A Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework Toolkit –

A practical guide for Equal Development Partnerships

Equal

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European Social Fund

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1 Introduction

This guide is one of a series produced by the GB Equal Support Unit (ESU) to help Development Partnerships (DPs) and Transnational Partnerships to develop and mainstream best practice from innovative projects. This toolkit is based on the evaluation of the first round Equal Partnerships and the outcomes of the focus group exercises conducted with existing DPs conducted as part of the research to preparing this toolkit.

This toolkit is designed to help you to:

- overcome difficulties experienced by Round 1 DPs;
- get all partners on board from the start;
- produce a simple plan everyone understands and can use;
- reduce the stress of co-ordinating the partnership's work programme testaetasetaehtraeta;
- improve DP activities and outcomes;
- meet the Commission's updated requirements; and
- test and get adopted new ways of supporting disadvantaged groups.

The toolkit is based on extensive research into Equal Round 1 carried out with the Commission and DPs, and international expertise in planning and evaluating multi-partner projects in over 40 countries.

What is this toolkit?

This toolkit is based on project cycle management (PCM) and logical framework methodology. This is widely used around the world by many leading development agencies. This toolkit will:

- explain PCM and how you can use it to design and implement projects, as well as to identify and test mainstreaming opportunities;
- explain how to build a logical framework to help partners discuss and think through all the implications of what they are trying to do;
- put all the main elements into a simple plan; and
- explain some best practice techniques for project management.

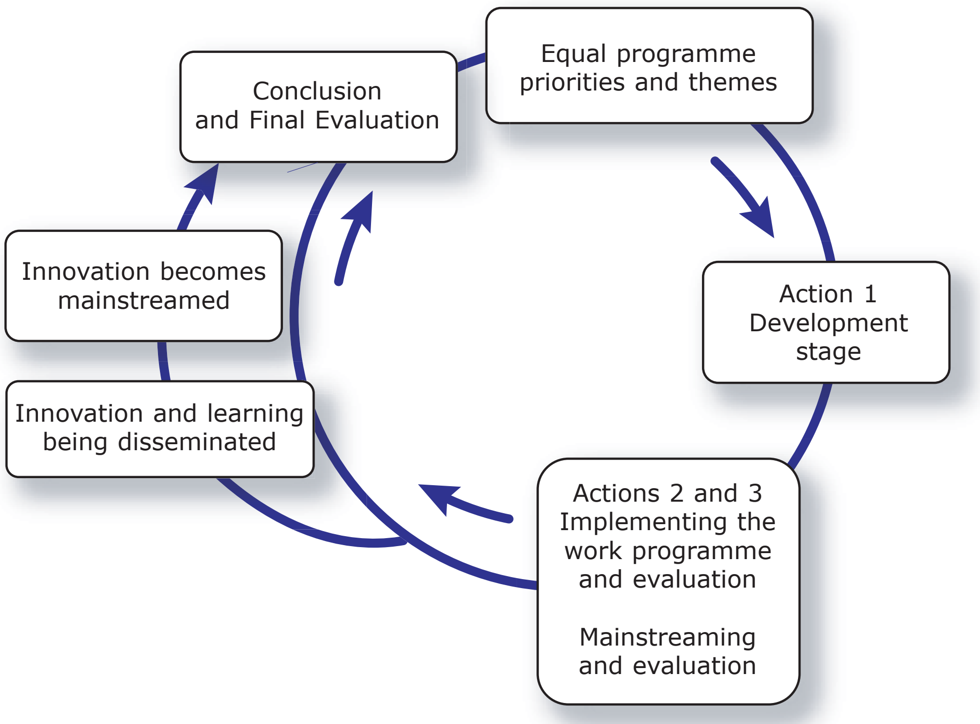
Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is designed for Equal DPs, both those experienced in project management who want to learn a new method, and those who have never managed projects before and are looking for ways to design, implement, evaluate and mainstream projects.

What is the Equal project cycle?

The Equal project cycle is a framework for designing, implementing and evaluating projects. It provides the context for making decisions and managing activities. The project cycle divides into a number of stages in the life of a DP and maintains the links between one stage and the next.

The diagram below illustrates the Equal project cycle.



The cycle starts with the policy objectives of the Equal programme. It then identifies the issues that a DP will tackle, and develops the outline project proposal. During Action 1 the DP is created, detailed plans are developed to put in place and its achievements are monitored and evaluated.

Action 2 is the main implementation phase for domestic and transnational activities. During this phase, DPs test out new approaches to tackling discrimination and inequality in the labour market, and work with Development Partnerships in other Member States to share knowledge and understanding of discrimination and inequality.

During Action 3, Development Partnerships are involved in thematic networking, disseminating good practice and making an impact on policy. DPs will identify the outcomes from their activities with the most potential to influence mainstream policy and practice and the potential audiences for these outcomes. At this stage your DP will be able to disseminate and mainstream your learning outcomes and innovation. Actions 2 and 3 can be run at the same time or Action 3 can start later.

What is logical framework?

Logical framework is a clear set of techniques you can use at different stages of the cycle to plan, monitor and evaluate your project and a set of templates you can use for recording, analysing and measuring progress.

Why use the project cycle (PC) and logical framework?

Equal is about developing new ways of supporting disadvantaged groups and strengthening the labour market so it is open and accessible for all. This will inevitably mean that:

- organisations and government departments involved in helping people into work will have to change some of their practices; and
- those seeking work will have to change they way they relate to work opportunities.

There is nothing simple or straightforward about making changes. For stakeholders to change they need to be involved and want to change. The project cycle and logical framework is a method that involves stakeholders in designing, implementing, mainstreaming and evaluating projects.

Evaluations have shown that if a project does not have a clear methodology, it reduces the chance of it achieving sustainable benefits. Lessons have been learnt from a number of specific issues that projects have experienced and these lessons have been incorporated into the PC and logical framework methodology. The list below illustrates the areas in which the PC supports project design and development and incorporates the lessons learnt from the first round of Equal projects in the UK.

Project evaluation conclusions		PC and logical framework
Projects tend to be developed to attract funds.	→	Projects are designed to solve problems.
Projects have to fit a standardised set of outputs.	→	Projects develop local criteria and indicators to suit the local situation and achieve excellence.
Focus is on writing applications for funding.	→	Focus is on designing and making decisions before writing the proposal.
Stakeholders have not been active in designing projects.	→	Stakeholders help to define the problems and make decisions about the solutions.
Projects are driven by the funder or technical supply.	→	Projects are led by demand.
Poor analysis of local situation.	→	Through stakeholders' involvement, the local situation is well understood.
Activity focused.	→	Projects are designed through identifying objectives as solutions to problems.
Impact cannot be verified.	→	Each objective has clear evidence indicators that can be verified.
Short-term vision.	→	The focus is always on the long-term and sustainable benefits.
Projects tend to include many areas and become complex and exclusive.	→	Projects tend to be placed in an operational strategy and remain focused on a single outcome.
Inconsistent documentation.	→	All documents are standardised to improve consistency and content.

2 Quality assurance

The Equal toolkit involves using quality assurance checks. These will guide your DP through developing, designing and delivering a project. It also supports testing your DP activities. You will use the quality assurance checks mainly during the initial design and development stage in Actions 1 and 2. However, you can use the same procedure, but with different questions, as part of the ongoing project monitoring, mainstream testing and regular evaluation.

Have you assessed external factors that affect long-term benefits in your project design?

The toolkit provides a set of quality assurance checks under each of the four headings that you can use to score the process. Each heading (eligibility, relevance, feasibility, and sustainability) has a small number of process questions so you can test the quality of each particular set of actions as you carry them out.

If the result of a quality assurance check is mostly 'Fully' or 'Fairly', you should continue to the next stage. If the result is mostly 'Fairly' or 'Hardly' you need to think of reviewing the process and carrying out further work. If the result is mostly 'Hardly' or 'Not at all', you may decide at this stage not to continue with this particular idea or to review it.

While the quality assurance questions are concerned with process, it is possible to include additional questions about the technical nature of the priority or theme or how the project relates to a regional or local strategy.

Eligibility

Does your DP support the Equal Priorities?

- Is your DP formed with domestic and transnational partners?
- Does your DP clearly fit within Equal thematic priorities?
- Is your DP looking to test new ways of working with its stakeholders?

Relevance

Is your DP relevant to an inclusive labour market?

- Is your DP relevant to the agreed strategy and to the real needs of beneficiaries?
- Does your DP have a clearly identified range of stakeholders who are, in some way, affected by the activities and results of the DP?
- Is your DP linked to problems and solutions that have been identified by beneficiaries and other stakeholders?
- Do your DP's objectives clearly indicate measurable benefits to stakeholders?

Feasibility

Is your DP technically and financially achievable?

- Is your DP feasible in that you can realistically achieve the objectives within the environment you are working and with your capabilities?
- Having assessed your organisational and management skills, do you consider you are capable of carrying out the planned project?
- Have you assessed any assumptions made and taken them into account in the design and implementation of your project?

Sustainability

- Will you mainstream your DP, or parts of it, or its activities?
- Is your DP sustainable so that the services you develop and deliver can continue to be delivered by mainstream bodies, leading to a continued flow of benefits?
- Are your activity outputs realistic and achievable with concrete indicators to monitor progress?

3 Eligibility

Your priorities must be eligible in relation to the Equal priorities, Themes and activities. This section will focus on DPs and how you should manage a project. You should increasingly apply good governance both in terms of creating a robust framework in which to work and in terms of managing successful projects from initially identifying problems to mainstreaming good practice.

Sequence of activities

You should:

- clarify the main area of concern;
- assess the local situation of the target beneficiaries;
- put in place good-governance procedures;
- carry out a stakeholder analysis;
- carry out a partnership roles and tasks exercise; and
- check quality assurance for eligibility.

Who should be involved?

You should involve all partners, relevant mainstream agencies, neighbourhood organisations and those directly affected by the issue you are discussing.

Exercises	Records
1 Stakeholder analysis	***Template 1 - Stakeholder record***
2 Partnership roles and tasks	***Template 2 - Partnership roles and tasks***
3 Quality assurance check - eligibility	***Template 3 - Quality assurance check - eligibility***

3.1 Development Partnerships

DPs are at the heart of the Equal programme. It places great importance on partnership working and allocates significant time and resources at Action 1 stage to allow you to develop and structure your DP.

If your DP deals with inequality in the labour market, you should bring together statutory, voluntary and community-sector groups to work towards increasing equal opportunity and empowering disadvantaged groups. Partnerships working under Equal should be an inclusive rather than exclusive method of working.

3.2 Good governance

Good governance relates to the way you structure your working relationships and is increasingly being seen by the ESF as an essential component of all DPs. The term 'good governance' is likely to replace other descriptions of partnership good practice. Good governance should include the following:

1 Statement of purpose which reflects the purpose of your DP and may well include a broader statement of the partners' interests.

2 Stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify the potential beneficiaries, partners and mainstreaming providers so you can clarify how your DP will work and develop.

3 Partnership roles and tasks to clarify the responsibilities and actions of your DP's partners. You can also use the findings to write the terms of reference for each partners' involvement in the DP.

4 A set of relevant reference documents relating to the legal and legislative requirements for the DP.

5 Standard procedures for recording the proceedings of your DP such as decisions made, communication methods, regular reviews and planning.

6 A recruitment and withdrawal procedure for members of the DP which will include terms of reference for members, clear procedures for identifying and selecting new members and what members must do when they leave.

7 A quality assurance check which forms part of the logical framework method.

3.3 Stakeholder mapping and analysis

Within the Equal programme a number of partners will have come together in Action 1 to develop the DP. In Action 2 more partners may be included and you will need to define the range of stakeholders that you are aiming to work with.

Stakeholders are defined as groups of people, individuals, institutions, enterprises or government bodies that may have a relationship with your DP. There are also differences in the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, their access to (and control over) resources, and the part they play in decision making. Inequalities between stakeholders can hinder growth and harm development. Unless you address these issues properly they can damage the effectiveness and sustainability of your DP's activities and outcomes. You must analyse the differences and inequalities and take them into account when developing a DP.

Stakeholder mapping

Once you have identified all the stakeholders involved in the DP, you should categorise them in a primary, secondary and tertiary hierarchy. It then becomes easy to see how each stakeholder should be involved and when. It is evident from Equal DP evaluations that stakeholders' participation is vital to the successful design and implementation of a project. We suggest that an initial team of representative partners come together to map and analyse the DP stakeholders.

- **Primary stakeholders** are those whose interests lie at the heart of the project. They include potential mainstream providers, and beneficiaries who experience the problem that the project is aiming to solve and are usually users of services.
- **Secondary stakeholders** need to be involved if your DP is to achieve its objectives. This group would include partners, statutory agencies (such as government departments), voluntary groups, private-sector organisations and potential funders. These stakeholders are where the primary support will come from and usually where you can identify partners for your DP.
- **Tertiary stakeholders** may not be too involved at the beginning but may be important in the mainstreaming. These will include policy makers, practitioners and other organisations working with similar client groups. These stakeholders can be an important category; they will support the long-term sustainability of a project. They are particularly important within Equal.

Stakeholder's analysis

- What are the stakeholders' expectations of the DP?
- What benefits is the stakeholder likely to receive?
- What resources will the stakeholder commit to the DP?
- What interests does the stakeholder have which may conflict with the DP?
- How does a stakeholder regard other categories of stakeholders?
- What other tasks do stakeholders think the DP should do or not do?
- Does the stakeholder have the resources to be a partner?

Once you have identified and categorised the stakeholders, you should analyse how they can be involved. Below is a list of analytical questions which can help you to consider how and when to involve particular stakeholders.

You should record the results of the stakeholder mapping and analysis in a clear format that you can monitor, update and re-evaluate over the life of the DP. You can use Template 1 (Stakeholder record) to record this information.

