report Analysis.Review all program reports: Activity progress, Financial records,Trainer feedback

Helpful Implementation Tips

Maintain an organized digital record of all media mentions related to your project, assigning one team member to oversee this tracking. When attending your own events, pay attention to subtle but important details beyond formal feedback - note participant moods, overheard comments, and logistical factors like venue comfort or scheduling issues that might affect outcomes. These unscripted observations often reveal more than standardized surveys.

For focus groups, intentionally include diverse service users to capture varied perspectives. Create comfortable, informal settings with refreshments that encourage open dialogue, ensuring all participants have opportunity to share their experiences.

Remember that some of the most valuable insights emerge through unplanned conversations and careful attention to operational details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Consistent documentation of these observations will significantly enrich your evaluation process.

Individual components of social projects - like training sessions, workshops, and webinars - typically undergo evaluation as well. For example, a training program might be assessed at three different levels:

1. Immediate Results (Output)  
   The number or percentage of participants who successfully completed the training out of all who started.  
   Example: If 15 people attended a coaching workshop and 12 completed it (passing the final test), the success rate is 80%.
2. Practical Application (Outcome)  
   The number or percentage of participants who applied what they learned in their work or personal life.  
   Example: Within a month after the workshop, 4 of 12 participants (33%) used the skills at work, while 6 (50%) applied coaching techniques in either their professional or personal life.
3. Long-Term Impact  
   The number or percentage of participants who reported meaningful positive changes in their work or life due to the training.  
   Example: 6 out of 30 participants (20%) transformed their careers by becoming trainers or starting businesses, while 4 (13%) made significant improvements in their personal lives²².

22Data sourced from coaching trainings implemented during the Zharkyra initiative (Atyrau, Kazakhstan)

Project Evaluation at Completion Stage

At the project's conclusion, NGOs prepare a final report that evaluates how successfully the goals and objectives were achieved. This final assessment typically examines two or three levels of results:

(Figure 7)

1. Project Outputs - The direct products and activities completed during implementation
2. Project Outcomes - The short-term achievements against goals (measurable within 1 year of project completion)
3. Project Impact - When applicable, the long-term effects and changes occurring 3-5 years after project completion

1 year 3-5 years

Immediate Deliverables (Outputs)  
The direct products and services created through project activities

Short-Term Results (Outcomes)  
The immediate changes and achievements against project goals, measurable within one year of implementation

Long-Term Impact  
The sustained changes and transformations occurring 3-5 years after project completion

Practical Guidance for Effective Project Reporting

When writing your report, keep it concise—no more than 10-15 pages. Avoid emotional language or praising your own work, as this may make sponsors question whether you're presenting an accurate picture. Focus instead on showing concrete results, demonstrating how you've met the project goals, and sharing real success stories from your beneficiaries.

Remember that sponsors care about public recognition. For good publicity materials, plan ahead by considering branding for all products and services, and arrange for professional photography or videography. It's helpful to collect beneficiary stories and supporting data throughout project implementation. We recommend assigning one team member to coordinate gathering all necessary information during the project phase.

ASSESSING GOAL AND OBJECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT

The most accurate way to evaluate the level of goal and objective achievement is by asking and answering the following questions in your report:

• To what extent was the goal achieved? Can this be expressed quantitatively, as a percentage?  
• If targets were exceeded, indicate what was done well. Were the initial targets set too low?  
• What additional achievements were made beyond the planned objectives?  
• If targets were not met, what needs improvement and how? Were the initial targets set too high?  
• What lessons were learned? How can mistakes be avoided in the future?  
• It's also valuable to include beneficiary quotes to support the quantitative data.

1. % ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET INDICATORS FOR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES  
2. WHAT ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS WERE MADE BEYOND THE PLAN?.

