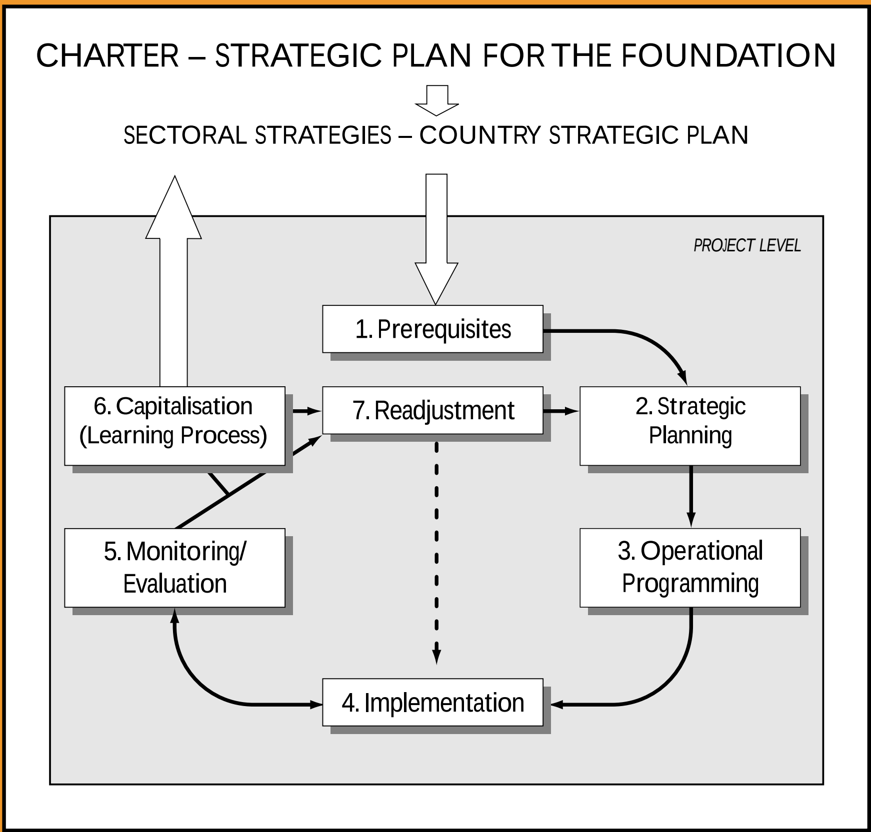
Terre des hommes

aide directe à l'enfance meurtrie, sans préoccupation d'ordre politique, racial ou confessionnel

Project Cycle Handbook



Elaborated by:

Reto Zehnder – Consultant – Echanges Equipement

Riccardo Rodari – Independent consultant

Philippe de Leener – Independent consultant

Catherine Wick –Terre des hommes Foundation – IHD Project Co-ordinator

Patrick Durisch –Terre des hommes Foundation – Project cycle resource person

In collaboration with:

Philippe Buchs –Terre des hommes Foundation – Head of Programme Department I

Ignacio Packer –Terre des hommes Foundation – Head of Programme Department II

Nathalie Chuard –Terre des hommes Foundation – SDC trainee

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Foreword

Over the years Terre des hommes has sought to optimise on quality both in the field and at Headquarters. Its endeavour has taken the form of an ISO certification process at Headquarters, and in the field through the institutional and human development (IHD) project, a crucial element for improving and harmonising project cycle management.

The Institutional and Human Development project was launched in 1999 following three years of Terre des hommes – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) joint evaluations. These evaluations focused on the challenges which lie before Terre des hommes:

- how to improve quality of services to beneficiaries and how to promote understanding of projects by Headquarters personnel and donors.
- how to turn the experience accumulated over the years into a real capital, highlighting the lessons learnt from both successes and failures.
- how, with projects in some thirty countries, to create a spirit of belonging to a single institution, with clear lines of action.

To meet these challenges, the institutional development project supported by the SDC between 1999 and mid-2002, had a triple focus:

1. Participatory elaboration of a strategic plan for 2000-2004, undertaken between February and October 1999;
2. Project cycle training for Terre des hommes' personnel in the field and at Headquarters, as well as for partners. Planning and monitoring training workshops were held from 1999 to 2001 and are to continue in the future.
3. Capitalisation[1] (placing emphasis on the lessons learnt from experiences) and dissemination of best project practices in Terre des hommes' main focus areas (health/nutrition, social welfare and child rights), through input from resource personnel in the relevant fields.

This Handbook describes Terre des hommes' project cycle options.

1 This terminology is often used in French but more rarely in English. "Institutional learning" or "learning process" are more often used to describe this concept. Nevertheless we have chosen at Terre des hommes to continue using the term "capitalisation" in English as it has become a habit. Bearing in mind that it is the same concept. For further details refer also to sheet XXIV (Capitalisation) and XXVI (Glossary).

Harmonising project cycle practise: an institutional will

It is essential nowadays that all projects in the field be organised around the project cycle in accordance with the stages and methods set out in this Handbook. It is above all a matter of emphasising on a pragmatic process, objective-oriented and calling for an in-depth reflection by all stakeholders. The appropriation of a project by its stakeholders depends on this. A harmonised presentation of its results is also essential in order to facilitate communication and capitalisation of experiences. Each person in the field, Headquarters programme personnel, resource persons, have a role to play to achieve this aim.

Philippe Buchs
Head of Programme Department I

Catherine Wick
IHD Project Co-ordinator

Introduction

1. For what and for whom is this Handbook?

Why this Handbook?

This Handbook is a compilation of the project cycle method within the Terre des hommes Foundation – Lausanne[2].

Its use is intended:

- To give a clear definition of the concepts and terms used by Terre des hommes;
- As a reference document for the planning, programming, monitoring, evaluation, capitalisation and readjustment processes;
- A teaching aid for project cycle training;
- To present the method to other stakeholders so that they understand what we are doing and to enrich our methodology through exchange with them;
- To prepare all elements making up the project strategic plan and operational plan, and for their monitoring.

This document will allow the reader to have an overall view of the project cycle as perceived by Terre des hommes, to understand the function of each stage and the relationships between them. It should facilitate mastery and appropriation of the concepts and language of project management. This Handbook is a first stage, a sort of institutional framework and reference methodology, that should be complemented in the future – in a way to be agreed – by a more pragmatic toolbox.

This Handbook forms a complement to the training in planning and monitoring organised in each of Terre des hommes' countries of intervention over the last three years, but does not replace it. It is not enough to have attended a course to know how to plan, monitor, evaluate and capitalise. Good skills are acquired above all by practice and in interaction with other stakeholders.

Each "school" of project cycle management method, each organisation or institution has its own jargon. The definitions given in this Handbook are those adopted by Terre des hommes. It is important for us to have a common language within the institution and for everybody to attribute the same meaning to the same term. A single acceptation of terms and key ideas facilitates communication within the

2 For ease of reading, we will use "Terre des hommes" to mean the Terre des hommes Foundation – Lausanne.

institution, so that it becomes possible to compare different interventions on the basis of these common references. This also allows for easier communication with stakeholders outside Terre des hommes.

Planning, the keystone of this Handbook, provides a tool to think action through strategically, but it does not replace strategic thinking. The same can be said for monitoring. The Handbook is therefore a tool for looking at project management; it feeds reflection but does not replace it. It should not therefore be used as a collection of recipes to be followed step by step and leading to a plan or report, but as a general reference within which to find a way forward. This Handbook should be more a source of inspiration than a road to be followed.

The definitions of terms and concepts given in this document should be adopted by all Terre des hommes teams. However, not everything is defined and a certain room for manoeuvre remains so that each planning/monitoring/evaluation/capitalisation exercise can be adapted as closely as possible to local reality. The latter are always both highly complex and diverse. Methodological indications given here can never cover every requirement. Project management is a difficult art calling for reflection and creativity. No handbook can provide this, unless it confines itself to a mere bureaucratic process.

Following the first edition of this document in 2000, various strategic planning and monitoring workshops were held reaching all teams in the field and the programme department at Headquarters. As the workshops were held the method improved thanks to the input of all concerned. Whereas in the early stages it was mainly a question of preparing a "strategic planning Handbook", the aim was considerably enlarged as time went by to cover all stages of the project cycle. Such improvement will be continuous; it concerns in particular stages to which less time has been hitherto devoted and which remain to be completed. We have still some way to go.

The Handbook is structured so that it can be at any time updated as desired. Each chapter represents one stage in the project cycle and is made up of a number of sheets each numbered separately as follows: Sheet I – page 1. In this way, whenever a sheet is updated, page numbering can be adjusted without requiring renumbering other parts of the Handbook. The vast majority of the 27 sheets making up the Handbook include a final summary.

Who is the Handbook intended for ?

The Handbook is first and foremost intended for:

- Persons involved in the management of interventions carried out, supported, funded or co-funded by Terre des hommes
- Heads of delegations
- Operational managers (desks) at Headquarters
- Other senior personnel at Headquarters

2. Contents of the Handbook

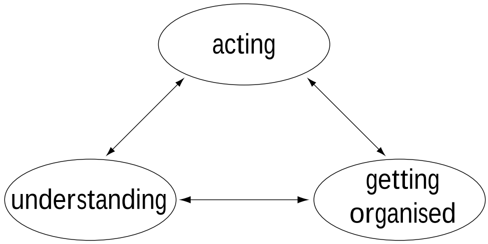
Having explained how an organisation functions (Sheet I) and what is meant by project or programme cycles (Sheet II), we will go on to the prerequisites (Sheet III), the first stage of the project cycle. A definition of strategic planning is given in Sheet IV, stating what planning is not, what the different types of intervention are, and who does the planning. Sheet V provides an overview of the planning process, outlined from Sheet VI (where to start) to Sheet XVIII (validating the strategic plan).

Sheet XIX covers the operational programming stage, or how to translate project strategy into activities and means (human, material, financial). After a brief outline of implementation/execution (Sheet XX), the fourth project cycle stage, Sheets XXI to XXIII introduce the notions and mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation, including reporting format. Sheet XXIV looks at Terre des hommes' capitalisation or learning process. The readjustment process, the final stage of the project cycle, is covered in Sheet XXV. Lastly, a glossary and bibliography – containing a list of references in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese – and an index complete the Handbook (Sheets XXVI and XXVII).

We hope you enjoy reading this!

I. Understanding – getting organised – taking action

The life of any organisation, like that of any collective enterprise generally, is based on three closely related functions:



Each function entails two dimensions:

- **A strategic dimension,** the upper level where crucial options concerning the institution as a whole and its policy are situated.
- **An operational dimension** or actual implementation.

One of the main focus of this Handbook – planning – belongs to the **acting** sphere. It is nonetheless important to constantly bear in mind that planning supposes an **understanding** of what is going on. Implementation of the plan also means **getting organised.**

Before looking at how the three functions interact, they have to be defined.

1.1. Understanding

This means explaining matters of concern to us, both for major questions and interrogations (Where does poverty stem from? Why are children mistreated?) as for significant everyday facts (Why did such a child run away?). **It gives meaning to facts and events.**

In order to understand, it is first and foremost important to **ask oneself the relevant questions.** These are not always obvious. For example, inadequate hygiene in a population may often be explained by saying that the population has not understood the risks of a lack of hygiene. This thus answers the question:

Why don't they want to adopt healthier forms of behaviour? However, in many cases the relevant question would be: Do they have all the conditions necessary for adequate hygiene? When the question is formulated in such a way, an understanding of the risks of a lack of hygiene is only one of several variables to be taken into account. By proceeding this way, one may discover that behaviour lacking in hygiene is due more to inadequate infrastructure than to lack of awareness or an absence of determination.

Understanding is a skill which increases over time. For this, it is necessary to learn to ask oneself the relevant questions, to observe and not to make hasty judgements.

1.2. Getting organised

This means taking the steps necessary to be able to function effectively, whatever the level (institution, service or team).

Getting organised means defining a number of elements such as:
- **Structure** (organisational chart of the institution or team);
- **Relations** (how individuals and elements in the organisation communicate and interact);
- **Distribution of work** among persons and services (who does what, individual work specifications).

This organisation is based on a system of values set out in **Terre des hommes' Charter.** The Charter corresponds to what is generally referred to as its **mission**, a document which sets down fundamental values (principles in which we profoundly believe), identity (who we are) and the reason for the institution's existence (what gives our existence meaning and purpose).

1.3. Acting

This is intervening on the reality in order to change it in a desired way.

At the strategic level, acting is based on a vision of the future which we wish to contribute towards achieving. It is on the basis of this vision that objectives and strategies can be formulated.

At Terre des hommes, the vision of the future is expressed in:
- The strategic plan for the institution as a whole
- Thematic sectoral strategies

- Strategic plans by region and country
- Strategic plans for each project in the field.

Acting is also based on a system of values directing the way we intervene. For example, if co-operation is an important value for an organisation, efforts will be made to develop efforts of networking with other partners.

At the operational level, acting is expressed by actual management of action through programming and administration.

Summary:

The life of any organisation is based on three closely related functions: understanding, getting organised and acting, each with a strategic and an operational dimension. For example, strategic planning belongs to the sphere of acting, while it is important to constantly bear in mind that planning means understanding what is happening and that implementation of planning requires us to be organised.

II. Project cycle

The Handbook deals with the project cycle, but it might as well be applied to programmes. What do we exactly understand by these terms?

2.1. Concepts and definitions

Project

One of the most quoted general definitions is that given by Cleland and King (1983):

A project is a complex effort to achieve a specific objective, having to respect a deadline and a budget, and which typically extends beyond organisational borders, is unique and generally one-off in the organisation.

Projects are thus distinguished from the organisation's ongoing operations, are related to innovation (in the broadest sense of the term), and have a beginning and an end.

In the area of international co-operation/development aid, a "project" is made up of a set of programmed actions directing at achieving an objective, as well as the organisation of the means necessary for its implementation.

In a very institutional fashion, it could also be said that a project is a form of contract between an organisation and the beneficiaries of an action based around financial assistance (we undertake to do something, making certain means available, with regard to certain beneficiaries, and we need certain financial means to do this). This last definition, oriented according to a purely "donor" logic, has the merit – despite its limitations and constraints – of highlighting an organisation's duty of accountability with regard to the beneficiaries.

At Terre des hommes we consider that **a project can be broken down into several phases (or cycle)**, each lasting from one to three years depending on the situation and type of intervention. Each phase has its own objective and strategy. In order to be as realistic as possible, **the project cycle method described in this Handbook is applied for a (medium-term) project phase and not for the (long-term) duration of a project.** This is so even though, right from the early planning stage, various options have to be considered for a phasing-out strategy.

Programme

At Terre des hommes, we use this term to cover two different meanings:

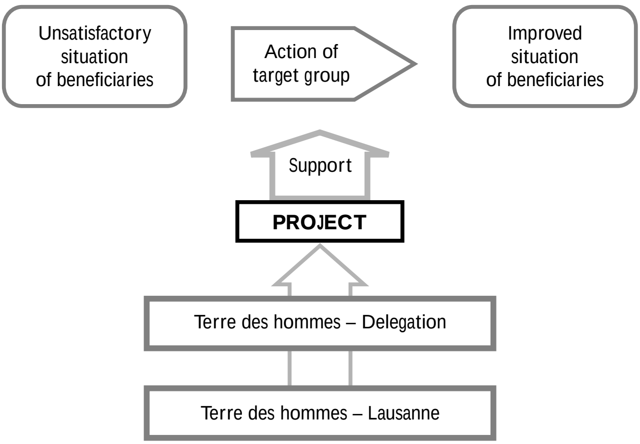
1. **Geographical:** a programme may be a group of individual projects in any given country (e.g. Bangladesh programme, Burundi programme, etc).
2. **Thematic:** a programme may also be a thematic sector of intervention. A "child rights programme (CR)" will for example be a group of individual projects implemented or supported by Terre des hommes in different parts of the world on this subject. This term comes to us from the SDC, which uses it in the framework of its financial "programme contributions" to NGOs.

Given the existing links and synergies, the benefits/added value of a programme (for whichever of the definitions) should typically be greater than the sum of the benefits/added value of each project taken individually.

2.2. Place of the project in development action

In emergency or development aid there are always at least two major families of stakeholders: those related to an aid agency, in our case for example the local Terre des hommes team or its local partner; and those making up a given population, or part of a population which we usually refer to as the target group.

Generally, the former **(those intervening)** assign themselves a mission of helping the latter **(beneficiaries)** to take action in respect of their own reality so as to improve a situation deemed difficult or unsatisfactory.



This is said to be **support intervention** in a case where those intervening adopt the perspective of mainly supporting beneficiaries' efforts and, implicitly, not putting themselves in their place or taking action for them. It can be assumed therefore that action for change is mainly a matter for the beneficiaries with those intervening accompanying them and facilitating their efforts with a view to improving the situation or solving problems.

We talk of **substitution intervention** in a case where those intervening take over the beneficiaries' problem as if it were their own concern. The target group's problem has therefore become the intervention agency's problem.

It can also be couched in the following terms (from "Réinventer le présent" – Enda Graf, Dakar, 1994, adapted by R. Rodari): *see table on p II-4.*

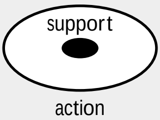
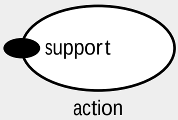
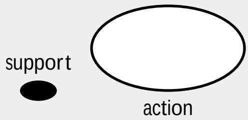
The ideal position is naturally the third. In reality we are always swinging from one position to another. This does not matter as long as we know which position we are in and why. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to place oneself in position 1 to mobilise the beneficiaries and set the scene for action, but then it is necessary to pass rapidly to position 2 or 3.

At Terre des hommes the tendency is towards support intervention, which corresponds more to its philosophy: helping people to make it on their own by supporting and accompanying them but not by doing things in their place ("empowerment").

Subscribing to this intervention policy leads to the establishment of a clear distinction between what those intervening do and what beneficiaries do.

The work of the former is a support project while the latter lead an action in which they are the main stakeholders. The **project,** i.e. the actions to lead to a desired change, is therefore the concern of the beneficiaries. It can be understood therefore that on the one hand to plan a change, i.e. plan a project, and on the other to plan a support intervention represent two different types of planning, in pursuit of different objectives and carried out by different stakeholders. The planning of those intervening will certainly take into account the beneficiaries' project planning but it does not get mixed up with it nor naturally does it substitute for it.

In reality, however, it is rare for beneficiaries to formulate a clear project for action shared by the whole community. It is rarer still that they propose a real plan of action to those intervening. This means in practice that support intervention must, among other things, help stakeholders in the target group to bring words to their situation, understand it, state what they want to do to change it, and the opportunities they wish to develop through their action. At times it may even be appropriate to start with this.

POSITION 1	POSITION 2	POSITION 3
BEARER OF THE ACTION *"The action is me"*	CO-MANAGER OF THE ACTION *"I roll my sleeves up"*	FACILITATOR OF THE ACTION "I accompagny the action if asked"
		
Support is identified with action: its success conditions one's own success as supporting stakeholder. The success of the action justifies its existence with regard to itself, its employer or its donor.	The support sets the conditions of the action. It provokes reflection, raises the problem at the origin of the action. The latter is however borne by the beneficiaries. There can be co-management, with support playing a role in the success. But its success as support is possible only if there has been success in the eyes of the beneficiaries. In a sense, support identifies with – and consequently evaluates itself from – the success achieved by the beneficiaries.	Support is situated outside the action. It is not with regard to the action that it justifies its presence in the field. It is interested in this to the extent it is called upon for this subject **(logic of consultation)**. It may possibly be at its origin but it does not get involved in finalising it. This is the **concern of beneficiaries**, it is up to them to do what they want with it. It will however ensure that the beneficiaries are in a position – and capable – to exploit the potential for learning and innovation contained in the action.
The action is his/her concern, therefore he/she will be tempted to impose his/her standards to conduct it	The action is both his/her concern and that of the beneficiaries. It is shared.	The action is the **concern solely of the beneficiaries.**

In such case, planning of support intervention takes place almost in the shadow of the beneficiaries' project planning. An easy manner of proceeding, not necessarily calling for a clearly formulated project by enlightened beneficiaries to be available, consists of planning support intervention **in close interaction with target group representatives.** By planning support intervention, we help clarify the beneficiaries' project for change. People want to change their situation, what steps can we take to help them succeed?

The fact that action is borne by the beneficiaries and that the beneficial effects continue beyond external intervention is a basis criteria for the success of a project. This viability (sustainability) "has to be planned", it must be part of strategic thinking.

2.3. Breakdown of the project cycle

Implementation of a project phase involves a series of stages which together make up the **project cycle.** Why cycle? Because it is not linear in form, each stage receiving feedback from the preceding: for example, when evaluation leads to readjustment being proposed, or a new identification re-launches new planning/programming and so on.

No situation in which we intervene is static and in fact the initial diagnosis merely offers a snapshot of what is happening at one given moment. Even if it never returns exactly to the same initial situation, the project is presented as a cycle as it is continually repeated to adapt to a changing context.

Ultimately, we might wonder whether the term "spiral" would not be more appropriate, in as far as that there is never a return to the starting point - or the project is a failure given that the starting point is deemed to be an unsatisfactory situation. As "cycle" is more generally used, Terre des hommes has opted for this term.

The project cycle also offers a structure to guarantee that all parties are consulted and that relevant information is made available in order to facilitate enlightened decision-making at each stage of the project, on the basis of key documents.

Even if a project has to be interrupted in the middle of its phase or shortened, the cycle and its stages remain identical.

Once again, there are several schools of thought and the content of each stage can differ from one institution to another. Terre des hommes nonetheless wishes to distinguish the following stages in the project cycle:

I. Prerequisites (cf. Sheet III)

This stage corresponds with identification of the field of intervention and the institutional framework in which the project will evolve, including also context analysis and verification of adequacy with Terre des hommes' mission.

Key documents: Terre des hommes' Charter, institutional strategic plan, sectoral strategies, regional or country strategic plan, fact-finding mission report (or ex-ante evaluation), possibly a request for intervention from a partner or group of beneficiaries, decision appeal document to the Board.

II. Strategic planning (cf. Sheets IV – XVIII)

Planning is the collective process of building the strategy of a project's phase, which can be broken down as:

- Vision and final aim (or goal) of the project
- Situation analysis (problems, stakeholders, resources and potential, limits obstacles and risks)
- Constructing the project objective
- Constructing the project strategy
- Preparing the project's follow-up matrix or logical framework (logframe)
- Model of action and links with sectoral strategies
- Project appreciation criteria

Key document: ***project strategic plan***
Prepared by the team responsible for the project (assisted by the delegation) and submitted for consultation to the Terre des hommes delegation and local partners. The final decision and agreement are made by the Headquarters of the Foundation in Lausanne.

III. Operational programming (cf. Sheet XIX)

This is the short-term (annual) operational translation of the strategy.

- Identification and arrangement of activities leading to results
- timetable for implementation
- identification and organisation of the necessary human and material resources
- budgeting in accordance with Terre des hommes' accounting plan
- setting up of a monitoring system for gathering information

Key document: ***Annual operational plan***
Prepared by the team responsible for the project, assisted by the delegation. The final decision is taken by the Terre des hommes delegation and ratified by Headquarters at Lausanne.

IV. Implementation / execution (cf. Sheet XX)

Implementation/execution is the carrying out of the activities (tasks) detailed in the operational plan according to approved standards and in the limits of available resources. This crucial stage in a project highlights all the team's expertise. The best planning does not compensate weaknesses in project implementation.

V. Monitoring and evaluation (cf. Sheets XXI – XXIII)

Monitoring makes it possible to verify in the course of the intervention whether action is producing the effects anticipated, to identify unexpected effects, observe how the situation and the context of the project are evolving, and to examine the interaction between the stakeholders. Monitoring contributes to the periodical readjustment of intervention with a view to ensuring its success.

Key documents: ***Periodical reports and reports on request***
On the basis of monitoring and in accordance with a standard format, the field regularly informs Headquarters and any other project partners (donors, etc). Monitoring also gives rise to internal monitoring documents: data sheets, tables, etc.

In the course of implementation (mid-term self-evaluation), at the end of the phase (the most frequent), or even some time after the end of or withdrawal from the project (also known as ex-post evaluation), internal or external **evaluations** may be carried out. They give rise to adjustments in the project and contribute to the capitalisation of experience.

Key document: ***Evaluation reports***

VI. Capitalising on experience (cf. Sheet XXIV)

Monitoring elements (observation in particular) and the results of evaluation contribute towards improving practice (successes/failures) or, in other terms, to **capitalising on experience.**

Key document: ***Capitalisation report***
This is prepared by the project's stakeholders. Capitalisation is foreseen at least once at the end of each phase of the project, and might cover the whole of the project or a significant part of it.

VII. Readjustment or withdrawal (cf. Sheet XXV)

Readjustment is somehow more than a stage, it is a decision-making process with regard to modifications to be brought to the project.

Three types of readjustment can be distinguished:

- **Operational readjustment** in the framework of monitoring: this mainly concerns modifications not going beyond the level of actions and not implying budgetary modifications. It makes it possible to optimise intervention and can be done at any time in the year.
- **Strategic readjustment** following the results of (self-, internal or external) evaluation. Such readjustment can involve modifications to the intervention strategy and is done at key moments in the course of the project's phase.
- **Extreme readjustment:** as above, except that it involves modifications to the project's objective. It can be said that the project is in crisis.

Withdrawal is often prepared and programmed right from the planning of the project phase, unless external circumstances over which the project has no control force it into sudden closure.

In summary, during this stage in the project cycle there are a number of possibilities depending on the evolution of the intervention:

Continuation of the project

The lessons (successes and failures) drawn from a previous phase of a project make it possible to plan the next phase. This is the **readjustment** stage. It should be noted that this can also be carried out in the course of a phase, in accordance with monitoring/evaluation results.

Closure of the project

This is purely and simply the end of an intervention, **withdrawal** at a specific date; it is only justified in rare cases (punctual emergency interventions, insecurity, etc).

"Localisation" of the project

Transfer of project competence and responsibility to a recently created local partner, together with **progressive withdrawal** on the part of Terre des hommes (firstly from project management and then from project funding). This generally calls for **capacity building** within the project or under the form of a specific project.

Handing over a project to a third party

To a governmental partner, NGO, existing grass-roots organisation.

Key documents: ***Partnership agreement, handover protocols, localisation plan, strategic plan of the new phase, etc.***

Summary:

Terre des hommes gives priority to support rather than substitution interventions.

A project can be broken down into different successive phases of an average duration of one to three years, depending on the context and type of intervention.

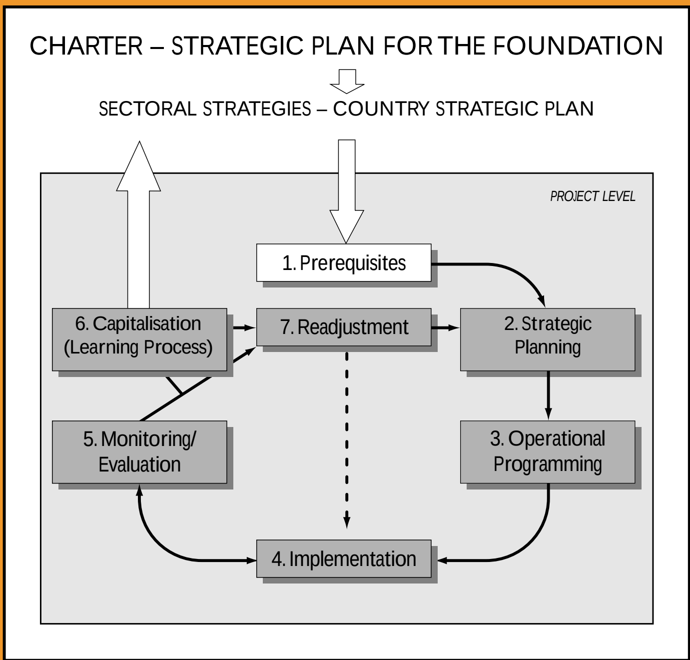
The project cycle method – which is the subject of this Handbook – applies mainly to one project phase.

A project phase goes through seven stages, making up the project cycle: (1) prerequisites, (2) strategic planning, (3) operational programming, (4) implementation/execution, (5) monitoring/evaluation, (6) capitalisation, (7) readjustment or withdrawal

Each project cycle stage produces or calls on key documents making it possible to take enlightened decisions.

STAGE 1 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

PREREQUISITES



III. Prerequisites[1]

Prior to undergo a time-consuming planning exercise likely to raise unnecessary expectations among the stakeholders, the field and framework of intervention should first be identified, certain prerequisites checked and an institutional green light obtained. This is the first stage in the project cycle.

This can be done by means of an **exploratory or fact-finding mission**[2] at the intended site of intervention, conducted by Terre des hommes' personnel (in the field[3] or at Headquarters) or in some cases by a person from outside Terre des hommes (also known as ex-ante evaluation). There are no binding rules with regard to the choice of person for such a mission as everything depends on the context, type of intervention planned, available resources and availability of a person having the profile required for this type of exercise. Terms of reference for an exploratory mission should be shared and discussed with Headquarters.

The aims of the exercise are to:

- **Identify the field and modalities of intervention:** what type of project? Direct management or partnership? What problematic does it aim to tackle? What are its main lines and implications? In what geographical region/zone is it situated? What is the target group?
- **Analyse the local and national context in which the project would take place:** at economic, social, political, legal levels, etc. Identify current national policies in the intended field of intervention.
- **Determine who is already doing what in the area of intervention:** NGO, public services, grass-roots groups, local initiatives.
- **Study existing documentation:** reports by other agencies, literature on the subject, official statistics, etc.

Once we have a better idea about what we intend to do and on what we want to act (preliminary project), an intervention framework should be outlined – i.e. the maximum financial envelope the future project can reckon on. The suitability of the intervention planned should also be checked with strategic reference documents as should the added value Terre des hommes can bring in the context.

1 This stage is particularly necessary when opening new projects.

2 The terms "initial assessment" or "needs assessment" are often used.

3 This may be either a team present on the spot (in the case of the identification of a new project in a country where Terre des hommes is already intervening) or a team from another, neighbouring country of intervention.

The exploratory mission should enable us to clarify our project framework and check relevant prerequisites prior to project planning. But it should in no case replace or substitute for participatory strategic planning as described in the next stage.

Below are a number of aspects to be taken into consideration as planning prerequisites.

3.1. How to delineate the field of intervention

Whether by experience, conviction, observation of the context or at the request/invitation of other stakeholders, we often have an idea of the type of intervention to be undertaken, the place it should take place in, the population sector, and who might make up the target group.

When an answer, even a general one, can be given to such questions, there is already a certain image of what our **field of intervention** might be, to some extent forming the background in which we wish to situate our intervention.

It might be an accepted fact, for example, that work will be with single mothers in a certain town or district, or with malnourished children in a certain region, or with children in street situations at risk of violence in a certain urban area. This is known because the institution has a past history, has become known for a certain type of action and already has a range of skills. A general idea has been aired but nothing very precise, in any case nothing that would enable planning work to be started straight away. To define the specific nature of a field of intervention more precisely in an area where we have something relevant to bring, **the area in which most efforts are to be invested, where added value can be provided, has to be identified.**

3.2. What motivates us to intervene?

Once the field of intervention has been identified to some extent, and even before thinking about planning, it is necessary **to be clear about the reasons motivating us to intervene:**

- Who and what lies at the origin of the idea?
- What is the point of departure, our driving force?
- Why intervening here and not elsewhere?
- Do we have antecedents in the region in question justifying our intervention?

- Are we qualified to intervene?
- Is it wise for us to intervene or are other actors better qualified?

The institution's **mission** should provide an initial response to these questions, the one of Terre des hommes being set out in its **Charter.**

In case of a partner organisation's project, it must have its own mission which must be compatible with our own. If the partner has only recently been created or where it does not have its own mission, it must first of all establish its mission before considering a project (see below). The intervention planned must be fully integrated into its mission, or the project is liable to extend beyond the institution's area of competence and betray its values.