When you design, monitor or evaluate a project you should look again at the stakeholder record, as stakeholders' circumstances will change over time and their relationship to the project will also change. You should use the Monitoring column to keep a log of how the stakeholders were involved in the DP.

Template 1 - Stakeholder record

HIERARCHY OF STAKEHOLDERS	EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES	INTEREST AND EXPECTATIONS	BARRIERS AND ISSUES	MAIN ROLES IN THE DP	MONITOR-ING
Primary stakeholders					
Secondary stakeholders					
Tertiary stakeholders					

If all DPs carry out a stakeholder analysis and monitor stakeholder involvement and support, the information gathered will become invaluable when evaluating DP performance. The analysed information will show where support is coming from, where barriers exist, who the hard-to-reach groups are, what methods of communication work well with different groups and how different stakeholder groups have responded to different ways of working.

3.4 Partnership roles and tasks

Through the stakeholder mapping and analysis exercise, you may have been able to identify additional partners for Action 2 and Action 3 and invite them into your DP. Once your DP has formed, and before you carry out any activities, you should conduct a partnership roles and tasks exercise.

The partnership roles and tasks exercise enables you to identify how your internal structure should operate and analyse how you should share work between partner members by assigning tasks and establishing roles. You can also use it to identify areas of responsibility and specific actions that need to be carried out.

The exercise is structured by listing all the roles to be performed by partners, or by listing the actual partners, in the top horizontal row. All the tasks are listed in the vertical left-hand column: a task is defined as a particular action that needs to be done.

It also useful to distinguish between the lead role, that is, decision-making, and the support role, that is, being instructed to do the work. You can do this by marking the lead role with an '**X**' and the support role with an '**O**'. Below is a simple illustration.

Template 2 - Partnership roles and tasks

Partner roles **Tasks**	**Lead partner**	**Transnational partners**	**Partner 1**	**Partner 2**	**Partner 3**	**Partner 4**	**Partner 5**	**Partner 6**	
Partnership co-ordination	X	O							
Administration	X	O	O		O				
Strategic planning	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O
Financial management	O	O		X					
Financial control	X	O		X		O			
Transnational working	O	X					O		
DP design and preparation	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O
DP monitoring	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O
Mainstreaming research	O			O				X	
Dissemination	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O

The vertical columns will provide details of each partner's tasks and you can use this information to draw up terms of reference to establish the partnership framework. During your DP's lifetime, there will be changes both to the partners and the roles and tasks. You can use this exercise to review and make changes any time.

To complete this stage of the process you can use the eligibility quality assurance check below to make sure that you have followed good-practice.

Template 3 - Quality assurance check

Eligibility	**Does not apply**	**Fully**	**Fairly**	**Hardly**	**Not at all**
1 Are all stakeholders clearly identified?					
2 Are stakeholders clearly categorised?					
3 Are the DP activities eligible?					
4 Does the project contribute to existing					
5 Has the DP been formed?					

4 Relevance

At this point in the project cycle, your DP structures will be in place and you should have established a working team to take project planning forward to the proposal stage. This is part of designing the project and preparing the DPA for Action 2.

At this stage you should define your DP's rationale and, at the same time, identify and define a number of innovative solutions. Your DP should develop a sound understanding of the problems it will tackle and produce a set of strategy options to consider.

You should set up a workshop run by an independent facilitator. Those involved should include partners and other relevant stakeholders. Before and during the workshop, you should follow the sequence of activities below.

Sequence of activities

- Clarify the rationale.
- Assess the local situation of the target beneficiaries.
- Run a workshop and conduct a problem and objective assessment.
- Determine acceptable strategy options.
- Appraise the strategy options.

Who should be involved?

Partners, technical officers, potential mainstream providers and beneficiaries.

Exercises	Records
4 Problem and objective assessment	***Template 4 - Problems and objective record***
5 Strategy options	***Template 5 - Quality assurance check - relevance***
6 Quality assurance check - relevance	

4.1 Problem and objective assessment

The problem and objective assessment is a single exercise. You should invite primary and some secondary stakeholders you have identified to take part in this exercise. This exercise examines the rationale of the project and helps you come to a shared view of all the issues and potential solutions.

The problem assessment, the first part of the exercise, identifies problems and brings together different people's perceptions into a single agreed set of related problems. No problem exists by itself; it is always part of a cause-and-effect chain of problems. If you identify a problem wrongly, the solution is also going to be wrong. That is why you must express problems in concrete and factual terms and not in general and vague terms. You may have to design a project using the problem assessment a number of times until you get it right.

How to construct a problem assessment

- Before the workshop you will have identified a general problem or rationale.

- At the workshop you should discuss the general problem and clarify it to make it relevant to the Equal priorities and Themes, for example, unemployment among a particular age group or gender group.

- Once you have clarified the problem, write it on a card and place it on the centre of the wall.

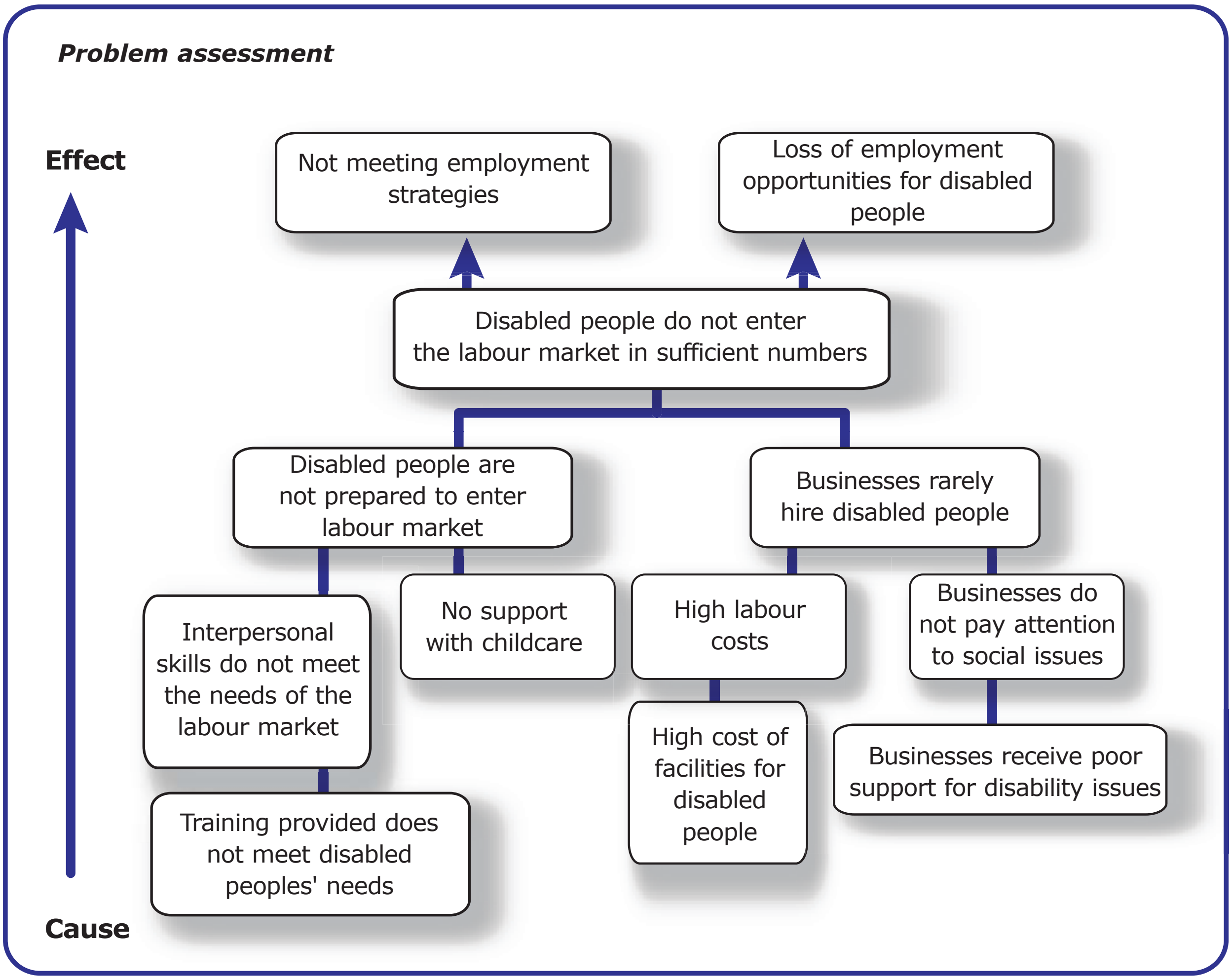
- Give all the stakeholders cards of the same colour (yellow) on which to write their own ideas about the associated problems, which either cause the key problem or are an effect (result) of the key problem. Within any group different people will see the same problem in different ways so you should encourage each person present to say what they think. The exercise captures all the different perceptions and insights which you must include as they form the basis of understanding the whole problem. Try not to use the term 'lack of..' - try to describe the problem in terms of how it affects you. For example, instead of using 'lack of skills' describe the problem in more detail such as 'existing skills don't match employers needs' If it is difficult to express a problem in concrete terms, try adding the specific target group to the problem and in that way the problem will become specific.

- The workshop leader should then place all the cards on the wall below or above the problem; instead of, to create a hierarchy of cause and effect. If it is a cause, it goes on the level below, if it is an effect, it goes on the level above and if it is not a cause or an effect, it goes on the same level where it can create a new column of causes or effects.

- The workshop leader should then create different vertical columns of cause and effect problems by separating them into different target groups or technical areas.

- The exercise is complete when the top of the problem assessment could also be at the very bottom as the main cause. A cycle of cause and effect is then revealed. At this stage you should confirm that the original problem is still the key problem. Review the hierarchies and try to put them into clear cause-and-effect relationships before moving to the next part of the exercise.

A problem assessment puts the effects of a problem on top and its causes underneath in a hierarchy of cause and effect.



For example, if the original problem is 'Disabled people do not enter the labour market in sufficient numbers', a cause might be 'Businesses rarely hire disabled people', and an effect might be 'Loss of employment opportunities for disabled people'. Another problem is 'Disabled people are not prepared to enter the labour market' which is neither a cause nor effect of 'Businesses rarely hire disabled people' but is a cause of 'Disabled people do not enter the labour market in sufficient numbers' so this problem goes to one side and starts a new vertical line of problems. There can be any number of vertical lines of problems.

If the problem assessment has many vertical hierarchies, the problem is usually quite complex. In this case, you may need to take some problems out and carry out a new problem assessment on these. Also, if you find that the vertical hierarchies contain few problems, you can assume that the group of stakeholders present is not very familiar with the problem area under discussion and you might need to include additional stakeholders. A review of the problem assessment may reveal a different key problem, but this does not affect the validity of the current assessment. Discussing the problem itself is important and can lead to greater understanding of the issues surrounding it.

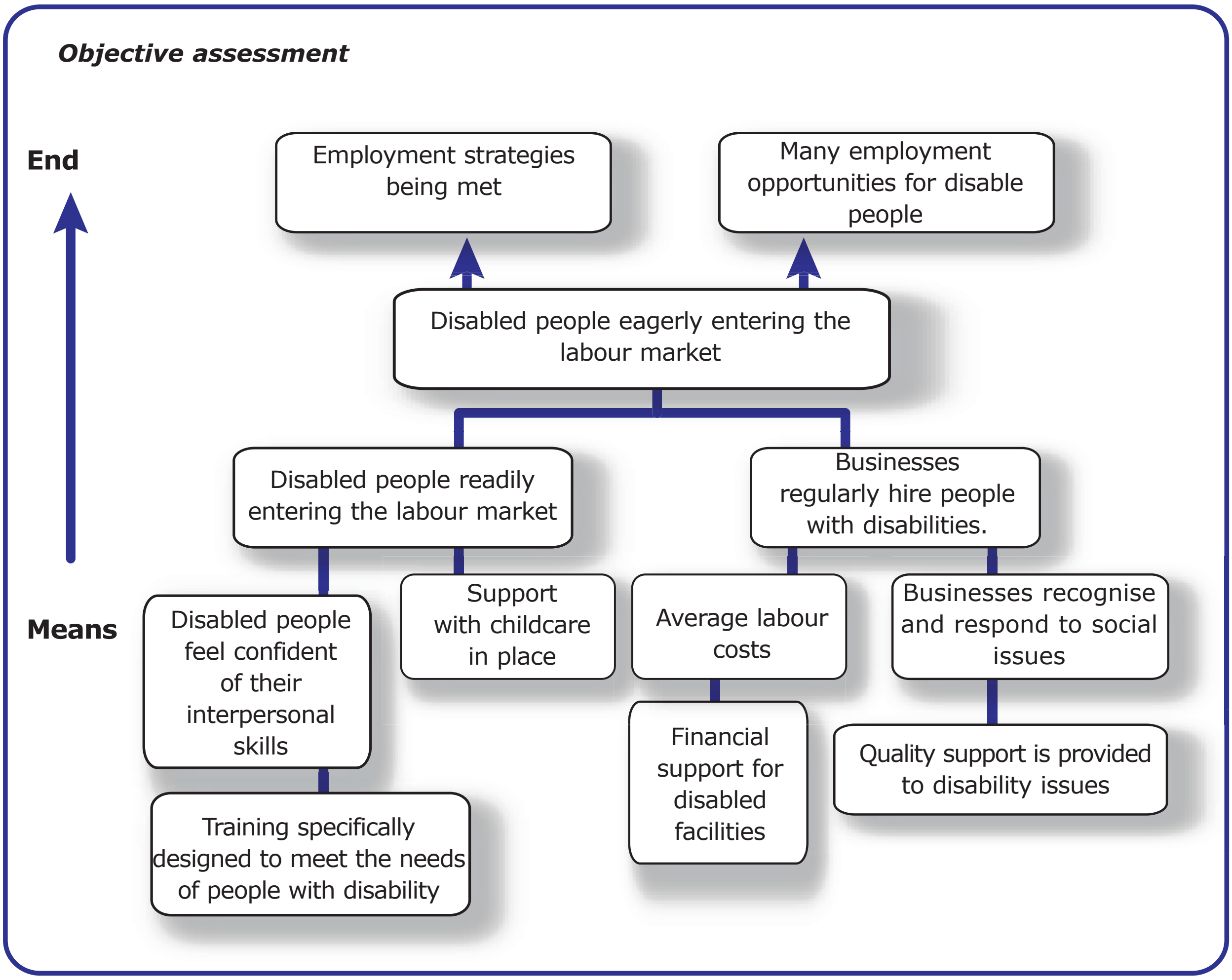
Objective assessment

This continues on from the previous exercise and you should do it at the same time with the same people. The problem assessment identifies and organises problems which you can then work with; the objective assessment identifies and organises objectives in direct relation to the problems. The exercise involves reformulating problems into objectives. Objectives are desired future situations, they are not activities. Be careful not to write an activity. An activity will use verbs such as 'to improve', 'reduce', 'construct' and so on. An objective is a description of what it will be like once something has been improved, reduced, constructed, etc. When writing an objective it is often simply a matter of turning the problem statement around, or imagining a completely new situation as the following examples show.