3. WHAT WAS DONE WELL?  
4. WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT IN THE FUTURE?  
5. LESSONS LEARNED AND MISTAKES  
(Figure 8)

1. WE ACHIEVED OUR GOAL!  
The cake is tasty and in high demand.

2. Sales reached 120% due to sales of diet cakes.

3. Cake decoration with fruits - attractive to customers Sales reached 120% due to sales of diet cakes..

4. TO INCREASE PROFIT WE WILL MAKE THE CAKE BIGGER

5. IN THE FUTURE WE NEED TO IMPROVE THE STAND - THIS KIND OF STAND IS MORE CONVENIENT.

TIPS

Be honest with yourself when describing achievements. Sometimes indicators may be exceeded or not met compared to the planned targets, so be sure to explain the reasons why the results turned out this way or that.

Often, unplanned achievements can be important for the project's future development and should be considered in planning. For example, mothers learned about the importance of breastfeeding and started nursing, or began paying better attention to their own and their baby's health. In the future, it might be possible to include some topics for mothers in the project, even if this theme wasn't originally part of the project plan.

It is important to discuss lessons learned and mistakes with the team—not in a "blame-finding" manner, but in an atmosphere of trust and openness. This approach ensures that next time, your team members will plan better, identify risks earlier, and feel comfortable warning you about them in advance

23Goal setting will be discussed later.

Key Requirements for Conducting a Quality Project Evaluation

1. Ensure Project Information Access  
   Have complete, available data about the project
2. Define Evaluation Purpose  
   Clearly understand why the assessment is being conducted
3. Establish Evaluation Scope  
   Determine which specific aspects will (and won't) be examined
4. Create Work Inventory  
   (Prepare detailed list of required activities:

Number of surveys needed.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) to conduct

Other data collection methods)

1. Assign Evaluation Team

Designate 1-2 internal staff or hire external specialists

1. Develop Evaluation Timeline  
   Create detailed schedule for all assessment activities
2. Calculate Evaluation Budget  
   Allocate funds (typically 1-10% of total project budget)
3. Define Expected Outcomes  
   Document anticipated findings and preliminary recommendations.

PLANNING YOUR EVALUATION BUDGET

When preparing your evaluation costs, consider these key expenses:

First, account for the time your evaluation team will need. This covers creating surveys and interview guides, running the actual assessments, and writing up the findings.

Second, the working hours of an expert or sociologist to verify the correctness of data collection instruments and methodologies.

Third, travel expenses for evaluators, including transportation, accommodation, and daily allowances.

While hourly payment isn't yet common practice in Kazakhstan, this approach provides a simple way to track working hours and fairly compensate team members and experts. Many international donor organizations typically use this payment method.

Best Practice: Include these evaluation costs directly in your initial project budget when applying for funding, showing them as separate line items. This ensures full transparency with sponsors.

Exercise 2.  
Develop a complete evaluation framework including: Purpose, Key Questions, Methodology,Team,Timeline,Budget.

EVALUATION PLAN TEMPLATE

1. PURPOSE  
2. KEY QUESTIONS  
(1)  
(2)  
(3)  
(4)  
3. METHODOLOGY

4. TEAM  
5. TIMELINE  
6. BUDGET

SOCIAL PROJECT PERFORMANCE TRACKING

Monitoring is the ongoing process of tracking and analyzing selected project indicators to measure changes among the target audience or in their environment during and after project implementation. Different stakeholders have distinct monitoring priorities:Project teams focus on completing planned activities, The Sponsors track progress toward target outcomes and the Communities look for tangible impact on local issues.

HOW TO BUILD A PROJECT MONITORING SYSTEM

1. DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK

-Accountable Staff Member

-Primary Data Sources

2. MEASUREMENT AND COMPARISON OF INDICATORS

-Data Collection Schedule

-Analysis Strategy

3. IDENTIFYING & ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE DEVIATIONS

First, appoint a responsible person within the project team to oversee monitoring activities. This individual will lead the selection of project indicators and data sources, as well as determine the methodology for data analysis. Quantitative data - including the number of trainings conducted, participants reached, campaigns implemented, and workshops held - should be recorded in Excel spreadsheets to enable statistical tracking and progress measurement. It is essential to document both baseline and target values for all monitored indicators.

Qualitative data is collected through interviews, focus groups, and project meetings. This type of information helps interpret quantitative results and reveals the actual changes and improvements experienced by beneficiaries.