3.3. What is the mission?

"A mission is the creation of an orientation bringing people together and urging them to accomplish their deepest aspirations".

Vaclav Havel

"The mission of an institution is the definition of what is fundamental, permanent and unchangeable for it".

Palomo Izquierdo

Other, closely related terms: charter, philosophy, credo, policy, intent.

Reasons for defining a mission:

1. To contribute to selecting suitable strategies, so as to disregard strategies not in line with the mission.
2. To ensure that all objectives of the institution head in the same direction. This is important as all objectives, whether long- or short-term, specific or particular, should be directed towards accomplishment of the mission;
3. To provide a clear picture for all concerned (managers, employees, beneficiaries, other stakeholders, etc) of the direction the institution is taking;
4. To create a spirit of belonging and a motivation of all staff around the institution;
5. To transmit a positive image, e.g. through a publicity type slogan or by public relations.

Characteristics of a mission:

A mission should as far as possible have the following characteristics:

1. The mission must enable an institution to differentiate itself from others. It should answer the question: "What do we have that is unique or different to what others have?"
2. It should be forward-looking and answer the question: "Where are we going in the future?"
3. It should be motivating, contain a unifying concept bringing all concerned together and motivating them. It is not easy to achieve this but it contributes to conveying the mission to the staff.
4. It is important that the mission be clear, transparent and communicated to the different stakeholders.
5. The mission defines what we are competent to act on.

(Adapted from "Planificación: el arte de establecer objectivos" by Amado Salgueiro, Ecuador, 1994)

Some questions to test the validity of our mission:

- An important question in defining a mission is to define what we have that is original. An effective means of doing this is to ask ourselves what would happen if our project or institution should cease to exist.
- The mission must be highly motivating. A good test question is: if all the members of the personnel won a large sum of money on the lottery enabling them to live without working, would our mission motivate them to continue?
- If some of the values expressed in the mission can be easily changed, they are not fundamental and should not be included in the mission.

3.4. The decision-making process in starting a new project[4]

Once the field and framework of intervention have been identified (preliminary project) and it has been checked that they coincide with the mission, a decision of principle (green light) should be obtained at institutional level to go ahead. Indeed a planning process mobilises considerable resources (in time and human terms), and it would be a waste of time and very frustrating if a project (in any form whatsoever) did not come about. In addition, the fact of planning a project can build up false expectations and hopes on the part of future beneficiaries, teams in the field and our partners, expectations which could not be met if the project did not go ahead.

4 It should be noted that this is already subject to an ISO procedure (CPT-01) set out in September 1999

At Terre des hommes, the final decision-making body for a new project is the Foundation's Board of Trustees, with an intermediary stage comprised of the geographical area (desk) and head of department at Headquarters.

Even though it may not always be possible in all circumstances, the objective of this process is to obtain the institution's go-ahead in principle. Obviously, in as far as no planning has yet been undertaken, precise information is lacking about the strategy the project intends to adopt to improve the unsatisfactory situation at the root of our process. But it is very seldom that we do not have information and sufficiently convincing arguments to obtain this agreement of principle. The difficulty lies rather in estimating the cost of the intervention without having conducted strategic planning or operational programming. We therefore have to refer at this stage to a provisional budget or envelope.

There are two types of process at Terre des hommes, depending on what time in the year an intervention proposal is submitted to Headquarters:

First scenario: *the proposal coincides with the period for preparing annual budgets.* In the event of agreement with Headquarters, the provisional budget will be included in the country budget for the coming year. The Board's agreement of principle or its refusal will be made at the time of approving the annual budget for the country concerned.

Second scenario: *the proposal is made during the year when the budget for the country concerned has already been approved.* In the event of agreement with Headquarters, a special procedure is adopted with the Board's Executive body, which gives its agreement in principle or its refusal. If the request occurs during the budgetary year, the agreement is conditional upon 100% funding originating from "non-traditional" donors[5].

In many cases therefore it is necessary to inform the Board at a later date, when the project has been planned and funding secured.

Once institutional go-ahead on principle has been given, it is then possible to tackle strategic planning more calmly. Strategic planning is the subject of the next chapter.

5 Preparation of the Foundation's annual budget is based on a forecast of income from "traditional" donors (regularly providing funding for Terre des hommes), with income subsequently being translated into related expenditure. A "non-traditional" donor is therefore an institution or organisation for which no contribution forecast has been used in calculating the Foundation's annual budget.

Summary:

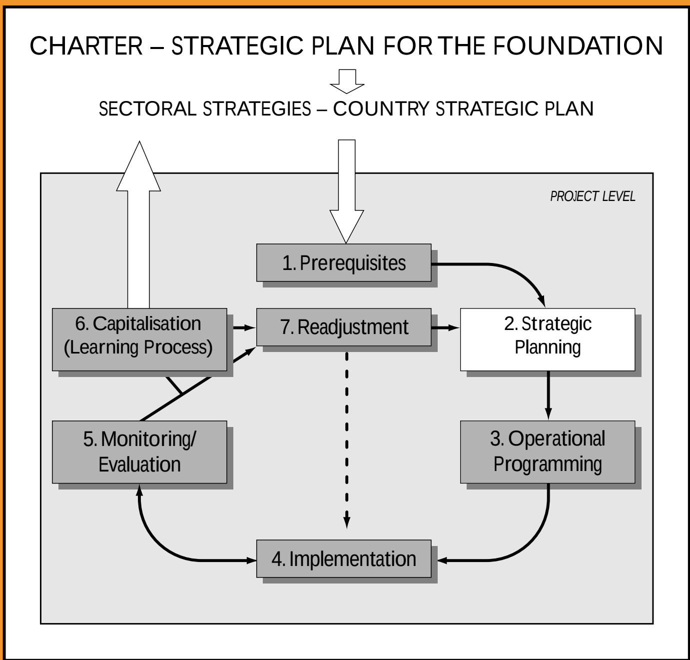
Even before starting to plan, the field and framework of intervention (type and place of intervention, target group, provisional budget) have to be determined and a context analysis conducted. As a general rule this is done by means of an exploratory mission conducted by Terre des hommes' staff or by an external person.

Certain prerequisites must also be checked in the course of this exercise and it must be clear what is driving us to intervene, with reference to Terre des hommes' mission and/or the mission of partner organisations (adequacy). Where the latter do not have a mission, we should help them to establish one before embarking on planning.

Lastly, an institutional agreement of principle should be sought before launching a time-consuming planning exercise which might raise expectations and false hopes among stakeholders.

STAGE 2 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

STRATEGIC PLANNING



Terre des hommes

IV. Strategic planning: What is it? What is it for? Who does the planning?

4.1. Planning: What is it?

Definition

Strategic planning is the collective process of building a strategy for a project phase.

Strategy is organising action in a constructed, consensual manner to reach an objective.

This definition places emphasis simultaneously on:

- Realising the **objective** which is the keystone of the strategy. It is therefore important that it be constructed with as much care as possible.
- The conditions for producing planning which should be an effort of **collective construction.**
- The need to build action on the basis of **in-depth reflection** and not as a reaction to problems or on the basis of mere intuition.
- The need to arrive at **consensus** so that all partners feel involved in choices made.
- The fact that the main aim of planning is to work out a **strategy**.

A strategy should make it possible not only to achieve the objective (effectiveness) but also to achieve it at the lowest cost (efficiency). By cost, we mean all resources put into the action and not simply financial resources.

4.2. Why plan?

- To improve project quality
- To improve project effectiveness
- To improve project efficiency (optimising the use of the human and financial resources available)
- To facilitate monitoring and evaluation of project progress and results in accordance with criteria defined during planning
- To facilitate communication between the Foundation and its partners (greater clarity and transparency)
- To ensure continuity (in the event of a change in project senior staff, delegate

or Headquarters manager or of permanent handover of the project to a local organisation)
- To ensure and exchange between the various partners and take their different points of view into account
- To reduce any bias in terms of definition of the target population
- To facilitate capitalisation of the methods applied
- To facilitate comparison between similar projects
- To have an opportunity of obtaining funding from international co-operation institutions
- To facilitate communication on projects and project results.

4.3. Beneficial effects of planning

For Terre des hommes' operational managers:

Participation in the preparation of planning, common efforts in the same direction, facilitated monitoring, establishment of clear criteria drawn up jointly, greater clarity and transparency between partners, better project presentation to obtain funding.

For the Headquarters team:

Simplified monitoring and evaluation of results, ensured continuity in the event of a change in personnel, enriched reflection as a result of capitalisation, possibility of greater credibility vis-à-vis financial partners.

For beneficiary children:

Greater understanding on their part of what is happening with regard to their situation; an understanding of the reasons behind decisions affecting them; knowing what might happen to them in the future.

For donors:

An assurance that financing meets their requirements, synthetic funding requests, improved monitoring and conditions for evaluation, simplified communication, greater credibility for Terre des hommes and its partners.

The planning and project management Handbook serves as a theoretical basis for teams and partners to carry out planning in accordance with the method presented during training workshops.

Terre des hommes Foundation expects all projects it supports to be planned in accordance with the method outlined in the Handbook.

4.4. Planning is not restricted to the document it produces

There is a tendency to confuse planning with the document stemming from it. They are not the same thing. Such confusion usually has two causes:

- The term "planning" is used to refer to both;
- A belief that the planning document is the aim of the exercise.

To avoid the first pitfall, we recommend that the document arising from planning be called the **" project strategic plan ".**

To avoid the second, emphasis must be placed on the fact that **the main aim of planning is to elaborate a strategy and not to produce a document.** The latter is merely the description of a strategy.

4.5. An easy-to-use operational tool

Of the various methods that exist, Terre des hommes has opted for strategic planning, an approach increasingly used by development agencies, NGO and enterprises. It has the advantage over other methods that it is clearly oriented towards objectives and solutions, contrary to conventional, problem – activities-oriented methods. Generally speaking, a problem is a symptom of an unsatisfactory situation that cannot be improved in a lasting way by simply tackling the problem. For example, malnutrition in a child can be symptomatic of a situation whose gravity extends far beyond the matter of nutrition and affects the family as a whole. What must be addressed therefore is an overall change in the family's situation to reduce problems in the future, and where possible avoid them reoccurring.

The new desired situation has to be defined as clearly as possible **in terms of objective.** This presupposes that major importance is given to defining the objective prior to deciding on what action should be undertaken.

Within one single method, the steps taken and the underlying concepts can vary considerably. For this reason we have adapted the method to the specific needs of Terre des hommes to make it an effective, practically oriented tool as easy to use as possible.

All too often, a planning exercise results in a document which is then relegated to a drawer. Or planning can become a straitjacket which prevents action being adapted in pursuit of the objective. The reality we are faced with is always extremely complex and we have to do with a constantly changing world. Our work therefore evolves along paths strewn with pitfalls and unforeseen factors. Planning should help us find our direction in this uncertainty and complexity in order to achieve our objective. Consequently it must **be flexible,** take the context into account, and allow for any reorientation that may become necessary. It is not a once for all exercise but a constantly evolving effort. Flexibility also assumes that the rules and concepts of the method can be challenged for the purpose of having them evolve. This said, any change in strategic planning should be negotiated with the parties involved, including donors and Terre des hommes' Headquarters.

At the same time, the adoption of a planning method makes it possible to have a reference framework and a common language for the institution as a whole.

4.6. What does strategic planning mean?

The term strategy can be used in a number of different ways. As stated above, **strategy means organising action in a constructed and consensual way in order to reach an objective.**

Designing action is too often based on unquestioned evidence, conviction and intuition. This leads often to a predetermined, "common thinking-based" strategy. In such case, the reasons having led us to decide on a strategy are neither explicit nor conscious. Strategic thinking, however, consists in imagining different routes the action could take in order to select the one which seems to us to offer the greatest probability of achieving our objective. In addition, this route is all the better if it allows us to achieve the objective at less cost in time, human and material resources. This way of building up action renders our choices explicit and conscious and thus makes it possible to question its validity and meaning at all times.

4.7. Design and implementation – two levels not to be confused

Often, in the course of planning exercises, there is some confusion between how intervention is conceived and its implementation. They are however two separate steps (which is why they are different stages in the project cycle) and should be distinguished one from another:

- **Design is a process of collective thinking** to define what is essential, i.e. what constitutes the essence of the project, and leads to the formulation of **strategy**.
- **Implementation is the execution of this strategy** defined in detail.

The essential should not be confused with the detail, so as not to give rise to confusion and lose sight of what is important. Strategy is the primary reference and implementation ensures that it can be achieved.

Planning belongs to the design level. The main focus is on defining the final aim (or goal), objective, expected results and actions (the acronym FORA will be often used to refer to these four terms). The end result of this exercise is the **project strategic plan.** The period concerned generally extends over one to three years. It is therefore situated in the medium-term.

However, in many cases the life of a project is made up of a number of phases and, when preparing strategy, it is already necessary to imagine how it might extend into the following phase. Already at the initial planning stage thought must be given to the different options of a phasing-out strategy.

Programming and administration belong to the implementation of the intervention. It is a matter here of defining activities, means (including a detailed budget), those responsible and their tasks. It should be noted that action should not be confused with activities, the latter being elements of the former. Where, for example, action is "to train personnel in strategic planning", activities leading to its implementation might consist of:

- Holding a training workshop
- Preparing and distributing a handbook
- Ensuring methodological monitoring.

Personnel training is one element of the strategy. Should it be decided to do something other than training, then the strategy would have to be changed. This may mean a significant change in the design of the intervention, even though major changes may not be made to the rest of the planning.

However, if the training option is retained, but a choice is made to implement it by means of activities other than those envisaged above, changes can be made which do not affect the strategy. Considerable flexibility is therefore possible with regard to activities, albeit within the limits of the means available.

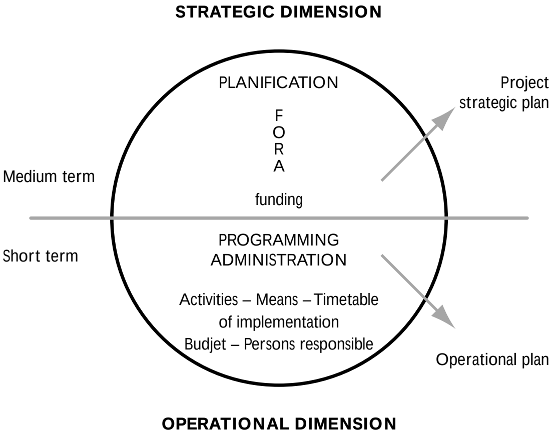
Consequently, **only actions should be included in planning.** Activities are contemplated only during programming.

If, as we indicated, planning is a medium-term component, **programming** however **concerns the short term** (three months to one year).
Its end results are:

- The annual operational plan setting out the timetable for implementation of activities, breakdown of budget, tasks and responsibilities.

- Possibly a quarterly program detailing the operational plan and specifying in particular logistics and the work plan for each member of the team.

Planning is the strategic dimension of intervention management. Programming and administration represent the operational dimension.



4.8. Who does the planning?

To avoid any tendency of substitution, **the main stakeholders in the project, the beneficiaries in particular, must be involved in the planning process.** If planning is undertaken solely by a Terre des hommes team, or even worse by management alone, it will be difficult to mobilise other stakeholders as they will fail to perceive the project as something which belongs to them. It is therefore most important that planning be **carried out participatively**.

Another aspect is the need to be aware of and ensure an exchange of views on each stakeholder's perception of the problems and situation, and the interests, motivation and potential of each, as well as each one's vision of the future.

Indeed, stakeholders should be called on to participate throughout the project and not only during planning. This is a crucial option which makes it possible to increase scope and sustainability of the intervention.

4.9. How to achieve real participation

The mere presence of beneficiaries or partners is not sufficient to guarantee true participation. Their real participation is only possible if we create conditions for equal interaction based on listening and mutual acceptance.

Three requirements must be met to achieve this:
- Focusing on beneficiaries
- Ensuring conditions for effective communication
- Taking differences into account

Focusing on beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are the main stakeholders. Nonetheless, it is sometimes neglected to associate them with the thought, planning and action processes, even though they are most directly concerned and without them our action would be meaningless. They are the main stakeholders but rarely the protagonists of a project. **Every possible measure must therefore be taken to ensure that they are central to everything we do.**

Ensuring conditions for effective communication

To avoid good intentions and praiseworthy principles remaining at the level of rhetoric, appropriate arrangements for communication have to be created. These take the form of concrete measures allowing everybody to take an active part in exchange.

The aims of such communication are to:
- Create a productive and participatory working atmosphere
- Provide the stimulation necessary for initiatives to be forthcoming
- Ensuring equality among all participants, which implies ensuring that everyone has equal rights, in particular:
    - The right to speak, with freedom to express an individual point of view without being subjected to personal judgement;
    - The right to be heard, with what each person has to say being taken into account by the others;
    - The right to make a mistake without it giving rise to sanction (simple reproof can also have a penalising effect).

A communication arrangement basically includes the following:
- Working rules and principles accepted by all
- A system of moderation stimulating each individual to participate, ensuring that the

accepted rules are observed by everyone but without taking on an underlying role of authority

- A practice of "positive discrimination", i.e. knowing how to put oneself at the same level as those who may find themselves in a position of inferiority, particularly with regard to speaking (by using language and terms understood by all, facilitating intervention from those for whom it is difficult to express themselves verbally)

Taking differences into account

Not everyone can participate in the same way for reasons of differences in status, training, age, and position in relation to the problem. Moreover, not everyone is concerned by the project in the same way: while some are the main persons concerned, others are less involved. The participation of some may even be impossible (very young children for example). Nonetheless, an effort must be made to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible are involved in the process, while being aware that the level of involvement and manner of participation of each may vary:

Having children participate creatively

- The beneficiaries of Terre des hommes' projects are almost always children. It is at times difficult to have them participate, which means that ways have to be found to allow them to express themselves; for example by organising meetings with only a few adults present so as not to intimidate them, or using games and non-verbal means of expression such as drawing and role-playing. What they express is valuable for decision-making, even if they do not participate directly.

Involving a representative group of beneficiaries

- All the individuals who will benefit from a project are not known at the time of planning. For example, when a project to support single mothers is started up, not all the beneficiaries can be known as they will present themselves as the project gets under way. This is one of the main limits to beneficiary participation in planning. It is nonetheless possible to involve a group representative of the whole.

Taking differences of status into account

- Some persons cannot express themselves freely at a meeting because they feel ill at ease or because their status does not permit them to (for example, there are societies where women cannot speak in public in front of men). In such cases, conditions must be created to overcome these difficulties. For example, by having women meet separately or by avoiding persons whose differences in status might inhibit some participants attending the same meeting.

Who should be associated with decision-making? Who should be consulted?

- Stakeholders may only be concerned by a project to a limited extent. For example, an NGO partner collaborating only from time to time for specific matters. In this case, it will not be necessary to associate them with decision-making but it might be useful to consult them to get their opinions and suggestions.

There are two modes for stakeholder participation in planning:

- Consultation: the stakeholder gives his/her opinion, may take part in reflection but has no decision-making power;
- Participation in decision-making: he/she is involved in choices of orientation.

As we have seen, getting some stakeholders to participate can give rise to difficulties for which there are no ready-made solutions. Such solutions must be found on a case-by-case basis, taking the specific nature of the situation into account.

Summary:

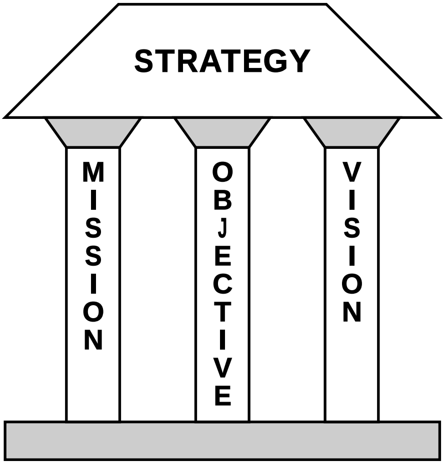
Strategic and participatory planning is focused on the objective and involves all stakeholders. Planning (final aim, objective, expected results, action) concerns the design of a project and is medium-term. Operational programming (activities, responsibilities, timetable, etc.) concerns implementation and is short-term.

Planning improves project quality, ensures continuity and facilitates communication. Planning is not restricted to the document it produces.

It is essential to have all stakeholders participate, beneficiaries in particular, by seeking the most appropriate methods to do so in each instance.

V. Overview of the planning process

5.1. The three pillars of the planning process



The planning process rests on three pillars without which it is not possible to build a strategy:

- **Mission,** which tells who we are as an institution and sets out our basic values;
- Our **vision,** which expresses how we see the future of the situation on which we wish to intervene and its context;
- Project **objective,** which is the status of the situation we are to create by the end of the phase.

5.2. Main stages in a planning exercise

Very often one chooses to start the planning process by an analysis of the present situation. We prefer for our part to start by **projecting ourselves into the future straight away as it is the situation we wish to achieve that should drive our planning process.** In reality, the order of stages can be changed without it necessarily affecting the process as, in any case, there are always some “back and forth” between the different stages. It is not unusual therefore that work on one stage brings into question what we have done at an earlier stage. For example, taking external assumptions into account drives us to take another look at our objective. Or strategy building causes us to discover an ally we would not have thought of.

1. Definition of our vision of the future from scenarios

2. Situation analysis

- Analysis of the **unsatisfactory situation** (the problematic justifying the action). Are there a number of **problems** in regard to which we choose to intervene in function of our mission and skills?
- Analysis of **stakeholders**. Who are the main **stakeholders** present? Who are our allies and who our opponents? Who might become allies or opponents (potential allies and opponents)? What are the interests of each stakeholder?
- What are the **resources and potentialities** we can make use of: partners, financial and human resources, skills, etc.?
- Analysis of **limits, obstacles and risks** to be taken into account and which restrict our field of action.

3. Building intervention logic

- Building the **final aim** on the basis of the vision: description of the situation to which our intervention will contribute.
- Building the **objective**: description of the situation which we want to attain by the end of the phase.
- Building **strategy**: imagining possible ways to attain the objective in order to choose the best, the one most likely to guarantee us success. Strategy is generally made up of several strategic axes entailing a series of **(intermediary and final) results.** Each result is the outcome of one or more **actions**, and represent so many steps to pass through in order to achieve the objective.
- Defining **external assumptions** (or critical conditions): are there any factors external to the intervention, over which we have no control, but which may determine achievement of the results and/or the objective?
- How will we monitor and measure progress of results along the path we have mapped out? Defining **indicators and means of verification** to facilitate these measures.
- The preceding stages make it possible to prepare a **logical framework** (or log-frame, also called "follow-up matrix") summarising the whole intervention logic (Final aim – Objective – Results – Action/FORA, indicators, means of verification and external assumptions).

4. Clarifying the model of action

In relation with sectoral strategies, the model of action concerns the **way in which the project intends to intervene with regard to beneficiaries.** As recurrent strategy, repeated ways of perceiving and acting, this means rendering specific and describing which model of action a project will prioritise and indicating the technical/methodological tools to be used for this purpose (e.g.: the "child-street system" for a children in street situations project).

5. Project appreciation criteria

- Analysis of **consistency** or **coherence** with national policies, Terre des hommes' Charter and strategic plan, sectoral strategy, policy or priorities of a possible institutional donor, etc.
- Degree of **participation**: will the project operate in a participatory way? Is the target population to be associated at all major stages?
- **Sustainability** analysis: the way the project goes about guaranteeing that substantial advantages (beneficial effects) for the target population extend beyond the duration of intervention.
- **Strengthening local capacities**: description of capacity and institutional building among existing or emerging partners.
- Reflection about the (positive or negative) **impact** anticipated: repercussion of our intervention on its environment (population, institutions, surroundings in general). Impact typically comprises effects beyond the control of a project (e.g.: changes in behaviour).
- **Gender** analysis: project approach to social and economic gender relations, possible measures to ensure balanced access by men-women or girls-boys to project services.
- **Networking**: referring in part to the stakeholder analysis, it describes the approach of a project with regard to the web of stakeholders (individuals and groups) and expected net benefit. We are speaking here of both primary networks (natural groupings of beneficiaries such as family, friends, neighbourhoods, etc.) and secondary networks (constructed, formal or informal groupings, such as a co-ordination of NGO operating in the same field).
- **Project cycle management** model: concerns the mode of organisation, functioning and planned development of the project. Does the project match Terre des hommes' planning and implementation standards? What type of monitoring/evaluation? How frequently, what are its contents and for whom are reports intended?

Summary:

The planning process rests on three essential pillars: mission, vision and objective.

We choose to start the strategic planning process by looking forward to the future, as the situation we should achieve must orient any planning process.

The main stages of the process are:

- ***Definition of our vision***
- ***Situation analysis***
- ***Building intervention logic***
- ***Clarifying the model of action***
- ***Project appreciation criteria***

It is always necessary to operate a back-and-forth process between the different planning stages, as one stage fuels another.

VI. Where to begin? With the future!

6.1. Scenarios of the future: what for?

"All roads are good for someone who does not know exactly where to go", said Seneca.

To know where we are going, we have to have a clear mental image of the future. The more we are able to have a clear, lucid representation of future reality, the better we can orient ourselves.

To plan is to talk of the future. The future is of course built on the past. But we often spend far too much time going back over the past and very little imagining the future. This is perhaps because the future is scaring. The present and past are reassuring; we are to some extent familiar with them, they are realities which exist or have existed. The future on the other hand makes us uneasy as it is full of unknowns and quite simply because it does not exist. We devote little time to thinking about the future even though all our action is focused towards it.

We often structure our action on the basis of analysis of the present situation. By doing so, we may fall into the trap of preparing action as a reaction to today's problems and not in terms of a situation which we wish to arrive at, with the risk that we progress one day at a time without really knowing where it is all leading to. However, if we have a concrete image of the reality we wish to arrive at, it can exert a force of attraction which drives us on to realise it. In such case, we proceed in the same way as a seaman navigates, with our eyes fixed firmly on the cape of land ahead.

The scenario is a tool helping to structure our representation of a future in which our decisions of today have a role to play. A good scenario should enable us to take the right decisions and build powerful strategies.

6.2. A commentary in the future

Building a scenario means building a "history of the future".

It means describing as realistically as possible how we see a given situation at a given moment that we must situate in time.

For example, we can imagine that we are a team of journalists sent by our newspaper to make a report in a particular area at a time we have fixed in the future. We then get into a time machine and get out at the time and place in which we are to make our report.

What we then go on to do is observe and describe what we see. We have to recount **facts**, **situations** and **events**, not work a speech or a theory. We have to **recount and not explain**, trying at the same time to involve our intuition, knowledge of the problem and desire for change. We should not get carried away but make the effort to project into a possible, desirable and plausible future. Our subconscious will help us carry out this exercise.

Certainly, it is difficult to foretell the future and it is very difficult to know what the future has in store for us. But we can imagine several possible futures and build a scenario for each of them. The more alternatives we can conceive of, the closer we can get to what might come about. We must therefore commit ourselves to a collective creative process of building scenarios to describe as many futures as we deem necessary in function of what we are capable of imagining. We will naturally concentrate our efforts on those scenarios we regard as to be wished for.

It is not a matter simply of describing what the **results** of our action might be but also the impact they will have on the environment and the **developments** in the situation stemming from external factors. There is a future which we will be subject to, because it will be the product of forces over which we have no control. We will be the powerless onlookers of that future. But there is also a future to be built which will be the product of our own will and action, a future whose authors we will be and which might be so much better if we show proof of creativity and daring.

In building future scenarios, we will probably discover that we do not have sufficient knowledge of some facts. In such case, our questioning about the future shows up gaps in knowledge about the present or past. We will thus be more aware of what we still need to know about yesterday and today in order to build the future, and we will be better able to fill such gaps.

6.3. Embracing a single ideal scenario: the vision

As indicated, it is good to construct several future scenarios. These will be so many possible hypotheses which shed light on our choices. However, of all the scenarios we may imagine, there should be only one we should wish as a group. For if, within a single institution or project, the futures we would like diverge, how can there be any coherent overall action? **Embracing a single ideal scenario should enable each person to feel prepared to face the challenges it entails.**

6.4. Stages in building scenarios

1. Divide participants into small groups.
2. Decide on a **place** and **date**, in principle at the end of the project phase.
3. Decide on which **stakeholders** we are to be concerned with. Our beneficiaries naturally, but also our partners and other institutions: how do they live, what do they do, what is their status, role, etc?:
4. Define **aspects of the situation** we should take a close look at. In particular what are the most striking facts to be observed? What impact will we have on the (institutional, social, political) environment? What will we have significantly influenced?
5. Each group **gets into the time machine** and arrives at the place of reporting. From then on, it is a matter of constructing future scenarios as a "living future", giving a clear and convincing image of what the future we are helping to create will be like. It is to be **recounted and not explained.**
6. **Pooling scenarios** of the different groups in a plenary session. Suggestions and input to improve scenarios.
7. Each small group returns to the future to **refine the vision** of the situation.
8. Further pooling and another return to the future, as many times as necessary.

A vision is not sufficient to build the objective however. We will then have to take into account the problem situation, other stakeholders and our resources and limitations.

Key questions for constructing a vision:

- *Is there a sense of team unity around a single ideal scenario (vision), making it possible for each person to feel prepared to face the challenges it entails?*
- *Does the vision recount facts, situations and events, rather than involving speeches or theories?*
- *Is the vision plausible and realistic, and at the same time wished for and ambitious?*

Summary:

To know where we are going, we have to have a clear mental image of the future. The more we are able to have a clear, lucid representation of future reality, the better we can orient ourselves.

The scenario is a tool helping to structure our representation of a future in which our decisions of today have a role to play. A good scenario should enable us to take the right decisions and build powerful strategies.

A scenario we all wish for, the ideal scenario, constitutes the project vision. It will be the main source of inspiration for building our objective, the keystone of our planning and action.

VII. Problem analysis

Definition

Problems are states of affairs or facts that cause difficulties and suffering or, at least, discomfort. They are what make a situation unsatisfactory.

A crucial moment in situation analysis is when problems must be taken into account. It is not, however, the only element and not too much time should be spent on it to the detriment of strategy building (what to do to change things). There is a great temptation to dwell on problem analysis because problems are what bothers us. They have also to do with aspects which are to a certain extent known to us and which it is easy to talk about. Nonetheless, exhaustive analysis of problems is impossible because of the extreme complexity of reality. Generally, there will be agreement on defining one or more key problems to serve as a reference point in planning work.

Problem analysis does not automatically lead to solutions

Contrary to what may be too often believed, problem analysis does not always provide solutions.

We tend to think that a solution is simply the pure and simple negation of a problem (problem: children are malnourished => solution: feed them). This tendency can lead us to a stalemate rather than considering more effective solutions.

Problems are subjective

Problems have no "objective" existence. They exist for – and only for those – who perceive them as such.

For example, the fact that young children play in rubbish dumps may not be perceived as a problem by parents (e.g. the case of refuse recycling in Quito), or by the children themselves. It is however unacceptable from a social worker's perspective. A state of affairs therefore only becomes a problem when it is regarded as such.

7.1. First step in problem analysis: pinpointing the main problem

Problem analysis does not simply mean **drawing up an inventory of what is wrong and choosing where to place priority.** It also has a second, fundamental dimension which consists of acquiring greater understanding and ascertaining what is wrong. This time, the basic question is not **"What is wrong?"**. It is more a matter of understanding **"how"** and **"why"** it is wrong in order for a given problem to be a priority.