Problems	Objectives
Lack of employment opportunities for disabled people.	Employment opportunities for disabled people exist.
Disabled people do not enter the labour market in sufficient numbers.	Disabled people eagerly entering the labour market.
Businesses rarely hire disabled people.	Businesses regularly hire people with disabilities.

How to construct an objective assessment

- Give participants different colour cards (green).
- For every problem card (yellow) ask participants to write an objective on a green card (use short phrases to write objectives).
- Place the green cards on top of their corresponding problem cards. This is a free-flowing exercise so participants can write any objective for any problem. There is no limit to the numbers of cards they can write. This is done one problem card at a time, converting each problem separately.
- If there are different objectives for a single problem, the workshop leader must place all the objective cards on top of the problem.
- Once all the problem cards are covered by objectives, you should assess the hierarchy. From a cause-to-effect hierarchy it should now have changed to a means-to-an-end hierarchy.
- At this point assess if the means-to-an-end hierarchy is practical. There may be gaps or you may need to reorganise the objectives to make the logic hierarchical. As you sort through the hierarchy, it is essential that you do not lose sight of the original problem.
- It is likely that the objective assessment will be more or less logical at the end of the exercise. If you cannot convert some problems into objectives, it is likely that the problem is too general or unclear and you will need to re-state it to clarify the issue.
- The problem cycle will have now changed into a cycle of objectives.



4.2 Strategy options

Selecting the strategy options is the final part of the problem and objective assessment exercise. This exercise will help you to make decisions about the project or projects you want to apply in Actions 2 and 3. At this stage you will have formed columns of objectives and each column will reflect either a different target group of stakeholders or a different technical area of expertise. The columns represent different parts and solutions to the same problem. Each column has the potential to become a component of the project or even an individual project in itself.

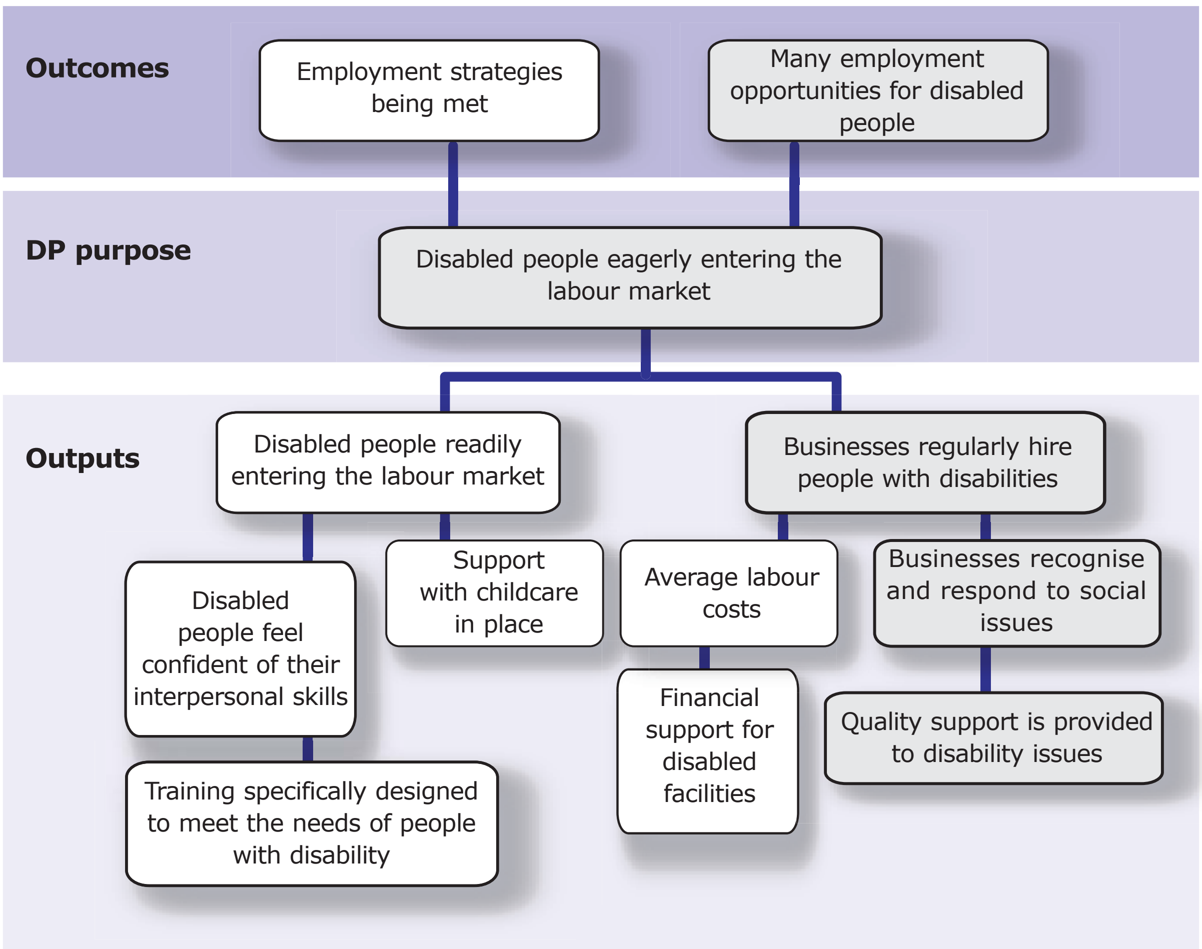
The columns represent different technical sets of objectives that are needed to achieve the project purpose. You must assess these columns strategically in terms of the type of expertise required, length of time needed to put in place, type of budget requirement and the range of stakeholders involved. The similarity or difference will help to determine if they should be one project or more than one. It is better to err on the side of caution and develop smaller, more manageable projects rather than large and complex ones.

Sometimes it becomes clear that to solve the problem you must develop all the columns into projects and then carry out these projects at the same time as an operational strategy. Obviously, if there are existing projects that already cover the area within a column, you should treat these as partner projects and not duplicate them. Once you have identified the vertical strategies and grouped them together, you will need to decide which of the strategies you will carry out.

How to choose the strategy options

- Cut the vertical hierarchical objectives into three and label each section 'Outcome', 'Project purpose', or 'Outputs' as in the diagram. If the project purpose is too broad, you can move it up to the outcome level or, if it is too small, you can move it down to the output level. You can move the levels of objectives up and down until they seem realistic.
- Agree that the columns are all relevant to solving the key problem.
- Identify columns that are already being dealt with in existing or planned projects. You should then see these as partners in solving the key problem.
- Identify those columns that cannot be dealt with through the Equal programme, such as national policy issues.
- Assess the columns that remain to identify potential projects that can be done together, as an operational strategy, or as separate projects. You should do this through discussion.

Strategy options



The shaded boxes show a vertical strategy.

You should use the following key questions when appraising the strategy options.

- What is likely to solve the problem?
- Can the key problem be solved by one or two projects or is it necessary to put in place a parallel set of projects all focusing on the key problem?
- What is acceptable to the beneficiary environment?
- What resources are available?
- What can potential implementing agencies do?
- What other projects or initiatives are planned or being implemented?
- If the project is successful, can it be mainstreamed?

At the end of the problems and objectives assessment exercise you will have developed and prioritised a number of strategy options. You must record and keep these in the project document file to provide a record for the rationale of each objective in the project.

Template 4 - Problems and objectives record

Problems to be tackled	Solutions and objectives
1	1
2	2

Sometimes it is necessary to carry out the problem and objective assessment again with different stakeholders. This is good practice and will help you to fully understand the background and circumstances of the problem and potential solution. It is best to carry out a quality check before moving the process forward.

Quality assurance check - relevance

At this point check how the group carried out the exercise and how relevant the strategy options are to the Equal priorities and the problems identified. You should use the quality assurance check – relevance to do this. Relevance relates to the problems to be tackled by the project and determines who the project is relevant for (the stakeholders). It assesses how clearly you have identified the problem and the cause-and-effect relationship between a number of problems. It also assesses the potential solution you have described in the hierarchy of objectives.

Template 5 - Quality assurance check - relevance

	Relevance	Does not apply	Fully	Fairly	Hardly	Not at all
1	Are the problems clearly identified and stated?					
2	Are the objectives clearly identified and stated?					
3	Do the problems and objectives match?					
4	Are the problems, objectives and stakeholders important to the community?					
5	Was there clear agreement on which options to take forward to the logical framework?					

5 Feasibility

To test the feasibility of the strategy options you have identified, you can use the logical framework. You should transfer the strategy options in the same hierarchical order into the logical framework and then prepare the project proposal with a budget and activity plan.

Sequence of activities

- Transfer the set of objectives into the logical framework.
- Develop the objectives and assumptions and separate them into two columns.
- Look at the relationship between the two columns and amend where necessary.
- Prepare indicators and evidence.
- Appraise environmental, social, gender, faith and race issues and review your progress to date.
- Complete the logical framework with activities, budgets and other inputs.
- Prepare the budget.
- Bring together all the information from the previous stages and write the project proposal.
- Review how you will put the project in place.

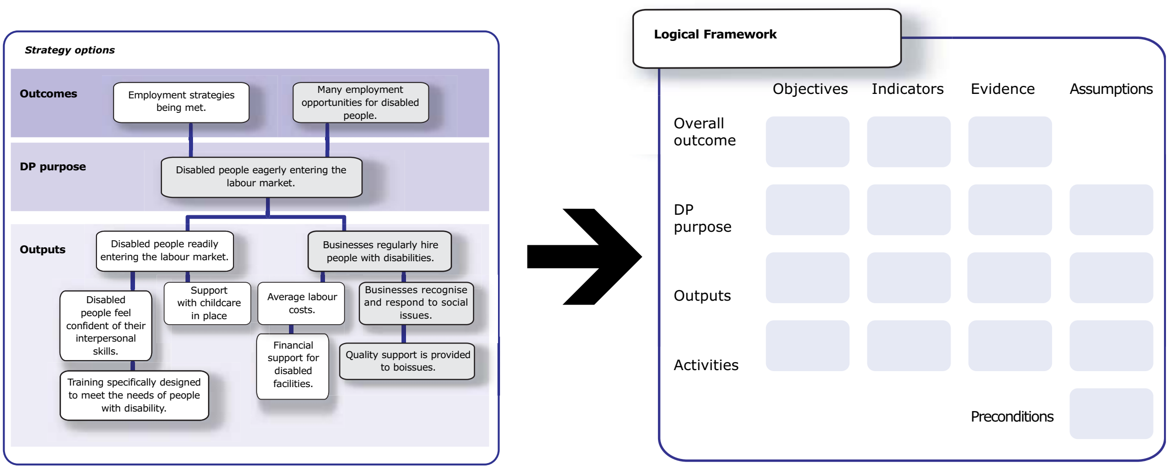
Who should be involved?

You should use a small team of partners, relevant theme specialists and local support agencies who work in the area or sector.

	Exercises	Records
1	Prepare the logical framework	**Template 6 - Logical framework record**
2	Carry out a quality assurance check - feasibility	**Template 7 - Quality assurance check - feasibility**
3	Carry out a mainstream test	**Template 8 - Mainstream test framework**
4	Prepare the budget	
5	Prepare and write the project proposal	
6	Prepare the activity plan	
7	Carry out a quality assurance check - sustainability	**Template 9 - Quality assurance check - sustainability**

5.1 Preparing the logical framework

The process starts by transferring the strategy options to the logical framework.



The logical framework is the main tool used within the remaining project cycle stages. You will use it for designing, implementing and evaluating the project. In particular, you must see it as a dynamic tool, which you use to re-assess and revise the project as it develops and as circumstances change as you are putting it in place. The logical framework will help your design team to discuss and think through all the implications of a project. Project design is based on building up information and testing the links between one set of information and another. The structure of the logical framework will force your design team to:

- identify the critical assumptions and risks that may affect the feasibility of your project and eventual mainstreaming; and
- specify the indicators and evidence of information that they will use to plan the details and monitor putting the project in place.

You will use the logical framework:

- as the basis of terms of reference for job descriptions and commissioning work;
- for planned and actual monitoring;
- for making changes to the project if required; and
- for evaluating your DP's activities.