Primary data sources for monitoring include: trainer reports, service delivery records, event summaries, attendance logs, complaint and suggestion registries, in-depth interviews with participants and stakeholders, as well as media and social media coverage reports. While Outcome and Impact indicators prove more challenging to select and track than Output indicators, they ultimately demonstrate the project's true achievements and transformative effects. The monitoring officer's responsibilities include creating a data collection schedule with a frequency determined by project phase duration and activity intensity. This person will also manage data entry into tracking tables and perform comparative analysis of indicators at different stages: baseline versus target versus actual results. The monitoring schedule may be aligned with sponsor reporting cycles or conducted monthly. Monitoring should also occur for individual events when necessary. At the outset, create a centralized data tracking table, preferably using Google Drive to ensure team-wide access and enable data-driven project adjustments. Following data collection, the monitoring lead analyzes results to identify causes of underperformance or overachievement, enabling the project manager to implement corrective measures. This systematic approach ensures timely team responsiveness and helps prevent operational errors.

Exercise 3: Monitoring Organizational Performance

1.Standard Indicators Tracked  
The organization routinely monitors: number of project proposals submitted annually:

* successful grant applications per year;
* revenue streams (sponsorship funds and client payments);
* operational expenditures;
* monthly client/beneficiary counts with maintained databases;
* repeat client numbers;
* cases with resolved/improved conditions;
* received complaints;
* training/event effectiveness outcomes.

2. Recommended Additional Metrics  
Potential supplementary tracking should include: [list suggested indicators separated by commas].

3. Monitoring Responsibility  
The organization have a designated monitoring officer with formally defined duties in their job description. If absent, appoint an individual responsible for: data collection coordination, indicator tracking, and progress reporting.

4. Data Sources  
Primary information originates from: [enumerate sources such as financial records, client databases, feedback forms, staff reports - separated by commas].

5. Collection Frequency  
Data aggregation occurs [state timeframe: weekly/monthly/quarterly].

6. Analysis Process  
[Specify position] performs analysis using [list methods: comparative assessment, trend analysis, etc.].

7. Decision-Making Protocol  
[Identify decision-maker(s) by title] utilizes findings to guide organizational strategy. For instance, the most recent data-informed decision involved [briefly describe a concrete example of implemented changes based on performance metrics].

MONITORING INDICATORS TABLE

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| № | Indicator | Responsible for Collection | Data Source | Frequency of Collection (or specific dates) |
|  |  |  |  | [ |

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MODEL FOR SOCIAL PROJECTS/PROGRAMS  
HOW TO DEVELOP A PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK?

**The Logical Framework (LF)** helps you plan, describe, and monitor project implementation. The LF is the most common and accessible tool for project monitoring and evaluation. It serves as the primary assessment instrument at all project stages. Reports to donors and the public are also prepared according to the logical framework.

A project description or application may consist of many pages, but by reading just the LF, your donors and partners will immediately understand what exactly you will do in the project and what problem you are trying to solve. This format is convenient for teamwork and discussions with donors and partners. International organizations, embassies, and foreign companies often require completing a logical framework and consider it part of the application. If someone from the team leaves or the project manager changes, the LF will help the new person quickly understand the essence of the project.

We recommend starting work on a project or funding application by developing a logical framework.

What is a Logical Framework?It is a one- or two-page document that conveys the main essence of your project. The framework contains information about what problem you are solving, what result you want to achieve, how you will achieve the results, and what resources you need for this. The logical framework is also often called a logical model, logical matrix, or logical structure diagram.

Regardless of its name, the Logical Framework helps answer key questions such as:

KEY CONNECTIONS  
• What results do you aim to achieve through the project?  
• What actions will you take to accomplish these results and the project's overall goal?  
• What resources are required for project implementation?  
• What potential challenges could affect the project's success?  
• How will you measure and verify the project's progress and success?

The table format and its components may vary depending on donor requirements. Most commonly, it includes: the goal, objectives, activities, immediate results (outputs), final outcomes, their corresponding indicators, and overall impact. In this guide, you will later explore different examples of logical frameworks.