The question has also to be asked – and this is of capital importance – whether the problem identified is in fact the "real" problem. In other words, the question must be asked **whether behind what is believed to be a serious problem, there is not an even more serious problem** not spotted early in the analysis. For example, in a region of the Andes where there are many malnourished children, the main problem was identified as the mothers' inability to prepare balanced meals. Subsequently, it was realised that although this inability might be very real, there was an even more serious problem: fathers were selling highly nutritional vegetables grown by the family to buy consumer goods and mothers had no say in the decision. The mothers therefore found themselves in a situation where they had to prepare food of little nutritional value but which was "filling" (pasta, in particular), food that fathers bought with the income from what they had sold. Persisting in thinking that the main problem was the mothers' failure to provide a "nutritive diet" would probably have led to deciding to take action to remedy this aspect. However, that would obviously not have resolved anything as it was not the real problem. Even worse, by doing this it would have been implied that the mothers were responsible for malnutrition in their children, which was not the case.

7.2. Second step in problem analysis: confronting points of view

After the first analysis, a second stage should take place in which the points of view of the team and those of beneficiaries and partners are aired. This can give rise to enriching exchange on condition that it is conducted as a genuine **exchange of views**. As already mentioned, this means telling one another how we see things while making a special effort to understand the point of view of the other party. Ensuing discussion is aimed at understanding why there are divergences in perception and not at trying to establish who is right.

It is only once this has been done that it is possible to start seeking consensus, prioritising problems, and possibly highlighting relations of causality.

7.3. Placing a situation in its context

A situation can never be separated from the rest of society, but represents only one "part" of it. It is therefore important to **place the situation in the larger context to which it belongs**. If we are concerned about the rejection of young single mothers in a country, it is not possible to disregard the more general matter of the relationship between men and women in this society. What is more, the same situation may exist elsewhere in the same society and is addressed by other stakeholders. It is also important to take an interest in this aspect without being side-tracked by it. The objective here is not to lose sight of the fact that problems are never isolated and that in order to address them effectively they have to be situated in their broader context.

7.4. Setting a situation in its historical background

As already said, a situation is never without a history, in many cases a long history closely linked with that of those playing an important role in the stakeholders' landscape, for example interest groups. Generally, there is not a single history but several, indeed as many histories as there are interest groups. Knowing the variety of histories will be so many assets in building a "workable" strategy. In practice, to piece together histories, different groups are asked to explain the present situation, for example on the basis of a simple question such as "Give me your version of the history of this situation, how did it come to that, what were the main stages?". Each person gives his or her version, thereby opening the way for exchange.

Key questions in problem analysis

- *What are the main problems **from our point of view**?*
- *What **order of importance** do we give them? Do all members of the team give them the same order of importance? If not, why not? Do these differences hamper our action? If so, what solutions can we find?*
- ***Who is experiencing the problems** we have identified?*

- ***Do those experiencing the problems perceive them as such**? If not, why not? If so, do they give them the same importance as us? If not, why not?*
- *What are the main problems **from the beneficiaries' point of view**? Which group of beneficiaries: children, men, women, parents, etc.*
- *Where there is a difference in perception between beneficiaries and ourselves, might this create an obstacle to our support work? If so, how can it be remedied?*
- *What are the main problems **from other stakeholders' point of view**? Do they have the same perception as ourselves? If not, why not? (refer to the stakeholder analysis). Can this create problems in collaborating with those who are our partners? If so, how can this be remedied?*
- *Have problems been situated in the broader context?*
- *What is the history of the situation, how has it come about, what were the major phases?*

Summary:

Taking problems into account is a crucial moment in situation analysis (steps: inventory of problems, acquiring deeper understanding of and familiarity with problems, seeking out the real problem, exchanging views (team, beneficiaries, partners). The situation must also be set in its context and history.

VIII. Stakeholder identification and analysis

Definition

A stakeholder is a person, group or institution likely to play a role in a project or be affected by its actions, for better or worse, directly or indirectly. Among the stakeholders is the **target group**, for example, single mothers. It is within this target group that **beneficiaries** will be defined, i.e. those with whom Terre des hommes will be working directly, for example young mothers living in a poor district of town and facing rejection.

8.1. Inventory of main stakeholders

Before starting on the analysis, an **inventory of the main stakeholders** has to be made, i.e. those who matter most with regard to the project and situation.

Of the stakeholders, attention must be paid:

- to **beneficiaries** in particular;
- then to direct or indirect **partners**, i.e. those with whom Terre des hommes has already developed or will develop relations in the course of action. In most cases this means:
  - Terre des hommes' **local partners**
  - **Other NGO** with which a relation of collaboration exists in the framework of the project
  - **State institutions** (ministries, social services, health structures, prison administration, municipality, etc.) with which the project must collaborate or negotiate
  - **Other players** in the same sector (institutions, NGO, international organisations, etc.)

Below are a number of aspects to be taken into particular account:

1. **Status and importance** of a stakeholder: is the stakeholder essential (a protagonist) or is it a minor stakeholder?
2. The current or expected **degree of co-operation**: decision-making, consultation, information.
3. The main **qualities of our collaboration**: confidence, common interests, etc.

4. The **main obstacles** to our collaboration: lack of partner's legitimacy, poor communication, disagreement, opposition, etc.
5. The **main advantages** to be obtained by the project from this collaboration: sustainability, efficiency, etc.

This information then enables us to better assess the worth of current alliances or to envisage new ones. It may also help in seeking ways out of any conflicts or difficulties we encounter with some stakeholders, or to be armed against them.

8.2. Analysis of main stakeholders

The subsequent analysis of stakeholders can cover a considerable number of aspects: analysis of **decision-making** power, analysis of **resources** accessible to or used by stakeholders, analysis of **relations** between the different stakeholder groups, analysis of **activities** conducted by major families of stakeholders (what people are already doing without our assistance), analysis of **practices** for activities directly concerning the field of intervention of the project.

Analysis of stakes and interests in the field of intervention of the project deserves special attention as they lie at the origins of stakeholders' positions and choices. Indeed, stakeholders' behaviour depends largely on what they have to win or lose in a given situation. Questions to be asked are: what has each party to gain or lose by project action? What is the position of the project in the turmoil of their interests?

PROTAGONISTS			
Stakeholders	Supposed interests	Potential interests	Comments
Other players			
Stakeholders	Supposed interests	Potential interests	Comments

This analysis will make it possible to pinpoint converging or opposing interests and identify **allies and adversaries** among stakeholders.

By **allies** we mean stakeholders whose position or action is positive for our project. They may be partners, where we are collaborating with them, or stakeholders with whom we do not necessarily have contact. A newspaper, for example, may uphold a position similar to our own by means of articles, without us asking it to do so.

By **adversaries**, we mean stakeholders whose position is opposed to ours or who act against our position. Here again, there may or may not be direct contact with these stakeholders. A stakeholder may put obstacles in the way of our action; for example, an authority may forbid us access to an area of operation. In such case, we make contact with this stakeholder. On the other hand, a religious or political group may advocate positions opposed to ours without us necessarily having contact with these stakeholders.

Having identified allies and adversaries, the positions of these stakeholders can be more clearly determined on the basis of the following criteria:

Allies			**Adversaries**		
Formal	de facto	Potential	Declared	de facto	Potential
Those with whom we have an expressed agreement (even though it may be only verbal).	Those with whom we collaborate or who are going in the same direction as us, but with whom we have not made any agreement.	Those who might become our allies.	Those openly declaring themselves hostile to our action or manner of doing or seeing things.	Those hostile to us without having openly expressed it.	Those who might under certain conditions become adversaries.

This allows closer analyses which might lead us to discover certain things, such as:

- While we have entered into an agreement with stakeholder X, the partnership is not working. This is a formal but not a de facto ally.
- Stakeholder Y, with whom we have had no contact, is intervening in a way beneficial for our project. This is a de facto ally even though there is no collaboration on our part.
- Stakeholder Z is neutral with regard to us but could become an adversary should we adopt a certain position.

Particular attention should be devoted to potential stakeholders. In such cases, we should try to imagine what the interests and stakes are which might make them into allies or adversaries. This can be useful in mobilising a stakeholder in our favour, showing a stakeholder what there is to gain by collaborating with us. For example, a project aiming at re-establishing a family environment for children in care is seeking to have institutions – in which they are housed – closed. Educators are in general opposed to the project as they fear they will lose their jobs. In one of these institutions, the team supported by Terre des hommes has been able to show the educators that it is in their interest to work in an open setting as they will be more effective this way as well as keeping their employment. The institution was partially closed in favour of an open structure.

A stakeholder analysis will be **valuable in defining our objective**. Our project will be all the more relevant – and efficient – if we intervene in lines of operation where we have a **comparative advantage over other partners**. For Terre des hommes, these are the **lines of concentration** selected in the strategic plan and where the Foundation has committed resources for capitalisation efforts.

Key questions in stakeholder analysis:

- *Who are the most important stakeholders (inventory)?*
- *Analysis of **activities** conducted by major stakeholder families: who does what, where, with what effect for whom, etc. Of these activities, special interest is to be taken in **initiatives** concerning our field of intervention: we will look at what people are doing already without our aid, how they are already coping.*
- *Analysis of* **practices***: how people do what they are or will be doing, particularly in all activities directly concerning the project's field of intervention.*
- *Analysis of **decision-making power**: are we dealing with stakeholders who have control over their own decisions, or rather who are dependent on other, possibly hidden, instances? Who decides what within the prevailing environment? By which methods?*
- *Analysis of the **interests and stakes** in the project's field of intervention: what do different parties have to gain or lose by the project's action? How is the project situated in the turmoil of their interests? Who are our allies and who our adversaries?*
- *Analysis of **resources** accessible to or used by stakeholders: who has or uses which resources to do what?*

- *Analysis of **relations** between different stakeholder groups: co-operation? mutual assistance? exploitation? conflict? Who is allied to whom to do what? Who is opposed to whom and over what?*

Summary:

The stakeholder analysis enables us to intervene in those sectors where we have a comparative advantage over other partners. The inventory of major stakeholders will enable us to better evaluate current alliances and consider new ones. The analysis of interests and stakes will allow identification of allies and adversaries.

IX. Favourable forces: resources and potentialities

Planning does not rest on problem solving alone, it must also take into account and bring out existing resources or the development of potentialities.

Definitions

A resource may be a given state of affairs, object, person or group making it possible to undertake action. In short, a resource can be anything at our disposal for use in achieving our objective.

A potentiality is a latent resource.

Action strategies based on the highlighting of resources

A determination to solve problems is often what starts a movement of change, but is not in itself sufficient to maintain it. For that, quality resources are called for. In our case these are first and foremost human resources. We must endeavour to identify such resources and recommend the best possible use of them. This should lead us to action strategies based on the highlighting of resources rather than on problem solving or meeting needs. Problems and needs are boundless and if we focus only on them, we eventually reach stalemate and a feeling of being overwhelmed. Beneficiaries take on the role of victims and we take on that of saviours, generating a relation of dependency which ultimately becomes exhausting for all concerned.

Developing potentialities

While it is not easy to identify and pinpoint resources, it is even more difficult in the case of potentialities which are latent resources.

For a potentiality to become a resource, it has to be acted upon and conditions created for it to develop.

For example, we sometimes detect "dormant" capacities in an individual. For them to be of use we have to act on the person (through training for example) and create conditions for him or her to exercise these capacities (by suggesting a suitable role). The most noble, and unfortunately frequently overlooked, part of the developer's work is precisely to "awaken" these potentialities lying dormant in stakeholders benefiting from our support.

Showing imagination...

Identifying and estimating resources and potentialities calls for a great deal of imagination for often those least apparent prove most effective.

Even a football team can become a resource

A good example of developing a potentiality is that achieved by a Terre des hommes team at Cartagena (Colombia). The project took place in a deprived district whose inhabitants had fled the civil war in their region. All of them had lost their homes and land. They were traumatised by violence, marginalised and rejected by the inhabitants of the town to which they had come. The project proposed help to the children in the district to overcome the effects of the psychological trauma they had suffered. After some thought, the team found itself with a choice of either intervening directly with the children or acting through a local actor. The second option was decided on as it offered greater opportunity for action to be continued beyond the end of the project. The most effective stakeholder had to be found. The first idea was to turn to social workers. However, fortunately, observation of life in the district brought the team to learn of the existence of a football club formed by young people. The project recognised a potentiality in this and suggested to the young people it would train them in organising activities for their juniors. They agreed with enthusiasm and their action was successful at several levels:

- As members of the local football team they were heroes. They therefore had greater impact on the children than any other stakeholder could probably have had;
- They are victims themselves, and the organisation of activities helped them to overcome their own suffering;
- Local inhabitants felt themselves appreciated for being capable of doing something for themselves.

As can be seen, the project conducted a strategy of "killing two birds with one stone" (see also Sheet XIII).

This example shows that:

- The team displayed creativity by rejecting the first solution to come to mind (social workers) and find one which was less evident but more effective.
- It was not sufficient to discover a potentiality, something had to be done to transform it into an effective resource. In our example the project trained and offered support to the young people. In this way the football team became the strategic lever of the project.

Key questions for resources and potentialities analysis:

- *What are the resources and potentialities we can use (partners, financial and personnel means, skills, etc.) to achieve our objective?*
- *What human resources have been identified and what is the best way of using them?*
- *What capacities lie "dormant" (potentialities) and what are the conditions that must be created to "awaken" them (resources)?*

Summary:

To maintain a movement of change requires quality resources, which in our case are primarily human resources. They have to be identified and their best possible use advocated to base strategy on highlighting of resources and potentialities. This calls for considerable imagination.

X. Unfavourable forces: limitations, obstacles and risks

Just as we can count on favourable forces, we must be aware of what restricts or hampers development of our strategy. Generally speaking, these elements fall into three categories:

- Limitations
- Obstacles
- Risks

10.1. Limitations

Definition: limitations are **anything hampering our intervention and setting limits to it**, in particular:
- Boundaries of our area of action;
- Non-extendable resources (the budget for example);
- The time available to accomplish our intervention;
- External constraints over which we have no control (for example, those imposed by the government, climate or local culture).

Limitations are not, strictly speaking, opposing forces, as they do not necessarily oppose our strategy but are rather constraints which we must take into account.

10.2. Obstacles and risks

Definition: obstacles are **anything which prevents the realisation of what we have planned. Risks** are anything which may become an obstacle, whether foreseeable or not.

Some obstacles are foreseeable, for example the fact that hostile stakeholders are going to try to hamper what we are doing. But not all obstacles are foreseeable and it is necessary to be aware that what we have planned can be hampered by unforeseen and unsuspected elements.

10.3. Example

This, for example, is the result of an analysis of obstacles and risks conducted at a workshop in Brazil (Fortaleza, November 1999):

1. Limitations:

- little time to carry out our endeavour
- very limited financial resources
- very little known by us about the reality of the town where we are to establish the project.

2. Obstacles:

- dislocation of institutions with which we have to establish relations
- some families refuse to take their children back.

3. Risks:

- emerging incompatibility of values with some partners
- mistrust of Terre des hommes by partners not familiar with us
- reticence on the part of local authorities to collaborate within the network.

Key questions for the analysis of limitations, obstacles and risks

- *What are our limitations/constraints which we must take into account and restrict our field of action?*
- *What are the obstacles and risks with which we are – or might be – confronted? For example in the case of other stakeholders not sharing our perception or having diverging interests: can this create obstacles to the collaboration and thus to the success of the project?*
- *What are the minimum conditions which must be fulfilled for us to achieve the objective?*

Summary:

To take into account the limitations, obstacles and risks facing the project is to ensure realistic planning.

XI. Final aim

Once we have the situation diagnosed and have defined problems and type of intervention, as well as the type of population we intend to work with, it is possible to address the **fundamental question**: What do we want to achieve? Where do we want to get by undertaking all these efforts?

The question will be answered by working from the general to the particular in terms of final aim, objective, results or actions.

11.1. What is the final aim?

A final aim designates **the future positive state, at an overall level, to which our intervention contributes.** This is our supreme aspiration, the ultimate goal of our action.

Examples:
- All the children of the country/region have good nutritional status, or
- Child Rights are respected in the country.

The final aim provides the **overall orientation** and underlying sense of all the efforts being made. A final aim cannot be achieved by a single stakeholder, who taken in isolation can merely contribute towards approaching it. It can even be claimed that a final aim can never be achieved. Thus, for the second example above, even where there has been success in having Child Rights respected, it is always possible that they will subsequently be undermined again.

11.2. Building the final aim

The final aim is a direct emanation of the project's vision, can be expressed in a single sentence, and refers to a desired future positive state to which our project will contribute.

Key questions for the final aim:
- *Does the final aim refer to a future positive state at an overall level towards which our project is contributing?*

- *Does the final aim correspond with our overall aspiration vis-à-vis the matter at issue?*
- *Does the final aim correspond with Terre des hommes' mandate and mission?*

Summary:

The final aim refers to the future positive state at an overall level towards which our intervention contributes. It is our supreme aspiration and the ultimate goal of our action.

The final aim provides overall orientation and underlying meaning to all our efforts.

XII. Objective

The objective is the keystone of the strategy. Without a sound objective there can be no sound strategy. Building of the objective is therefore a crucial moment in planning.

12.1. What is the objective?

An objective indicates **what we want to reach in concrete terms, within a specified time, in order to contribute towards achieving the final aim**. The objective is the description of the **future positive state** in which the beneficiary population is to find itself by the end of a project phase as a result of project action. This state has **lasting effects**. It is **measurable** even though the objective itself is not necessarily quantified.

For example, if the final aim is full observance of Child Rights, the objective that might be set could be a change of public opinion so that it comes to consider certain situations as a breach of these rights. Most often, a series of objectives makes it possible to come closer to realising the final aim.

The objective lies with the **competence and responsibility of the project**, which means two things: that **the project has the means to bring it about** and that it has **the obligation to achieve it** by the end of the project phase.

Often the objective concerns a change in behaviour. We can induce it by creating specific conditions but we cannot guarantee it as it depends on the persons concerned. The underlying hypothesis should be made explicit. For example, in the case of a change in behaviour concerning exclusive breast-feeding, the hypothesis might be: if we train women in exclusive breast-feeding, they will change their behaviour and breast-feed their infants for six months without having resort to supplementary feeding.

12.2. Formulating the objective

To say that **an objective is a state** supposes that the following criteria have been taken into account in its formulation:

- A state is a **new situation**, not a process, wish or intention.
- This situation is the outcome of a **change** produced by the project.

- A state always has **an object and a subject**: What has changed and for whom has it changed?
- The objective should describe a **positive** state, it should not therefore be expressed in negative terms. For example, to say that children no longer live on the street does not tell us what has become of them. It is better to say, for example, that the children have been settled in a satisfactory family setting.
- Along the same lines, **it serves little purpose to formulate the objective in comparative terms**, as the new situation necessarily expresses a positive change with regard to the initial situation. For example, rather than saying that children are better fed, it is preferable to specify the nutritional status achieved.
- To express a state, **verbs should be used in the present or past tense**. An infinitive or gerund generally expresses a process or action. **This way of formulating the objective forces a distinction between the means and the end.** Phrases frequently heard may be: our objective is to support single mothers. This tells us what we want to do but not what we want to achieve. Stating that "single mothers are independent", on the other hand, is a clearly expressed state.
- The objective should be **formulated concisely**. It acts as a focus to direct project intervention and all members of the team should therefore bear it constantly in mind. Too lengthy and complicated expression cannot be easily memorised.

It is nonetheless useful for the formulation of the objective to be accompanied by comments clearly defining the terms of the objective. For example, if it is stated that "single mothers are independent", this will provide an opportunity to explain what is meant by independence and what conditions make it possible to assert that it has been achieved.

12.3. Elements necessary for building the objective

To construct a solid objective, we need:

- A well defined **mission**
- A clear idea of the **ideal situation** we want to contribute to bringing about (the final aim we aspire to achieve one day)
- A thorough knowledge of the **unsatisfactory situation**
- Analysis of strategically important **stakeholders**
- An idea of the **framework and limitations** of our intervention

12.4. Stages in building the objective

1. **Deadline**: indicating the month and year of the end of the phase
2. **Beneficiaries**: who they are exactly (for example the children of a specific part of town, living in a given situation), their numbers (in numerical terms or as a percentage)
3. The **spatial** (geographical) area
4. The **state** and the quality it is wished to achieve
5. The **qualitative and quantitative elements** necessary to specify what we want to achieve and for whom
6. **Other elements** regarded as important.

A sound objective should meet the following **criteria**:
- Be attainable with the means and by the project's action
- It should address the main problem identified
- It should be highly desirable for the protagonists of the project. For that, it should be both realistic and bold, motivating and mobilising
- It should make a significant contribution towards the final aim

12.5. An example of an objective

An example of an objective broken down into components (Project to prevent child abandonment – Casablanca)

Component 1	75% of beneficiaries
Component 2	have been able to keep their children
Component 3	satisfactorily*
Component 4	and to assume responsibility for themselves**
Component 5	following the association's support for a maximum of one year

* Keeping their children satisfactorily:
- Skill 1: …
- Skill 2: …
- Skill 3: …

** Assuming responsibility for themselves:
- Skill 1: they are capable of facing difficulties themselves
- Skill 2: they have a plan for their lives

There is no ready-made formula...

Building a sound objective is a difficult exercise because of the wide diversity of situations in which Terre des hommes operates.

An objective which may suit one project very well cannot for the most part be transposed to another project, even where the two projects are very similar, because of differences in the context of intervention, teams' skills, Terre des hommes' experience on the spot, etc. Yet again there can be no ready-made formula.

We have given definitions and indications making it possible to formulate an objective appropriately. It is however not possible to provide orientations as to its content which will make it possible for sure to formulate an appropriate objective.

Key questions for building an objective:

- *Does the objective make a significant contribution to the final aim?*
- *Does the objective describe a situation to be attained (a future positive state sought by the project) and not a process, wish, intention or list of actions?*
- *Does it contain essential components: target population (for whom?), duration (when?), place (where?)*
- *Is it attainable with the human and financial resources available?*
- *Does it bring an appreciable solution to the key problems identified?*
- *Is its degree of attainment measurable? Have we defined indicators and means of verification?*

Summary:

The objective is the keystone of strategy. Without a sound objective there can be no sound strategy. Building the objective is therefore a crucial moment in planning.

The objective falls within the scope and responsibility of the project.

An objective indicates what it is specifically wished to reach within a given time in order to contribute towards attaining the final aim. It is the

description of a future positive state in which the beneficiary population will find itself by the end of a project phase and as a result of the project's action. This state has lasting effects. It is measurable even if the objective itself is not necessarily quantified.

The objective meets specific rules of formulation.

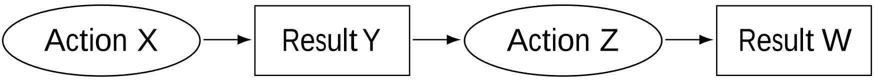
XIII. Project strategy

Once it has been determined what we wish to achieve, it remains to be established how to arrive at it. This is where we talk of strategy: the question of "how to arrive" then becomes paramount.

13.1. What is strategy?

Strategy is the organisation of action oriented towards an objective, which itself contributes to the final aim.

At the time of planning, the strategy we formulate is in fact a set of hypotheses for action: if we carry out action X, we will obtain result Y. If we obtain result Y, we can carry out action Z which enables us to obtain result W.



And so on, until we obtain a full and consistent set of hypotheses for action which should enable us to achieve the objective. The strategy planned must be checked periodically to ensure that it remains valid.

In the case of a sector for which there is a resource person (in 2001: Child Rights, Children in Street Situations, Nutrition, and Mother and Child Health), the corresponding sectoral strategy represents an essential reference document for building strategic axes.

At the time of strategy implementation, the path to be taken will be indicated by confirmation of the hypotheses for action; the strategy planned must therefore be checked regularly to ensure that it remains valid. In the course of things, it may be advisable to optimise actions and/or modify strategy where it is found that initial options or ideas are not bringing about the results expected (see Sheet XXI on monitoring).

The best way to proceed is to build up strategy as a **series of interlinked results** to be obtained. Before deciding what we are going to do, we must always ask ourselves what we want to achieve. It is only when we are clear on this that we can start asking ourselves about the actions to be undertaken.

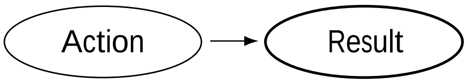
A result can be formulated in the same way as an objective but is not quite the same thing. **The final aim, the objective and the result belong to the same family of ends, but they are situated at different levels.**

The final aim is what gives meaning to all we do.

The objective is what gives meaning to a phase of the project. Different objectives may lead to one and the same final aim.

The result is situated lower in the level of importance. It is one stage among several towards achieving the objective. As several paths are possible to achieve it, a result can generally be changed without this affecting the objective. The objective will be attained once all the final results have been achieved. All results should contribute towards achieving the objective; there can be no result which does not contribute towards achieving the objective.

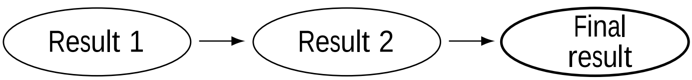
Each result is the product of one or more **actions**:



There should be a direct relationship of cause and effect between these two terms: we should be sure that the action planned does in effect lead to the result sought. As already indicated, **action is made up of a series of activities**, and there should be no confusion between action and activities.

A result is a step towards realising the objective and in many cases is a pre-condition for going on to the next step. Results thus follow one after the other in logical order.

This succession of results represents a **strategic axis** leading to a final result:



In this example, we have two **intermediate** results and one **final** result.

The number of intermediate results can vary. What matters is simply to indicate results of real strategic value.

Results should be measurable either in themselves or by means of **indicators**.

Example

Result expected: "80% of beneficiary mothers provide adequate care for their infants".

Action leading to this result: training mothers in elementary care.

Indicators of the result: the state of health of the infant.

This indicator will be made up of indices such as: the state of cleanliness of the baby, quality of the baby's physical environment, etc. By evaluating the different indices, we can say whether the infant is well cared for.

13.2. Two important distinctions: expected vs. attained results, expected vs. unexpected results

a) **Expected** results should be distinguished from **achieved** results.

Expected results are those identified at the beginning of the project, whereas achieved results are those actually attained within the time planned.

Let us take for example the following expected result: "80% of beneficiary mothers provide appropriate care for their infants". To achieve this we have planned to train mothers in elementary care.

If we obtain a percentage significantly lower than 80%, we should look into the reasons for the difference. Was training inadequate? Perhaps something extra should have been done, such as accompanying mothers for some time in daily care? Or should we have done something other than training?

To ascertain to what extent we have achieved a result we will use **indicators**. If we take the above example, the indicator might be: the state of cleanliness of the baby, the quality of its physical environment, etc. By evaluating these different indices, we can tell whether the infant is well cared for.

b) Another important distinction is between **expected** results and **unexpected** results, i.e. those obtained but not expected at the outset, and which can ultimately prove extremely important. To continue with the same example, we might find that an infant is well cared for because the mother has preferred to leave him/her with a carer. In such case, we can say nothing about the mother's caring skills. What does this unexpected results mean? Have we analysed the situation incorrectly? Or was the action taken inappropriate?

Now that we have seen in greater detail what a result is and its place in relation to other components of planning, let us look at the steps in building results.

13.3. First step in strategy building: elaborating final results

Starting with the objective, we now proceed "backwards". It is very important to proceed in this way in order to guarantee a logical order in the stages.

The first question will therefore be: what are the final results making it possible for us to achieve the objective?

Example

Objective:
In December 2003, 1500 children and adolescents placed in institutions in Rio de Janeiro are effectively resettled in their families of origin or in substitute families.

Remarks:
The final aim of the project is to have the city's social services adopt a strategy to help children in difficulty by intervening directly to support their families and no longer to have children "institutionalised". The intention of the project is to contribute towards discontinuing institutions and long-term placement and replace them by small, flexible structures providing temporary shelter for the children (crisis centres).

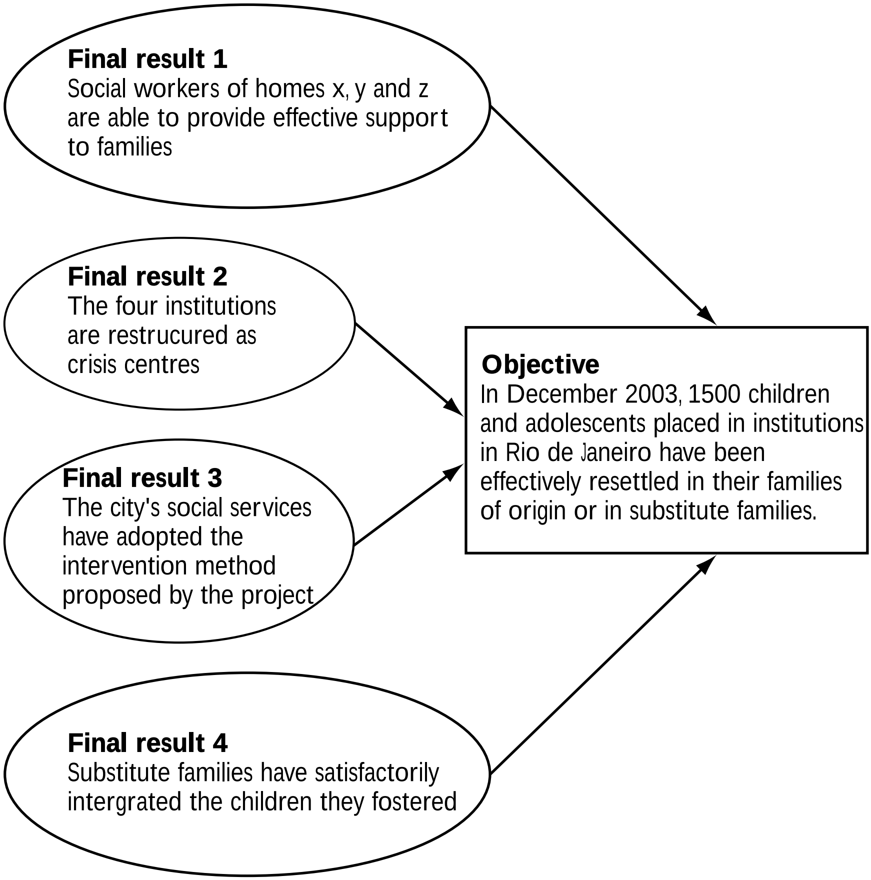
The project understands by effective resettlement that the children are settled in a lasting manner in a family environment favourable to their development.

Final results:
The objective is considered to be attained by achieving the following four final results:

1. Social workers at homes x, y, z and w are able to provide effective support to families to help them overcome their crisis situation
2. The four homes are restructured as crisis centres
3. The city's social services have adopted the intervention model proposed by the project
4. The substitute families have satisfactorily integrated the children they fostered

Strategic axes:
Each final result is the outcome of a strategic axis which it is useful to name without yet knowing the final content. E.g.: preventive axis, network axis, etc.

Graphic:
The relationship between the objective and the final results can be represented graphically as follows:

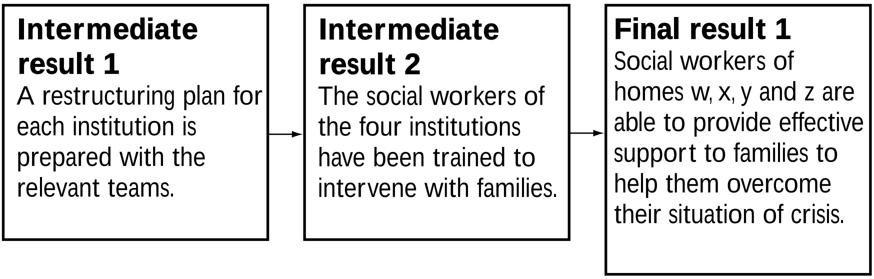


13.4. Second step in strategy building: elaborating intermediate results

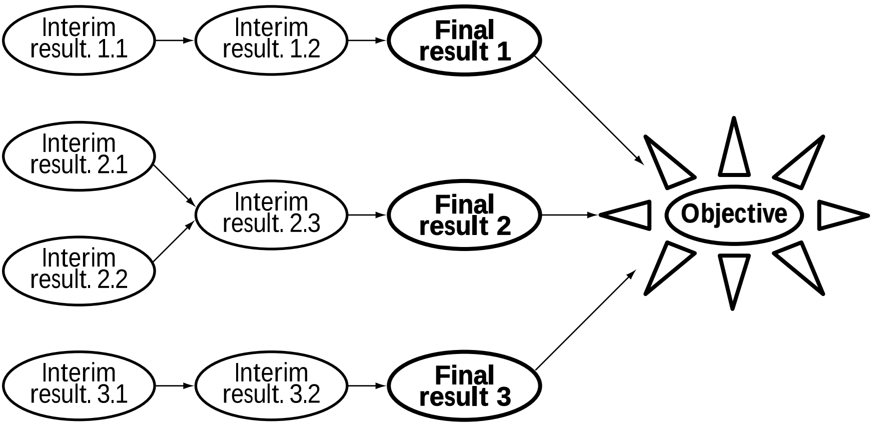
Once the above stage has been accomplished, we can indicate for each final result the intermediate results making its achievement possible. Each final result will thus give rise to a strategic axis.