The logical framework has four columns and four rows and you complete it in the order below. You write brief statements in each box and then test the logical relationship between the statements. You may have to rewrite the boxes a number of times to get the logical relationship right. Your design team may need to go through the process a number of times. Below is a diagram of the logical framework – the numbers refer to the sequence for filling it in.

Logical Framework

	Objectives	Indicators	Evidence	Assumptions
Overall outcome	1	7	8	
DP purpose	2	9	10	6
Outputs	3	11	12	5
Activities	13	14	15	16
			Preconditions	4

Sequence for filling in the logical framework

- The Objectives column is filled in first by working from the top to the bottom filling in boxes 1, 2 and 3. Do not fill in the 'activities' box (13) until the end. This information comes from the strategy options.
- The Assumptions column is filled in second by working from the bottom (preconditions) to the top (project purpose) filling in boxes 4, 5 and 6. The relationships between the objectives and the assumptions tests the level of risk. The Assumptions column includes the external factors that affect your success, but are outside your control and tests them against the logic of the objectives.
- You then need to fill in the second and third columns (Indicators and Evidence) to establish the basis for measuring the effectiveness and clarity of the objectives. Fill in boxes 7, 8 and 9 and then 10, 11 and 12 (in order).
- Fill in the activity row (boxes 13, 14, 15 and 16) last, after you have filled in and agreed all the other components. This is to make sure that the objectives, and not the activities, lead the project. The activities are less important than the objectives and you should see them as ways of achieving the objectives.

The following sections describe in more detail how to fill in each column and explain how to use the logical framework to test the feasibility of your proposed project.

5.2 Objectives column

Transfer your objectives into the logical framework from your chosen strategy option.

The outcome

This relates to the Equal Programme Priorities and Themes which to you will contribute. While your DP's activities will contribute to the outcome, it may not achieve it alone; other inputs and initiatives will also contribute.

DP purpose

This is written as a statement of what the situation will be like when you have used the outputs and the beneficiaries have benefited. It is at this level that your success or failure is measured. This is where you define how sustainable the benefits are that your beneficiaries will experience. You should not describe how you have delivered the services, but the change of behaviour as a result of the services being used.

DP Purpose - key points

You should describe:

- what it will be like once the services are used;
- the flow of benefits; and
- the change in the behaviour or performance of the beneficiaries or mainstream provider.

When writing the DP purpose, try to include the three key points in the description, especially when describing the benefits that will have to provide sufficient incentive to lead to a change of behaviour.

Outputs

These are the delivered services and facilities that your DP provides. The outputs describe the completed activities that you manage. They should look at the lower level of causes in the problem assessment and should reflect the relevance of the issues in the objective assessment. Each output will be the result of a series of activities. Outputs are written in the past tense as having been received.

Activities

These are the services and facilities that your DP delivers. These are written as actions to be done. You do not fill in the activity box until all the other boxes have been completed and agreed. Activities should support the objectives, especially the outputs, and be flexible. The management of your DP should always be in a position to change the activities to best achieve outputs and your DP purpose.

The key to designing good projects is to make sure that each level directly links in with and achieves the higher level. Sometimes the link is not strong enough, in which case one or other of the objectives needs to be changed. Often higher objectives are too ambitious and the link between outputs and the DP purpose is not realistic. As the links between levels are strengthened through discussion and review, so the project design will be improved.

5.3 Assumptions column

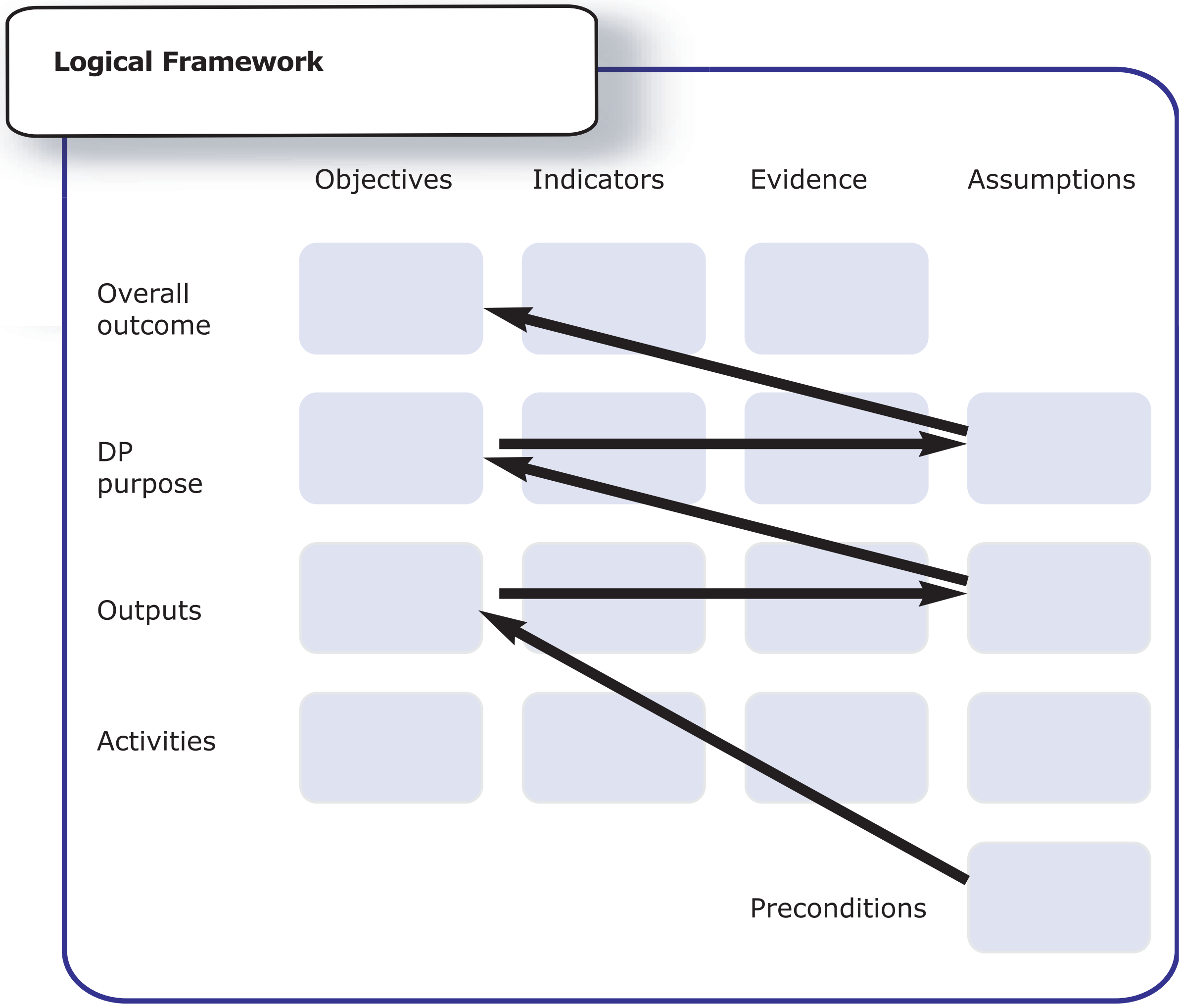
Every DP is influenced and affected by external factors that represent the risks to its activities. Assumptions are external factors outside your control but which have an impact on your performance and ability to mainstream. An assumption is a positive way of describing a risk and a risk is a negative way of describing an assumption.

Assumptions are especially important between the outputs and DP purpose levels and describe what must happen, in addition to the stated objectives, to achieve the DP purpose. They describe positive contributions such as physical resources, policy initiatives, relevance to the attitudes of beneficiaries and so on. Not all objectives have assumptions attached, but if they do, you must include and assess them in the design, and some objectives can have more than one assumption.

Filling in the Assumptions column

1 Start from the bottom and work upwards.
2 The precondition is the first assumption you should prepare. A precondition is usually a policy that needs to be in place, or an agreement by a major contributor to your DP. A precondition may be flagged up earlier on in the activity design and if, after some investigation and negotiation, you find it is no longer necessary - you can remove it. If, however, the precondition still remains when you have finished completing the logical framework, it shows a high level of risk and ideally you should not carry out any activity until you have met that precondition.
3 There are no assumptions against activities.
4 Assumptions against each output and DP purpose are identified.
5 There is no assumption against outcome.

How assumptions affect objectives



When you have identified all the assumptions and assigned them to an output or DP purpose, you should assess them for their effect on a project.

The way to assess if an assumption is important is to analyse the level of uncertainty between each level of objective and to look for external conditions that you need to meet to achieve the stated objective.

- Is the assumption important?
- What is the likelihood of it being realised?
- Can your DP strategy be modified so the assumption is no longer needed?

You should assess the assumptions that you consider important in the following way:

1 Do you need to carry out further investigation to answer the implied question in the assumption? If the investigation has a positive outcome and the assumption will not affect you, remove it. If the research shows a negative outcome, you will have to leave the assumption in the framework or convert it to an output or activity.

2 Can you convert the assumption into an output or an activity (or both) to provide a more comprehensive design and reduce how much you rely on external contributions? If you can, remove the assumption and build in a new output or activity (or both). Sometimes it is possible to strengthen an output but it is still necessary to keep the assumption.

3 If you cannot do either of the above, you will have to leave the assumptions in place.

This process will identify all the assumptions including those you can remove. The remaining assumptions represent the level of risk you will have to work with during your project. Ask if the level of risk is acceptable. If you feel it is, you should continue. If, however, you feel the risk is too high, you should stop the project at this stage.

External assumptions effecting mainstreaming

The Equal programme is about long-term mainstreaming. If you carefully examine the assumptions at this stage, you will identify external influences that either support or restrain you. In addition to the assumptions directly related to the objectives, there are some wider factors that you should consider at this stage. You should assess these factors in terms of their likely impact on your DP mainstreaming and they may lead to changes in your DP's design.

- **Ownership by mainstream providers –** how involved are mainstream providers in designing and implementing your DP? Do they agree with and are they committed to the objectives of your DP?
- **Policy support –** do you have evidence that local and regional authorities will put in place the necessary policy and resources for mainstreaming?
- **Physical conditions –** do the mainstream providers have the necessary resources, premises, equipment, etc., for planned activities?
- **Environmental protection –** to what extent do your DP's activities affect the environment? Have you taken measures to make sure that any harmful effects are reduced during the project and after it has ended?
- **Social and cultural conditions –** have you considered cultural, ethnic, religious, age and gender issues to ensure equal access and use of the services you will deliver? Will the project promote equal distribution of access and benefits to all groups?
- **Organisational capacity –** do the mainstream providers have the organisational ability to continue delivering the services? If capacity is weak, what measures have you included to build capacity while you are putting the project in place?
- **Economic and financial viability –** can you finance the services you are delivering in the long term?

5.4 Indicators column

Once you are satisfied that the Objective and Assumption columns are logical and realistic, you should fill in the two internal columns, Indicators and Evidence. For each objective, from the outcome to the outputs, there must be an indicator. Each indicator must be verifiable, that is, it must define an objective in a concrete and measurable way. This forms the basis of the project monitoring and evaluation system. Indicators should include a measure of quantity, quality, time, target group and sometimes location.

How to define indicators

• Quantity -	**how many or how much?**
• Time -	**when?**
• Quality -	**how good?**
• Target group -	**who?**
• Location -	**where?**

Indicators, if designed well, will give your DP a high level of detail. For example, when discussing the target group, indicators should not identify people, but men and women, young and old, ethnicity, disability, employed or unemployed and so on. Indicators will design in 'hard to reach' groups and identify on the type of staff required to represent the target group you are planning to work with. The more detail you can put in the indicators, the easier it will be to assess feasibility.

You can also use indicators when you put your activities into place. Your DP's management can use them to monitor the progress and plans of your activities, and as part of the final evaluation. Preparing clear and measurable indicators is the most important part of establishing a monitoring system. The levels of indicators must measure and match the levels of objectives.

Activity indicators are not included in the logical framework. Usually the cost is listed as a budget line for each activity, in the Indicator column, and the sources of funds are listed in the Evidence column. The total of all the activity budgets will equal the total cost of the project. It is helpful to show the type of cost for the proposed project to help in identifying possible sources of funds. Where there is likely to be more than one funder, it is usual to describe the different funders against the budget in the Evidence column.

All but one of the components of an indicator concerns the technical feasibility of achieving the stated objective. The one component that is not technical is the quality. When describing the qualitative aspect of an indicator, it is important to incorporate the views and perceptions of beneficiaries, as quality is often a subjective value, based on opinion.

5.5 Evidence column

You must support each indicator by evidence. This will describe where the information will come from so you can monitor the indicator, and who will be responsible for generating the information on a regular basis. It should also include when the information will be available so your DP's management can use it to monitor the progress of the objective at the stated time. It should also describe the method of collecting the information. This information will be used to verify the indicator and will be included in the column next to each indicator. When preparing sources of evidence you should ask the key questions below.

Before you move on to the activities you will need to assess whether the logical framework has a logical relationships between the vertical and horizontal boxes.

Evidence questions

- Can the indicator be measured at reasonable cost by existing sources or by procedures to be developed as part of the DP?
- Is the responsibility for gathering data clearly assigned?
- Can the information gathered be easily used to monitor and evaluate the DP's progress at the planned times?
- Does the information gathered relate to the statements made in the corresponding Indicator column?
- If additional procedures are required, do they include information on cost?
- If extra procedures are required, is the cost acceptable?

5.6 Activities

There are three sources of activities: some from the assumptions, some from the sources of evidence and most from the outputs.

To remove an assumption that cannot be met, you will need to design a new output and set of activities. For example, if the assumption is that 'banks will lend credit to new shops without collateral' and we know from experience they will not, then that assumption can be converted into an output such as 'the DP will establish a job-rotation programme, in order to develop young peoples skill levels'. This output will have a number of activities attached.