**Project Logical Framework Template**

**Table**  
Project Goal:

Objectives  
Activities/Actions

Immediate Results (Outputs)  
Final Outcomes  
Outcome Indicators

When completing this table, apply the logic: "If we implement these actions, they will lead to these results."

KEY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The diagram below best illustrates the connections within the project and partially within the logical framework. Vision realization becomes evident through the impact created by the project or program. Goals and objectives are considered achieved when we attain the project's intended outcomes. Any implemented activity invariably produces tangible outputs that can be documented.

Implementation Framework:  
Vision → Goals/Objectives → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact

The operating conditions and contextual factors surrounding your project may evolve, necessitating corresponding adjustments to the Logical Framework in consultation with donors and partners. For instance, the pandemic compelled many organizations to modify their original plans. Should emerging circumstances or unforeseen risks threaten your ability to deliver intended results, proactively adapt your implementation approach.

Even if you've never heard of a Logical Framework (LF) or created one yourself, when planning and implementing a social or research project, you've likely done most of the work required to develop an LF.

If you have no project implementation experience, think back to a family celebration you helped organize or observed. Typically, event planners understand what outcomes they want to achieve—whether it’s a wedding, birthday, or anniversary. People aim to enjoy time with loved ones in a beautiful venue with fun activities and good food. Organizers book a host, select a location, plan the menu, hire photographers, etc. If we described all this work in a table, we’d have a logical framework, as shown in the example below. After the event, we could review the results and compare them to our initial plans. The following table, with an anniversary LF, is provided as a real-life example.

Table: Logical Framework Model for the "Father's 60th Anniversary Celebration" Project

Project Title: Anniversary celebration for father's 60th birthday  
Project Goal: In December 2021, family relatives and friends had the opportunity to spend quality time together and celebrate father's anniversary

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objectives | Activities/Actions | Immediate Results (Outputs) | Final Outcome | Outcome Indicators | Project Impact |
| Organize logistics and plan content | 1. Create guest list and send invitations 2. Select venue, time, and menu 3. Develop program, hire emcee | 1. Percentage of guests informed about event 2. Venue and menu selected (address, time) 3. Actual menu matches ordered one 4. Emcee incorporated guest information and adapted program | Family and friends had a good time | 1. Percentage of satisfied guests (feedback) 2. Birthday person's satisfaction (feedback) 3. Amount of monetary/valuable gifts received | Family became more united Birthday person received many positive emotions and gifts Friendships strengthened |

Below is an example of a logical framework for one objective of the "Public Spaces" project in Atyrau region. The project helps local residents independently improve their villages and small towns. In this example, the final outcome is specified instead of the objective. The final outcome reflects the change we want to achieve for the population of Atyrau region. We use the outcome to measure or confirm achievement of the goal. In this example, the goal is formulated as a statement. This approach is the most understandable. Indicators are provided for both the final outcome and immediate results. This logical framework also includes information on baseline data and target indicators that the team aims to achieve, as well as methods for verifying this information.

Table: Logical Framework Model for the "Public Spaces" Project

In this example, the final outcome is specified instead of the objective

Project Goal: Local communities have increased their participation in improving public spaces and addressing local issues.

| Description | Indicators | Baseline Data (2019-2020) | 2021 Target | Verification Sources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Final Outcome (Outcome) |  |  |  |  |
| Residents utilize improved/new public spaces | 1. Percentage of residents using new/improved public spaces | 1 - 0%, 24 facilities | 1 - 30%, 35 facilities | Site visits, photos, videos, reports from local coordinators and project groups |
| Immediate Result (Output) |  |  |  |  |
| Active citizens improved their knowledge and skills in implementing joint projects | 1.1 Number of residents trained and participating in public space improvement projects | 1.1.1 - 76 | 1.1.1 - 100 | 1.1.1 Training evaluation forms and participant lists |
|  | 1.2 Number of consultations provided to project groups | 1.1.2 - 4 per group | 1.1.2 - 8 per group | 1.1.2 Trainer reports |

PROJECT MODELING USING THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Work on the Logical Framework (LF) should begin as soon as you have sufficient information to develop the project. If tight deadlines prevent thorough problem analysis, create an initial LF version by discussing core ideas with your team. For ongoing projects, where existing challenges are already known, you can readily design an LF that helps address these issues.