Take the first axis as an example. Here also we will proceed backwards by asking: which result will enable us to achieve the final result? We will then do the same for each intermediate result until the axis has been completed.

This might give the following:

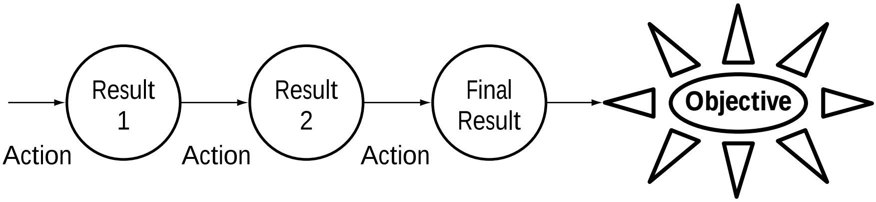


We will then proceed in the same way for each axis, until an overall graphic is obtained as follows:



This graphic representation makes it possible to see our strategy at a glance. It is the **synoptic[1] chart of the strategy.**

We can then go on to indicate the actions making it possible to achieve each result, and complete each axis to obtain a graphic with the following format:



13.5. Winning strategies

As already mentioned, strategy building requires a sound understanding of the situation, an awareness of constraints and resources, and a clear vision of what it is wished to be achieved. Once we have all that, we can start on strategy building, which comes down to seeking the way in which to achieve the objective.

But there is not just one single way, several are possible. It is a matter of finding the best way, i.e. a winning strategy.

How do we go about it? Let us start by looking at the two meanings of the term "finding a way", two meanings which involve two different but complementary approaches:

- **Discovering** a strategy which already exists but which we do not yet know. To do this, we must look at what other organisations working in the same sector are doing, and seek to enter into an exchange with them. This will enable us to benefit from their experience and perhaps to find proven strategies, sparing us lengthy deliberations and giving us an opportunity to adopt a way of proceeding having already proved to be efficient and/or effective, and adapting it to our specific situation.

- **Inventing** a strategy, creating a new one. To do this we have to call on our intuition and imagination. There are unfortunately no ready-made formulae for this but there are also no constraints on creativity. It can therefore be said that there always exists a possibility of inventing a strategy more brilliant than the others. In this way the research effort becomes passionate as it presents a challenge.

1 Synoptic means "affording to have a view of the whole at one glance"

Both ways imply a significant joint effort which may be testing and rather anguishing. Wondering about the best way inevitably leads us to consider that there are poor ways, and if we choose one of them that the project may not achieve its objective. Strategic thinking aims at effective action by means of winning strategies; but it does also consist in ruling out ineffective action by avoiding losing strategies.

There are three main criteria for evaluating whether a strategy is good or bad:

- The **relationship between strategy and objective**: when strategic axes are the most direct ways to achieve the objective, we can talk of considerable **effectiveness**.
- **Matching the means and the ends**: serious ills call for serious remedies. But where we have to do with minor problems, the means will be proportionately modest. We talk of **consistency** between the means and the ends.
- The **cost-benefit relationship**: mention is often made of **efficiency**. Good efficiency can be achieved when we obtain significant results with reasonable expenditure. It should be noted that efficiency is not merely economic. In addition to economic costs, there are **social costs and benefits**, for example social equality, equality of opportunity between girls and boys, risks of conflict, etc, which are also aspects which weigh heavily in the scale of real costs.

Other criteria also important to consider:

- The degree of **participation** (implication) of beneficiaries offered by the strategy selected.
- The degree of **collaboration**, possible synergies to be brought into play.
- The influence (risks and advantages) on the partner's **institutional development**.

Other criteria may also come into account, such as **environment, cultural and political acceptance** on the part of the host country, conforming with the **principles and wishes of donors**. A sound strategy should satisfactorily meet all these components.

As we have seen, a "sound" strategy is one which makes it possible to achieve the objective in the best possible way, i.e. by highlighting our energies and resources as much as possible to obtain maximum results and positive impact. Consequently, strategic planning is focused on effectiveness and efficiency.

Building genuinely promising strategies rests on three pillars which at the same time make it possible to control quality.

1. Highlighting resources and potentialities

- Key resources, those which must be brought out as a priority, are the people with whom the project is working. To what extent does the preferred strategy contribute in this? Who will be highlighted? How? Have powerful synergies been created? How can potentialities lying dormant be awaken?

2. Getting around obstacles

- Sound strategy proposes a favourable solution to getting around obstacles, and supposes that a solid analysis of the situation has been conducted. Obstacles have been identified and there has been in-depth consideration about how to address them. The same applies for limitations and constraints: an effective strategy offers original solutions in order to achieve as much as possible despite limitations.

3. Neutralising risks and threats (or at least predicting and preparing for them)

- Risk assessment is equally important. Any strategy involves advantages and disadvantages as well as risks: by taking certain action it may be that what we fear actually happens. How were the risks assessed when the strategy was being prepared? How has it been planned to reduce them, or even to eliminate them? How do we think we can limit their impact on the smooth implementation of the project?

Taking a look at three winning strategies:

The butterfly effect

We prefer to use the term "butterfly effect" rather than the expression "snowball effect" more commonly known in Europe, as the latter has little meaning in most of the countries where Terre des hommes operates. The butterfly effect refers to the image of a butterfly fluttering its wings in Asia, where the air thus displaced increases incrementally until a hurricane is caused in the Atlantic. In concrete terms it means introducing small changes to set off a sort of **chain reaction** producing large-scale positive effects. For this reaction to be set off, the change we introduce must be based on the strategic **leverage points** already identified.

Such strategies are what Terre des hommes must consider develop first and foremost, for a project is always something minor in proportion to the hugeness and seriousness of the problems it seeks to address. If we want to obtain significant improvement in situations in which we intervene, our strategies must rely on the butterfly effect.

A win-win situation

In this type of strategy, all stakeholders benefit from the project's action. Particular attention is therefore paid to the analysis of stakeholders' interests to ensure that all of them gain and there are no losers.

Killing two (or more) birds with one stone
These are targeted strategies in a promising action sector or strategic leverage point, making it possible to obtain several results and positive impacts from the same intervention. A minor example of this type of strategy is that of the Cartagena's football team (see Sheet IX).

Ideally a sound strategy should combine two or even three of these models at the same time.

13.6. Losing strategies

We will turn to some types of losing strategies among those most frequent in our field of intervention.

Spontaneous action and "activism"
We often get caught up in immediate action. This type of spontaneous action is based on preconceived ideas or evidence which, in many cases, lack a solid basis (we feel that… , but have not really checked). Changes in action are not undertaken in function of the objective but are subject to the inspiration of the moment and may take place at any time (this is agitation, not action!).

Normative planning
Whereas strategic planning is directed towards an objective, normative planning and spontaneous action is activity-focused. For the latter, action follows predetermined schema without being much concerned about knowing where we are going; we stick with doing what has been planned. We then satisfy ourselves with an evaluation at the end of the stage to take stock.

Scattering strategies
The project is involved in a multitude of intervention fields. Everything happens as if it should provide a solution to every problem that exists. As it is not possible to do everything and we cannot be competent in every field, the result is a waste of energy and resources generally leading to scant results.

Much ado about very little
These strategies are marked by major investment in energy and resources for very limited results. The latter may be very good in themselves but the disproportion between the means and the ends reveals a lack of efficiency difficult to accept.

Yet more of the same
This comprises persisting with a strategy not yielding the expected results by

amplifying it. We are failing but insist on keeping to the same lines saying that everything will work out in the end. For example, a project aims to change behaviour among beneficiaries through awareness-raising actions. As results are disappointing, a decision is taken to strengthen awareness-raising. But this still does not work and it is decided to use further awareness-raising means. And so on…

Key questions for strategy building

Global intervention strategy

- *The logic of the overall strategy: is it **coherent/consistent**?*
- ***Effectiveness:** are our paths (axes) best adapted to achieve the objective sought?*
- ***Feasibility:** is our strategy realistic, taking context and resources into account?*
- ***Efficiency:** does our strategy make it possible to achieve the objective at reasonable cost?*
- ***Support:** do the main stakeholders (particularly beneficiaries and our allies) support the strategy? Are they co-authors of it?*

Results (final and intermediate)

- *Do they describe a situation to be attained (a state) and not a process or actions?*
- *Is their sequence logically coherent?*
- *Is the objective achieved once all the final results are attained?*
- *Do the main results appear in the strategy? Have any been omitted?*
- *Are the results in the strategy all of a strategic level or should some be eliminated?*
- *Do all the results fall within the terms of reference of the project?*
- *Is each of the results measurable by at least one specific indicator, reference value and/or key question?*

Actions

- *Have all the actions necessary to achieve the expected results been taken into consideration?*
- *Are all the actions essential and do they all contribute towards achieving the results? Are there any superfluous actions?*
- *Have they been formulated in terms of actions to be undertaken and not as a situation to be achieved?*
- *Are the actions appropriate and compatible with the culture and social environment of the target population?*

Winning strategy, losing strategy

- *Is the chosen strategy effective, efficient and consistent with the means available?*
- *Does it allow effective participation on the part of stakeholders, and of beneficiaries in particular?*
- *Does it have a positive influence on the institutional development of partners?*
- *Are key resources – i.e. the people with whom the project is working – highlighted by the strategy chosen?*
- *Does the selected strategy bring original and effective solutions for overcoming obstacles and for doing as much as possible despite limitations?*
- *How have the risks been evaluated in preparing the strategy?*
- *How is it planned to reduce or eliminate risks, or where this is not possible, to overcome them? How can their impact on the smooth implementation of the project be limited?*
- *Does the selected strategy have a butterfly effect?*
- *Do all parties win as a result of this strategy?*
- *Does it kill (at least) two birds with one stone?*
- *Has it been ascertained that we have not chosen a losing strategy, i.e.: spontaneous action or activism, normative planing, scattering strategies, much ado about very little, or yet more of the same?*

Summary:

Strategy is the organisation of action oriented towards an objective.

It is built by a linkage of the results to be obtained.

From the objective, we work "backwards" in two steps:
1. Elaboration of final results and strategic axes;
2. Elaboration of intermediate results by strategic axis.

A graphic presentation, in the form of a synoptic chart, makes it possible to see our strategy at a glance.

Once the strategy has been prepared it is very useful to take a close look at it and ask ourselves whether we have really opted for a winning strategy, or whether we are heading towards a losing strategy.

A "sound" strategy is one which makes it possible to achieve the objective in the best possible way, i.e. by bringing out most of our energies and resources to obtain optimum results and positive effects.

A losing strategy is one which promotes activism, always more of the same, considerable means for a minimal result, dispersion in different directions, or stems from normative planning.

XIV. The logical framework or follow-up matrix

14.1. The twofold function of the logframe

Once the intervention logic (project strategy) has become clear, the various elements mapped out during the planning process should be presented visually in the form of a two-directional matrix, known as a **logical framework or logframe**.

The matrix is all too often regarded as the main result of the planning process whereas its main function is actually to serve as a basis for the monitoring of the results and objective (see chapter on monitoring & evaluation further).

Many donor agencies now require a logframe for funding applications. This two-part table can indeed provide a useful presentation tool **on condition that the various components it contains have been obtained by means of a strategic planning process** as described above, and not merely by filling in the boxes. In addition, **the logframe must be read in parallel with the synoptic chart of the strategy** (see Sheet XIII) in order to be able to embrace the intervention logic at a glance.

The matrix is therefore necessary both as a simplified presentation of the project (one page as a general rule) and as a monitoring tool. **For this reason Terre des hommes now requires a logframe for each project, whether directly implemented or through a partner organisation, accompanied by a synoptic chart of the strategy.**

The matrix provides a systematic and logical presentation of the final aim, objective, results and actions (FORA) and their inter-linkage. This is the **vertical logic** of the matrix. The vertical logic is to show that all actions are necessary to obtain the expected results; that results in their turn guarantee that the objective set can be obtained, and that the objective contributes meaningfully to the final aim of the project. This logic forms the first part of the logframe.

Columns 2 to 4 set out the external assumptions, indicators and means of verification (see below). This is the **horizontal logic**.

This concise matrix has the advantage of being easily readable and understandable by most co-operation agencies, donors, etc. It is a useful visual tool, on condition that the elements it contains have been consistently established. The matrix (or logframe) is also a practical tool for regular project monitoring and makes it possible to structure discussion during interventions under way.

14.2. The Terre des hommes logframe format

Although presentations and terms used may vary slightly from one organisation to another, the formats used are similar and can be easily understood by all.

For the logframe to be both a simplified presentation tool and a project monitoring tool, it must be easily readable.

Format, contents and timetable of the logframe accompanying the strategic plan

As a general rule, we can say that in principle planning of a project consists of:

Basic indications

- A number of indications relating to name, target population, region of intervention, duration of the phase, partners in charge, starting date, etc.

Vertical logic

- **A single final aim**
- **A single objective.** In most cases there is only one objective per project. Only in exceptional cases may two objectives be accepted within the framework of one project. In such exceptional cases some thought should be given to whether it may not be preferable to have two different projects (such as health and institutional development) rather than two objectives. The two projects will be combined – or not – under the same programme.
- **Three to four strategic axes,** with six being the absolute maximum.
- **Each strategic axis** has only **one final result**, or in exceptional cases two on condition that they can be achieved with a strictly identical intervention strategy (e.g. the same intervention leads to the introduction of exclusive breast-feeding up until the age of six months and more appropriate complementary feeding practices).
- To achieve these final results it is sometimes necessary to formulate **a limited number (maximum five) of intermediate results** (e.g. x community health workers being trained, pregnant women being surveyed, etc).
- To achieve each result, or intermediate result, the **main actions (maximum five)** necessary for its achievement are identified (e.g. to identify and select community health workers, negotiate an agreement with health centres for training and monitoring community health workers, etc).

Horizontal logic

At the level of **indicators** and **external assumptions**, an effort will also be made to keep to what is essential, not merely in order to make the logframe more readable but also for monitoring. It is essential to monitor each external assumption and each indicator regularly. To remain within acceptable limits in terms of cost and use of human resources, it is better to set one indicator per result and ensure perfect monitoring rather than set three or four without being able to ensure quality of monitoring. The same logic applies for external assumptions. **The means of verification** are specified for each indicator, indicating where and how the data necessary for monitoring are to be found.

By applying these rules the logframe can be presented as follows:

First page: overview

Logframe: Name of project			**Page 1**
Region of intervention:	Phase n° and duration:	Delegation responsible:	Date initial logframe.: ....
Target population	PM/DO/DM[2] Tdh at Lsne:	Local partner(s):	Version: .... Rewiew date where appropriate: ....
Intervention logic	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**External assumptions**
Final aim:			
Objective:	•.................................. •.................................. •..................................	•.................................. •.................................. •..................................	•.................................. •.................................. •..................................
Final result I: .... *(and so on)*	•.................................. •.................................. •..................................	•.................................. •.................................. •..................................	•.................................. •.................................. •..................................

Second page and following: breakdown by strategic axis

Following the description and graphic presentation by axis of intervention, contained in the narrative part of the strategic plan, each axis (final result) will be presented on one page, according to the following format.

2 Reference persons in Lausanne for projects are: Programme managers – PM (Responsables de programmes – RP), Desk Officers – DO (Chargé/es de programmes – CP) and, for the Africa region, Desk managers – DM (Responsables de desk – RD)

Final result n° I: ....(copy result 1 above)				**Page 2 et seq.**
Intervention logic	**Deadline**	**Indicator(s) and means of verification**	**External assumptions**	**Main actions**
Interim result 1 a)	•......................	•.............................. •.............................. •..............................	•........................ •........................ •........................	•........................... •........................... •...........................
Interim result 1 b)	•......................	•.............................. •.............................. •..............................	•........................ •........................ •........................	•........................... •........................... •...........................
Interim result 1 c)	•......................	•.............................. •.............................. •..............................	•........................ •........................ •........................	•........................... •........................... •...........................
Interim result 1 d) *(and so on)*	•......................	•.............................. •.............................. •..............................	•........................ •........................ •........................	•........................... •........................... •...........................

The overall project logframe, to be attached to the strategic plan, will therefore consist of one page containing basic indications and the final aim, objective and final results, plus as many pages as there are axes (final results) in the strategy. All indicators and results should have the duration of the project phase.

14.3. Annual breakdown of the logframe

So as to follow project progress more closely, it is highly recommended in most cases to break the logframe down into annual segments.

While the intervention logic of the first page does not vary (unless the objective or results are revised during a mid-term review), it may be that quantification of the indicator, or the indicator itself, varies from one year to the next. Some indicators will produce a zero result for the first or even the second year (e.g. the number of children in street situations having completed their training, or certain changes in behaviour which require two or three years before showing measurable results, or malnutrition prevalence rates requiring an epidemiological survey to be conducted only at the end of the project phase).

In all such cases, it is preferable to take a fresh look at pages 2 and beyond each year and adapt them in accordance with the operational programming envisaged (some intermediate results may not be anticipated until the second year, and it is therefore unnecessary to use them in the breakdown of the first year). In the annual logframe breakdown it is possible to set annual, quarterly, or even monthly targets in some projects.

If Terre des hommes prefers to split the logframe into two different parts, one for the duration of the project and the other to be prepared annually, it is because in social projects, which depend to a great extent on factors difficult to foresee, it is hardly possible to plan every action and all activities three years in advance.

Another major distinction lies in the fact that the "upper" part of the logframe, together with the strategic plan (final aim, objectives, results) binds the project, partners, Foundation and donors contractually. Any major change calls for re-negotiation and consultation.

The "lower" part of the logframe is more flexible and can to a large extent be left to the responsibility of the project leader and team. Importance lies not in the actions and activities to obtain a specific result but in its achievement within the budget allocated and in line with previously defined standards of quality.

14.4. Indicators

Project monitoring and evaluation allow us to ascertain in the course of implementation whether we are on the right track towards the objective or not. This system must be built in function of the specific nature of the intervention. As it is often difficult and/or costly to measure actions and results as a whole, we define a number of **signs that are easily measurable but significant** for the success of the action: these are the indicators.

Definition:

Indicators are operational descriptions (quantity, quality, target group and location) of the objectives and results of our project which can be reliably measured with limited financial and human resources.

In as far as it is often difficult to measure the entire objective or result the project has laid down, we decide to measure only a small, significant part of the result, which nevertheless gives us a reliable indication of changes having taken place.

Indicators should serve during the planning stage to assess the relevance and sustainability of an objective or results. This may lead us to review a result or even the objective set during earlier planning stages in the case, for example, where it is impossible to measure, and thus to ensure that it will be achieved.

During project implementation, indicators make it possible to measure operational performances of the project. These constitute an essential tool in the monitoring/evaluation process of the project (see Sheet XXI – XXIII).

Often good indicators are only "discovered" during the course of the action, and there should therefore be no hesitation about taking a fresh look at indicators during periodic project planning reviews.

In some cases it is not necessary to invent indicators as they already exist. They may be in the form of reference or threshold values, for example in the field of health or nutrition, corresponding to the norms/standards of reference in the branch concerned.

The valuable input of resource persons

We will also mention here the considerable work of Terre des hommes Headquarters' resource persons who – in the field of children in street situations, child rights, health, nutrition and psycho-social – are called upon to develop and provide input with regard to indicators in their respective fields of expertise.

Mention should also be made of the work – albeit with a more "emergency" orientation – conducted by the Sphere project concerning minimum standards in the sectors of water supply & sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter & site planning, and health services[3].

Quality criteria for a sound indicator:

"SMART": Specific; Measurable; Available at an acceptable cost (feasible); Relevant; Time-bound.

- **Specific:** the indicator may be attributed to an objective/result. A single indicator can usually be used only once.
- **Measurable:** the indicator should be measurable in either quantitative or qualitative terms.

3 Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Sphere Project, first final edition, 2000. The Sphere project is an international initiative launched in 1997, involving the IFRC, ICRC and a number of European and American NGO platforms, aimed at improving the quality of assistance provided to victims of disasters and enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system in disaster response.

- **Available at an acceptable cost (feasible):** the data necessary to read the indicator are available or can be obtained in time, using (financial and human) resources which are not disproportionate to the objective (or result) to be measured (cost efficiency).
- **Relevant:** the changes measured are directly related to the project intervention. It is likely that if the changes take place, the overall process is heading in the right direction.

But also:
- **Sensitive:** the indicator can record different types of changes occurring within a given time (a reference point is necessary). It is up to the project to define which changes are important to be measured given the objective and/or the result set.
- **Reliable:** an indicator is reliable if several persons using the same indicator in an identical context reach the same result (IOV Indicators Objectively Verifiable).

An indicator can measure:

- Project **performance**: the state of progress of the project or an activity.
- Project **impact**: the effects brought about by the project on the target population or on the socio-economic environment.

Measurement may be:

- **Quantitative:** the number of children resettled.
- **Qualitative:** the average duration of resettlement
- **Behavioural:** early introduction of complementary food by the mothers.

It can also be:

- **Direct:** average (or minimum) cash income of young people one year after completion of training.
- **Indirect:** the number of young people owning a bike.

To formulate an indicator, one should specify:

- **The target group:** the persons to which the indicator is applied (for whom?), e.g. moderately malnourished children from 6 months to 3 years
- **Quantity:** the quantity of the “product” of our intervention (how much?), e.g. rates of prevalence, number of children, etc.
- **Quality:** (how, what?), e.g. a stable income.

- **Time:** when are we measuring and/or duration (for how long does the "product" last ?), e.g. three years after leaving the centre.
- **The place:** (where?) urban district x

14.5. Means of verification

Once the indicator has been established, the source of information and/or means of collecting information necessary to verify it has to be specified. The exact formulation of the verification source tells us about the feasibility and cost in human and/or financial resources of the indicator.

Formulation of the verification source should contain:
- **Format (What, How):** for example report, data sheet, survey, accounting, etc.
- **Who:** who should provide the information
- **When:** date and intervals for information

Where outside (external) sources are used, their accessibility and reliability have to be checked.

The cost and complexity of obtaining the necessary data must be assessed. Where appropriate, the indicator should be replaced by another one, simpler and less costly to verify, or by a reference value.

A limited number of indicators and verification sources will replace a multitude of data and statistics accumulated in projects and at the same time augment the quality of monitoring.

If no means of verification can be identified, the indicator or even the objective must be reconsidered, or other ways found to "measure" the objective or result concerned.

14.6. External assumptions (or critical conditions)

The project never controls the whole reality (context) of the project. There may well be factors external to the intervention of considerable influence and it is important to identify them and take them into account in project planning and monitoring, as project intervention can never cover all the factors necessary to reach the objective.

Definition: an **external assumption**, known also as **critical condition or hypothesis**, is an external factor beyond the control of the project but which determines whether the objective or an expected result can be reached. These external assumptions may be situations, events, framework conditions or decisions necessary for the success of the project.

The logic behind these external assumptions is : if the external assumption is fulfilled, then the objective or result concerned can be achieved. If not, the project is jeopardised.

How to identify external assumptions

Once the intervention logic has been determined, the **external assumptions** specific for each level of planning must be identified: objectives, results and, where necessary, actions.

To define the external conditions, one should ascertain whether the actions undertaken by the project guarantee by themselves that a specific result is obtained. If not, external conditions have to be defined for the project to effectively guarantee that the planned results are obtained.

External assumptions are specific to a result or objective. However, an effort must be made to avoid setting the same external assumptions for each result and to rather place them at the level of the overall objective.

Formulation

The essential characteristics required in order to formulate external assumptions:

- They are formulated as **a positive state having been achieved** (e.g. the target population remains stable; and not: there is a risk of forced displacement).
- They are formulated with sufficient **precision** for them to be monitored and verified.

Assessment of external assumptions:

Once external conditions have been formulated, they must be assessed:

- Verify that they are **not under the responsibility of the project**, e.g. mothers have not understood the message being taught to them. Such a situation shows that the method or content taught is not appropriate and it is the responsibility of the project to make necessary modifications.
- Analyse external factors from the point of view of their **importance** and the **likelihood** that they will come about. In accordance with the conclusion of the analysis:
    - **Remove** the external factors which are **practically certain** to take place (Terre des hommes to authorise the credit necessary for the project) **or which are highly improbable** (earthquake in a low-risk area).

- Retain external factors that are probable and define, where appropriate, an action to be undertaken **with a view to influencing them** (start up a dialogue with the Municipality to ensure lasting resettlement of the target population in an urban district).
- Identify external conditions essential for the success of the project but for which there is a high chance that they will not come about **(fatal conditions or killing factors)**. In such case it is essential to reformulate the project or at least the strategy (or result or action) likely to be affected.

There may be important conditions which have to be obtained before starting the intervention : these are **preliminary conditions**.

E.g.: a prison director authorises a project for detained juveniles to operate inside the prison.

Realisation of certain external assumptions may not only be a condition of success but also the cause of increased project performance.

The external assumptions retained must be subject to monitoring throughout the duration of a project and may be source of a project review or reorientation of some activities.

Key questions for the components of the logframe:

External assumptions:

- *Have external assumptions been formulated as a positive state which has been achieved?*
- *Are they precise enough to be monitored and verified?*
- *Do they lie outside the responsibility of the project?*
- *Are preliminary conditions called for before intervention can be started?*
- *Are identified external assumptions (external factors) realistic and probable? Is there a real likelihood that they will come about?*
- *Have foreseeable events with a direct influence on the project been incorporated?*
- *Has it been ensured that these external assumptions do not include factors likely to jeopardise the objective or a result (killing factor)? If so => redefine the objective or results.*

Indicators

- *Has it been possible to attribute at least one indicator, reference value and/or key question to each level of the logframe (other than the final aim)? If not, why not?*

- *Are there too many indicators for project monitoring capacities?*
- *Do they have essential characteristics (quantity, quality, time, place and target population)?*
- *Is the indicator appropriate for measuring the degree to which the objective has been achieved (precise but not over complicated or costly)?*

Means of verification

- *Has a means of verification (data sheets, documents, surveys, etc) been specified for each indicator?*
- *Does the identified source contain all the necessary information? Is this information reliable?*
- *Might the identified source provide us with unnecessary information which should not be taken into account?*
- *Is the identified source really accessible to us?*

Summary :

The logframe is necessary both for simplified presentation and as a monitoring tool. It is of use only if its various components have been elaborated using a participatory strategic planning process, as described in the previous stages, and if it is accompanied by a synoptic chart of the strategy.

The logframe covers the whole project phase and is then broken down annually, and appended to the operational plan.

The logframe provides a systematic presentation and logic of the final aim, objective, results and actions (FORA) and shows how they are inter-linked. This is the vertical logic.

Columns 2 to 4 contain external assumptions, indicators and verification means. This is the horizontal logic.

An external assumption (or critical condition) is an external factor over which the project has no control but which determines the objective or a result. Where the critical condition is fulfilled, the result or objective in question can be achieved. External assumptions are identified for each

planning level once the intervention logic has been determined: objectives, results and, where appropriate, actions.

Indicators are operational descriptions of project objectives and results which can be reliably measured with limited financial and human resources. In cases where indicators have to be invented, reference can also in certain fields be made to references values or based on indications provided by resource persons in their respective fields of expertise.

Once an indicator has been established, the means of verifying it must be specified: this is the source of information and/or the means of collecting information necessary for its verification.

XV. Model of action

In addition to our mission (who are we, what is our expertise, and what are our fundamental values?) and the situation analysis (in relation to what do we wish to intervene?), another aspect lies at the basis of and will no doubt – directly or indirectly – have contributed to how we choose and build our intervention logic: the model of action.

15.1. What is a model of action?

A model of action is the approach a project wishes to adopt vis-à-vis the beneficiaries. In other words it is the way the project intervenes in concrete terms in relation to beneficiaries.

The model of action can also be defined as a "recurrent strategy" in the strategy/intervention logic, i.e. ways of perceiving things and of acting which are repeated throughout project implementation.

Example of key questions (projects for single mothers in Algiers) to define a model of action:

1. Starting point of the project

1.1 How did we begin providing support? What was our starting point?

2. The overall vision of the problem

2.1 What are the main problems we wish to or must address?

3. Model of action

3.1 How does initial contact with a mother (or a young woman, as appropriate) take place? How does she come to us?
3.2 What kind of services do we provide? What other essential services do we not provide? Why? Do other stakeholders provide them?
3.3 How does support take place? Is there a sequence (succession of stages) in our intervention with regard to mothers?
3.4 What is the aim of our intervention?
3.5 What makes us say that our support for mothers has been successful?
3.6 When do we discontinue support to mothers?
3.7 What happened to our former beneficiaries?
3.8 What are the representations and intentions underlying our action?

15.2. Where does the model of action come from?

There are two cases to be differentiated, i.e.:
1. The existence of an institutional sectoral strategy in the field in question;
2. Absence of an institutional sectoral strategy in the field in question.

15.3. Existence of a sectoral strategy

Where the intervention planned relates to a theme connected with one of Terre des hommes' resource sectors[4], the model of action is a direct outcome of the relevant sectoral strategy, a reference document within the institution.

Based on the lessons of the past (compilation/capitalisation of experience), sectoral strategies can reflect the vision, future prospects and orientations that Terre des hommes would like to take for any future intervention in the field concerned. By basing itself on the successes and failures of projects in the field, the values of the Foundation and an exchange of experience with other organisations active in the same field or with research bodies (universities, etc), a sectoral strategy can describe the approach advocated by Terre des hommes in the sector in question.

The approach is not fixed in time, but evolves as it is implemented in projects in the field, bringing new (positive or negative) experience. The sectoral strategy allows to explicit as clearly as possible the models of action, and also provides some useful implementation and piloting tools for the project.

If for example a new Terre des hommes team arrives in a new and unknown area to identify and plan a new project in the field of Children in Street Situations (CSS), the team will base itself mainly on Terre des hommes' CSS sectoral strategy in order to build an intervention logic for the project in question.

A sectoral strategy concerns a more general (institutional) level and can contain (to simplify and continue with the example of CSS) several work options. As use of any one of these work options depends on a multitude of factors (feasibility relating to the context/culture, existing national policies, resources and skills available, etc), **the project must therefore make a choice right from the**

4 Terre des hommes has five resource sectors at Headquarters in 2001: Children in Street Situations (CSS), Child Rights (CR), Mother and Child Health (MCH), Nutrition (NUT), and Project Cycle Management (PCM). A sixth resource sector is being created and concerns the Psychosocial domain. Each sector is under the direction of a resource person specialised in the relevant field.

outset. It is this choice which has to be set out and argued at the planning stage, and which should be regularly revalidated (on this last point see the subsequent chapter on monitoring & evaluation).

In brief, **a sectoral strategy** is a source of inspiration to build a sound intervention logic, but it **cannot fully substitute for a project intervention logic**. It is important to draw a clear distinction between these two levels.