Some activities will come from the sources of evidence, such as a survey to collect data to monitor the use of a service among households. You should design most of the activities in the logical framework to achieve the outputs and you should reference to them to make it clear which activities relate to which outputs.

Once you have written down and referenced all the activities, you should assign a draft budget to each activity in the Indicator column. The total budget amount will be approximate and is just an indication of the cost of the activity or project. In the third column (Evidence), write the source of funds or in-kind support that you expect to receive – and, if it is appropriate, assign dates against the budget, so you will know when you expect the funds to be paid. This will then provide a funds payment schedule while you are putting your activities in place. This will complete the logical framework.

As a general rule, it is best to reference all the statements in the logical framework starting from the Objective column across to the Assumptions column. This will make it clear which statement in one box relates to another statement in another box.

5.7 Appraise the logical framework

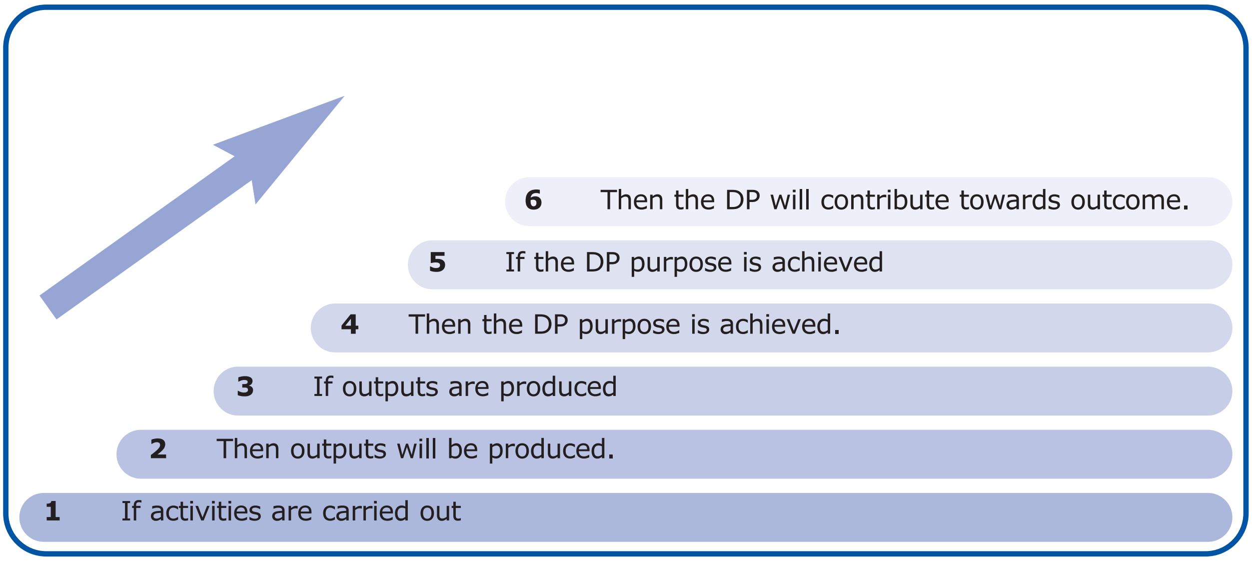
At this point, before moving on to preparing a full DP proposal, it is important you conduct a thorough review of the feasibility of your proposed DP and its activities to date. You should select a design team from your DP to be responsible for conducting an internal appraisal. This may require them to gather additional information and change the design.

Template 6 Logical framework record – example

	Objectives	Indicators	Evidence	Assumptions
Outcome	Work opportunities for people with disabilities are greater than the number of people with disabilities seeking work.	80% of companies have disabled facilities and are recruiting the disabled people by the 2010. The number of job vacancies is greater than the number of disabled people seeking work by 2010.	TI company survey. Employment agencies survey.	
Project purpose	People with physical disabilities are able to find work and are enjoying the working environment.	By 2009 all people with physical disabilities who live in Stratford and who are seeking work can find work.	Employment agency annual survey.	People with disabilities register with the employment agencies.
Outputs	**1** Businesses regularly hire people with disabilities. **2** Businesses have recognised and put in place the necessary facilities and employment conditions to recruit people with disabilities. **3** Businesses are receiving and using support offered by the employment agencies to put in place suitable disability access facilities and conditions of employment.	**1** In Stratford, 65% of businesses are able to hire people with disabilities by 2008. **2** 65% of businesses in Stratford have registered with the local employment agencies for disability access status by 2007. **3** 35% of businesses in Stratford have made use of the disability access status support by 2007.	**1** Chamber of Commerce and local employment agencies annual records. **2** Register of disability access status with local employment agencies. **3** Register of disability access status with local employment agencies.	**1** People with disabilities are keen to be employed. **2** Businesses trust the disability access status as a quality mark that they will benefit from. **3** Businesses have the time to register. **3.1** The employment agencies don't make accessing the support bureaucratic.

Activities		Budget	Source of funds	Start dates
	1.1 Businesses are specifying in their recruitment advertisements the disability access status (DAS). 1.2 Businesses are using the DAS symbol.	**£000**	Project funds	**1. 2007**
	2.1 The employment agencies promote the DAS support. 2.2 The employment agencies provide DAS training and in-house advice. 2.3 The businesses are accessing financial support to put in place physical access facilities.	**£000**	Department for Work and Pensions. Department for Education and Skills.	**2. 2006**
	3.1 The employment agencies provide practical support to businesses to put in place the physical and organisational facilities. 3.2 The employment agencies develop the DAS support mechanisms that include both the conditions of disability employment and the physical access conditions.	**£000**	European Social Fund	**3. 2005**
				Precondition: Local employment agencies sign up to the initiative.

By assessing the quality of DP design, you will be able to identify inconsistencies in the logic, gaps in information and other problems with the potential project. There are two ways of appraising the logical framework: one is to check the vertical and horizontal logic and the second is to check the quality of the process. To check the logic, appraise the objectives from bottom to top in the following way.



You should then appraise the relationship between the outputs and the assumptions and decide if the assumptions are likely to happen. Finally appraise the indicators against the DP purpose and outputs and decide if they state quantity, quality, time and target group clearly and realistically. If you feel reasonably happy with this appraisal, the second check is to use the quality assurance check - feasibility, to appraise the process.

Quality assurance check – feasibility

After completing the logical framework and before preparing the final DP proposal, your design team should use the quality assurance check - feasibility to assess your DP's development so far. Feasibility relates to whether you can effectively achieve your project's objectives. You need to:

- assess how well your DP's objectives and assumptions fit together; and

- how efficiently you could call up the resources you need and the expertise to manage all your activities and achieve your objectives on time and within budget.

Template 7 - Quality assurance check - feasibility

Feasibility	**Does not apply**	**Fully**	**Fairly**	**Hardly**	**Not at all**
1 Is the DP purpose defined in terms of benefits to the target groups?					
2 Will the DP purpose contribute to the overall outcome?					
3 Are outputs described as clear services that will have been delivered to target group(s)?					
4 Will the DP purpose be achieved if the outputs are delivered?					
5 Have important external assumptions been identified and their effect minimised?					
6 Is the risk posed by the assumptions acceptable?					
7 Does each of the objectives in the DP purpose and output level have clear indicators?					
8 Does each indicator have a clear description of the evidence next to it?					
9 Are the activities described in sufficient detail to know how the project is to be put in place?					
10 Will the activities achieve the outputs?					
11 Does the project give value for money?					
12 Is there satisfactory control of partner’s funds?					
Put in relevant project criteria					

5.8 Mainstream test

One of the major tasks of the Equal Programme, Action 3, is to test a DP’s ability to mainstream its activities, learning and outcomes. Rather than test this at the end of project, you can use the logical framework to start testing your DP’s likely mainstream potential at the beginning. You can develop Action 3 in between designing your DP, the application and putting it into place. As the evidence from the previous round of Equal showed, unless you consider the mainstreaming in your DP's design stage, there is a danger that the successful results of your DP's activities will not be appropriate for mainstreaming. So, in Round Two of Equal, Action 2 and Action 3 are brought closer together and the mainstreaming aspect of the programme is taken into account much earlier in the process.

The mainstream test framework is a matrix modelled on the logical framework, which links with the structure of the DP's objectives. You can alter it to take into account the type of project you are developing and the type of potential mainstream partners you are including.

The mainstream test framework allows you to test each output and its related activities in relation to their potential mainstream application. You should design the mainstream test alongside the logical framework. DP's are monitored within the logical framework and the mainstream test framework is used to monitor the potential application of the project to mainstream providers.

Your DP design team should decide who should apply the mainstream test framework and how often. You could employ an outside evaluator to manage the testing or your own partners could manage it internally. Rather than carrying out mainstream testing every three months, it is advisable to test much more regularly or when the plans indicate. There is a direct relationship between monitoring your DP and carrying out mainstream testing, and these two on-going evaluations should work in parallel with each other. Both need reviewing regularly and both will contribute equally to the final conclusions in evaluation.

Template 8 - Mainstream test framework

Objectives	**Potential mainstream partners**	**Process for involving mainstream partners**	**Process for testing if the project objectives can be transferred to mainstream partners**	**Actual results of transferring DP objectives to mainstream partners**
DP purpose			• Method of application • Staffing - skills required • Cost (if any) • Documents required	• Did it work? • Strengths and weaknesses • Changes required
Outputs and activities			• Method of application • Staffing - skills required • Cost (if any) • Documents required	• Did it work? • Strengths and weaknesses • Changes required
Outputs and activities				
Outputs and activities				
Conclusions				

How to fill in the mainstream test framework

- Transfer the purpose, outputs and activities from the left-hand column of the logical framework to the first (Objectives) column of the mainstream test.
- In the second column, identify and write in potential mainstream providers. These may be the same for all objectives or they might be different for different levels of objectives.
- In the third column, discuss how these providers might be involved in mainstreaming. It is best to include them in this discussion.
- In the fourth column, identify, plan and write down how the objectives, outputs and activities might be transferred to a mainstream provider. These might include methods of applying these in the mainstream, staff and skills, costs and documents. The contents of these boxes will differ depending on the type of project.
- In the fifth column, monitor what actually is happening. This should be done on a regular basis when the plans indicate.

This type of action research will enable your DP's managers to:

- identify the potential for mainstreaming early on;
- see where there are problems and hopefully sort them out; and
- keep a monitoring log on the process so that by the end of the DP you have a lot of information for evaluating your DP's potential for mainstreaming.

5.9 Budget plan

You must base your cost estimates on careful budgeting. They will have significant influence over both the investment decision at DP appraisal and subsequent mainstreaming decisions.

The format of your budget will depend on the procedures of the lead partner or the requirements of the funder. Project costings should allow costs to be allocated between the different funding sources so that each partner is clear about their contributions.

Whatever budget format you adopt, you should give information on recurrent costs after the activities have ended. It is usual to put a column in the budget to identify recurrent costs and include annual budgets for mainstream testing. This information is critical in determining if the activity is acceptable as part of mainstreaming. You can find details of the budget structure for the Equal contribution in the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) and Mainstreaming Partnership Agreement (MPA).

5.10 DP proposals

If there are a number of potential application funders, you can use the logical framework to form the basic project design for each funding. This maintains consistency. Equal GB has two project proposal application forms, the DPA and the MPA, which follow the basic structure of the Equal Project Cycle.

When preparing the DPA and MPA you need the following information from the previous processes and exercises:

- Partnership good governance;
- DP eligibility;
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis;
- Partnership roles and tasks;
- A problems and objectives assessment;
- Strategy options;
- The logical framework project design and project monitoring indicators;
- The mainstream test framework; and
- The quality assurance checks.

In addition to this information the DPA and MPA require budget estimates, descriptions of management and accountability systems and mainstreaming methods.

Quality assurance check – sustainability

This quality assurance check should be carried out by your design team after finalising the project proposal and budget and before submitting the proposal for funding appraisal. Sustainability relates to whether your DP's benefits will continue after the project has ended and if they are acceptable to potential mainstream providers. This requires an assessment of the external factors and their effect on the project objectives as well as the willingness by beneficiaries to use the services and, perhaps, help to deliver the project. It might also include an assessment of how much support your DP's outcomes will receive from partners once the funding comes to an end.

Template 9 - Quality assurance check - sustainability

Sustainability	Does not apply	Fully	Fairly	Hardly	Not at all
1 Once the DP achieves the objectives, will the target groups use the services?					
2 Will there be adequate ownership of the DP by the potential mainstream provider?					
3 Is there a capacity-building component?					
4 Are the recurrent revenue costs secured?					
5 Is commitment from partner agencies, where necessary, formally secured?					
6 If sustainability is achieved, will it contribute to the Equal Priorities and Themes?					
Put in relevant project criteria					

6 Implementation

The implementation stage will take as long as the project is planned for, but you must look beyond the completion date to the time when you expect to achieve the DP purpose and mainstreaming benefits to be realised. Before the implementation stage, you must appoint the organisations that will carry out the work. They will develop a work plan and time period for the project. At the very beginning, they should carry out an inception review to make sure the initial project design is still valid and the external conditions are still the same. Throughout the implementation stage you must carry out regular and planned monitoring reviews using the indicators defined in the logical framework. You must include the activities, outputs and assumptions. Monitoring the budget will also be a major part of the implementation as well as monitoring the stakeholders and partners. Your DP will decide whether the lead partner manages the project or a small management team is formed.

Sequence of activities

- Review the objectives and prepare or confirm the activity plan and budget plan.
- Carry out an inception review of the project preparation and conditions and suggest any changes.
- Set up management and monitoring systems using the logical framework.
- Carry out the activities and achieve the outputs and the DP purpose.
- Keep track of progress against the activity plan and the budget plan.
- Test project actions against mainstream providers' procedures.