The diagram below shows where the Logical Framework fits within the overall structure of modeling a new proposal or project:

1. Analyze beneficiary needs: Identify all problems and requirements of different stakeholders affecting problem resolution.
2. Conduct root cause analysis: Determine the core problem, potential solutions, and optimal resolution path.
3. Formulate project goals and objectives, incorporating them into the logical framework.
4. Develop a list of activities/actions and specific tasks to achieve objectives, adding to logical framework.
5. Plan required project resources (human, material, financial, informational). Form project team.
6. Create detailed project budget.
7. Assess risks, develop preventive/corrective measures. Make necessary adjustments and reflect in budget.
8. Discuss initial project version with partners, experts, and (when possible) beneficiaries.
9. Make necessary revisions to logical framework elements
10. Establish quantitative indicators and design monitoring system. Incorporate into logical framework and update budget.
11. Prepare final project proposal based on the completed logical framework.

elements of the logical framework (what it includes)

what falls outside it (external to the framework)

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Analytical Skills: Ability to review and assess documents or reports

Research Skills: Proficiency in locating relevant information on the topic

Facilitation Skills: Capability to guide and manage discussions effectively

Questioning Techniques: Skill in formulating insightful and purposeful questions

Sector Knowledge: Understanding of key processes and trends within your field

TIPS

Understanding "Good" Questions  
Drawing from the expertise of sociologists and professionals experienced in working with beneficiaries, we can define "good" questions as open-ended inquiries that require detailed responses rather than simple yes/no answers. Examples include asking "What do you like about our program?" or "What suggestions do you have for improving it?" These questions avoid limiting respondents to predetermined options or the interviewer's own perspectives.

The value of such questions lies in their ability to yield maximally useful information while making respondents feel their opinions are truly valued. When faced with brief answers, effective follow-up questions might include "You mentioned you didn't particularly like something - could you specify what exactly wasn't satisfactory?" or "At what point did you notice this issue?"

Practical Recommendations for Project Framework Development  
When preparing a Project Logical Framework, we recommend conducting between two to four team meetings. These sessions serve multiple purposes: engaging team members in the project, collecting diverse ideas, and ensuring shared understanding among all participants. During these meetings, maintaining thorough notes is essential, and the use of flipcharts can significantly enhance the clarity and visual organization of discussions.

STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

STEP 1  
Justify the project need and logic

STEP 2  
Create a problem tree and transform it into a solution tree

STEP 3  
Develop the first draft of the project's logical model

STEP 4  
Finalize the logical model

STEP 1: ESTABLISH THE PROJECT RATIONALE AND LOGIC

To develop your project foundation, you must clearly demonstrate the need for intervention and the project's underlying logic. When identifying an unresolved issue affecting your beneficiaries, this becomes the core concept for your initiative. Conduct comprehensive problem analysis by reviewing relevant articles, reports, statistical data, government programs, and media publications to determine how your team can effectively contribute to solutions. Utilize search engines, Google Scholar, NGO websites, media platforms, and research organizations to gather electronic resources.

Engage in discussions about target audience needs, root causes of problems, and potential solutions with your team, partners, donors, and beneficiaries through both online and offline meetings. Data collection methods may include online surveys (using free tools like Google Forms or Instagram polls) and focus group discussions.

Documentation Protocol:

Maintain detailed records of all research materials and meeting outcomes in a shared team file

Highlight key findings relevant to project design

Ensure notes remain accessible to all team members throughout framework development and proposal writing

Identify and analyze all key stakeholders - mapping decision-makers, potential supporters, and existing initiatives in the field.

This approach ensures your project addresses genuine needs while building on existing efforts. The gathered intelligence will inform both the initial design and ongoing project implementation.