15.4. Absence of a sectoral strategy

It is a different matter if a project is identified/planned with a theme lying outside resource sectors (e.g. in 2001: preventing child abandonment/supporting single mothers, psycho-trauma, etc). In these cases there are no existing sectoral strategies yet to use as an inspiration basis.

The project will in such case adopt a model of action of its own, drawn from experience and the skills of the project team, other Terre des hommes' projects addressing the same subject, and based on recommendations/advice from other organisations active in the field.

It may also happen that the model of action advocated by the project has not been fully explicited or may not be the result of carefully considered preparation. The model of action nonetheless affects project behaviour and it is therefore essential to clearly define it and to monitor performance. In particular it is a matter of clarifying the representations, beliefs and related values underlying the manner in which we intervene, and which are at the foundation of our intervention logic.

Clearly defining the model of action should also enable us to subsequently analyse its effectiveness and consistency with Terre des hommes' philosophy by means of the monitoring system. This will make it possible to identify best practices in terms of models of action, as the basis for a future sectoral strategy.

Key questions for the model of action:

- *How does the project intervene with regard to beneficiaries?*
- *Is it consistent with Terre des hommes' intervention philosophy/sectoral strategy in the field concerned?*
- *What are the technical/methodological tools we wish to prioritise (e.g. type of nutrition, medicines, teaching tools, research-action using the "Child-Street System", etc) to obtain results?*

Summary:

The model of action for our intervention concerns the way the project intervenes with regard to beneficiaries.This is the "recurrent strategy" in the project strategy/intervention logic.

Where a sectoral strategy exists, the model of action stems directly from it and provides a basis and source of inspiration for building our intervention logic. Sectoral strategies lie at a more general level than intervention logics and therefore initial choices have to be made and argued in line with a given sectoral strategy.

Where there is no sectoral strategy the project must clearly define the chosen model of action underlying the intervention logic, in order to be in a position to measure effectiveness and consistency over time with a view to mapping out a future sectoral strategy.

XVI. Project appreciation criteria

By analysing the situation, identifying and mapping out our intervention logic, we have – consciously or otherwise – taken account of or thought about a number of factors:

- Project **sustainability** or **viability**
- The **strengthening of local capacities**
- The degree of **participation** by the different stakeholders involved in the project
- **Consistency** with national policies, Terre des hommes' Charter and principles of action, terms of reference or policy of any institutional donor agency, etc.
- Multiplier effects or **expected impact** of our intervention
- **Gender** approach
- **Networking** approach
- **Project cycle management** (monitoring system, evaluation, reporting, etc)
- etc.

It seems to us important at this stage in planning to dwell at some length on these different factors. This is mainly for three reasons:

1. They make it possible to look from different angles at what we have planned so far; **they represent a number of criteria contributing to a cross-cutting appreciation of our planning**. If they have not been taken into account so far, this offers an opportunity to do so.
2. Most of them simply reflect **Terre des hommes' values and principles of action**, as expressed in the Foundation's 2000-2004 strategic plan.
3. **They are required by most institutional donor agencies** and included in the format of funding requests submitted. Taking a closer look at them at this stage and highlighting them will facilitate writing the project strategic plan, which in turn will help for the preparation of the funding request.

It should be noted that for each of these factors, a non-exhaustive series of key questions has been developed (see end of this Sheet) to assist during consideration and writing of the ensuing project strategic plan.

16.1. Sustainability

Similar concepts: durability, lasting effect, viability.

It involves:
- Measuring and analysing the sustainability of project/programme advantages.
- Identifying factors determining sustainability.

Definition:

A project or a development programme may be considered sustainable when it is in a position to guarantee substantial advantages (beneficial effects) over a sufficiently long period following the end of external assistance, whether in the form of financial, technical or organisational assistance.

It is therefore a matter of:
- **Continuation of benefits or services, and not necessarily the survival of the project/programme;**
- **Self-reliance** of a project or development programme and not necessarily its **self-sufficiency**; i.e. its capacities to mobilise (in a lasting fashion) the means necessary for its effective functioning, even if these means are not fully generated by the project/programme but to some degree come from an external donor or regular public funding.
- **Institutional development** of local partners (the situation of grass-root organisations, NGO, etc).
- **Management of inequality and social conflicts** to counteract any negative effects likely to jeopardise social (human) development prospects for future generations.
- The sound management/preservation of **ecological heritage**. For Terre des hommes, the case of environmental hygiene (with regard to its effects on health) have to be taken into account.

Factors explaining sustainability

An OECD study[5] on 28 projects in Tanzania, Congo and Rwanda indicates a number of factors influencing project sustainability:

a) Contextual factors

These have a considerable influence on sustainability. However even in a difficult

5 Sustainability in Development Programmes: a Compendium of Evaluation Experience. Selected Issues in Aid Evaluation – 1, Paris, OECD, 1987.

context a project can be sustainable. What counts is **that the project is well adapted to the context and is flexible**, starting with a sound appreciation and consideration of constraints.

b) Factors relating to project characteristics

- Sustainability seems **not to have a direct correlation with any one sector**. Both economic and social projects can be sustainable, however relatively more economic than social projects fall into the "low sustainability" category. Introducing a cost-recovery system or seeking to attract additional external funding (grants) to support a social project appears to be more effective than launching an economic project.
- **Complex major integrated projects encounter difficulties.** They appear to be too demanding for existing capacities;
- **Sustainability is also not related to the type of local partner.** The specific capacities and experience acquired by the local partner in a given sector and context count for more;
- Generally, **the presence of expatriate personnel does not seem to be a factor enhancing project sustainability**; there would even seem to be an inversely proportional ratio between the two variables but this is due to the fact that expatriate personnel are more present in complex, less viable projects for other reasons. In addition, it has been noted that staff experience has an influence on project sustainability;
- Concerning the duration of support, the study postulates that **the longer the project, the less sustainable it is**. This observation, like the previous one, is to be rectified, as complex projects require longer support. It is nonetheless true that lengthy support engenders habit and does not encourage the introduction of mechanisms increasing project autonomy;
- **The precision with which the target group has been demarcated** also seems to be a factor of sustainability. The authors emphasise that the concept of the target group cannot always be used (for example, in a project based on group dynamics). The study notes that women's projects score above-average in terms of sustainability;
- Contrary to what is usually admitted, evaluation shows that **projects where there is a high degree of innovation (particularly at an institutional level) are most sustainable.**

c) Factors relating to project design

Factors having a positive influence on sustainability are as follows:

- Sound **conception/formulation** of the project from the start;
- Integration of **institutional development** into the objective;

- Clearly defining the **handover/takeover method** right from the outset of the project. The phasing-out strategy must be present right from the beginning of the project, should be reviewed and be made more precise during the implementation phase;
- From the start defining a mechanism leading to **self-financing** and, for productive projects, a sound business approach;
- Quality of **internal management** is a key factor (division of labour and responsibilities, internal communication, democratic decision-making process);
- The existence of an **effective monitoring system** is also essential for sustainability (internal reporting system, regular evaluation and adaptation of planning/programming, transparency of accounting, regular evaluation of results);
- The attention paid to **training those in charge of the project** (administration, management, etc).

In addition to the factors revealed by this study, the following factors should also be mentioned:

- The **appropriation by the target group** of the content or the message of the project is also a key factor for sustainability.
- The same applies for the **appropriation** of parts or of the entire project **by public authorities**, which depend on its adequacy with the governmental policy in force in the concerned country (consistency).
- The importance of the **policy of the donor agency(-ies) involved**, in particular the duration, the modalities and the strategic priorities of funding.
- The **participation of all stakeholders concerned and involved**, including the beneficiaries.
- **Taking into account social, cultural and gender aspects.**
- The **political and economic context**. Sustainability is hardly attainable in an unstable economical and political context.

16.2. Participation

Definition:

Participation and shared perception are factors to increase responsibility for joint decision making. It starts with dialogue leading to negotiation (about problems, solutions and approaches) and ends with decision-making and action[6]. Participation is not exclusively limited to beneficiaries.

6 IFAD workshop on Impact Achievement, 14-16 Nov. 2000

What is participation for ?

- To make sure that project design appropriately reflects the **real priorities of beneficiaries** and is relevant and realistic from the point of view of the different groups of beneficiaries (children, mothers, fathers, etc).
- To allow **different voices** to be heard and make sure that the project reaches out to the population intended.
- To encourage assumption of responsibility, transparency, motivation and, ultimately, **sustainability**.
- To produce **knowledge**.
- To **rapidly alert** the different instances of the project to problems which may arise.
- Lastly, participation is a **human right** and recognises that children, parents, local communities have the fundamental right to be associated with decision making affecting their future.

16.3. Consistency

The project is **integrated** and follows major guidelines of national policies and partners' strategies. A consistent approach means that initiation or reinforcement of production activities are in line with the framework for social, economic and technical development, and respect the local context (compatibility with ecological requirements and social aspirations). A grasp of a community's reality and an awareness of its ways and systems of utilising and managing resources is fundamental. Actions decided on can then be consistent with the context and will give rise to as little negative interaction as possible.

16.4. Expected impact

Impact

Impact describes the effects of a project on its environment. Whereas results and objective are effects the project may produce, impact consists of effects beyond its control.

To consider impact is to seek to **foresee and discern** repercussions of our action on the population, institutions and surroundings in general. Our interventions always lead to some modification in the environment, some unforeseen or harmful. We must therefore be constantly attentive to the effects of our intervention. Already during planning we should try to foresee the impact of a project, even though it may not be easy because of the many factors involved and the unpredictability of a considerable number of them.

In summary, there are four types of impact to be taken into account:
- The positive impacts we have foreseen and wish to obtain
- The negative impacts we have foreseen and seek to avoid
- Unforeseen positive impacts we seek to make the most of
- Unforeseen negative impacts we seek to remedy.

Impact is not specifically included in our project strategic plan (intervention logic), precisely because one of its main characteristics is that it is generally "not planable".

We must however seek and analyse the impact our intervention is likely to have – be it positive or negative – on beneficiaries and project environment.

Looking into the question of impact means seeking to foresee and discern the repercussions our intervention will have on the population, institutions and surroundings in general.

16.5. The gender approach

Respecting principles of participation and integration implies the active involvement of all members of the community as a whole – men and women – and an awareness of their respective activities.

Being aware that involving women in a development effort cannot be dissociated with the involvement of men, our intervention logic has to pay particular attention to the **social and economic relations of gender in the society in which we intervene** by taking into account the specific nature of their respective roles, responsibilities, expectations and constraints with regard to identified development measures.

16.6. The networking approach

The networking approach[7] is being increasingly developed in many areas and in different forms, particularly under the impetus of those practising a systemic approach. There are various conceptions of what a network is and how it does or should function. This wide range of points of views and of ways of proceeding means that the conception which seems most appropriate to a particular context and objectives can be chosen.

7 The terms "networking, "network intervention" or "network approach" are all used.

What is a network ?

A network is a web of (individual and group) stakeholders in interaction. Stakeholders may be linked by common rules or objectives. Or they may be brought together because they belong in the same context. To define a network, it is also possible to start from one individual and identify the relations linking her/him to other individuals or groups.

Two types of network can be distinguished:

1. **Primary networks: natural groupings** of individuals reacting with one another (family, friends, neighbourhood, urban district, working relations, etc.)
2. **Secondary networks: constructed groupings** providing services to meet the needs of primary networks. They may be **formal** secondary networks where they have an official existence, specific and lasting functions (e.g. health system, school system, social services). **Informal** secondary networks generally play a functional role and have no official existence. They are less structured and do not necessarily have a lasting existence. For example:
    - Families from a neighbourhood helping one another to look after children;
    - A group of public and private institutions co-ordinating activities to improve assistance to single mothers.

Primary and informal secondary networks are highly flexible and constantly changing.

What is the point of networking ?

Networking can offer the following advantages:

- Increasing our power of intervention (problem solving, lobbying, increased competence), the effectiveness and impact of our intervention, whilst being more efficient
- Going beyond the cumbersome workings of formal institutions for greater effectiveness and flexibility in intervention
- Achieving better dissemination of information
- Improving our understanding of problems
- Increasing the sustainability chances of our intervention
- Mutual institutional strengthening for members of the secondary network by exchange of methods and experience.

Some principles of networking:

- Not doing ourselves what others know how to do better than us
- Seeking synergies: never doing anything alone, always trying to establish alliances and partnerships

- Trying to mobilise primary networks
- Considering that we are at the same time part of the problem and of the solution
- Trying to make ourselves useful, avoiding the creation of a dependency and assistance mentality
- Benefiting from the difference in network members
- Looking for what unites us rather than fighting to get our point of view across.

16.7. Project cycle management

This concerns the methodological tools and processes linked to the project cycle which have been used for the project. What are the planning and implementation standards? What type of monitoring/evaluation is there to guarantee that we keep heading in the right direction by making the necessary adjustments? What policy reporting is there?

Key questions for project assessment criteria:

Consistency:

- *Is the project as planned consistent with:*
  - *national policies*
  - *Terre des hommes Foundation's Charter and strategic plan*
  - *Terre des hommes' sectoral strategy (model of action)*
  - *The mandate of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation or other donor agencies etc.*

Participation:

- *Will the project operate in a participatory manner?*
- *Will the local population be associated in all important phases (planning, management, capitalisation, evaluation)?*
- *Will the population concerned adopt the project as its own and actively contribute towards its achievement?*

Sustainability:

- *Does the project create new dependency on external aid?*
- *Will the lasting effect of the project extend beyond the period of external aid?*
- *Will the duration of the project be sufficient to ensure sustainability (advantages lasting beyond the end of the project)?*
- *Are project beneficiaries prepared to mobilise themselves in order to obtain services offered to them by the project?*
- *Does the project call on locally available potential resources and development capacities?*

Strengthening local capacities (partnership, localisation process):
- *Does the project incorporate an institutional strengthening policy for its partners? Does it support the creation of a partner institution which should be able to gradually take over project management?*
- *Have the local stakeholders' management and absorption capacity been evaluated?*
- *Have potential financial resources for local partners been identified?*
- *Has the training of partners in fundraising and financial management been planned?*
- *Does the project support local initiatives and self-promotion efforts (empowerment) among the target population?*
- *When the project was conceived, was a phasing-out scenario taken into account/was the question of withdrawal addressed?*

Expected impact:
- *What (positive or negative) impact is it thought the project will have on its environment?*
- *Can we reasonably assume that impacts of our intervention will be positive?*
- *Might the project have a negative impact on men/women relationships, social coherence, local culture, environment, etc?*

Gender:
- *Does the project pay particular attention to the social and economic relations of gender? If so, which? If not, why not?*
- *Have any measures been taken to ensure balanced men/women, girls/boys access to project services?*
- *Does a gender policy exist at the project team level?*

Networking:
- *Does the project seek to network?*
- *If so, does the distribution of work within the network allow the project to concentrate on the fields where Terre des hommes has an established comparative advantage?*

Project cycle management:
- *Does the project meet planning and implementation standards currently applied by Terre des hommes (and where appropriate institutional donor agencies)?*

Monitoring – Evaluation:
- *What type of monitoring has been planned to check whether the action produces the expected results?*
- *Have evaluations / audits been planned?*

Reporting:
- *What are the periodicity and contents of project reports and to whom are they addressed?*
- *Who prepares the reports?*

Summary:

Because they form part of Terre des hommes' values and principles of action, because they enable us to look from different angles at our planning/intervention logic to assess consistency and cross-cutting effect, and because they are in many cases required by donor agencies in funding proposals, it is important to dwell at this stage of planning on the following factors: sustainability, participation, consistency, expected impact, strengthening of local capacities, gender, networking and project cycle management.

Doing this work at the current stage will also facilitate preparation of the project strategic plan, which is at the basis of any funding application.

XVII. Final visible product of planning: the project strategic plan

It is not enough to have designed a good project; one must also be able to argue a project as well as secure funding. In order to do this, the quality of presentation of the project strategic plan is key.

The first aim of a project strategic plan is however not to raise funds, but rather **to express or layout the project strategy, and thereby constitute the key project reference document**. This is the first and foremost reference document by which the project team can orient itself and not only a text for outside use. The strategic plan of any project has to meet first Terre des hommes' internal requirements and comply with the standards set out in the Handbook.

In case specific donor agencies require a specific format these proposals can then be prepared on the basis of the project strategic plan which contains all the necessary information.

17.1. Characteristics of a project strategic plan

- **Synthetic:** it should be as synthetic as possible in order to be easily readable and at the same time highlight essential information. The principle here should be: everything essential should be contained in it; everything else eliminated.
- **Striking:** key ideas should be highlighted in a striking manner, but without bluff, as linguistic artifice will be of little use if ideas developed are not particularly good.
- **Structured:** on the whole, the document should be structured the same for all Terre des hommes' projects. This does not exclude the possibility of adapting it to meet specific requirements.
- **Consistent:** the text must have internal consistency: the sequence of ideas must be logical, headings match content, arguments be clear and relevant.
- **Clear:** it must be easy to understand and the reader should not need to decipher information.

A project strategic plan meeting all these criteria may still not be enough to make it a good project strategic plan. For this, the strategy it describes must be sound. We should therefore not forget that the project strategic plan is merely the expression or a layout of strategic thinking. If the latter has not been thought through sufficiently, the plan may be good from an aesthetic, formal point of view but the ideas it conveys may be very poor.

Formal qualities

- Synthetic
- Clear
- Striking
- Structured
- Consistent

Internal consistency

- A logical sequence of ideas and chapters
- Convincing arguments

Strategic relevance

- A worthwhile objective (well constructed, motivating, ambitious and realistic at the same time)
- The strategy must be effective to achieve the objective
- Efficiency: optimisation of resources
- Feasibility: the strategy is realistic, the means to implement it are available

During analysis of a project strategic plan, it is important to know the conditions under which it was prepared: is it the outcome of a joint effort, the work of a small group or of one individual?

17.2. Format of the project strategic plan

This format is to be respected for all Terre des hommes' project strategic plans. It contains all the essential elements required. Obviously, additional details can also be added depending on the context.

We will only mention here the main chapter headings, broadly reflecting the stages in the planning process.

Cover page (basic indications and executive summary)

1. Project framework
- Starting point of the project/event at the origin of the project
- The specific national context within which the project will be implemented

2. Situation analysis
- Specific problems in the sector/target group for which the project plans to intervene
- Stakeholders and expected collaboration
- Resources and potentialities
- Limitations, obstacles and risks

3. Intervention logic
- Future vision of the project
- Final aim
- Objective
- Global intervention strategy (synoptic chart of the strategy)
- Intervention axes
- External assumptions (critical conditions)
- Indicators and means of verification

4. Model of action

5. Project appreciation criteria
- Sustainability
- Strengthening of local capacities
- Participation
- Consistency
- Expected impact
- Gender approach
- Networking approach
- Project cycle management

6. Project structure and resources
- Project structure (set up)
- Human resources
- Budget
- Funding

Annexes:
Map, logframe, budget, flow chart (organogram)

Summary:

The project strategic plan is the expression of the strategy, which makes it a reference document for the project.

The first aim of a project strategic plan is not to secure funding, but it may form the basis for the elaboration of funding proposals meeting the requirements (format) of donor agencies.

A good project strategic plan must be synthetic, striking, structured, consistent and clear. The format reflects the stages of the planning process and is to be respected for all project strategic plans of Terre des hommes.

XVIII. Validating the project strategic plan

As already mentioned, the strategic plan will become the project's reference document, for piloting and monitoring, talking about the project, explaining it to outsiders, to secure funding, etc.

It is therefore important that this document be validated by the institution, even if validation is not systematically and visibly indicated on the document (e.g. stamp of approval or other).

We should make the following differentiation:
1. The strategic plan of a partner's project
2. The strategic plan of a Terre des hommes' project

18.1. Process in the case of a partnership

Initial validation takes place in the field by the **delegation office**, following exchanges with the partner and/or Headquarters to finalise the plan.

Final validation takes place at Headquarters by the **person responsible for the geographical area in question (programme or desk manager)**, after **mandatory** consultation with the relevant resource person (in the case of a project in a resource sector domain) and with the head of department.

The project strategic plan should be accompanied by a detailed operational plan for the first year (see next chapter). It is an integral part of the **partnership agreement**, an instrument governing collaboration between the organisations concerned as well as the work and responsibilities of each party. The head of the relevant programme department signs the partnership agreement.

18.2. Process in the case of a Terre des hommes' project

Final validation takes place at Headquarters level by the **person responsible for the geographical area in question (programme or desk manager)**, after **mandatory** consultation with the relevant resource person (in the case of a project in a resource sector domain) and with the head of department.

The project strategic plan must be accompanied by a detailed operational plan for the first year (see next chapter).

Once the strategic plan has been validated, it becomes the project reference document, and can only be amended after going through a similar procedure in the context of major readjustment (change of strategy/intervention logic, see Sheet XXV on readjustment).

Summary:

As it is to become the project's reference document for piloting, external communication, or funding requests, the project strategic plan must undergo an institutional validation procedure.

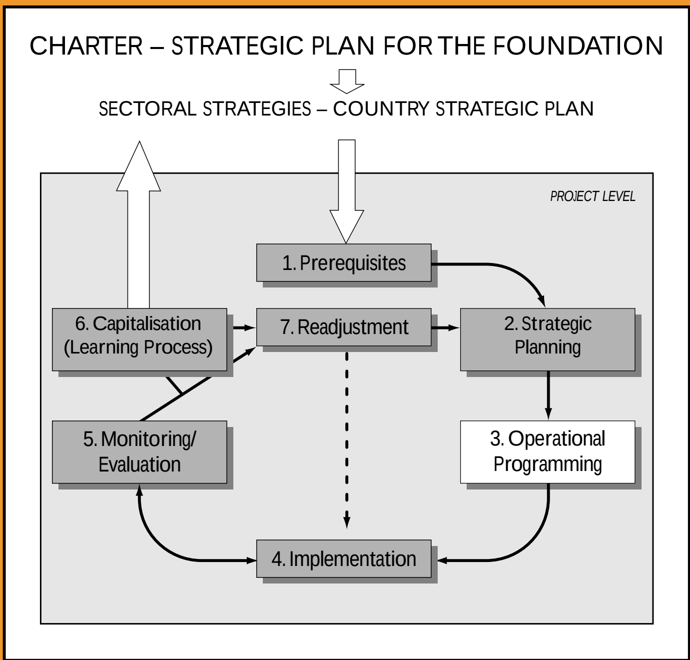
The validation process varies slightly depending whether it is a project of a partner or of Terre des hommes. However final validation always lies with the programme/desk manager at Headquarters, following mandatory consultation with the relevant resource person (in the case of a project in a resource sector domain) and the head of department.

In the case of a partnership, the agreement – of which the strategic plan forms an integral part – is signed by the head of the relevant programme department.

Following validation, the project strategic plan can only be amended after going through a similar procedure in the context of subsequent major readjustment.

STAGE 3 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMING



Terre des hommes

XIX. Operational programming

In the early part of this Handbook we have seen that the life of any organisation, as of any collective enterprise in general, rests on three interrelating functions:

understanding – getting organised – acting.

We have also seen that each of these functions entails two dimensions:

- The **strategic dimension**, the higher dimension where vital options concerning the institution and its overall policy are situated.
- The **operational dimension**, the dimension of execution, or implementation.

The planning process which we have just gone through has allowed collective thinking about the **conception or design of intervention**, which is typically situated in the strategic dimension. The resulting product is the **project strategic plan**.

In programming (the stage we are concerned with in this chapter), we look at the **concrete implementation of an intervention strategy**, situated in the operational dimension. The resulting product is the **annual operational plan**.

19.1. Operational programming: a formality?

One may think this is a pure formality but this is not the case! It is enough to see the difficulties encountered by teams in the field following training workshops in planning methodology. There used to be a tendency to think of programming "as something the field knows all about and is used to doing; therefore there is no need to spend too much time on it during workshops, as teams in the field will get on with doing it themselves".

There is considerable challenge to transposing a medium-term strategy (generally over a three-year period) into activities – means – resources in the (annual) short-term, while at the same time respecting the substance and logic of the strategy.

In addition, actions/activities form the visible side of intervention; they are what engender (material and human) costs and require daily management skills. It is operational programming therefore which will determine the annual funding requirements of the project. **Good programming leads to a well-packaged annual operational plan, which can act as a convincing negotiating tool!**

In extreme cases it may also happen that in the course of a programming exercise we realise that the strategy envisaged during the previous stage is unrealistic in relation to financial resources available. This pitfall can be avoided by specifying the limitations (budgetary in particular) of the framework in which the project is to evolve as accurately as possible prior to embarking on planning.

19.2. What is programming?

Programming means "*organising the means available, as well as those that must be sought, to carry out the actions identified and regarded as viable and achievable. Programming should be conducted in function of a strategy. Once we have defined the types of actions likely to meet the objectives, they should be specified and operational sequences proposed for each of these actions, together with schedules and job descriptions for the different stakeholders…*"[1].

Programming therefore means preparing a detailed operational plan for a project every year (a plan format is given below), the main sequences of which are:

Breaking down results into actions and activities[2] and preparing a timetable for implementation

This involves identifying and ordering activities leading to the realisation of results (structure and breakdown of work by strategic axes). It is what we do each year when we complete the "lower" part (actions and activities by result or intermediate result) of our logframe. In small and medium-sized projects, it is possible to include the timetable directly into this breakdown of the logframe.

In more complex projects it may be preferable to use programming tools such as Gantt tables, project management software, or quite simply prepared on an Excel sheet. Whatever method is opted for, it is essential that the operational plan contains a timetable which is regularly monitored. Methodical preparation of a timetable can bring to light potential scheduling conflicts or conflicts of resources between several activities.

N.B.: In any project there are activities not necessarily connected to a strategic axis (for example: delegation management activities, capacity building, different fundraising activities, etc): they also need to be broken down into one or two additional pages (or tables).

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1 Cheminements d'une action de développement: de l'identification à l'évaluation, E. Beaudoux/G. de Crombrugghe/F. Douxchamps/M.-C Gueneau/M. Nieuwkerk, L'Harmattan, 1992 (free translation from the French)

2 N.B.: an action is made up of a set of activities.

Identifying and allocating the necessary human and material resources

This is the internal organisation of the project, which makes it possible to allocate staff and equipment so as to provide the services agreed on and bring about the expected results with the means available (flowchart, responsibilities, allocation of activities (job descriptions), allocation/possible sharing of equipment, etc.).

Identifying and programming the necessary external support

- Planned training/workshops and organisational steps
- Visits to projects by the delegation/Headquarters
- Evaluation/audits (if planned)

Design and introduction of a system for gathering / archiving data for monitoring purposes

Who collects and/or processes what data, when and how (see chapter on monitoring & evaluation).

Preparing the project's annual budget

On the basis of the activities programmed for the year and the means necessary for their implementation, we should now be in a position to estimate the annual cost of the project. The budget is made on the basis of Terre des hommes' accounting plan and in accordance with current format.

Ideally there should be budgeting by strategic axis. The Finance Department is currently working on the introduction of an analytical accounting plan which should eventually facilitate and systematise this type of exercise.

19.3. Tools

Some tools (mainly in the form of tables) have been developed and used as support material during a training session for Headquarter's managers and some visiting delegates (January 2001).

These tools will be reviewed and improved in order to make them easier to use. This is a major challenge for the future. We can nonetheless already draw inspiration from these existing tools.

19.4. Annual operational plan

To recap, an operational plan is the operational breakdown of a project strategic plan over a year. The starting point is therefore the logframe. To prepare the operational plan, reference should also be made to Sheet XIV §14.3.

The operational plan lies at the basis of operational monitoring and should make it possible to explain and provide arguments for the budget. It comprises the following components[3]:

Brief project description (project title, country/region, year, agency responsible for implementation, etc.).

Programming actions / activities by strategic axis

- Intermediate result aimed at by the end of the year by strategic axis[4]
- Breakdown of intermediate results in terms of actions/activities by axis[5]
- Implementation of actions/activities (who does what)
- Timetable

Structures and procedures

- Project flowchart/organogram
- Relations with any local partners (agreement, capacity building, etc)

Human resources

- Number and skills
- Planned training of project personnel

External resources

- Support planned during the year (delegation, Headquarters)
- Evaluation and audit
- Other external support

3 This is not a specific format laying down the form the document has to take but rather a checklist which places emphasis on the substance (content). An operational plan can be presented in the form of a table and text. What is important is that the components mentioned are contained in the document.

4 Where during planning an intermediate result has already been identified for each strategic axis at the end of the relevant year, this could be carried forward. Where this is not the case, intermediate results can be fixed by axis to be achieved by the end of the year, together with relevant indicators.

5 Where appropriate, what is implemented by Terre des hommes should be distinguished from what is implemented by a partner.

Material resources

- Acquisitions planned during the year

Financial resources

- Provisional budget in the Terre des hommes format (Headquarters template)
- Planned local fundraising
- Planned funding from institutional donor agencies

As for all project documents (project strategic plan, reports, etc.), it is important to go straight to the point and produce a document as concise and synthetic as possible.

19.5. Decision-making process around the operational plan and annual budget[6]

Traditionally at Terre des hommes, the period for preparing country annual budgets (which may include a number of projects) takes place from June to October of the preceding year. This is mainly a period of interaction and "negotiation" between relevant field and Headquarters' geographical areas until consensus is reached and provisional acceptance obtained.

Country budgets are then approved by the Heads of Programme department, and in November by the supreme body, the Foundation's Board.

The project annual budget is an integral part of and indissociable from the operational plan. The one does not go without the other, as the content of the operational plan makes it possible to understand and explain the budget, and vice versa.

Taking into account the institutional realities at Terre des hommes, **two steps** can be envisaged during the programming process[7]:

1. **Between June and October:** elaboration of an estimated annual budget. This will be accompanied by an explanatory note detailing the number of personnel envisaged for the project as well as their role and salary. Reasons for

6 It should be noted that this process is already subject to an ISO (PRT-01) procedure, elaborated in September 1999. What follows refers to some of the stages in this procedure; for the remainder, proposals for improvement can be made to reflect developments in Terre des hommes' project management method.

7 Obviously the ideal situation is when the annual operation plan and the budget are elaborated simultaneously. If conditions are permitting, one should not hesitate to do it this way!

any variations of the budget lines compared to the present year (in the case of an existing project) or explanation of the content behind each budget line (in the case of a new project) will also have to be included in the note.

2. **At the end of the year** (December): elaboration of an annual operational plan. This plan explains and provides a breakdown of the previously accepted budget. Programming of actions/activities, implementation timetable over the year and allocation of human and material resources will clearly emerge from this plan.

Summary:

Operational programming, the third stage in the project cycle, makes it possible to organise the means available, as well as those to be raised, in order to implement actions identified in our intervention strategy. The product of this exercise is the annual operational plan and includes the budget.

The challenge and difficulty are precisely to transpose the medium-term strategy into activities – means – resources in the short term, while respecting the substance and logic of our intervention strategy.

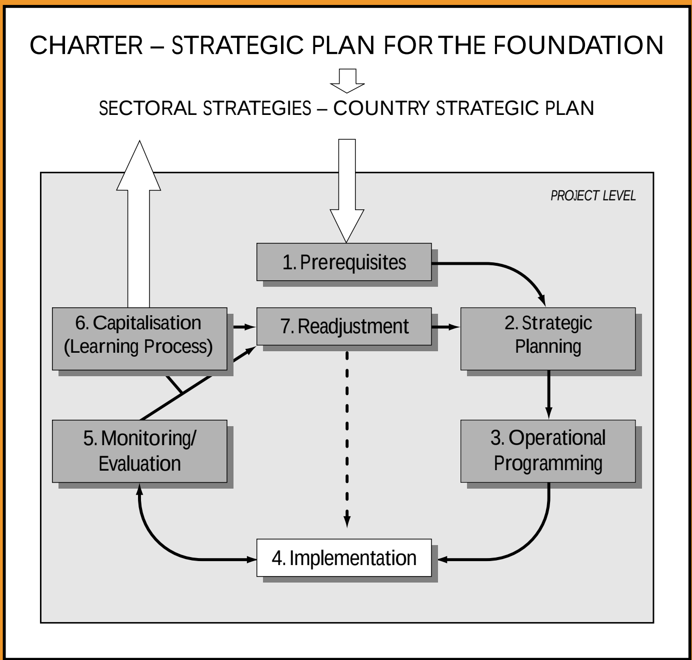
The annual operational plan lies at the basis of operational monitoring and should make it possible to explain / put forward arguments for the provisional budget. It should not therefore be regarded as a formality.