Who should be involved?

The implementing organisation, mainstream providers, beneficiaries and relevant partners.

	Exercises	**Records**
1	Carry out the inception review	
2	Prepare the activity plan	***Template 10. Activity plan***
3	Establish and carry out project monitoring	***Template 11. Quarterly monitoring record***
4	Establish and carry out budget monitoring	

6.1 Inception review

You should spend the first week or two after implementing a programme carrying out an inception review of your DP. This will provide an opportunity to review your DP's conditions and design before embarking on the detailed implementation.

Best practice suggests that if you carry out the inception review at this stage, the benefits are as follows:

- You can make changes in relation to changed circumstances.
- New staff or partners have an opportunity to familiarise themselves.
- You can prepare the detailed activity plan.
- You can prepare job descriptions for new staff.
- You can secure commitment from all the partners.
- You can strengthen management arrangements and accountability.

The list below provides a standard set of tasks your management team or manager should check when carrying out the inception review.

Eligibility

- Check the priorities and themes.
- Check the criteria.
- Check that the project contributes to the priorities and themes.
- Check the stakeholders:
  - who they are;
  - if they have they been involved;
  - if they are still around? Are there new stakeholders that need to be involved?
- Review the Partnership Roles and Tasks - are they still valid or do they need changing?

Relevance

- Check the problems and the strategy options.
- Check the strategy options to see if they are still valid. Identify what other interventions are being planned or carried out to support the same aims.

Feasibility

- Check the logical framework.
- Check the activity plan.
- Check the budget.
- Check the DP proposal.
- Check the funding.

Mainstream test

- Check the mainstream test framework.
- Check the mainstream providers are still supportive.

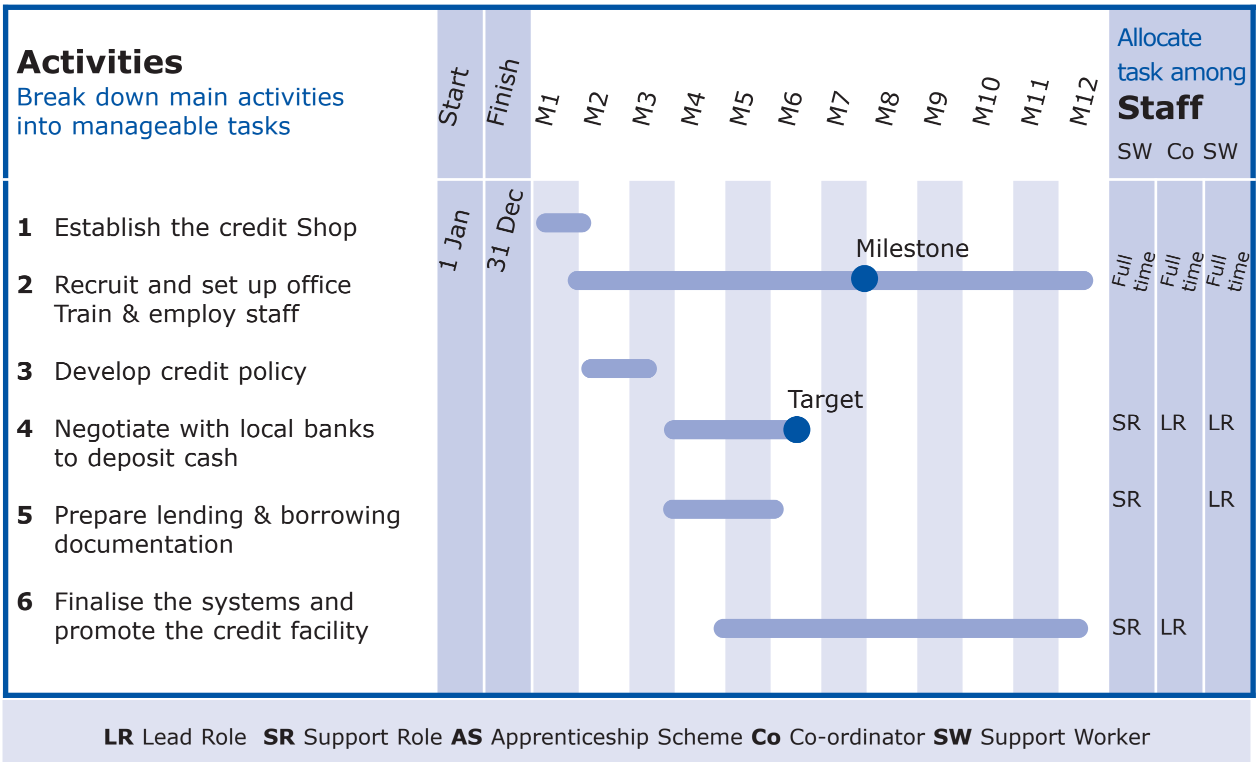
Implementation

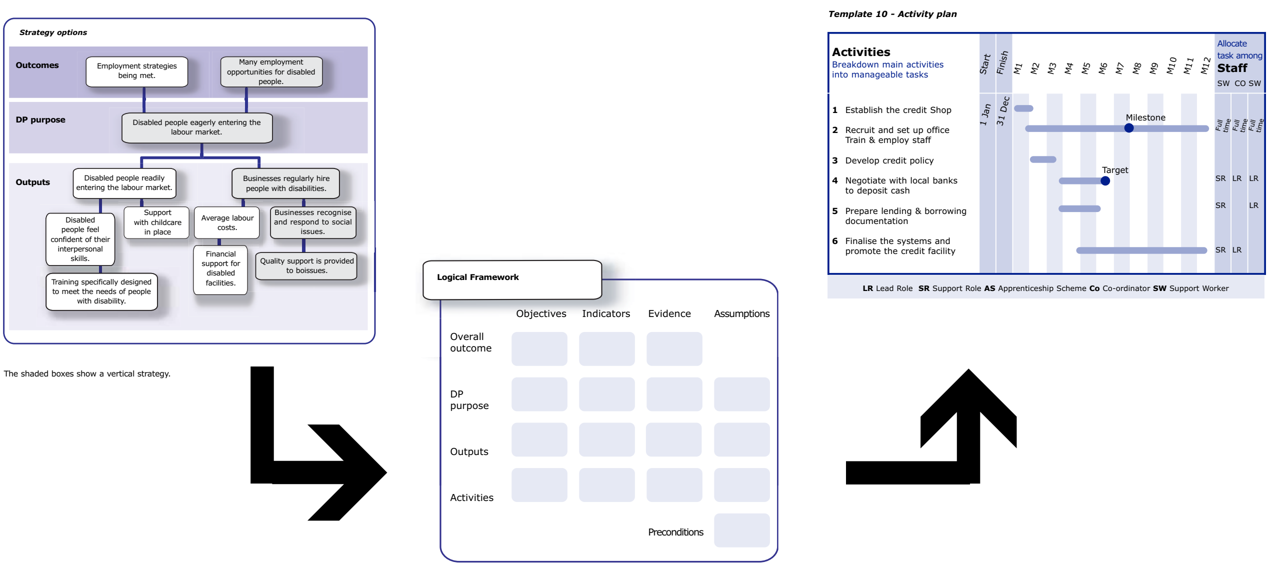
- Decide if changes are needed.
- Recommend changes to the DP design, if required.
- Check the monitoring procedures against the logical framework and activity plan.
- Check the agreement on the DP's evaluation.
- Check that all the necessary systems are in place to evaluate the DP's recommendations.

6.2 Activity plan

An activity plan is a detailed month-by-month plan of the activities and the sequence they should follow. You have summarised what your DP seeks to achieve and listed the main activities in the logical framework. The activity plan offers an opportunity to build on the main activities and develop the level of detail you need to manage your DP at a practical level, and monitor its implementation. The main activities are carried forward from the Logical Framework to the detailed activity plan. In this way you can maintain a strong link between the original problems and objectives to the implementation activities.

Template 10 - Activity plan





The diagram above illustrates the links

The activity plan (sometimes called a Gantt Chart) lists the activities in the left-hand column and then provides 12 columns, one for each month, in which the start and finish time for each activity is marked. This shows the sequence of activities and where one activity depends on another. In the right-hand column the name of the person, partner or role responsible for carrying out the activity is stated. This not only provides a very clear way of planning the detail and allocating responsibility, but it is also a very clear way to communicate with stakeholders on what action will be carried out when and who will do it. When you monitor the actions using planned and actual methods, mark the actual on top of the planned in a different colour so you can track progress.

6.3 Monitoring progress

Monitoring is the checking process used to measure, manage and keep your DP on track. Monitoring is an internal management responsibility and is an essential part of internal evaluation. Monitoring measures the gap between what was intended and what is actually happening. Internal evaluation diagnoses the reasons for the gaps and provides options for how to respond. If you cannot monitor and measure a project, you cannot manage or evaluate it. Monitoring checks are vital data for evaluating your DP.

Key points in monitoring

- It is an internal management responsibility.
- It measures progress in relation to the planned budget, activities, assumptions and outputs.
- It finds problems and identifies solutions and puts them in place.
- It takes place at all levels of DP implementation.
- It uses both formal and informal data gathering methods.
- It focuses on resource allocation, expenditure and activities, planned outputs, people involvement and organisational capacity.
- It is a key source of data for evaluation.

Yours DP's management must keep focused on all areas at all times and keep asking if:

- the funds have been disbursed on schedule;
- this activity will lead to the planned output;
- any important assumptions need attention;
- stakeholders are behaving as expected; and
- the outputs will lead to achieving your DP's purpose.

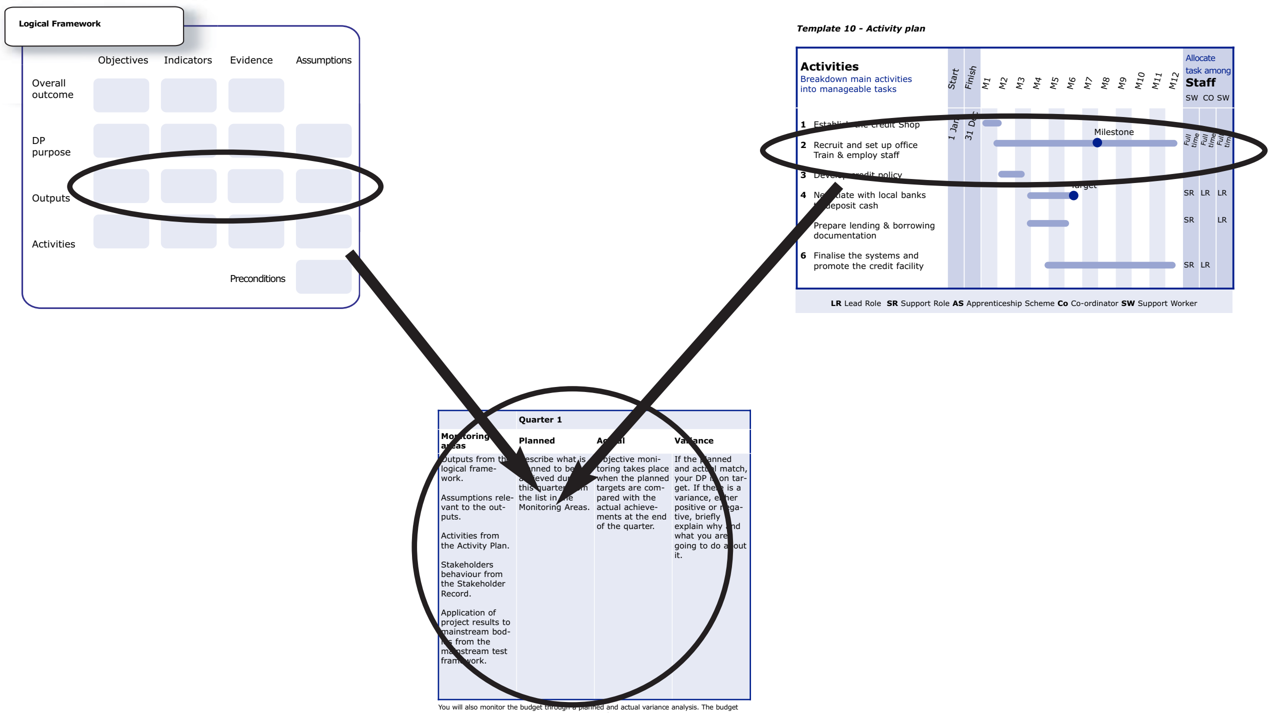
Monitoring is not a check to keep funders happy but a feedback mechanism to help your managers keep your DP's plans on track or change them to match changing realities.

Monitoring uses a planned and actual format and takes place quarterly (every three months), with explanations on why any variance between the two formats occurred and what action your management took to bring the plans back on track. Sometimes it is not possible to bring plans back on track and the results of your DP will be delayed. Knowing this in advance is part of good management and changes to the plans must be made at this point.

The quarterly monitoring process

The outputs, indicators and assumptions are brought forward from the logical framework, and the targets and milestones from the activity plan are combined and transferred to the planned column in the quarterly monitoring record.

The quarterly monitoring record



In the quarterly monitoring record you record what happened under the Actual column. If the actual is less or more than planned, record the reasons why and what is to be done about it during the next quarter in the Variance column. If the planned and actual are equal, there is no variance and you can record your DP's activities as being on target.

Template 11 - Quarterly monitoring record - example

	Quarter 1		
Monitoring areas	**Planned**	**Actual**	**Variance**
Outputs from the logical framework. Assumptions relevant to the outputs. Activities from the Activity Plan. Stakeholders behaviour from the Stakeholder Record. Application of project results to main-stream bodies from the mainstream test framework.	Describe what is planned to be achieved during this quarter from the list in the Monitoring areas.	Objective monitoring takes place when the planned targets are compared with the actual achievements at the end of the quarter.	If the planned and actual match, your DP is on target. If there is a variance, either positive or negative, briefly explain why and what you are going to do about it.