STEP 2: CREATE A PROBLEM TREE AND TRANSFORM IT INTO A SOLUTION TREE

Based on the collected information, create a "problem tree" to analyze the causes of existing problems, their consequences, and attempt to address the "root" causes. Place the problem at the center of a sheet or online document and write down the reasons for its occurrence around it. Then list the potential consequences of this problem. Once you've analyzed all the causes and effects of the problems, you can proceed to create a solution tree. You transform negative problem statements into positive solution statements. This way, you'll be able to formulate the goals and objectives of your future project.

TIPS FROM THE AUTHORS:  
The "problem and solution tree" is just one analysis tool. You can also use brainstorming techniques or the "Ishikawa diagram" and simply prioritize the identified problems. The essence of these actions is to find the specific causes of a problem that you can work with and influence through your project.

The "root" cause is the fundamental underlying reason for an existing problem. To move from a list of problems to the "root" cause level by level, you need to ask "Why?" and "What next?" until you reach the original cause of the problem. Unfortunately, in social projects, it's not always possible to work with the root cause, as these are often systemic problems like poverty or economic crisis. Such causes cannot be solved by one or several projects, so you select the level and type of problems that you can address through your project.

HOW TO TRANSITION FROM PROBLEMS TO GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

The goal of your project becomes the desired state of your beneficiaries that you undertake to achieve through your actions together with them. Typically, there is a "big" picture - a vision of an ideal situation representing some perfect state, and small steps toward it - this is your project and its objectives. The most challenging part here is visualizing what you want to achieve (the project goal) and determining the paths you will take to reach that goal (the project objectives). Another way to put it is that objectives are like puzzle pieces: when put together, they form the complete picture of the goal.

When reading the project goal, everyone should clearly see the result you aim for and the target audience for whom the project is being implemented. When formulating goals, you should adhere to the SMART criteria from English:

SPECIFIC   
MEASURABLE  
ACHIEVABLE   
RELEVANT   
TIME BOUND

You can follow this formula for writing the goal:

DIRECTION OF CHANGE + AREA OF CHANGE + TARGET GROUP + DEGREE OF CHANGE + TIMEFRAME

Examples of well-formulated goals:

1.By the end of 2021 (timeframe), increase (direction of change) the level of computer skills (area of change) among 100 school teachers in the city of Atyrau (target group) by 50% (degree of change).

2.By the end of 2024 (timeframe), increase accessibility to social facilities for people with disabilities (target audience) to 80% (currently 50%) in accordance with international standards in 19 cities of Kazakhstan (area of change) through legal counseling, advocacy campaigns, and accessibility assessments.

TIPS FOR FORMULATING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

When formulating goals and objectives, it is best to begin with a verb. The goal should be expressed in a single sentence. To achieve the goal, work is required across several directions that collectively address the problem. It is practical to develop objectives for each of these strategic directions identified for goal attainment. There should typically be no more than 3 key objectives leading to the goal, though this may vary depending on project complexity. Generally, if you find yourself with more objectives, examine them carefully - what may appear as objectives could actually represent activities/actions that should properly belong under one of the main objectives.

For example, improving education quality requires working with multiple stakeholder groups: teachers need professional development to deliver better content; students require improved learning conditions (proper classrooms, appropriate class sizes, equipped laboratories) and engaging materials. In this case, three clear objectives emerge: first - enhance teacher qualifications; second - upgrade school facilities and improve school management (training for principals); third - develop compelling educational content and delivery methods for selected subjects. The overarching goal here would be improving national test scores (UNT) or student academic performance.

Always express goals and objectives using specific metrics. Crucially, verify that each objective directly contributes to achieving your stated goal. The objectives should collectively form a coherent pathway to the desired change, with each representing a distinct but complementary approach to addressing the core problem.

Refining Goals and Objectives in the Logical Framework. During the development of your Logical Framework (LF), you may create multiple iterations of both your goals/objectives and the overall framework itself. This iterative process is normal and valuable - continue revising your formulations until you are confident that the goals, objectives, and indicators are properly aligned and accurately reflected in your LF.