Given the institutional realities at Terre des hommes, the programming process can be carried out in two steps:

1. ***Between June and October: elaboration of the annual budget***
2. ***At the end of the year (December): elaboration of an annual operational plan.***

STAGE 4 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

IMPLEMENTATION/ EXECUTION



Terre des hommes

XX. Implementation/Execution

Implementation is the execution of activities (or tasks) as set out in the operational plan.

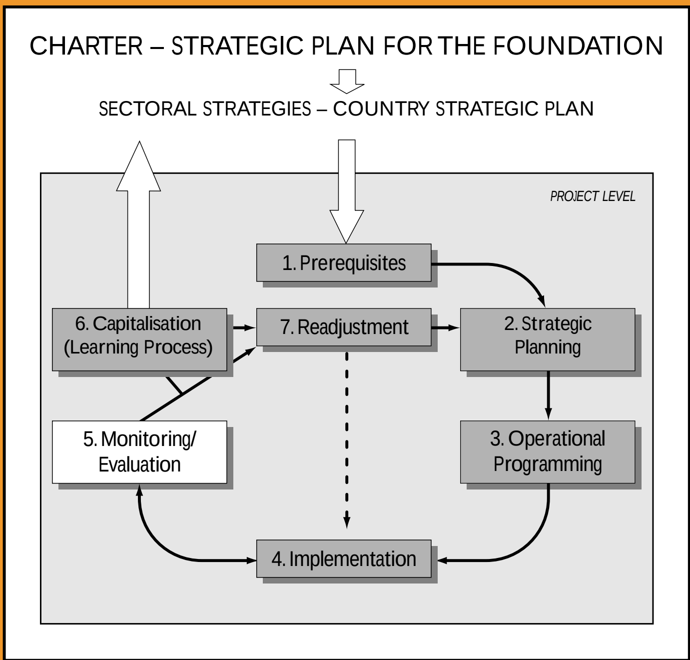
This crucial stage of a project brings to light all the institution's historical experience as well as a team's know-how in terms of project management (administration, human resource management, logistics, procedures, etc). Indeed, however good the strategic planning and operational programming may be, they cannot compensate for weaknesses in project implementation. The latter can nevertheless be considerably improved if the two previous stages have been conducted along the lines set out in this Handbook.

Many components of project implementation standards and related procedure are contained in the Terre des hommes Collaborators' Manual or "ditou".

Throughout and alongside the daily execution of project activities and tasks, strategic and operational monitoring – the subject of the next chapter - is of considerable importance.

STAGE 5 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

MONITORING AND EVALUATION



Foreword

In project management and among most international organisations, frequent reference is made to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, a broad term embracing a range of measures covered in this chapter.

A distinction should however be drawn between two different levels:

1. The first level is the **responsibility of the team in the field (project + delegation)**: this is what we call **monitoring**. It comprises analysis by the team itself of data gathered through the monitoring system. **Whenever reference is made to "monitoring" in this text, it should be taken to involve the accompanying analysis/self-evaluation.** This is the subject of the first part of this chapter.
2. The second level is the **responsibility of the institution**: this is what we call **evaluation** or **auditing**[1]. This exercise takes place at very precise, one-off moments in the project cycle. It also involves the participation of an outside person[2] who provides a "neutral" view and evaluates the project/programme concerned with the help of the team in the field. We talk of **internal evaluation** when this exercise is conducted by a person employed by Terre des hommes in another sector of activity (such as resource persons, a delegate from a country other than the project's country, a desk/programme manager evaluating a project in a geographical sector other than the one he/she is in charge of, etc.). We talk of **external evaluation** or **external audit** when the person is not employed by the Foundation (such as an independent consultant, a local auditor, a person from another organisation, donor agency, etc). This is the subject of the second part of this chapter.

We feel it is important to distinguish between the two levels from the outset, even though it is true that monitoring and evaluation are closely linked together, as one is of no use without the other. An explanation is given below.

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1 To avoid any confusion: An audit focuses on verification of the internal control (and particularly financial) procedures of a project or programme (compliance with approved management standards); evaluation focuses on the results, objective and impact (project or programme achievements and impacts). The two processes are complementary and on occasions overlap but are not identical. The common point lies in the involvement of an external person or body.

2 A person is said to be "external" to a project/programme where he/she has no direct permanent connection with it (employee in the field or involved in steering/supervision, such as desk/programme managers at Headquarters). In theory therefore an outside person has no direct interest in the existence, type or operation of the project/programme concerned, and this should make it possible to have as "neutral" an outside view as possible.

XXI. The monitoring system[3]

21.1. Definition

Monitoring comprises a range of project management tasks at different levels throughout project implementation. It allows to continue the strategic thinking undertaken at the planning stage and guarantees that the project "stays on track": this is **strategic monitoring**. At the same time it allows regular assessment of work progress (action/activities) and use of resources (human, material, financial), and explains any discrepancies: this is **operational monitoring**.

Monitoring therefore has a key role to play in the project cycle: to some extent it forms the **link** between implementation and planning.

Without a sound monitoring system, the best planned strategy is in danger of not being implemented in optimum conditions, for the strategy worked out during the planning exercise is actually a series of hypotheses (IF we do this, THEN we will obtain such a result). The validity of such hypotheses can be verified by evaluating the results of the action planned; to do this, we need sufficient data to analyse. This calls for an effective system of permanent monitoring of project implementation, bringing together a range of appropriate measures (processes, rules, tools and functions).

In the absence of a monitoring system we are in no position to ascertain whether we are on the right track or whether our intervention should be reoriented.

Planning is merely a starting point and an attitude of mind. Implementation and monitoring are all important.

21.2. Aim

The aim of the monitoring system is to guarantee the success of the project (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance).

3 For information, the term "monitoring" is used in English, "suivi" in French, "seguimiento" in Spanish and "acompanhamento" in Portuguese.

21.3. Functions / usefulness of monitoring

In addition to checking progress in relation to specific /tangible project components included in planning and programming, the monitoring system has other important functions, namely:

- Improving institutional capacity to **understand** the realities in which it is involved, to **act** and **organise itself** effectively and efficiently.
- Enhancing project **transparency** and **accountability**[4] with regard to all stakeholders (including beneficiaries). This is mainly through (oral and written) **reporting** on project performance and project choices to the various partners: staff in the field, local authorities, Headquarters, working groups, donors, etc.
- Facilitating **evaluation** so that teams have a clear idea of "where they're at" in order to defend their position through solid argument.
- At a later stage and as a result of information gathered, enabling **capitalisation** of lessons drawn from practice, and disseminating them to create institutional capital (see chapter on capitalising experience).
- **Perfecting indicators** identified at the planning stage where appropriate in order to evaluate project performance (at the level of objective and expected results).
- **Broadening stakeholders' field of awareness** so that they become increasingly lucid about the realities in which they are intervening and the effects of their action.

A good monitoring system must:

- As far as possible involve beneficiaries through participatory methods
- Be a learning process permitting action to evolve and Terre des hommes to develop as a "learning organisation"
- Be a tool for management rather than control
- Be included in a process of information, communication and consensus-building
- Be of use in the field and Headquarters equally, without tying up an excessive amount of resources.

4 The term "accountability", for which the English word is often used in French, encompasses the concepts of transparency, responsibility and compliance with norms. Extract from the SDC magazine ("Un seul monde" No. 3, September 2000): "The dictionary translates the English word "accountability" into French by responsibility, particularly in the financial sense. In international cooperation, the term is used to designate the person or body responsible – accountable – for a project, intervention or programme. It may be a government, ministry, the World Bank or the SDC, or also a manager or person in charge of a project. Accountability is basically the opposite of arbitrary. It involves concepts of frankness and assumption of responsibilities, a commitment to assuming, rendering accounts and providing explanations. All participants in a given project can thus count on observance of the criteria of transparency, reproducibility and effectiveness." (free translation from the French)

21.4. The process

As we have seen, monitoring is very closely linked to planning, implementation and evaluation. The essential **preliminary conditions** for introducing a high performance monitoring process are therefore:

- A clearly defined final aim, objective and results for the project
- The existence of relevant and realistic tools such as indicators, in order to be able to measure the state of progress of the above elements
- Availability of basic or baseline data[5] on which the project is constructed and which makes it possible to have a point of comparison.

The basic reference documents for a project (strategic plan and annual operational plan) should contain this information, and set out the main lines for the monitoring system it is intended to put in place (type of data to be gathered, when, by whom, etc).

The monitoring process can be broken down into three main stages:

Gathering information (collecting, measuring, observing) :

- Quantitative and qualitative data at the beginning of the project (baseline data) to have a point of comparison for project performance
- Quantitative and qualitative data during the project, to measure project performance
- Data relating to the indicators fixed during planning
- Criteria to orient the choice of data collection methods : reliability, validity and efficiency.

Data analysis, making it possible to:

- explain any discrepancies between expected and obtained results,
- anticipate whether the results obtained will allow the project objective to be achieved,
- assess project implementation,
- analyse stakeholder interaction.

Readjustment, making it possible, where appropriate[6], to:

- continuously optimise actions to better achieve the set results and objective (aiming at effectiveness)
- making the best use of (human/financial) resources available (aiming at efficiency)
- making selective modifications to strategy (strategic plan) so that our efforts are continuously focused on the results and objective the project is aiming for.

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5 The English term "baseline data" is also often used in French.

6 This stage is obviously not necessary where the two preceding stages have shown that everything is on track.

21.5. Fields of application

We can monitor, observe and measure a wide variety of different trends within the project or in the project's environment. Consequently, there are different levels of monitoring. In order not to become overwhelmed by an avalanche of unprocessed data we should focus on the essential. Reference documents to guide us in preparing the monitoring system to be established are the project strategic plan and the annual operational plan.

Following the logic of these two documents, we can distinguish between **five fields of application for monitoring**:

Document 1: Project strategic plan

1. situation
2. intervention logic
3. model of action
4. project appreciation criteria

Document 2: Annual operational plan

5. actions/activities and project organisation.

1. Monitoring the situation

At the origin of any project there is always an unsatisfactory situation on which the project is intended to have a positive impact. It is therefore crucial to follow changes in the situation and evaluate the role the project has in this respect.

It is also necessary to ascertain what the factors are in the project's environment that may have a positive or negative impact on project implementation and the effect the project can have on these factors.

This means opening our eyes to the reality around us, while at the same time remaining critical of our a priori assumptions and how we see reality.

By following the sequence of planning stages and using essentially the same tools[7] we can direct our attention towards:

7 Under each heading a series of key questions has been developed which we should take as a guide.

Project context (immediate environment)

Changes having taken place in the context in relation to our initial analysis:

- in fields such as national/regional policies in our sector of intervention
- at policy[8], legal, social and economic levels, etc.

How have these changes affected the project and what is envisaged in the future?

The problematic

- Is our problem analysis carried out during the planning stage still relevant?
- Have there been significant (quantitative and/or qualitative) changes calling for further analysis?

For example: developments in the scope of the problem (prevalence of malnutrition, number of children in street situations/CSS, etc), any changes in the nature of the problem (type of malnutrition, increased violence affecting CSS, etc), changes in the target group affected (age, origin of children, etc) or other meaningful and significant developments.

Stakeholders

- Is the stakeholders analysis we made during planning still relevant or does it need to be looked at in greater depth as a result of what we have learnt?
- Have further players emerged or existing ones disappeared? Which?
- What positive and negative experiences/influences have there been in collaborating with stakeholders?
- Have there been any changes in the strategies of our main partners? What about our partnerships?

Resources and potentialities

- Is the analysis we made during planning still relevant or have other resources/potentialities been identified during the year?
- What are the most promising resources/initiatives?
- How has the project been able to put to good use the resources and potentialities identified? What have been the positive and negative experiences?

Limitations, obstacles and risks

- Are new obstacles threatening the future of the project, or have obstacles identified during planning proved to be groundless in the meantime?
- How have these risks/obstacles affected the project and what strategy has the project applied to circumvent them?

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8 In the case of a country programme including several projects it is not necessary for each project to follow up the national "macro" policy of the context. This is usually done by the delegation office for the country concerned, and each project can thus take from it the major lines or aspects having a direct influence on their projects.

The results of this exercise will be of great importance for monitoring external assumptions (see below).

2. Monitoring the project's intervention logic

The field of application of this monitoring process focuses on our intervention logic, i.e. the foundations of our planning: the **FORA**.This obviously calls for a clearly defined strategy including objectives and results as well as indicators for measuring them.

With regard to monitoring the objective and strategy (results), we should concentrate on three fundamental aspects: **effectiveness, efficiency and relevance**.

By following the sequence of planning stages and using essentially the same tools (key questions), we can look at:

Future vision of the project

Where there has been no significant change in the situation/immediate environment of the project, it is not necessary to dwell on the vision, which therefore remains the same as at the time of planning. However, where there has been significant change, it becomes necessary to redo scenarios and redefine the future vision of the project.

Final aim

Same as for the vision. It is always useful to ask how much our intervention has contributed (or is on the way to contributing) to the final aim of the project.

Objective

During planning we have all realised how difficult it is to set a sound objective. Realising this in itself justifies the importance to be given to monitoring the objective as the central component in project strategy. It involves:

- Monitoring and analysing **effectiveness**:To what extent (how far) has the objective planned been achieved or is likely to be achieved? With what quality?
- Monitoring and analysing **efficiency**: Have (human, financial, time) resources been or will likely be used optimally?
- Monitoring and analysing **relevance**: Does the objective achieved or being achieved still meet the expectations/needs of the target group?

How do we proceed?

- Application of the indicator (or indicators) to the objective to establish to what extent the objective has or will be achieved, which means checking on whether what was intended has been or will be achieved or whether (where it seems likely that this will be the case) there are discrepancies. If there is or is likely to be any discrepancy, it is necessary to ascertain the reasons for reorienting intervention appropriately. The indicator makes it possible to take note of any discrepancy but does not explain it, an analysis is thus necessary.

- Where it has not been possible to identify an indicator during planning, it may be possible that a performance indicator has been identified since; it should then be used and included in the logframe (with the relevant means of verification). Where we can still not identify a reliable and relevant indicator, the best possible appreciation should be made by other means to assess how far the objective has been attained. For this, reference will be made to the monitoring tools described below, for example by triangulation of different methods
- To establish whether or not and "to what extent" the objective has been or will be achieved does not tell us whether it is appropriate, i.e. an objective enabling the target group to progress towards resolving its problem more perceptively and thus to advance towards the "improved" solution being sought (= the solution closest to our ideal scenario). However, it should be clear that **any change of the objective in the course of a project (or phase of a project) should be an exception rather than the rule**. If it nonetheless proves necessary the project can be said to be in crisis, and it then becomes necessary to negotiate with Headquarters and donors for project readjustment.

Results (strategic axes)

We proceed in the same way as for monitoring the objective, but at the subordinate result level.

Global strategy

For this we look at the coherence of the overall intervention strategy and its capacity to contribute towards achieving the final results and objective.

- What interactions/synergies are there between the different axes?
- Should the importance of the axes be weighted differently?
- Should we add/remove/readjust any axis according to how much each one contributes to achieving the objective?

External assumptions (critical conditions)

- Are external assumptions identified during planning still valid?
- What changes have occurred? Are there any new external assumptions? Should any be removed?
- What has their real influence been on the project? Has the project been able to influence one or more of them, or is there room for improvement?

For this we could base ourselves on and possibly use the conclusions of situation monitoring.

3. Model of action

Here we focus on our method of intervention and the approach the project wishes to adopt with regard to beneficiaries, as well as technical and methodological tools used. The model of action is the "recurrent approach strategy" in the project's intervention logic.

A result or objective can be achieved in different ways, by using different approaches which make up as many models of action. We can for example adopt a preventive or a curative approach, choose between formal and informal education. For priority fields (CSS, CR, MCH, NUT [9]), the model of action will be inspired directly from the sectoral strategies.

Hence there are two possibilities:

- **The existence at Terre des hommes of a sectoral strategy/thematic resource person:** one single project does not contain all working options or models of action of a sectoral strategy but selects from among them at the outset (e.g.: a Children in Street Situations project may establish a drop-in centre rather than to do street contact/outreach). Monitoring the model of action in such case consists of looking at how relevant the original choice was. At the same time, and also of concern to resource persons here, is the monitoring of tools used in the project: their usefulness, any problems using them, results, proposed improvements, etc.
- **Absence of a Terre des hommes' sectoral strategy and/or thematic resource person (e.g. psychosocial [10], psycho-trauma, prevention of child abandonment/support to single mothers, etc):** in as far as there is no sectoral strategy specific to these themes nor a priori any relevant technical tools, the project has to rely on its own capacities and experience (with or without the assistance of external expertise) to identify the model of action behind the intervention logic. It is therefore of interest to monitor project performance from the standpoint of this model of action: How does the project relate to beneficiaries? What has functioned well and what has functioned less well? Are there any proposals for improvement? This stage is closely linked with the capitalisation process and should eventually make it possible for a sectoral strategy to emerge.

4. Project appreciation criteria

Because they represent Terre des hommes' values and principles for action [11] and make it possible to take a different, more cross-cutting view, criteria such as

9 Children in Street Situations (CSS), Child Rights (CRs), Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Nutrition (NUT)

10 While the creation of a post of resource person in this field is planned for 2002, there is for the time being no specific psychosocial sectoral strategy.

11 Strategic Plan for the Terre des hommes Foundation 2000-2004, Ch. 6.

sustainability, consistency, participation, expected impact, gender and networking must also be subject to monitoring. They are also often required by donors to be included in the reports we submit to them.

In addition to effectiveness, efficiency and relevance, these are key criteria in assessing the project overall, for example in an evaluation (quality criteria of a development project[12]).

Depending on the project and its location, some appreciation criteria will already have been taken into account during monitoring of the situation, intervention logic and/or model of action; it will therefore not be necessary to do it all again. However, the fact of approaching them again from a different angle provides additional assurance that none of these transversal views have been overlooked and makes it possible to assess the project globally in its strategic and institutional dimensions. In addition, it simplifies preparation of the monitoring reports which must include them.

Sustainability

This must be the key criterion for any development project and must therefore be monitored. A project must be clear at all times about the chances of sustainability of the benefits it is offering to the target group. For that there are a number of key questions to be asked:

- Is there a strategy for withdrawal[13] from the project or has some thought been given to it? Within what time frame? How and with whom? What are the benefits/services which will last beyond the end of the project?
- What assessment can be made of the long-term viability of project benefits?

Consistency

A closer look has to be taken at how consistent the intervention logic of the project is with national policies, the Foundation's strategic plan, sectoral strategies, etc. Such a stage is obviously only justified where there has been some readjustment in the intervention logic (and, in particular, strategy) or where there have been significant changes in context (for example a new national policy).

Participation

- What have been the promising participatory experiences which have motivated the target group, partners and project team?
- How and to what extent (information, consultation, joint decision-making, etc) has the participation of beneficiaries and other stakeholders been obtained?

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12 Criteria can sometimes be different or differently weighted (e.g. sustainability criterion) for an emergency project.

13 The terms "phasing out strategy" or "exit strategy" are often used.

Project impact

While not expressly contained in our project strategic plan[14], we must seek and analyse the impact our action has had on beneficiaries and on the project's environment.

- What effects /changes have we provoked outside the planned objective and which lie outside the direct sphere of influence of the project?
- Can we already identify positive and/or negative impact on the environment/society in which the project intervenes?

We should also take a look at stakeholders "indirectly affected" by the project, where this has not already been done in the stakeholder monitoring.

Gender

Another look should be taken at the analysis conducted during the planning stage to see whether it has evolved or whether it should be refined in light of what we have learnt in the course of monitoring. It should be determined whether it is necessary to adopt a new gender approach in order to guarantee involvement of both women and men (girls and boys) and take this into account in the project's effort.

- Have gender approach/measures proved sufficient? Should any changes be made, and if so which?
- Can we identify any impact by the project on relations between women and men in the immediate environment?

Networking approach

- What has been the role of/what has the project actively done in terms of networking?
- Has the project been a driving force in the networking of partners active in the intervention sector?
- What are the essential complementary services provided by networking?
- Is it necessary to change the approach? If so, why and how?

Project cycle management (tools and methodological processes)

- Describe any possible improvements in project management methods (planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, etc).
- Are planning/monitoring/evaluation/reporting tools effective and efficient? If not, what proposals are there to improve them?
- Have evaluation/auditing exercises been carried out?

Local capacity and institutional building

- To what extent has the project contributed towards local capacity building (transfer of know-how, awareness raising, exposure to other experience, etc)?

14 One of the main characteristics of impact is precisely that they cannot generally be planned.

- Where appropriate: how is the project's localisation proceeding? What might be improved? Should the localisation strategy be changed?

5. Actions / activities and project organisation

Having reviewed strategic monitoring by going over the four main chapters of our project strategic plan (situation – intervention logic – model of action – project appreciation criteria), we should turn to operational monitoring, i.e. monitoring of the second key document for our project: the **annual operational plan**.

It is essential for the project team to conduct effective and sustained operational monitoring; such monitoring makes it possible to obtain information necessary to take management decisions, essential for **optimising** actions/activities on an ongoing basis.

Programming actions

In the programming stage, actions are broken down into activities. It is up to those in charge of the project to check progress regularly, oversee the timetable for implementation and report back to the rest of the team. In the event of problems not extending beyond the level of action (in other words, not requiring a change in project strategy), any necessary readjustment should be made directly by those in charge in the field. Where problems significantly affect the rest of the project however, team decisions should be taken. This monitoring makes it possible to **optimise actions**, an essential element in the quality and success of the intervention.

Structures and procedures

- Has the project structure undergone any modification?
- Analysis of the functioning of the proposed flowchart (organogram): does it match reality in the field or does it require adjustment?

Human resources of the project

The way members of a team use resources, distribute work and organise internal collaboration (communication, conflict management, etc) has considerable influence on the success of the project. This is why it is important to discuss matters in the framework of regular monitoring and thus develop team management skills. The following should be taken into account:

- Responsibilities – qualifications, job descriptions: satisfaction – dissatisfaction among personnel, evaluation of each individual's skills and their optimum use, etc.
- Quantification – man/days, salary scale: evaluation of the adequacy between set objectives/results and available human resources.
- Flowchart: analysis of how the proposed flowchart is functioning and whether it corresponds with reality on the spot or needs adjustment.
- Training of project personnel.

Financial resources

The accounting department draws up terms of reference for key aspects of financial and accounting monitoring. For the first years, once budgeting by strategic axis has been introduced, it is important to be able to analyse real expenditure so as to be in a position to ensure more realistic budgeting.

21.6. Who does what, when and how?

As we have seen, the monitoring process can be broken down into three main stages: data gathering, data analysis, and readjustment.

The first is the responsibility of the field. The content (typology of data) should be defined for each project depending on the field of intervention and nature of the project, context, available resources and intervention strategy (indicators and means of verification) planned; there can be no standardised system at this level.

For the two other stages, Headquarters' involvement is greater in defining the content, which is more "standardised" (according to Terre des hommes' norms). On the one hand because the stages of analysis must lead to harmonised products (mainly in the form of reports) required by Headquarters to be kept informed (monitoring) and pass on information (mainly to donors), and on the other hand because the readjustment stage calls for decisions which have financial and strategic implications.

Preliminary conditions for a sound monitoring system

We should bear in mind that when we embark on project implementation, we already need to be clear about the type of data we intend to gather throughout project implementation (planning the monitoring system).

Then, for a monitoring system to function well, each of the persons involved should know what his or her responsibility is, what he or she is to do on a daily basis, and above all be aware of what its purpose is. Concerning this last point, two aspects can contribute considerably to the success of monitoring:

- all those involved have been consulted from the outset and feel that they have been associated with monitoring arrangements made
- they are regularly informed of monitoring results (feedback), particularly following analyses.

Where there is no consultation or feedback, it is very likely that some persons will fail to take monitoring efforts seriously, or might even "invent" data if they do not see the use of them simply to please their superiors.

The two reference documents for the project (the project strategic plan and the annual operational plan) should motivate and be the basis for the monitoring system we intend to establish.

What should be done and when?

§ 21.5 offers a full theoretical picture of the different fields of application for monitoring and what it implies. In practice, however, we cannot constantly make a thorough systematic review of everything, as the team would spend all its time doing this. According to "time" and "decision-making" criteria, we distinguish different processes and moments.

1. Ongoing: data collection

This is a "common trunk" required for both strategic and operational monitoring. During the planning/programming stage, the project team has defined a series of indicators and means of verification making it possible to measure whether we will achieve the planned results or not. The head of project then determines who collects what data, when, and in what form data should be recorded (monitoring sheets, logbooks, registers, cards, etc). **Data collection is often an ongoing task throughout project implementation. It is the responsibility of the field team.**

2. Analysis and readjustment

2.1 Regularly: operational monitoring

Each member of the project collects data from the reality he/she encounters directly. This information should be shared with the rest of the team at **monthly review** meetings under the head of project. Having pooled information, the team will be able to assess the state of progress of the project in relation to the operational plan (action – activities planned, schedule, use of resources, etc.), making **optimisation of actions/activities** possible.

Unless it involves major modifications in the use of financial resources (budget), **any decision-making about readjustment (or optimisation) of activities or action is for the field to do on an ongoing basis**, with Headquarters merely being informed of decisions. A concise record of these monthly meetings will provide a written record of decisions taken (of use in the event of staff changes) and can serve as a basis for intermediate reports (see next chapter on reporting).

2.2 Periodically: strategic monitoring

Depending on the timetable, depth of analysis, and decision-making process stemming from the results of the analysis, different moments can be differentiated during a project phase.

Semi-annual meeting on project progress

Once every six months, the project team as a whole meets with the delegate to take a fresh look at the logframe prepared at the planning stage and measure progress achieved towards the various results. Measurement is by means of indicators and means of verification included in the logframe, obtained from data gathered by the project. The following should be done at this point:

- Verifying whether the expected results have or are likely to be achieved. Where there are discrepancies, this should be explained.
- Seeing whether any other more effective and relevant indicators (which, for example, may not have been identified at the planning stage) might be used for the continuation of the project.

The result of this exercise can be used as a basis for the "logframe monitoring" part of the semi-annual report (see format in the next chapter).

Annual meeting on project progress

This is practically the same exercise as for the half-year meeting, except that a more in-depth analysis of the situation and strategy of the project over the previous year should be included. **The result of this exercise can be used as a basis for the annual report** (see format in the next chapter).

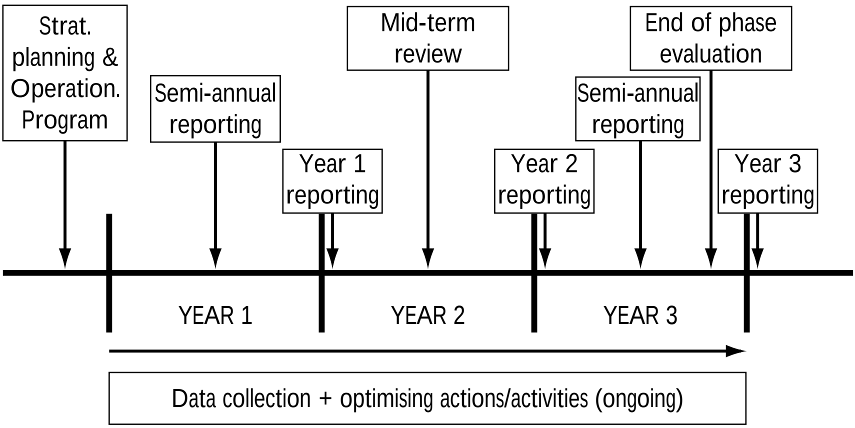
Mid-term review

Under the responsibility of the delegate and on a participatory basis, the whole project team revisits the various stages of strategic planning and draws up an assessment of the situation, the strategy, the model of action, and project appreciation criteria. This is a self-evaluation calling for an investment of several days. For this, the team should use as a starting point the results of previous reports, systematic data collection and dialogue with beneficiaries and partners. This is the real **momentum in terms of strategic monitoring of the project**, making it possible to propose adaptations to the project strategic plan drawn up during planning. It is therefore important to reserve sufficient time for this crucially important exercise.

This momentum should take place at mid-term (for example, at the end of 18 months for a three-year project phase). Where the length of the phase is shorter or in the event of a crisis, it can naturally be arranged for any more suitable moment.

Proposals for modifying strategy coming out of this exercise will then be discussed with Headquarters. Better still: the person in charge of the geographical area should be on the spot when the review takes place. In operational terms (operational plan), these modifications can be taken into account in the course of budget preparations for the following year.

In summary this gives the following at the process level[15]:



Crisis meeting
Should there be unexpected events susceptible to significantly change the situation or affect the direction the project is taking, a crisis meeting should be immediately convened after gathering the necessary information so as to suggest to Headquarters the measures to be adopted.

21.7. Techniques (tools) employed in monitoring

Each stage of the process (data collection, analysis, readjustment) has its methodological tool. We refer to some of them, but the list is far from exhaustive. Many of these tools are in no way specific to monitoring but are shared by all the sciences and serve above all to make precise diagnoses using as few resources as possible.

15 In the case of a project stage starting at the beginning of the calendar year for a three-year duration occurring without major obstacles.

Qualitative and quantitative methods

For a long time, data collection and information analysis was limited to quantitatively measurable factors (for example, statistics, prevalence rates, schooling rates, etc). However, in Terre des hommes' fields of intervention, it is necessary to obtain qualitative as well as quantitative information. Therefore a balance must be found when choosing appropriate methodology and corresponding tools.

Quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive to one another; each has its own advantages and limitations. Qualitative methods are generally less structured, but more difficult to set down and process. Quantitative methods seem more "scientific" and credible (tangible data, objectively verifiable) but offer less flexibility.

The quantitative approach seeks to know **how much**, while the qualitative approach seeks to ascertain **what, why and how**.

In the quantitative approach, we will use statistical methods, analyse figures, and our surveys will be more structured, with questionnaires of a more closed nature. We will proceed by using anthropometric measurements. Generally speaking, sampling is broader than for qualitative research.

In the qualitative approach, greater importance will be given to observation, open interviews and focal group discussions. Qualitative surveys measuring changes in behaviour and attitude are generally relatively complex processes which require careful handling.

Qualitative results can be reliably obtained by **triangulation** of different tools, such as observation, surveys/interviews, statistical data/study of documents (records, register, etc). Triangulation makes it possible to study the same social reality from different angles, either by combining different research techniques or by associating different persons with different skills. *"Methodological triangulation makes it possible to exploit the strong points of different methods, allowing for cross-checking of results and counterbalancing the limitations of each method. (…) It is equally possible to cross approaches and combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Good triangulation is the ideal; but often time and/or research budget restrictions reduce its possibilities. Nonetheless by using only two methods there is a greater chance of producing valid and reliable data than by research based on a single method."*[16]

We should be guided by three criteria in choosing data collection methods:

- **Reliability:** this means that if someone else collects the same data, or if the same persons repeat the data collection at a different time they will obtain the

16 Extract from the workshop report "Social qualitative research methods on tropical diseases", held in Darda and N'Djamena from 6 to 24 October 1997, jointly organised by the TDR of the World Bank/UNDP/WHO and the Swiss Tropical Institute (Basel and N'Djamena) (free translation from the French)

same results. The use of systematic testing by questionnaire and interview guides can enhance the reliability of data collection.