You will also monitor the budget through a planned and actual variance analysis. The budget will be related to the objectives by an assessment of the expenditure in relation to the activities.

Quarterly monitoring report

As well as the quarterly monitoring record which contains the planned and actual records, there is also a quarterly monitoring report. The report notes all general changes that have occurred during the quarterly period and analyses them to work out their effect on your DP. The quarterly monitoring report covers the headings in the DP proposal. It keeps an on-going record of the progress of your DP and of any changes to its environment (both internal and external) in a particular quarter. If there has been no change in a given section, nothing needs to be reported. Anyone looking at the quarterly monitoring report should instantly be able to spot where change has taken place and where no change has occurred. This not only cuts down on paperwork, it provides a very clear statement of what happened during the quarter. This is essential data for evaluation.

Stakeholder monitoring

At this stage you should bring the stakeholder record developed in Action 1 fully into the monitoring process. This record will have specified who the stakeholders are, why they are involved and how they are involved with your DP.

Monitoring is concerned with how stakeholders are involved during the life of your DP and, as a result of this, how they may be involved over a longer period of time. The Monitoring column of the stakeholder record records how stakeholders behaved and their effect on the DP, as well as the likelihood of their continuing support and involvement over time and once the DP comes to an end.

Mainstream test monitoring

You use the monitoring test framework alongside DP monitoring to evaluate the potential for transferring your DP's objectives to mainstream partners.

Partnership roles and tasks framework

You can use the partnership roles and tasks framework alongside DP monitoring to assess how your DP is actually functioning. As circumstances change, both for individual partners and your DP, you can update the partnership roles and tasks framework to reflect these changes.

7 Evaluation

The evaluation stage is the time when you assess your DP and identify and widely disseminate any lessons learnt. For an Equal project it is also the time to fully test a project for its mainstream potential.

Evaluation is DPs understanding the gaps between what was intended and what is actually happening and looking at operational and strategic options to make changes, if necessary. You need to carry out two types of evaluation which can be brought together in a single process.

You will use the logical framework to evaluate your DP's innovative achievements and lessons learnt and the mainstream test framework to evaluate if your project can be incorporated into a mainstream provider's service. You can use the partnership roles and tasks framework as a source of information when you evaluate your DP's performance.

Sequence of activities

- Be clear about the purpose of your DP as stated in the DP proposal.
- Focus on the flow of benefits and the outcome of your DP.
- Review the monitoring reports and logical framework.
- Prepare a statement of actual achievements against planned targets.
- Identify lessons learnt and disseminate the findings widely to influence mainstream providers.
- Test the potential for mainstreaming using the mainstreaming test framework.

Who should be involved?

The independent evaluator, beneficiaries and the partnership.

Exercises		Records
1	Carry out a document review	
2	Carry out the evaluation	***Evaluation report***
3	Prepare a report and identify lessons learnt	
4	Disseminate findings	
5	Test mainstream application	

7.1 Preparing the evaluation

Evaluation is the final stage in the project's life and must be carried out by an independent person. Evaluations should be clearly focused on trying to understand how your DP operated and how successful it was in achieving its stated objectives in terms of outputs, DP purpose and outcome. During the implementation stage, much of the technical and financial information will have been generated from the Quarterly Monitoring Records and Quarterly Monitoring Reports. This will have been analysed and you will have reached conclusions on how effective and efficient your management was in achieving the outputs. The evaluation does not need to repeat all this information but should refer to it and provide summaries where necessary. It is also necessary to be clear who the evaluation is written for. While it will contain technical information, it is important to isolate the key points and lessons learnt as a brief stand-alone document for wider circulation and discussion.

Evaluating innovation

Evaluating innovation is two-fold. At one stage it enables you to progressively assess an innovation and reach a conclusion about its mainstream potential. You do this through analysing how well each output you placed in the logical framework matches the verifiable indicators of its success. If, for example, the innovation was a particular form of work-shadowing which aimed to increase the readiness of host organisations to employ disadvantaged people, you can measure the increase and say if the innovation worked or not.

At a second stage evaluating innovation takes place as part of the test mainstreaming activity. This is where you evaluate if the innovation is transferable. Here, for example, is where you test the mainstream adoption of the work-shadowing innovation against the costs, attitudes and competence of those host organisations who will agree to work shadowing.

Overall evaluation

This applies to both Action 2 and Action 3.

This includes either your formative (initial) or mid-term evaluations and your summary or final evaluation which pulls everything together. This reviewing process:

- needs internal and external evaluators;
- focuses especially on analysing the quarterly monitoring data, especially the stakeholder monitoring record, to identify what, if any, changes you need to make in what you are doing or how you are doing it;
- starts early in the DP to help you stay on track.

Probably the most important aspect of overall evaluation is that it is not focused on the final report. That report will largely be the accumulation of the monitoring data and mid-term evaluation reports. Evaluation that is saved to the end of your DP's work is evaluation too late to improve and sustain your work. Its focus needs to be on how stakeholders perceive progress and problems, providing data and options to you about changes to the project and its environment and how you need to manage them.

To be consistent with all the other stages, the evaluation should use the same standard headings as in the DP proposal and quarterly monitoring records.

Evaluation takes place at the time when you should be starting to mainstream the benefits of your DP. Its primary purpose is to learn lessons, both positive (what worked well and why) and negative (what went wrong and why).

The general questions you need to consider about the evaluation are:

- What is the purpose of the evaluation?
- What are the questions that you want answered by an evaluation?
- How comprehensive will the evaluation be and what is the general approach?
- What will be measured?
- Who has authority and responsibility for the evaluation?
- What will be the role of evaluators?
- What will be the main sources of the data and how will the data be collected and compiled?
- How will the data be analysed and presented?
- How much will it cost and have you enough resources?

Project Cycle Evaluation focuses on the following:

- **Relevance -** did the project solve the problem?
- **Feasibility -** was the DP technically effective and efficient? Did it achieve the planned results within budget and on time?
- **Sustainability -** have participants the benefits and are they still being used?
- **Best value -** did the DP provide the units at the budgeted cost and how does this compare with similar projects?
- **Strategy support -** did the DP support and improve the strategic priorities of the Equal Programme?
- **Management, appraisal and monitoring -** the evaluation should try to assess how correct the appraisal and monitoring was, for example, by referring back in the quality assurance checks to see how each question was scored and how it resulted.
- **Mainstreaming adaptability -** evidence should be available through the mainstreaming test to see if the project has the potential for mainstreaming.

Annexes:

Annex 1: **Glossary of terms used in the toolkit.**
Annex 2: **Templates referred to in the toolkit.**
Annex 3: **References and further reading.**

Annex 1 Glossary

Activities The specific tasks to be carried out during a DP's life in order to obtain outputs.

Analysis of objectives The identification and verification of benefits which users hope to see in the future.

Action 1 A development stage in which the Development Partnership (DP) is funded to establish its partnerships and complete the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) and the Transnational Co-operation Agreement (TCA).

Action 2 The stage during which the DP work programmes approved at the end of Action 1 are funded and the activities are put in place.

Action 3 This action provides additional funding to DPs to carry out thematic networking, disseminating and mainstreaming activities.

Activity plan A graphic representation, similar to a bar chart, setting out the timing, sequence and duration of DP activities. It can also be used to identify milestones for monitoring progress, and to assign responsibility for achieving milestones.

Appraisal The analysis of a proposed DP to determine its merit and acceptability in line with established criteria. This is the final step before a DP is agreed for financing.

Assumptions These are external factors which could affect the progress or success of the DP, but over which the DP manager has no direct control.

Budget plan The DP expenses are described as an annual DP cost, divided into twelve months.

Commitment A commitment is a formal decision taken by funders, and other contributors who agree to provide resources to a DP.

Development Partnership (DP) This is the term used within the Equal Programme to describe the Partnership.

Development Partnership This is the term used within the Equal Programme Agreement (EPA) to refer to the Action 2 proposal.

Equal DPs funded under Equal are designed to test innovative activities on a transnational basis. A key aim of Equal is to feed policy and practice lessons learnt from individual DPs, or groups of DPs, into the policy process, nationally, regionally and locally. This process is known as mainstreaming.

Evaluation This is a periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency and impact of a DP against stated objectives. It is carried out as an independent objective examination, with a view to drawing lessons that may be applied more widely.

Evidence Evidence is the means used to record the indicators or milestones and make them available to DP management or those evaluating DP performance.

Factors ensuring These factors have had a significant impact on the sustainability of benefits generated by DPs in the past, and should be taken into account in the design of future DPs.

Feasibility study A feasibility study, conducted during the formulation stage, verifies whether the proposed DP is well-founded, and is likely to meet the needs of its intended users. The study should be used in the design of the DP, taking account of all technical, economic, financial, institutional, management, environmental, social and cultural aspects.

Financing agreement This is the document that is signed between the funder and the partner organisation. It includes a description of the particular DP or programme to be funded.

Financing proposal Financing proposals are draft documents, submitted by the DP to the relevant funders for their opinion and decision. They describe the general background, nature, scope and objectives of the measures proposed and indicate the required funding.

Good governance A set of principles and procedures that guide the management of Partnerships.

Hierarchy of objectives This is the order of activities, outputs, DP purpose and overall outcome as specified in the Objectives column of the Logical Framework.

Indicators Indicators provide the basis for designing an appropriate monitoring system. Measurable indicators will show whether or not targets have been achieved at each level of the objective hierarchy.

Integrated approach This is the consistent examination of a DP throughout all the stages of the project cycle, to make sure that the relevance, feasibility and sustainability of activities remain in focus.

Logical framework This is a methodology for planning, implementing approach and evaluating programmes and projects. It involves analysing problems, objectives and strategies with activity and budget plans.

Logical framework This is the matrix used to present a DP's objectives, assumptions, indicators and sources of verification.

Mainstreaming This is the process of transferring policy and good-practice lessons learnt from individual DPs or groups of DPs into the policy process, or to a public or private-sector organisation that will adopt the good practice as part of its existing services.

Mainstream Partnership MPA is the term used within the Equal Programme Agreement (EPA) to refer to the Action 3 proposal.

Mainstream provider An organisation or statutory body who provides public services.

Means These are the inputs required to do the work (such as personnel, equipment and materials).

Monitoring Systematically and continuously collecting, analysing and using information for management control and decision making.

Objectives Objectives describe how the aim of a DP or programme is to be achieved. Taken as a whole, they refer to activities, outputs, DP purpose and overall outcome.

Objectives column This is the set of objectives, established in hierarchy, which describe the things the DP will achieve.

Objective assessment This is a diagrammatic representation of the proposed DP interventions drawn up following a problem analysis. It is planned logically and shows proposed means, resources and ends.

Overall outcome This is the wider objective DPs are designed to contribute to. It is focused on the Equal priorities and themes.

Outputs The outputs are what the DP will have achieved by its completion date. The outputs are produced by carrying out a series of activities.

Partnership A partnership consists of a number of organisations who have signed up to being a partner of a formalised group such as a DP.

Preconditions Preconditions are external issues which must be taken into account or dealt with before a DP starts to operate.

Problem assessment This takes the form of a structured investigation of the negative aspects of a situation to establish their causes and effects.

Project or DP cycle The cycle follows the life of a DP from the initial rationale through to its completion. It provides a structure to make sure that stakeholders are consulted, and defines the key decisions, information needs and responsibilities at each stage so that informed decisions can be made. It draws on evaluation to build experience from existing DPs into the design of future programmes and activities.

Project cycle This is a methodology for preparing, implementing management and evaluating projects and programmes.

DP purpose The purpose is the central objective of the DP in terms of sustainable benefits to be delivered to the DP users. It does not refer to the services provided by the DP (these are outputs), but to the benefits which DP users will gain.

Strategic vision The strategic vision describes the situation once the programme has successfully been completed. It will provide guiding principles when designing and appraising individual DPs.

Stakeholder These are individuals or institutions with a financial or intellectual interest in the outputs of a DP.

Strategy options Strategy options are the result of a critical assessment of the alternative ways of achieving objectives, and selecting one or more ways to include them in the proposed DP.

Sustainability Sustainability is the ability to generate outputs after external support has ended. While a DP is limited by time, the benefits should continue and the activities should be developed long after the DP has ended, without the need for external inputs. This is a key requirement for a successful DP.

SWOT analysis This is an analysis of an organisation's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that it faces. It is used for DP appraisal.