We strongly recommend establishing quantitative indicators for both goals and objectives, but only when you have clear methodology for collecting and documenting this data. For instance, if your project claims to reduce urban crime rates by 5%, you must have baseline crime statistics from official sources to enable meaningful comparison upon project completion. Using arbitrary or unsubstantiated figures undermines your proposal's credibility.

Exercise 4.  
Search online or review your previous project proposals to analyze 3 unsuccessful and 3 well-formulated examples of project or event goals and objectives. Discuss these examples with your colleagues to identify key differences and lessons learned.

STEP 3: DEVELOP THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE PROJECT'S LOGICAL MODEL

Begin by creating the initial version of the Logical Framework (LF). One team member can prepare the first draft, allowing others to later review, supplement, and modify the document. You may start by defining the project's goals and objectives, then proceed to complete the remaining LF components. Alternatively, you could first outline the expected outcomes (outcomes) and use these as a foundation to shape the goals, objectives, and planned activities.

As new information becomes available, refine the wording of all LF elements and make necessary adjustments to ensure accuracy and alignment with project needs.

On the Differences Between Outputs and Outcomes in the Logical Framework

If formulations change during the work process or some ideas disappear after edits, you can always refer back to the initial discussions and see how the thinking evolved at each stage.

When developing a Logical Model (LM), organizations often confuse immediate results (outputs) and final results (outcomes). What's the difference?

OUTPUT------IMMEDIATE RESULT, PRODUCT

Output refers to tangible products and verifiable evidence of completed activities that can be directly recorded. By itself, output does not reflect final or long-term changes; it only demonstrates what you, your grantees, or contractors have accomplished within specific project activities.

Examples:

* Conducted 8 focus groups to identify training topics
* 10 NGOs received grants for organizational development
* Developed the project's communication strategy

OUTCOME--------FINAL RESULT

Outcome represents the change in the condition of the target audience (their circumstances, behavior, or attitudes) that indicates achievement of the project's goals and objectives.

Unlike immediate outputs, final outcomes reflect the consequences of the entire project rather than individual activities within it. Outcomes are measured using the same metrics as the project's goals.

Example:  
If the project goal is to improve student academic performance by 30%, then the desired outcome would be the actual measured 30% increase in student performance.

Exercise 5.  
Identify whether each item represents an immediate output (Output) or a final outcome (Outcome) of the project.  
Discuss your choices with colleagues and explain the difference.  
Mark with a checkmark (✓) whether the goals describe products (Output) or final results (Outcome).

| Output | Outcome | Activity/Result |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 1. Doctors visit young mothers 6 times per month |
|  |  | 2. A client database has been established |
|  |  | 3. Funding applications have been submitted for review |
|  |  | 4. Meetings with potential corporate donors have been held |
|  |  | 5. Legal consultants received training in law and cultural practices |
|  |  | 6. Community meetings with deputies have been conducted |
|  |  | 7. Alternative proposal projects have been submitted to deputies for review |
|  |  | 8. Young mothers have improved their knowledge of early childhood development |
|  |  | 9. Staff access to client information has increased |
|  |  | 10. Program resources have been expanded and diversified |

Answer Key for Exercise 5 (Page 25)

INDICATORS

Indicators are quantitative measures that help you track how close you are to achieving, reaching, or exceeding the expected result.

Indicators can be defined for immediate results (Output) and final project results (Outcome). Indicators can be both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative indicators include measures such as success stories, changes in career and life, etc. Quantitative indicators are used more often because they are easier to measure and are clear to everyone. Indicators may begin with words like "number," "share," or "percentage."

There should not be too many indicators. Usually, one to three indicators are enough for one task. Initially, during the brainstorming stage, you can list all the indicators that seem important in your work plan. Then try to reduce the list and keep only those that most accurately reflect the project's results. This will simplify the monitoring process, allowing you to focus on what matters most, while saving money and time on data collection.

TIPS

* When developing indicators, remember that you can only manage what you can measure.
* The outcome indicator shows how close we are to achieving the goal.
* An indicator is used to measure change, so to assess progress, you need its initial value, intermediate value, and final value.
* Collecting data for each indicator usually requires time, people, and resources—so make sure you have the right number of indicators: not too many, but enough.