- **Validity**: this means ascertaining whether the data collected offer a true picture of the reality. It may be that the same questionnaire or survey used by different persons leads to the same results but that this result does not match reality or does not make it possible to measure the change we wish to observe. Triangulation is aimed at offering greater validity in data collection and in the interpretation of information gathered
- **Efficiency**: this means the cost in financial and human terms in relation to the size of the measurement to be made. Systematic use of existing data, where they are reliable, is more advantageous than collecting data by one's own means

Observation – looking around

This should be the ideal tool for any project agent. This tool allows for flexibility and adaptability, aspects which are often lacking in more "technical" tools. It is also the tool with the greatest capacity to generate unique information that other tools cannot produce because of their lack of flexibility.

For this it is necessary to be able to spot and grasp the meaning of changes on the basis of **significant facts** actually occurring. Not just our reality but also that of beneficiaries. What strikes us most and why? Observing the world around us, preferably with the beneficiaries themselves, and interpreting changes and their consequences thus emerges as an important activity in monitoring. Knowing how to observe is an aptitude and a skill mainly developed through constant practice.

It is not enough to observe; transcription and sharing of the results of observation are also necessary. The limitations of this tool often lie in the capacity, role and status of the observer.

Chronological data recording

The recording of data chronologically constitutes a necessary minimum. Those in charge of projects and services should produce graphs and tables with information regularly reflecting the state of progress of their service or project. **Care should be taken to record only necessary data and not waste energy in compiling unprocessable data of no use for analysis.** The "indicators" and "means of verification" columns of the logframe should serve as a guide when completing registers, cards, etc. It should be checked that all data necessary to make indicators easy to read are included, and that all data collection dates match indicator dates. Any unnecessary data should be excluded from registers, cards, etc., as they encumber the monitoring process without adding anything of value.

Regular surveys

Data can be obtained through regular surveys (nutritional surveys, etc). Surveys should match pre-established terms of reference coinciding with project needs. For each field of intervention there exist specific survey methodologies. Headquarters resource persons should determine the methodologies to be used and the terms of reference to be observed, as these are essential to obtain comparable results and allow for progress in sectoral strategies.

The term “survey” often tends to bring quantitative methods to mind. However, qualitative survey methods also exist, such as the KAP (Knowledge-Attitude-Practice) or KPC (Knowledge-Practices-Coverage) methods. These methods can be very useful in better understanding the environment in which we are intervening but are complex and more difficult to handle than quantitative surveys. Therefore, before embarking on a qualitative survey of such type, it is necessary to make sure that the skills necessary to conduct it are forthcoming and what is wished to be obtained has been clearly identified.

Structured interview

This is complementary to other, more participatory approaches. A questionnaire is usually included in a structured or formal interview. In the context of Terre des hommes' intervention, it is preferable to present the questionnaire personally at an early stage of monitoring. In the course of the following stages and where the persons concerned are accustomed to it and have the skill (literacy, etc) to do this, it may be possible for the questionnaire to be self-managed (the persons involved complete the questionnaire themselves). While this can be time-saving in collecting data, it is often offset by a loss of time during analysis.

Semi-structured interview (semi-directive interview)

Another form of interview: instead of a questionnaire, the interviewer uses a check list of subjects/questions to be addressed. This type of interview allows the parties to express themselves more freely but is more difficult to analyse.

Sampling

Any form of data collection poses sampling problems. The literature on opinion polling and survey methods offers some information on the subject. It should be borne in mind that sampling must match the target group for the objective or the indicator to be measured. To have a measure of impact of our intervention, we may choose children of a given age group and district having benefited from a specific service offered by the project. To conduct a nutritional diagnoses we may choose a random sample from among all children of a given age group in potential zones of intervention of the project.

Other tools

The number of tools is almost unlimited.There is abundant literature on the subject. A simple Internet search is likely to provide a multitude of documents very rapidly. Which one should be chosen? When? For what purpose?

The answer to these questions is to be found for each project depending on its activity, the basic training of those in charge, and the organisational culture in which it is taking place. Most Terre des hommes' sectors of activities (priority fields of intervention) may require very specific tools (for example, the "Child-Street System"). Resource persons at Headquarters must play a decisive role in evaluating existing tools and where appropriate developing specific sectoral tools for their dissemination.

The following are an indication of existing "generalist" tools:

- SWOT (Strength – Weakness – Opportunities – Threats), or SEPO in French (Succès –Echecs – Potentialités – Obstacles).
- Participatory Rural Appraisal / PRA, Rapid Rural Appraisal/RRA, Accelerated Participatory Research Method /APRM (MARP in French), etc.

Other tools are to be found on Internet sites and in specialised works (see also the bibliography at the end of this Handbook).

Summary:

Monitoring is a set of project management tasks conducted throughout project's implementation making it possible to:

- ***extend strategic thinking undertaken during planning and ensure that we "keep on track": this is strategic monitoring***
- ***regularly measure the progress of work and use of (human, material and financial) resources, optimise action and explain any discrepancies: this is operational monitoring***

The aim of the monitoring system is to guarantee the success of the project (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance). In addition, a sound monitoring system enhances project transparency and accountability with regard to all stakeholders (including beneficiaries), and facilitates reporting, evaluation and capitalisation of experience.

The reference documents which should guide us in setting out the monitoring system are the project strategic plan and annual operational plan. The monitoring system itself must be effective and efficient (reasonable cost compared to the project).

The monitoring process can be broken down into three main stages: (1) data collection, (2) data analysis, (3) readjustment.

Five fields of application for monitoring can be identified: (1) situation (2) intervention logic (3) model of action, (4) project appreciation criteria, (5) actions/activities and project organisation.

Operational monitoring is an on-going process and makes it possible to optimise actions/activities. Decisions about readjustment are taken in the field.

Strategic monitoring is conducted on a periodic basis (semi-annual and annual reporting, mid-term review). Decisions about readjustment are taken at Headquarters, and, where appropriate, with donors.

Many methodological tools/techniques are not specific to monitoring and can also be used for diagnosis of a situation and for planning. It is necessary to find a balance in qualitative and quantitative data collection.

XXII. Reporting

Project reports form an essential tool firstly for project monitoring **in the field** and secondly for **communication between the field and Headquarters**.

Who in the field has never been confronted with the question of what to write in a report? The apprehension of having to make a report which may never be read or not interpreted as we would like?

Who at Headquarters has never been faced with reports having little bearing on strategic planning? Or reports that are fascinating, very long and detailed, that are left in a corner of the office awaiting the time to read them – a time which never comes? Or reports so short that they make little sense?

The challenge is twofold:

- To obtain monitoring reports clearly reflecting strategic (or operational) monitoring for the purpose of ensuring project quality and continuation.
- To obtain a suitable tool for communication, conveying essential ideas clearly and concisely, understandable to persons not living the project on a daily basis.

The format for the strategic monitoring report is based on the format for the project strategic plan; the format for the operational monitoring report is based on the format for the operational plan.

Terre des hommes' reporting requirements are as far as possible in line with those of donor agencies. They must however be adapted to the specific requirements of each source of funding.

To be concise and synthetic, reports should not repeat what has already been set out in the strategic plan but should refer to it; the two documents should be read in parallel.

What is of interest to us here is the project monitoring report and more specifically monitoring reports intended for Headquarters' programme personnel and for relevant donors (for strategic monitoring). We are not referring to reports intended for communications or marketing services. Nor are we seeking here an all-inclusive tool in the field for operational monitoring activities of internal use for the project.

The Headquarters person receiving a report from the field is required to acknowledge receipt and provide feedback; if the report does not call for any special comments, it will be very short but there should be some feedback. For the exercise not to be entirely in one direction, the Headquarters reference person should also briefly report on his or her relevant activities related to the concerned programme (modalities to be discussed between the geographical area and the field).

In all that follows we are talking on a project level. A Terre des hommes delegation is located at the upper level of a programme. In terms of reporting this means that each project should do its own monitoring report (elaborated by the head of project on the basis of the below-mentioned format) and that the delegation should do a complementary report or note, elaborated by the delegate according to a format yet to be defined[17], concentrating on its specific tasks (delegation support to the various project, monitoring of the programme/country strategy, institutional activities undertaken, etc.).

In practice, the delegation will often compile the project reports into one document, adding a part for the delegation; this is possible assuming that the parts dedicated to the projects follow the below mentioned framework[18].

It is often the delegate who elaborates the reports instead (but with the active participation/contribution) of the head of project and/or partners. Taking into account local constraints (language, degree of training and skills of the local responsible, etc.), Terre des hommes' delegations must do their best to implement a procedure for the progressive training of the heads of project/partners on reporting, so that in the future, they will elaborate their own respective project report. This must be part of the process consisting of giving more responsibilities to Terre des hommes' national senior staff and local partners[19].

Which reports?

1. Annual reports: strategic monitoring report (main planning stages, monitoring of indicators, operational report)
2. Semi-annual reports: operational report and monitoring of indicators
3. Monthly intermediate monitoring reports (often called situation report or Sitrep) or quarterly reports: main points over a month/quarter, etc.

In addition to these reports it is necessary to ensure regular communication between the delegation and the relevant Headquarters person(s) (person in charge of the geographical area or others) in a form to be agreed by them:

- numbered e-mails

17 The format is to be discussed between the delegations and the geographic areas. All proposals are welcomed and will contribute to the elaboration of a future framework.

18 At least for internal purposes (sending to headquarters). If needed, it will be possible to modify some parts for a report intended for a donor.

19 This process is especially important if the project is in the process of phasing-out or of localisation.

- newsletter
- telephone conversation, with written minutes, etc

Below is the format for the different types of report. For each point reference can be made to the key questions under the relevant headings in the Handbook. It is not essential to reply exhaustively to each question (this list is indicative) but to give relevant indications about changes that have taken place.

A. Intermediate (monthly or quarterly) monitoring reports

Dissemination: internal
Operational reports are intended for team members in the field, for the delegation and for reference persons for the programmes concerned at Terre des hommes' Headquarters (person in charge of a geographical area). **They are for internal use, and it is therefore not necessary to spend a great deal of time on the form of the document.**

Content and frequency:
To be defined between the delegation and Headquarters' person concerned, in line with individual practice, type of project and context.

E.g.: in Morocco the delegate sends a monthly report ("Sitrep") indicating:
- planning for the previous month (main facts in chronological order for the month)
- developments in the political/humanitarian/security situation, etc. in the country (where there is something to be noted)
- delegation activities (ditto)
- project activities (only where there is something special to note)

B. Semi-annual reports

Volume: max. 5 pages
Dissemination: internal and external (relevant institutional donor agencies)

Contents:

1. Cover page
2. Operational monitoring
3. Monitoring of indicators

1. Cover page

- Brief description of the project (taken from the annual operational plan)
- Executive summary of the project over the semester

2. Operational monitoring

2.1 Monitoring actions

- *Narrative part: monitoring of actions by expected result, one axis at a time: main points realised (with relevant figures), difficulties encountered, corrections made to the level of actions over the six months.*

2.2 Monitoring structures and procedures

Brief description of relevant elements in the internal life of the project: *problems encountered, solutions found, etc.* This chapter will report on:

- Changes made during the semester to the project flowchart
- Any new administrative procedures
- Changes in relations with local partners (contracts signed, difficulties encountered, etc.)

2.3 Monitoring the human resources of the project

Contains essential, synthetic information on:

- Any changes in personnel at management level, and reasons for departures
- Personnel training (workshops, courses, etc)

2.4 Monitoring external resources

- Support from delegation and Headquarters
- External evaluation and audits
- Other external support

2.5 Monitoring material resources

- Acquisitions

2.6 Monitoring financial resources

- Funding obtained
- Local expenditure accounts (semi-annual, with the annual budget divided by two to be used as a basis) and fund instalments received.

Period concerned	Budget in CHF	Budget in local currency	Expenditure in CHF	Expenditure local currency	Difference in %	Explanation of differences
30. Expatriate personnel expenditure						
31. Local personnel expenditure						
32. Admin. expenditure						
33. Expenditure for premises and equipment						
34. Transport expenditure						
35. Production expenditure						
36. Beneficiary expenditure						

3. Monitoring of indicators (follow-up matrix)

The operational report is complemented by a follow-up matrix.

This concerns monitoring of the logframe, with a table (one horizontal page) containing one entry per objective and final results, and four columns: intervention logic, indicators, indicator measurement, explanation of discrepancies. The first two columns should be copied from the logframe appended to the project strategic plan. ***This does not involve any strategy reorientation but a presentation and analysis of data.***

Intervention strategy	Indicators	Indicator measurement	Explanation of discrepancies[20]
Objective			
Axis I :			
Final result expected			
Interim result expected			
Interim result expected			
Axis 1I :			
Final result expected			
etc.			

C. Annual report

Dissemination:
- To programme reference persons at Headquarters
- To institutional donor agencies

Contents:
- Project strategy monitoring and recommendations
- Monitoring of indicators (follow-up matrix over the year)
- Synthesis of operational monitoring, cumulated over the year

Size: 10-12 pages

The annual strategic report is the main reference document for the project. It should therefore also serve for project monitoring at Headquarters, thereby contributing to development of the country strategic plan and to sectoral strategies. For an annual report to be readable and be read by decision-making persons, it should also be written in concise **synthetic** form and contain only

20 When timing of the report does not correspond with the deadline of the objective and/or of certain results, we should concentrate on an appreciation of the progress and an assessment of the chances of achieving them (as planned) in the future. Mention should also be made where relevant of the corrective measures envisaged.

key information making it possible to monitor project strategy without getting lost in an all-inclusive list of every project activity and action.

The annual report **follows the structure of the project strategic plan**. To keep the annual report as concise and synthetic as possible, information contained in the project strategic plan[21] should not be repeated. The two documents should be read in parallel.

Format for the annual report:
This is the format to be followed for all annual reports of Terre des hommes' projects. It contains the essential elements to be provided. Obviously additional indications can be included if required by the particular context.

Text in italics is not part of the framework but provides indications on how to proceed. The framework is complemented by key questions, to be found under the relevant headings of the Handbook.

1. Overview/executive summary (one page of narrative and one of table)

1.1 Executive summary – *A summary of three key points for the year and three challenges for the future (1 page max.)*

1.2 Presentation of the follow-up matrix (one horizontal page) – *A table containing one entry per objective and final results, and four columns: intervention logic, indicators, measurement of indicators, explanation of discrepancies (see chapter on semi-annual reporting). The first two columns should be copied from the logframe annexed to the project strategic plan.*

2. Situation monitoring (1–2 pages)
Main components of context monitoring (immediate project environment), problems, stakeholders, resources and potential resources, and limitations, obstacles and risks.

Conclusion:
Main components to be taken into account in continuing the project. Recommendations for the next strategic review.

3. Monitoring intervention logic (3 pages)
Main elements resulting from the monitoring of the vision, final aim, objective, overall intervention strategy, axes of intervention (results), external assumptions, indicators and means of verification. Comments/explanations intended to help the understanding of the follow-up matrix.

21 At least for internal purposes (Headquarters). Some data can be added where relevant in reports intended for a donor agency.

4. Monitoring the model of action (1 page)

- Way of intervening with regard to beneficiaries
- Consistency with intervention philosophy and sectoral strategies
- Description of methodological and technical tools used, assessment of these tools and techniques

5. Project appreciation criteria (1 page)

5.1 Sustainability
5.2 Consistency
5.3 Participation
5.4 Strengthening of local capacities (capacity building)
5.5 Impact
5.6 Gender
5.7 Networking
5.8 Project cycle management

6. Financial and operational monitoring (1 page)

6.1 Main achievements and modifications concerning actions and practices (concise outline of operational monitoring over the year)
6.2 Project structure
6.3 Human resources
6.4 Budget and expenditure
6.5 Funding

7. Annexes

Summary:

Project reports are an essential instrument, for both project monitoring in the field, and communication between Headquarters and the field.

The strategic monitoring report format is based on the project strategic plan format; the operational monitoring report format is based on the annual operational plan format.

Terre des hommes' reporting requirements match as far as possible those of institutional donor agencies.

Reports should be concise and synthetic, and not repeat what has been indicated in the project strategic plan or annual operational plan, but refer to them; these documents should be read in parallel.

There are three types of reports:

- ***Annual: this is the main reference document for the project. Strategic monitoring report + compilation of operational monitoring over the year***
- ***Semi-annual: logframe monitoring + compilation of operational monitoring over the semester***
- ***Intermediate: monthly ("Sitrep") or quarterly: operational monitoring (frequency and content to be determined between the field and those in charge of geographical areas at Headquarters).***

XXIII. Evaluation

As mentioned earlier, we consider that our teams carrying out monitoring in the field proceed in more or less the same way and use mainly the same tools as for an evaluation.

Differences between the two levels lie rather in the fact that an evaluation is more selective in a project cycle and focuses mainly on project objective, final aim, impact and assessment criteria. A further significant difference lies in the ability to see the project and its stakeholders in perspective with a degree of impartiality, and in the more formal aspect of evaluation involving external persons to the project or Headquarters' geographical desk who are in charge of project supervision.

23.1. Definition

Evaluation can be defined as an independent, objective examination, conducted at a given moment, of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project in order to facilitate decision-making and draw lessons from past experience.

In its latest publication on external evaluation[22], the SDC defines this as follows: *"Evaluation asks: are we doing the right things and are we doing things right?".*

For the OECD/DAC[23]: *"An evaluation is as systematic and objective an assessment as possible of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, as well as its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors."*

Evaluation is conducted at specific times: before a project ("ex-ante", also known as an exploratory, fact-finding, identification or feasibility mission), at the end of a phase or project, in the middle ("mid-term", "built-in"), after the end of a project ("ex-post"), or at any time during the project (following a crisis, in the event of significant reorientation, or at the request of donor agencies).

22 External evaluation), Working Instruments for Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Transference into action (PEMT), Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), June 2000.

23 Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) / Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Paris, 1991 (free translation from the French)

The recent conception of evaluation now places considerably more emphasis on the internal dynamics an evaluation can and should give rise to within the project team (constructive versus sanctioning evaluation). Evaluation is increasingly considered a privileged moment for in-depth consideration and joint learning. It should therefore not be only used as a means of control but above all as a quality enhancing process.

23.2. Evaluation at Terre des hommes

From an absolute point of view, all Terre des hommes' projects in the field should be subject to evaluation at the end of each project phase/cycle.

Nonetheless, the large number of projects (150), their diversity and the structural absorption capacity (at Headquarters and in the field) as they exist at the present time must be taken into account. It therefore seems more realistic for the time being, pending finalisation and application of a more formal policy, to recommend that:

- **Each geographical area** arranges for **at least two annual evaluations** in countries under its supervision.
- The costs of an evaluation should not exceed 5% of the total budget for the phase of the project.
- Evaluation is beneficial and essential for project quality.
- Evaluation considerably facilitates capitalisation of experience and improvement of best practices.
- Evaluation forms an integral part of the project cycle and must be planned accordingly by and in each project, with a corresponding sum reserved for the purpose.

With regard to the procedure/stages to be undertaken for an evaluation exercise, and rather than reinventing the wheel, we refer to the SDC document on external evaluation[24], which seems to us to be complete. It should be noted that the same steps must be followed for internal evaluation.

A report should be made of any evaluation, whether internal or external.

23.3. Audit at Terre des hommes

As a complement to evaluation, Terre des hommes intends as of 2002 to introduce a more systematic local auditing policy for any project with an annual

24 External Evaluation, working instruments for Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Transference into action (PEMT), Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), June 2000 (available on the SDC Website www.deza.admin.ch)

budget exceeding CHF 50,000. This includes an audit of accounts and the examination of legal aspects and measures relating to internal control in Terre des hommes' country programmes.

The reasons for introducing this procedure are:
1. Those providing (private or institutional) funding can have a guarantee that funds made available are being put to good use.
2. It makes it possible to ensure reliability of information from the field to Headquarters. It lightens the administrative and accounting burden at Headquarters and often obviates transmission of justification documents (invoices).
3. It helps improve quality of information given in Terre des hommes' financial documents.

We will see in subsequent chapters how to use results and draw lessons from the monitoring & evaluation system for readjustment and capitalisation.

Summary:

Evaluation is an independent, objective examination at a given moment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a project in order to facilitate decision-making and draw lessons from past experience.

Compared with monitoring, evaluation occurs at certain times in a project cycle, involves one or more persons external to the project, and focuses mainly on project objective, final aim, impact and project appreciation criteria.

An evaluation can take place prior to a project (ex-ante or exploratory mission), at the end of a phase or of a project, in the middle of a phase (mid-term), after the end of a project (ex-post) or at any time (as a result of a crisis, in the event of significant reorientation, on request from donor agencies).

Evaluation is increasingly considered as a privileged opportunity for in-depth consideration and joint learning. It should therefore not be used as a means of control but as a way of enhancing quality.

Terre des hommes differentiates between internal evaluation (conducted by a person employed by the Foundation but external to the project or

relevant geographical desk at Headquarters) and an external evaluation (conducted by a person not employed by the Foundation).

In absolute terms, any Terre des hommes project in the field should be the subject of internal or external evaluation at the end of each cycle. Bearing in mind the large number of projects and capacity of the present structure, each geographical desk should arrange for at least two annual evaluations in the countries under its supervision.

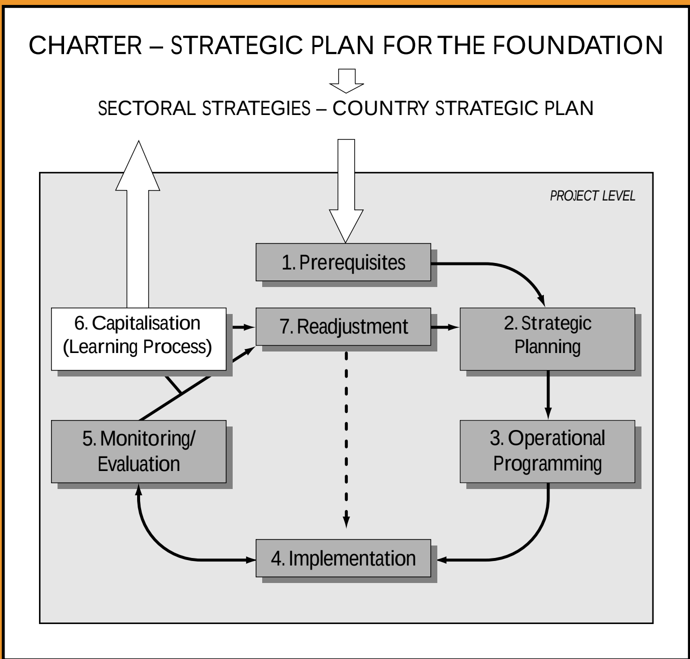
Concerning the procedure/stages to be observed for an evaluation exercise, reference will be made to the SDC "External Evaluation" document. The same steps are to be observed for internal evaluation.

A report should be made for each evaluation, whether internal or external.

As a complement to evaluation, Terre des hommes is implementing as of 2002 a more systematic policy of local auditing for projects exceeding CHF 50,000 budget.

STAGE 6 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

CAPITALISATION



Terre des hommes

XXIV. Capitalisation

Capitalisation: this is a word we hear increasingly frequently among organisations of international solidarity[1]. It may seem strange to use a term with a financial ring in non-profit making circles…

"Why use the word "capitalisation"(…)? It comes precisely from the difference between accumulation and capitalisation. Accumulation is the stuffing of bank notes under a mattress, until the time comes when we realise we can no longer use them. Capitalisation is exactly the opposite; it is the interlinking of experiences to use them as an investment. It is non-material investment of course but is this not the most valuable of all?" [2].

Let us take a look of what we mean at Terre des hommes by capitalisation.

24.1. Definition

Of the different definitions that exist, Terre des hommes has chosen the following:

Capitalisation
To capitalise is to make the experience shareable[3]

Best practice
Terre des hommes considers "best practice" to be the lessons drawn from the successes and failures of one or more experiences in the field in its priority areas. Best practice can be identified by a process of capitalisation. It must have been checked over time, be of potential use for other stakeholders and be measured in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, ethics and/or innovation.

Best practice is constantly monitored and adapted and does not constitute a "golden standard".

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1 Especially in French, as this word does not really exist in English ; for the latter the terms "Institutional learning" or "learning process" are more common.

2 Pierre Calame – Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme (FPH) in Analyser et valoriser un capital d'expérience, Dossier N° 125 co-ordinated by Annik Ollitrault-Bernard, Sylvie Robert and Pierre de Zutter, FPH, February 2001 (free translation from the French)

3 Definition inspired from the French by Pierre de Zutter in Des histoires, des savoirs et des hommes, série "Dossiers pour un débat" N° 35, FPH, 1994

24.2. Why do we capitalise?

It can be said in broad terms that we capitalise in order to make our successes known to third parties, and in order not to repeat the mistakes of the past. We want to improve quality by practice – hence the "best practice" concept – by taking past experience (good or bad) into account and learning from it.

As a result of their mandate, NGO intervene in a variety of fields and contexts which can be highly complex. In this way they acquire an accumulation of experience beyond the sum of the experience of each of their members. As they are traditionally faced with a significant turnover of personnel, the institutional memory tends to fade where there is no appropriate mechanisms for perpetuating it. Capitalisation is one of these mechanisms.

What is the difference between capitalisation and evaluation? Although there are some similarities[4], the two should not be confused. They are two different processes, and distinguishable at a number of levels:

- Evaluation makes a value judgement, generally by a person outside the project, with a view to taking a decision (to continue, discontinue or readjust intervention). In the case of capitalisation, however, it is the group (team) which communicates its experiences and what it has learnt in order that this may be of use to others.
- Evaluation is a short-term management (readjustment) tool; capitalisation is a longer term tool for the progress of a group/institution[5].
- Evaluation seeks to convince by means of conclusions and recommendations; capitalisation *"… is concerned with providing the best possible presentation in an accessible manner and with the relevant information with the aim of understanding and not of convincing"*[6]

Capitalisation and evaluation therefore often employ similar methods and are complementary but do not play exactly the same role.

"Capitalisation (…) certainly is interested in the results of existing evaluations and takes them into account both for what they have to say and what they suppose. It may even include a degree of evaluation where this does not already exist. A comparison between what has been planned, done and obtained is always useful. However,

4 Among others the fact that increasing focus is put on the constructive and common learning aspects of an evaluation, in order to improve quality (see previous chapters on monitoring & evaluation)

5 Even though the results of capitalisation can also obviously be used in project readjustment

6 Pierre de Zutter, ibid. (free translation from the French)

capitalisation will not necessarily make a judgement but will seek out what may serve as a lesson, what may be knowledge to be shared."[7]

24.3. Fields of capitalisation

Terre des hommes' mission, culture and institutional experience have naturally oriented priority fields of capitalisation.

Terre des hommes therefore seeks to capitalise as a priority in the fields of **Mother and Child Health, Nutrition, Children in Street Situations, Child Rights (in particular juvenile justice and thematic campaigns) and Psychosocial.**

It should be noted that the system of resource persons[8] at Headquarters is the result of the institution's determination to crystallise added value through capitalising on experience, in order to consolidate the "learning organisation" aspect. Thus, resource persons act as a relay and driving force in the above-mentioned fields.

For fields lying outside the resource sectors mentioned, other, more cross-cutting themes such as gender, social reintegration of marginalised children, partnership/institutional development (self-reliance, capacity building processes) and adoption are also included.

Capitalisation in a multiplicity of domains is facilitated by the acquisition and installation in 2002 of an electronic document management software. This platform is accessible to all Terre des hommes' users whether at Headquarters or in the field, and allows access and dissemination of all capitalisation documents at any time. Documents are filed with key words and each field team will be able to access this database through a search engine to look for the required information (for example the experience of a project located in another country but intervening in a similar thematic area).

24.4. Modalities of capitalisation

As has been seen several times in previous chapters of this Handbook, capitalisation is intimately linked with project monitoring in the field and with the learning process.

7 Pierre de Zutter, ibid. (free translation from the French)

8 To recap there are in 2001 five resource persons at Headquarters for the following domains: Children in Street Situations (CSS), Child Rights (CRs), Mother and Child Health (MCH), Nutrition (NUT) and Project Cycle Management (PCM). It is planned to have a sixth resource person by 2002 for Psychosocial.

Permanent learning must be one of the main features of any organisation or project. Learning should be systematic and should no longer be viewed as an incidental process. While they may be useful, discovery and incidental learning do not automatically lead to corrective measures or the timely adoption of new ideas.

Systematic learning must analyse lessons derived at project level so that success factors can be reproduced and mistakes not repeated. Learning should at the same time recognise and respect the value of, and be based on local know-how.

Different levels of capitalisation

In the field

In the course of their action, teams constantly witness meaningful facts that they should identify and understand. Just talk with a project officer of his or her experience to realise its richness. Unfortunately, this value is sometimes not even recognised. Consequently, a great deal of capital is lost. It cannot be made available to others or used to enhance action, be it in the same or another country.

To make capitalisation more systematic, Terre des hommes has chosen to incorporate a capitalisation stage into the project cycle. At the end of each phase, capitalisation of the project (as a whole or of one specific, significant aspect/theme[9]) is required by the institution; this product-oriented process takes the form of a **capitalisation report**, the format of which is set out below. As this exercise calls for investment in time and human resources, it is important that this should be taken into consideration during project planning/programming.

This does not mean waiting until the end of a phase before capitalising on it. Where circumstances require or prompt it (for example by anticipating a change of delegate, following a crisis, in the event of major reorientation of a project, significant facts observed which it seems important to share, etc), the field can take the initiative of embarking on a capitalisation process during the course of a project. Equally, Headquarters may ask the field for a capitalisation contribution in a specific field. **Capitalisation at the end of a phase therefore represents a necessary minimum.**

The **role of the delegation** is essential in this process. It is for the delegation to act as a **driving force for capitalisation** in the country concerned. As will be seen below, this does not mean that only a delegate may undertake capitalisation, but the delegation should ensure that the process is carried out and supervise it.

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9 The field of capitalisation, the period covered and the process are decided in negotiations between Headquarters and the field, on the proposal of the delegation.

At Headquarters

Capitalisation at Headquarters (mainly through resource persons) and in the field represent two complementary dynamics at different levels. The latter should first and foremost act as a driving force in team action. The former serves above all to define institutional policies, as a result of **capitalisation of best practices**. The **sectoral strategies** derive and inspire themselves from the process of capitalising on best practices. The two levels are complementary as it makes no sense to have a sound policy in one area if it is not applied in the field.

At Headquarters level, the Project Cycle Management resource sector plays a primordial role in co-ordination and as a driving force in the capitalisation process, among others through the electronic document management tool.

In summary, the modalities of capitalisation are:

Who capitalises?

- Stakeholders directly concerned in the matter (at Headquarters, delegation level, in the field).
- One or more specialists in the subject (such as resource persons).
- An author of a report who listens to what stakeholders have to say and gives an account of it (or is responsible for this being done).

The process

- Highlight any questioning as well as ensuing corrections
- Highlight the process (taking decisions)
- Creating an environment favourable for capitalisation (time to be allocated for this work)

How?

Capitalisation report integrated in the electronic document management system of Terre des hommes.

When?

- At the end of a project phase
- Periodically: in the event of crisis, major reorientation, significant facts it is wished to share, change of delegate (turnover), etc.
- Continuously at Headquarters level
- On request from Headquarters

24.5. The capitalisation report

The capitalisation document should be concise and synthetic **(maximum 10 pages)** and the process must be product-oriented.

Format:

First part: Description sheet (1 page)

1.	Name	Name of the project, policy, strategy or field
2.	Country	Country or countries concerned
3.	Subject, field, priority axis	
4.	Years	Beginning and end of the period relevant to capitalisation
5.	Contact person	Name and title/function
6.	Contact: information	Address, e-mail, telephone, fax, etc.
7.	Implementation	Who is implementing it? Partner? Who is involved?
8.	Funding	Who has made funding available? How?