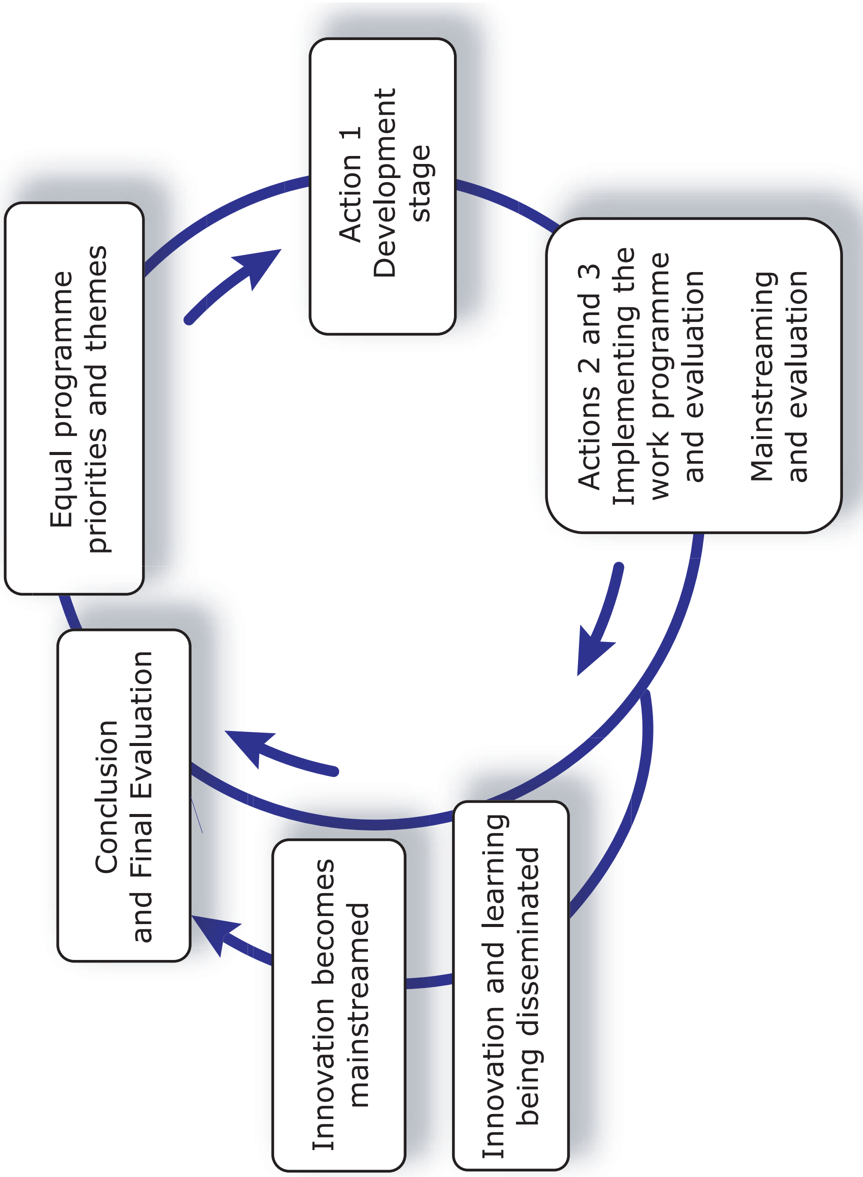
Terms of reference Terms of reference define the tasks required of the DP and its individual partners. They indicate a DP's background and objectives, planned activities, expected inputs and outputs, budget, timetables and job descriptions.

Transnational Anything transnational applies across a number of countries within the European Union.

Transnational co-operation This document outlines the method and agreement decision-making approach adopted by a group of agencies working across a number of European countries.

Annex 2: Templates referred to in the toolkit

Equal Project Cycle



Good governance

- Statement of the purpose of the DP
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Partnership roles and tasks
- A set of relevant reference documents relating to the legal and legislative requirements for the DP
- Standard procedures for recording the proceedings of the DP
- A recruitment and withdrawal procedure for members of the DP
- Quality assurance check

Stakeholder record

HIERARCHY OF STAKEHOLDERS	EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES	INTEREST AND EXPECTATIONS	BARRIERS AND ISSUES	MAIN ROLES IN THE DP	MONITOR-ING
Primary stakeholders					
Secondary stakeholders					
Tertiary stakeholders					

Partnership roles and tasks

Partner roles / Tasks	Lead partner	Transnational partners	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 3	Partner 4	Partner 5	Partner 6	
Partnership co-ordination	X	O							
Administration	X	O	O		O				
Strategic planning	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O
Financial management	O	O		X					
Financial control	X	O		X		O			
Transnational working	O	X					O		
DP design and preparation	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O
DP monitoring	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O
Mainstreaming research	O			O				X	
Dissemination	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O

Quality assurance check

Eligibility	Does not apply	Fully	Fairly	Hardly	Not at all
1 Are all stakeholders clearly identified?					
2 Are stakeholders clearly categorised?					
3 Are the DP activities eligible?					
4 Does the project contribute to existing					
5 Has the DP been formed?					

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Problen

Problems and Objective record

Problems to be tackled	Solutions and objectives
1	1
2	2
3	3

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Quality assurance check

Relevance	Does not apply	Fully	Fairly	Hardly	Not at all
1 Are the problems clearly identified and stated?					
2 Are the objectives clearly identified and stated?					
3 Do the problems and objectives match?					
4 Are the problems, objectives and stakeholders important to the community?					
5 Was there clear agreement on which options to take forward to the logical framework?					

Logical framework

Logical Framework

	Objectives	Indicators	Evidence	Assumptions
Overall outcome	1	7	8	
DP purpose	2	9	10	6
Outputs	3	11	12	5
Activities	13	14	15	16
			Preconditions	4

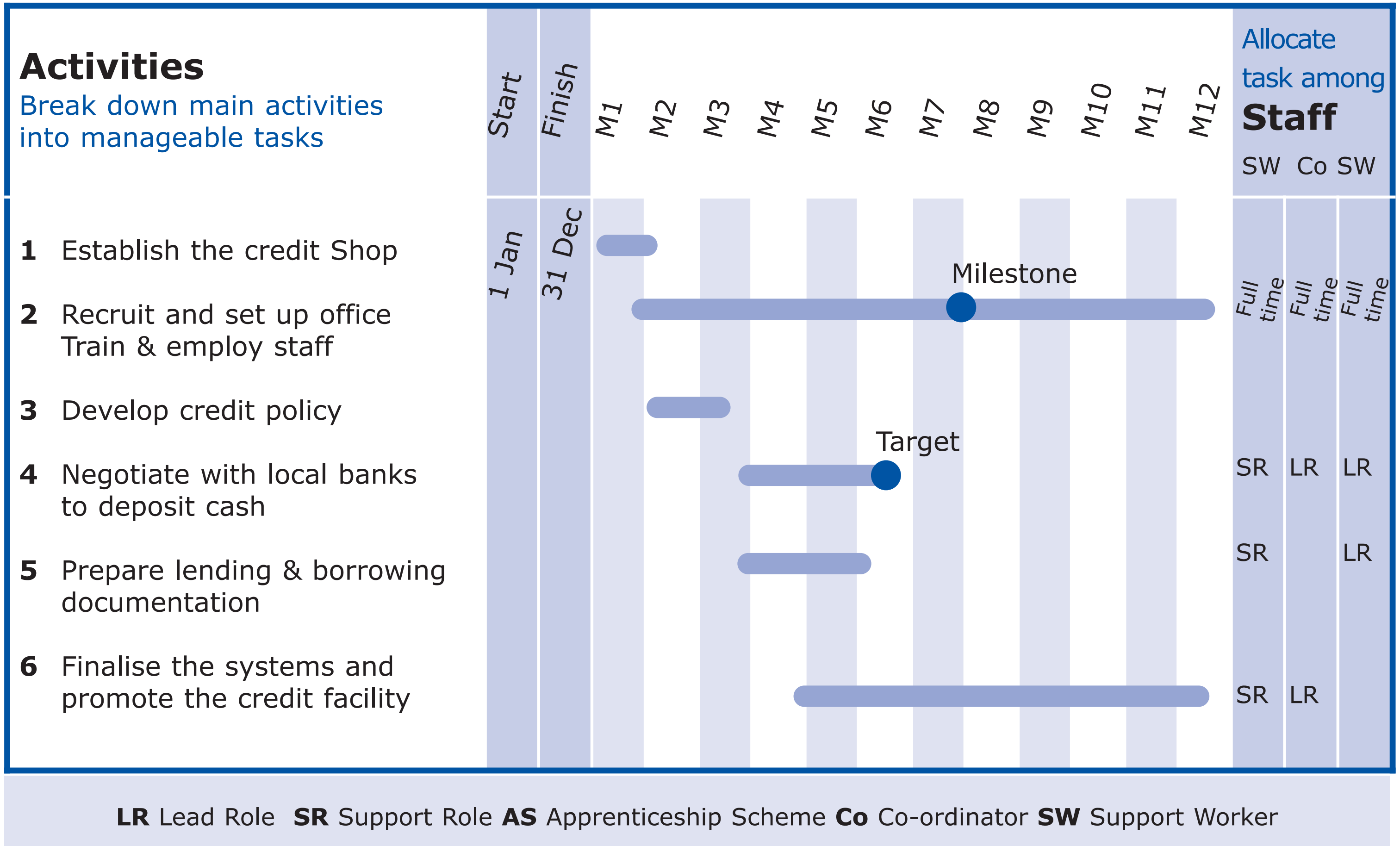
Quality assurance check

Feasibility		Does not apply	Fully	Fairly	Hardly	Not at all
1	Is the DP purpose defined in terms of benefits to the target groups?					
2	Will the DP purpose contribute to the overall outcome?					
3	Are outputs described as clear services that will have been delivered to target group(s)?					
4	Will the DP purpose be achieved if the outputs are delivered?					
5	Have important external assumptions been identified and their effect minimised?					
6	Is the risk posed by the assumptions acceptable?					
7	Does each of the objectives in the DP purpose and output level have clear indicators?					
8	Does each indicator have a clear description of the evidence next to it?					
9	Are the activities described in sufficient detail to know how the project is to be put in place?					
10	Will the activities achieve the outputs?					
11	Does the project give value for money?					
12	Is there satisfactory control of partner's funds?					
Put in relevant project criteria						

Mainstream test framework

Objectives	Potential mainstream partners	Process for involving mainstream partners	Process for testing if the project objectives can be transferred to mainstream partners	Actual results of transferring DP objectives to mainstream partners
DP purpose			• Method of application • Staffing - skills required • Cost (if any) • Documents required	• Did it work? • Strengths and weaknesses • Changes required
Outputs and activities			• Method of application • Staffing - skills required • Cost (if any) • Documents required	• Did it work? • Strengths and weaknesses • Changes required
Outputs and activities				
Outputs and activities				
Conclusions				

Activity plan



Quality assurance check

Sustainability	**Does not apply**	**Fully**	**Fairly**	**Hardly**	**Not at all**
1 Once the DP achieves the objectives, will the target groups use the services?					
2 Will there be adequate ownership of the DP by the potential mainstream provider?					
3 Is there a capacity-building component?					
4 Are the recurrent revenue costs secured?					
5 Is commitment from partner agencies, where necessary, formally secured?					
6 If sustainability is achieved, will it contribute to the Equal Priorities and Themes?					
Put in relevant project criteria					

Planned and actual record

	Quarter 1		
Monitoring areas	**Planned**	**Actual**	**Variance**
Outputs from the logical framework. Assumptions relevant to the outputs. Activities from the Activity Plan. Stakeholders behaviour from the Stakeholder Record. Application of project results to main-stream bodies from the mainstream test framework.	Describe what is planned to be achieved during this quarter from the list in the Monitoring areas.	Objective monitoring takes place when the planned targets are compared with the actual achievements at the end of the quarter.	If the planned and actual match, your DP is on target. If there is a variance, either positive or negative, briefly explain why and what you are going to do about it.

Annex 3: References and further reading

There are two recent guides for Equal Partnerships which clearly lay out good practices that Partnerships are advised to follow. You are advised to refer to these guides for more information on Partnership working.

- Partnership working – a guide for Development Partnerships by the GB Equal Support Unit, ECOTEC UK.
- Learning about Partnership from the experience of Equal Development and Transnational Partnerships by Cross-Sector Partnerships, Spain.

Project Cycle Management: Integrated Approach and Logical Framework European Commission, DG VIII, Evaluation Unit, 1993

Project Cycle Management and Objective-Oriented Project Planning (ZOPP) – Guidelines Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) 1996

Project Cycle Management - Training Handbook European Commission, DGVIII, Evaluation Unit, 1999.
Prepared by ITAD Ltd. UK

Launching the Project Cycle 1999
Office Instruction Volume 11, Department For International Development, UK

Social Audit Toolkit – third edition 2000
local livelihoods Ltd. UK

Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework Training Handbook for New Deal for Communities
Prepared by local livelihoods Ltd. For the DETR 2002

One source of guidance on how to manage evaluation can be found in a new independent website on European evaluation (www.evaluate-europe.net). It is called ‘Evaluation Mentor’ and you can use it to create a specification for an external evaluator.

Below is a list of websites where you can find out how organisations use Project Cycle Management (PCM) in their projects, or develop and research the use of PCM.

www.europa.eu.int/comm./europaid/evaluationmethods
Information on using PCM within projects funded by the European Union.

www.bond.org.uk
BOND is a network of more than 280 UK-based voluntary organisations working in international development and development education.

www.pcm-group.com/pcm
This is a training and consultancy company based in Belgium.

www.worldbank.org (search PCM)
Information about how PCM is used in the projects funded by the World Bank.

www.haznet.org.uk
Health Action Zones are partnerships between the NHS, local authorities, community groups and the voluntary and business sectors.

www.undp.org (search PCM)
The United Nations Development Programme.

www.mdf.nl/en/training
MDF Training & Consultancy is a management training and consultancy bureau registered and located in the Netherlands, but operating worldwide.

www.mande.co.uk
A news service focusing on developments in monitoring and evaluation methods relevant to development projects and programmes with social-development objectives.

www.ingenta.com (search PCM)
The most comprehensive collection of academic and professional publications available for online, fax and Ariel delivery.

www.dfid.gov.uk
The UK Government Department for International Development (DFID).

www.livelihoods.org
A DFID website with information resources, and lessons and experience learnt from the using sustainable-livelihoods approaches.

www.ifad.org (search PCM)
The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialised agency of the United Nations.

www.wlv.ac.uk/cidt
The Centre for International Development at Wolverhampton University is a leading international centre that provides consultancy, training, research, and project and programme management services in international development.

www.gtz.de/english (search pcm)
The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH is an international co-operation enterprise for sustainable development worldwide.

In more than 130 partner countries, GTZ is supports about 2,700 development projects and programmes, mostly under commissions from the German Federal Government.