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU CREATE EFFECTIVE INDICATORS

1. Does this indicator truly measure what we need it to? Is it practical to track?
2. What specific information do we need to collect to measure this indicator?
3. Is collecting this data realistic - can we afford the time, money and effort required?
4. Can we easily verify and track this indicator over time?
5. Who will actually use this data, and what decisions will it inform?

EXAMPLES OF OUTPUT AND OUTCOME INDICATORS

Output Indicators (Immediate Results)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity/Initiative | Indicators | Target Values |
| Environmental Hackathon Organization | 1) Number of eco-projects presented 2) Number of participants | 1) 25 projects 2) 100 students |
| Social Entrepreneurship Competition | 1) Number of applications received 2) Number of supported projects | 1) 80 applications 2) 6 projects |

Table:

Outcome Indicators

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Goal / Objective | Indicators | Target Values |
| Children gain knowledge through interactive and innovative teaching methods | Improvement in student performance after implementing new teaching methods | 30% |
| NGOs advocate for the accessibility rights of people with disabilities to buildings and services | Increase in adapted facilities after implementing accessibility recommendations | 50% |

STEP 4: FINALIZING THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Critically review your logical framework and problem-solving approach. Hold additional discussions with partners, beneficiaries, and donors. If possible, share and discuss the first draft of your logical framework with them to gather feedback.

Develop your project budget—it will help determine whether you have sufficient financial and human resources for all planned activities, including monitoring and evaluation. Make necessary adjustments and prepare an updated version of the framework as needed.

A FEW CRITICAL NOTES ABOUT THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The Logical Framework (LogFrame) doesn't account for timing - you won't see how the project unfolds over time. For that, project managers use a different tool: the Gantt chart.

While you could describe your project and its results without using a LogFrame, this would require sponsors to read through all your text to understand your idea - and sponsors rarely have time for lengthy documents.

The LogFrame over-structures projects. Due to its concise format, many important details and nuances get left out. However, you can include these in your project description, which we recommend structuring carefully with clear sections - this helps interested funders quickly find the information they need.

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Answer Keys to Exercise 5:

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 → Output  
Questions 7, 8, 9, 10 → Outcome

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

1. Scott Berkun – Making Things Happen: A Practical Guide to Project Management (2019)
2. Soros-Kazakhstan Foundation – Step-by-Step Guide to Using the Logical Framework (Available at: : <https://www.soros.kz/ru/instructions_for_completing_the_logical_framework/> )
3. GIZ Civil Society Program (Kyrgyzstan) – Handbook for Tracking and Measuring Project Results (2014, онлайн: [http://cso-central.asia/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Handbook-MonitoringEva luation\_GIZ\_RU.pdf](http://cso-central.asia/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Handbook-MonitoringEva%20luation_GIZ_RU.pdf) )
4. Red Cross/Red Crescent – Guide to Tracking and Improving Projects (2021, [Available online](http://monitoring-evaluation.ru/wp-content/uploads/IFRC-guide-in-Russian.pdf) <http://monitoring-evaluation.ru/wp-content/uploads/IFRC-guide-in-Russian.pdf> )
5. Project Management Institute – The Essential Project Management Guide (PMBOK®), 5th Edition

**MEET THE TEAM**

**AIGUL TAGATOVA**

Lead Trainer & Project Specialist

* Helps nonprofits and social entrepreneurs build their skills
* Spent 4 years evaluating international programs (worked on 5+ major initiatives)
* Background in social research - led over 30 studies from 1998-2008
* Certified project manager with 10+ years experience
* Has been coaching professionals since 2015

**EDUCATION:**

* Holds technical, economics and PhD degrees
* Additional training in psychology, coaching, and NLP techniques

**DINARA HURUSHEVA**

Fundraising & Development Expert

* Currently helps social projects secure funding (2017-present)
* Advises NGOs on fundraising strategies
* Previously researched regional development issues (5 years)

**EDUCATION:**

* Earned Master's in London through Bolashak scholarship program
* Undergraduate degree in International Relations from Abylai Khan University