This part will be useful for the search through key words.

Second part: Narrative (2 pages)

9. Background, context helping to understand the need for the practice, what has driven us to take action.
10. Briefly set out the final aim, objective and how the project is going about them (indicate reference documents: planning document,…).
11. Evaluation: evaluation undertaken, methodology and result, any reorientation (append the evaluation report where appropriate).

Third part: Lessons learnt (7 pages)

12. Significant facts observed
13. Additional elements necessary to understand the significant facts.
14. Analysis of significant facts.
15. Lessons learnt: analysis in terms of effectiveness and/or impact, efficiency, innovation, sustainability, ethics.

Role of the resource person: to seek out information from stakeholders, although it is the stakeholders who highlight salient/significant facts.

Product/dissemination:

The format is concerned with the final product but the tools used during the process are also very valuable and should be referred to in an annex.

24.6. Product / outcome of capitalisation

Capitalisation is an essential component in the quality process aimed at improving practice and avoiding past mistakes. Project or individual capitalisation reports can thus serve as a basis for compiling best practices in the relevant field, or as a way of enhancing different sectoral strategies, or both at the same time.

Capitalisation does not necessarily express Terre des hommes' policy ; it is the result of a decentralised process which rather lays emphasis on the successes or failures of experience which it is wished to share in function of the six criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, ethics and innovation.

Whereas, prior to external dissemination of capitalisation products, proof-reading and a minimum of consensus are necessary, it can be done much more freely internally. Internal dissemination – through the electronic document management system – of an "unfinished" or "imperfect" product is indeed to be encouraged as this leads to an enhanced product and to the sharing of experiences.

Summary:

To capitalise is to make experience shareable.

Capitalisation is an essential component of the search for quality to improve practices and avoid past mistakes. Best practices resulting from capitalisation feed into the relevant sectoral strategies. Best practice must be measured in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, ethics and/or innovation.

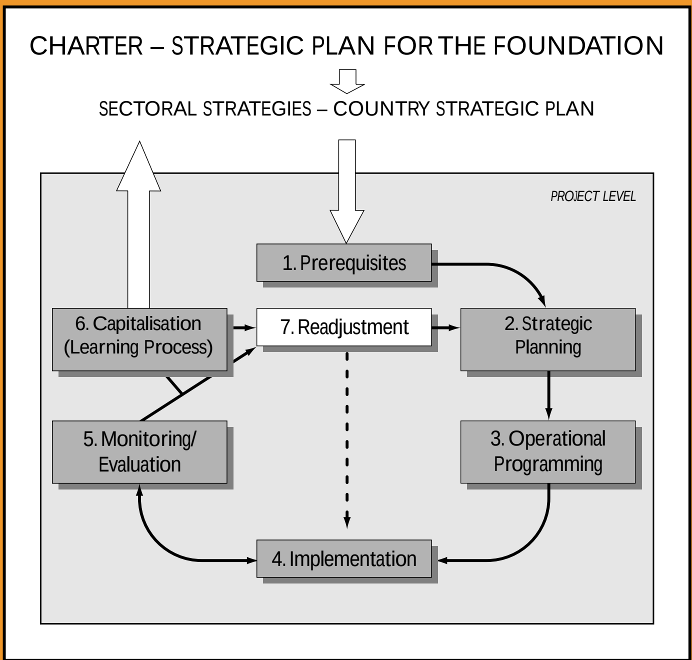
Evaluation and capitalisation are similar to some extent but are two different processes.

Terre des hommes' mission, culture and institutional experience orient priority fields for capitalisation. At field level and in order to make the learning process more systematic, Terre des hommes has chosen to incorporate a systematic capitalisation stage into the project cycle. Delegations in the field and Headquarters resource persons are the driving forces of the capitalisation process.

The capitalisation report should be concise and synthetic. Internal dissemination is unrestricted, even though a product may be "unfinished" or "imperfect".

STAGE 7 OF THE PROJECT CYCLE:

READADJUSTMENT OR WITHDRAWAL



Terre des hommes

XXV. Readjustement or withdrawal

25.1. Withdrawal

The withdrawal stage can be in different forms:

- **Localisation of the project:** for this, project skills and responsibilities are transferred to an NGO, in most cases newly created or emanating from the intervention set up. Localisation generally goes hand in hand with gradual withdrawal on the part of Terre des hommes (firstly from project management and then from funding), spread over a number of years and which is worked out on a case-by-case basis. This process calls for either capacity building within the project (strategic intervention axis) or is the subject of a specific new project starting at the same time as the localisation process.
- **Handing over of the project:** to a governmental partner, existing NGO, existing grass-roots organisation, etc.
- **Project closure:** this is quite simply the discontinuation of intervention, either because the needs have stopped existing, or the target group can continue on its own and maintain the assets stemming from our intervention, or because discontinuation was planned right from the start and a timeframe was set (occasional action in the event of an emergency) or in the event of force majeure (unrest/war).

It will be up to Terre des hommes to determine, on a case-by-case basis according to the context and available resources, the kind of withdrawal which seems the most suitable. Other than in cases of force majeure – which are unforeseeable by definition – withdrawal should be carefully planned and arrangement for it taken into account at the time of planning.

We should not forget that project withdrawal can form an integral part of intervention logic (in this case it is an integral part of the project phase/cycle and it has been possible to assess it), or may be the subject of new planning. In the latter case, we then refer to a new project which will operate by a method probably very different to that of the phase which is nearing its end (institutional support project versus directly managed project).

25.2. Readjustment[1]

When referring to readjustment, we are looking from the perspective of a project continuation (we also talk of "phase renewal or planning of a new phase"), whether it is implemented directly by Terre des hommes or through a partner.

Where readjustment takes place at the end of a project phase it is quite simply strategic planning for the next phase, into which lessons learnt from the ongoing phase are incorporated.

This step is crucial for the quality of intervention as it is through what we have learnt from our past successes and failures that we can avoid repeating the same mistakes and improve future effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.

We can see here just how important a sound monitoring and evaluation system is; without it we cannot know when and how to readjust and optimise our intervention.

Three types of readjustment can be distinguished, each type calling for a different decision-making process:

1. Operational readjustment
Modifications during a project which do not go beyond the level of actions/activities. This type of readjustment does not generally entail budgetary change or alter project strategy.

Operational readjustment can be made **at any point in the year** and **decisions are taken directly in the field**, with Headquarters being informed only in the event of significant change at the level of actions.

2. Strategic readjustment
Modifications entailing a change in the project intervention logic at the level of results (existing strategic axes and/or elaboration of a new axis). This type of readjustment may well entail budgetary change.

Strategic readjustment can be carried out:

- on an ad hoc basis albeit **always as a result of self-evaluation by the team** (at the time of a mid-term review of the strategic plan, at other points in the year as a result of "warning signals", and at the end of a phase).
- as **a result of an evaluation** of the project (external or internal).

1 Other project cycle methods refer to a "retroaction", "transference into action" or "realisation"; these are identical concepts.

For this type of readjustment to be carried out, Headquarters' approval is required. Who takes the decision? There are three possibilities:

1. Where **this does not entail any change from the overall project budget point of view and where there are only minor changes within the project budget** (budgetary items): a decision by the delegation or person responsible for the geographical area, with the Head of department and any institutional donor agencies being kept informed.
2. Where **this does not entail any change to the overall project budget but where there are major changes within it**: negotiation with the Head of department to determine which procedure to adopt (in particular with regard to any institutional donor agency), a final decision being taken by the person in charge of the geographical area.
3. Where **this entails a change to the overall project budget**: the same procedure as for the preceding point, with a final decision being taken by the Head of department.

3. Extreme readjustment

Modifications involving **a change of the project's objective**.

It must be borne in mind that **a change of objective in the course of a project phase should be an exception and not the rule**. The objective is the contractual basis of our project (with regard to donor agencies and partners as well as our beneficiaries); if the objective is changed, the contract is modified. In such a case the project is said to be in a **state of crisis**.

However, for reasons sometimes completely external to the project, a change of objective may prove necessary and even salutary; it may indeed be better to renegotiate a change with the parties concerned (stakeholders, partners, Headquarters, donors) rather than retain an objective which is unrealistic and can never be attained.

In the event of a change of objective, an evaluation (self-evaluation, internal or external) should precede and the change has to be the subject of renegotiation with the parties involved. For such a readjustment therefore, **the approval of Headquarters and, where appropriate, all institutional donor agencies is necessary**.

Who decides at Headquarters? The Head of department, on the basis of a proposal by the delegation and the person in charge of the geographical area, and following negotiation with all institutional donor agencies of the project.

N.B.: in the case of a partnership arrangement, this readjustment requires a change in the Agreement.

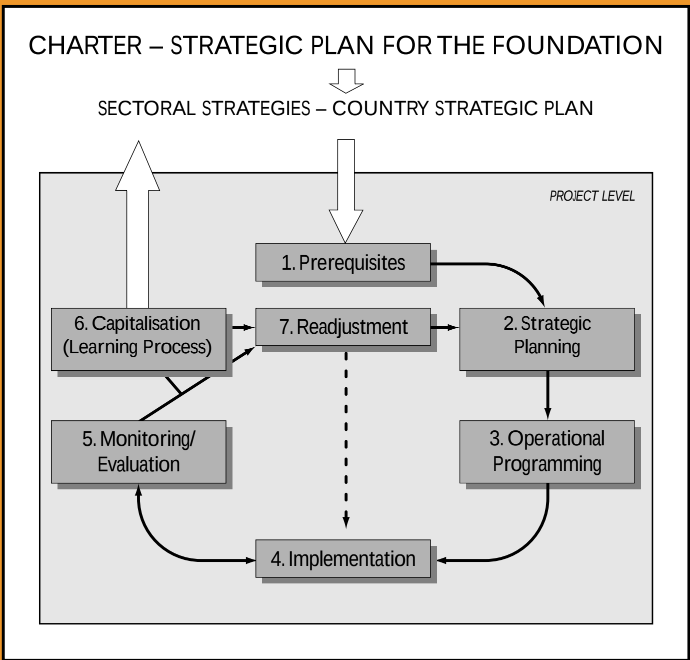
Summary:

Withdrawal, whether in the form of localisation, project handing over or closure, must be envisaged – except in the case of force majeure – during planning. It may be an integral part of the intervention logic (as a specific strategic axis) of an ongoing project or be the subject of planning for a new project.

When we talk of readjustment, we look at this mainly from the perspective of the continuation of a project. This step is crucial for the quality of intervention, as it is through what we have learnt from past successes and failures that we can avoid repeating the same mistakes and improve future effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.

There are three types of readjustment (operational, strategic, extreme), for which the decision-making processes lie at different levels.

GLOSSARY, BIBLIOGRAPHY & INDEX



Terre des hommes

XXVI. Glossary

The same term may have different definitions. It is not necessary for us to know which is the most correct according to the dictionary or a given current of thought. What is of interest to us is to have a common language to avoid misunderstandings and be sure that we are referring to one and the same concept for each term.

In this glossary we define the key terms used in the different chapters of the Handbook (Tdh definition) ; these definitions have been chosen by Terre des hommes to become references and will have to be used from now on by all the teams in order to adopt a common language.

For the sake of information we will also refer to some definitions given by other institutions such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and/or by the European Commission/EuropeAid (EU). **Where there is no specific Tdh definition we will use as a reference and until further notice the one given by the SDC and/or the EU.**

Action

Tdh definition: series of activities done by the project in order to reach a given result.

Comments: *Actions belong to the strategic level, whereas activities belong to the operational level. For this reason, activities should not be considered in the strategic thinking and should only be mentioned in the operational plan.*

Activity

Tdh definition: an activity is a work, a precise occupation which belongs to an action.

Beneficiaries

Tdh definition: see under "stakeholders"

EU definition: *Are those who benefit in whatever way from the implementation of the project. Distinction may be made between :*
1. ***Project partners/direct beneficiaries:*** *those who are supported by EU funds in order to manage design and implementation of a project, i.e. usually : ministries, implementation agencies;*

*2. **Intermediate beneficiaries:** those who are supported within the project in order to better perform services to the target group(s), e.g. agricultural extension staff, benefiting from training measures to better perform their advisory services to "female and male members of farm households";*
*3. **Target group(s):** the group/entity who will be positively affected by the project at the Project Purpose level and with whom the project will work very closely, as well as for whom, e.g. the "female and male members of farm households" in the case of the above extension project;*
*4. **Final beneficiaries:** those who, beyond the level of the target groups, benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large, e.g. " children " due to increased spending on health and education, "consumers" due to improved agricultural production and marketing, or "the state" as such due to increased export earnings from improved agricultural production and marketing.*

Best practice

Tdh definition: Terre des hommes considers best practice to be the lessons drawn from the successes and failures of one or more experiences in the field in its priority areas. Best practice can be identified by a process of capitalisation. It must have been verified over time, be of potential use for other stakeholders and be measured in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, ethics and/or innovation.

Comments: *A best practice is constantly monitored and adapted and does not constitute a "golden standard".*

Capitalisation

Tdh definition: To capitalise is to make the experience shareable.

Comments: *Capitalisation is also a stage in the project cycle and a process aiming at the identification of best practices.*

Communication set up

Tdh definition: A communication set up is a series of concrete measures allowing everybody to take part actively to the discussion exchanges.

Comments: *A proper communication set up must permit to overcome the obstacles of communication, which can come from cultural, language, training, status, gender or generational differences. The measures taken must allow the people in a less favourable position to have an advantage in the communication process.*

Effectiveness

Tdh definition: Criteria measuring the degree of achievement of an objective or results compared with what has been planned, the quality obtained and the paths that have been chosen to reach them (strategy).

SDC definition: *Effectiveness indicates the extent to which a project or programme has achieved its objectives.*

EU definition: *An assessment of the contribution made by results to achievement of the project purpose, and how Assumptions have affected project achievements.*

Efficiency

Tdh definition: Criteria measuring the resources (human, financial, time) used in relation with the objective or the results obtained (quantity and quality), and the paths that have been chosen to reach them (strategy).

SDC definition: *Efficiency compares the use of resources (personnel, time and financial resources) with the achieved results ("Input – Output").*

EU definition: *The fact that the results were obtained at reasonable cost, i.e. how well Means and Activities were converted into Results, and the quality of the results achieved.*

Evaluation

Tdh definition: An evaluation is an independent and objective examination, at a certain point of time, of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a project, in order to facilitate decision-making and draw lessons from past experiences.

Comments: *An evaluation implies the participation of an external person to the project/programme, i.e. who is not linked directly and permanently with it (such as employees of the project or involved in its direct supervision at the Headquarters). We distinguish between an internal evaluation (person employed by Terre des hommes in another activity sector, e.g. resource persons, other geographical sector, etc.) and an external evaluation (person that is not employed by the Terre des hommes, e.g. consultants, other organisation, donor, etc.).*

SDC definition: *Evaluation asks the question: Are we doing the right thing? And are we doing things right?*

EU definition: *A periodic assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance of a project in the context of stated objectives. It is usually* *undertaken as in independent examination of the background, objectives, results, activities and means deployed, with a view to drawing lessons that may guide future decision-making.*

Exploratory mission

Tdh definition: Process taking place during the first stage of the project cycle before embarking on the strategic planning of new projects and aiming at identifying the field and modalities of intervention and analysing the context.

Comments: *An exploratory mission can be conducted by a team of Terre des hommes or by an external person, depending on the place, the context and the type of intervention.*

Field of intervention

Tdh definition: A field of intervention designates simultaneously the sector of intervention (e.g. nutrition), the location, the stakeholders, the timeframe and the action domains directly concerned by the project's strategy.

Final aim

Tdh definition: The final aim is the ideal and ultimate goal, the supreme aspiration of the project. It designates the futur positive state, at a high level, towards which our intervention contributes. It is what gives sense to all what we are doing.

Comments: *In order to be reached, the final goal needs the involvement of a series of stakeholders. For that reason it lies beyond the project's scope, which can only contribute partially to its achievement.*

SDC definition (who calls it "overall aim"): *The overall aim to which a project/programme contributes with its results (outcomes), but whose achievement is outside the project's/programme's sphere of responsibility and is still impacted by other factors.*

Follow-up matrix

Tdh definition: see under "logical framework"

FORA

Tdh definition: Final goal, Objective, Results, Actions: the 4 basic levels of our intervention logic/strategy.

Comments: *We have opted to describe the strategy through the results, which represent the stages of the strategic path. It is a synthesised way to describe it. In reality a strategy includes also the actions, the methods, the resources, etc.*

Gender

EU definition: *The social differences that are ascribed to and learned by women and men, and that vary over time and from one society or group to another. Gender differs from sex, which refers to the biologically determined differences between women and men.*

Gender analysis

EU definition: *EU policy on gender mainstreaming in development co-operation requires the integration of gender analysis at macro, meso and micro levels, throughout the project cycle. A gender analysis allows the identification and integration of the dynamics of change in a given situation, as well as the monitoring of their evolution, particularly in relation to the disparities between women and men. A gender analysis includes attention to: the different roles (productive, reproductive, decision-making) of women and men; their differential access to and use of resources and their specific needs, interests and problems; and the barriers to the full and equitable participation of women and men in project activities and to equity between women and men in the benefits obtained.*

Hypothesis or Assumption

Tdh definition: A hypothesis or assumption is a temporary assertion that we would like to verify.

Comments: *A hypothesis or assumption is an assertion and not an open question.*

Impact

Tdh definition: An impact describes the effect, foreseen or not, positive or negative, produced by the project on its environment.

Comments: *Impacts are all changes generated by the project, directly or indirectly, and which go beyond the scope of the project. Whereas the results and the objective are effects which the project is capable to produce, impacts are effects which the project cannot master. They can affect the stakeholders of the project, as well as its environment.*

SDC definition: *Impact refers to the desirable and undesirable long-term effects of a project or programme which exceed the project's / programme's immediate sphere of responsibility.*

Indicator

Tdh definition: An indicator is an operational description of the objective and the results of our project (quantity, quality, target group and location) allowing to reliably measure its achievement with limited human and financial resources.

Comments: *We are concentrating here on the objective/result indicators; but indicators can also be used to describe/measure the evolution of the context, processes or impacts. Good indicators are often "discovered" in the course of action thanks to the monitoring system. Hence there should be no hesitation to revisit and find more relevant indicators during the periodic strategic reviews of the project. In certain cases it is not necessary to invent indicators, either because the results are immediately measurable, or because some reference or thresh values already exist, for example in the health or nutrition domain. A good indicator is SMART; it is in fact the most significant we are able to foresee (during the planning stage or during implementation) in order to measure the qualitative and quantitative performance of the project.*

SDC definition: *An indicator is a variable which helps to identify indirect differences in quality or quantity within a defined period of time. To this end, complex problems are simplified and reduced to an observable dimension.*

Limitations

Tdh definition: Limitations are anything hampering our intervention and setting limits to it.

Comments: *Limitations are not, strictly speaking, opposing forces, as they do not necessarily oppose our strategy but are rather constraints which we must take into account.*

Logical framework / logframe or Follow-up matrix

Tdh definition: Two-directional matrix which visually presents the different levels of the intervention logic elaborated during the planning process, and which serves as a basis for the monitoring of the project/programme.

Comments: *The logframe is all too often regarded as the main result of the planning process whereas its main function is actually to serve as a basis for the monitoring system. This is the reason why at Terre des hommes we also call it "follow-up matrix". This* *matrix allows besides the simplified presentation of the project, on condition that it is read in parallel with the synoptic chart of the strategy (the matrix alone does not allow to entirely explicit the strategy/the strategic axes of the project). Both the follow-up matrix and the synoptic chart of the strategy must be included in all project strategic plan, whether the project is implemented directly or through a partner organisation.*

EU definition: *The matrix in which a project's intervention logic, assumptions, objectively verifiable indicators and sources of verification are presented.*

Means of verification

Tdh definition: These are the sources/means allowing to find the necessary information for the measurement of an indicator.

Comments: *It can be, for example, monitoring data sheets, results of a survey, minutes of an interview, etc.*

Model of action

Tdh definition: A model of action is the approach a project wishes to adopt vis-à-vis the beneficiaries and the way it is dealing with them. This model is in close relationship with the sectoral strategies (when they exist).

Comments: *Models of action are recurrent "strategies", ways of perceiving things and of acting which are repeated throughout project implementation. These models govern the behaviour of the project, it is therefore important to enounce them explicitly (in particular if there is no sectoral strategy in the concerned domain) and to monitor their performance, their effectiveness and consistency with Terre des hommes' philosophy.*

Monitoring

Tdh definition: Monitoring comprises a range of project management tasks at different levels throughout project implementation. It allows to continue the strategic thinking undertaken at the planning stage, and guarantees that the project "stays on track": this is the strategic monitoring. At the same time it allows regular assessment of work progress (actions/activities) and use of resources (human, financial, material), to optimise the intervention and to explain the discrepancies: this is the operational monitoring. The aim of monitoring is to guarantee the success of the project (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance).

Comments: *The process of monitoring is made up of three main stages: data collection, analysis and readjustment.*

SDC definition: *Monitoring comprises the deliberate selection of observation fields and the targeted, systematic collection and production of data and information during the course of a particular activity. Monitoring begins at the planning stage and is an essential steering element. It is performed in relation to outputs, outcomes, processes, impacts, and the project setting.*

EU definition: *The systematic and continuous collecting, analysis and using of information for the purpose of management and decision-making.*

Objective

Tdh definition: The objective is the state a project offers to reach at the end of a phase. The objective is the keystone of the strategy, and it is the duty and responsibility of the project to achieve it.

Comments: *An objective indicates what we want to reach concretely, in a given time, in order to contribute to the achievement of a final goal. The objective is the description of a future positive state in which the beneficiary population is to find itself by the end of a project phase as a result of project action. This state has lasting effects. It is measurable even though the objective itself is not necessarily quantified.*

Obstacles

Tdh definition: Obstacles are anything which prevents the realisation of what we have planned.

Comments: *Some obstacles are predictable, for example the fact that hostile stakeholders are going to try to hamper what we are doing. But not all obstacles are foreseeable and it is necessary to be aware that what we have planned can be hampered by unforeseen and unsuspected elements.*

Planning

Tdh definition: Planning is the collective process of building a strategy for a project phase.

Comments: *Planning should not be confused with the project strategic plan, which is the result/product of a planning process.*

Potentialities

Tdh definition: A potentiality is a latent resource.

Comments: *For a potentiality to become a resource, it has to be acted upon and conditions created for it to develop.*

Prerequisites

Tdh definition: First stage of the project cycle aiming at identifying the field of intervention, designing the institutional framework of the future project or phase (financial envelope, implementation modalities, etc.) and verifying the adequacy with the mission, the strategic documents and the principles of action of Terre des hommes.

Comments: *This stage should help to produce a first draft (preliminary project) serving to obtain an institutional green light before embarking on the strategic planning stage.*

Problem

Tdh definition: Problems are states of affairs or facts that cause difficulties and suffering or, at least, discomfort. They are what makes a situation unsatisfactory.

Comments: *Problems have no "objective" existence". They exist for – and only for those – who perceive them as such. We tend to think that a solution is simply the pure and simple negation of a problem. This tendency can lead us to a stalemate rather than to considering more effective solutions.*

Programme

Tdh definition: A programme is a group of individual projects. The group can be defined on a geographical basis (country programme, e.g. Burundi programme) or on a thematic basis (e.g. programme Child Rights).

Comments: *The thematic definition comes from the SDC. Whether geographic or thematic, the benefits/added value of a programme should typically be more than the sum of benefits/added value of each individual project.*

SDC definition*:A programme comprises several projects which pursue a common or similar overall aim. However, a programme is more than the sum of its parts.*

Project

Tdh definition: A project is a complex effort to achieve a specific objective, having to respect a deadline and a budget, and which typically extends beyond organisational borders, is unique and generally one-off in the organisation.

Comments: *Projects are in general non repetitive in the organisation and are linked to innovation (in its broader sense).*

SDC definition: *A project is a planned package of measures to achieve a defined objective within a limited time and geographical area ,and within defined financial parameters. The work plan, the mandate, and responsibility for project execution are clearly defined. A project calls for multidisciplinary cooperation between persons and institutions.*

EU definition: *A series of activities with set objectives, designed to produce a specific outcome within a limited time frame.*

Project appreciation criteria

Tdh definition: Criteria which are part of the values and principles of action of Terre des hommes – as expressed in the Foundation's strategic plan – and which make it possible to look from different angles so as to contribute to the cross-cutting appreciation (or assessment) of our project. They include sustainability, consistency, participation, impact, gender, networking, project cycle management and strengthening of local capacities (capacity building).

Comments: *These criteria are requested by the vast majority of donor agencies in their funding applications. In addition to effectiveness, efficiency and relevance, they are key criteria to appreciate the entire project e.g. during an evaluation (quality criteria of a development project). Hence these criteria must be followed up and monitored throughout the implementation of the project.*

EU definition (called "quality factors" in EU's project cycle management method): *Criteria that are known to have had a significant impact on the sustainability of benefits generated by projects in the past, and which have to be taken into account in the design and implementation of each project (previously: "sustainability criteria"): ownership by beneficiaries, policy support, economic and financial factors, socio-cultural aspects, gender, appropriate technology, environmental aspects, and institutional and management capacity.*

Project cycle

Tdh definition: The 7 stages during the implementation of a project's phase: (1) prerequisites, (2) strategic planning, (3) operational programming, (4) implementation/execution, (5) monitoring & evaluation, (6) capitalisation, (7) readjustment or withdrawal.

Comments: *There are different schools of thought and the content of each stage may differ from one institution to another; the project cycle à la Terre des hommes includes the 7 stages mentioned above. The project cycle also offers a structure to guarantee that all* *parties are consulted and that relevant information is made available in order to facilitate enlightened decision-taking at each phase of the project, on the basis of key documents.*

SDC definition: *A system which covers the various elements in the course of a programme/project (identification, planning, monitoring, evaluation, implementation). These elements form a single entity, have interrelated themes, and are synchronised.*

EU definition:*The project cycle follows the life of a project from the initial idea through to its completion. It provides a structure to ensure that stakeholders are consulted, and defines the key decisions, information requirements and responsibilities at each phase so that informed decisions can be made at each phase in the life of a project. It draws on evaluation to build the lessons of experience into the design of future programmes and projects.*

Project phase

Tdh definition: A phase is the period of time covered by strategic planning and corresponding to a project cycle. Each phase entails its proper objective and strategy.

Comments: *A long term project can be divided into several phases, with an average duration of one to three years depending on the context and the type of intervention. The project cycle methodology described in this Manual applies on a project phase.*

Project strategic plan

Tdh definition: The project strategic plan is the reference document which describes the strategy of a project phase.

Comments: *The project strategic plan must only contain elements which have strategic value. Details regarding the implementation/execution of the strategy must be mentioned in the operational plan.*

Readjustment

Tdh definition: Stage of the project cycle during which the project is improved taking into account the lessons learnt through monitoring, capitalisation and/or evaluation.

Comments: *We distinguish between three types of readjustment: operational (ongoing), strategic (periodic) and extreme (exceptional).*

Relevance

Tdh definition: Criteria measuring adequacy between the objective or results obtained and the needs or expectations of the target group, or in other terms what allows the target group to progress towards the resolution of its problem with the most acuity in order to get closer to the desired "improved" situation.

SDC definition: *The question of relevance refers to the correlation between a project's/programme's development objectives and prevailing conditions, opportunities and risks in a particular country. Questions are asked about the extent to which a project helps to meet the existing needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries (are we doing the right thing?).*

EU definition: *The appropriateness of project objectives to the real problems, needs and priorities of the intended target groups and beneficiaries that the project is supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operates.*

Resources

Tdh definition: A resource may be a given state of affairs, object, person or group making it possible to undertake action. In short, a resource can be anything at our disposal for use in achieving our objective.

Result

Tdh definition: The result is a state which has to be reached at a given deadline in the course of the project's phase. Distinction is made between final results (end of a strategic axis, contributing to the objective) and an intermediate result (steps towards the achievement of a final result).

Comments: *Final goal, objective and result belong to the same family of ends, but at different levels. The sequence of results to be obtained forms the strategy of the project.*

Risks

Tdh definition: Risks are anything which may become an obstacle, whether predictable or not.

Scenario of the future

Tdh definition: It is the description of a future situation through significant facts, situations or events.

Comments: *One should describe and not make theories or manifest intentions. The scenario is a tool with which to structure our representation of a future in which our decisions of today have a role to play. A good scenario should enable us to take the right decisions and build powerful strategies.*

Sectoral strategy

Tdh definition: A reference document on a given theme describing the vision (final goal), the policy and the methodology to be applied by the projects concerned by the subject. The sectoral strategy is the main result of the capitalisation of best practices.

Comments: *In 2001 there are four existing sectoral strategies at Terre des hommes: Mother and Child Health, Nutrition, Child Rights and Children in Street Situations.*

Self-evaluation

SDC definition: *In a self-evaluation the persons who are the object of the evaluation and those who conduct it are identical. They may be individuals, groups or institutions. A self-evaluation examines the internal sphere of responsibility. It may involve an external person acting as a moderator.*

Significant fact

Tdh definition: A significant fact is an event that strikes the observer.

Comments: *A fact is considered significant not because we already have an explanation, but simply because it has attracted our attention and because we suppose that it has things to tell us. The explanation will come later.*

Stakeholder (actor)

Tdh definition: A stakeholder is a person, a group or an institution likely to play a role in a project or be affected by its actions, for better or worse, directly or indirectly.

Comments: *Among the stakeholders is the target group, for example single mothers. It is within this target group that beneficiaries will be defined, i.e. those with whom Terre des hommes will be working directly, for example young mothers living in a poor district of town and facing rejection.*

SDC definition: *Persons, groups and institutions who actively participate in a programme/project and/or are affected by it.*

Strategic axis

Tdh definition: A strategic axis is a component of the strategy allowing to achieve a final result.

Comments: *An axis is composed of a series of results which follow chronologically in a logical sequence. Each result allows to attain the following result. The last result on the axis is the final result.*

Strategy

Tdh definition: Strategy is organising action in a constructed, consensual manner to reach an objective.

Comments: *A strategy usually consists of several strategic axes (or paths), each one leading to a final result. The objective is achieved when all final results have been reached. Criteria to evaluate whether a strategy is good (winning) or bad (losing) are: effectiveness (achievement of the objective), efficiency (big results for reasonable cost) and consistency (adequacy of purposes and means).*

Sustainability

Tdh definition: A project or a programme may be considered sustainable when it is in a position to guarantee substantial advantages (beneficial effects) over a sufficiently long period following the end of external assistance, whether in the form of financial, technical or organisational assistance.

Comments: *In the concept of sustainability, the focus is on the sustained benefits, and not necessarily on the survival of a project/programme. As for all the other appreciation criteria, sustainability must be monitored periodically ; a project team must always be clear at any time on the chances of sustainability of the benefits it brings to the target group. This criteria is obviously weighted differently in an emergency project.*

SDC definition: *Sustainability is the primary aim of development processes, with a view to the durability of the projects. A project is sustainable if the changes set in motion and supported (effects, processes, etc.) can be continued and further developed over the long term.*

EU definition: *The likelihood of a continuation in the stream of benefits produced by the project after the period of external support has ended.*

Terms of reference

SDC definition: *A description of objectives, key issues, intentions, anticipated results and methodologies for specific short-term tasks. Usually used to prescribe specific mandates for consultants, e.g. for the purposes of conducting an external evaluation of a project or programme.*

EU definition: *Terms of reference define the tasks required of a contractor and indicate project background and objectives, planned activities, expected inputs and outputs, budget, timetables and job descriptions.*

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