

## Managing Project & Strategic Objectives with Logframe Analysis and the Logical Framework <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Kenneth Smith, PMP

For the past 50 years, **Logframe Analysis (LFA)** has been the core technique, and the related **Logical Framework** the **Best Practice** tool within the international development community<sup>2</sup> for planning, monitoring and evaluating economic and social development projects. The **logframe** approach links projects with their strategic objectives during the initiation and planning phases; identifies the project's indicators and targets – as well as their data sources -- for monitoring & reporting progress during implementation; and thereafter is the basis for assessing post-project performance. Exposition of the **Logframe technique and tool** is presented here as a possible enhancement to private sector strategic planning and management practices.

Projects are the means by which organizations -- *in consonance with their strategic objectives* -- attempt to address the perceived needs of their clientele to improve current situations. But projects are not the product of individual thought and effort, nor fully-formed at conception. Usually, a long gestation period precedes a project's actualization, during which time multiple stakeholders -- given their respective perspectives -- contribute to redefining its objectives, target beneficiaries and costs *vs* benefits; as well as shaping and reshaping its scope, substance, schedule, risks, requirements and resources, before implementation is approved.

Unfortunately, managers selected to implement projects do not usually participate in the early stages of project planning, and the strategic-level objectives are not communicated to them. Consequently, without being aware of the bigger picture, when obstacles arise during implementation, project managers all too often make on-the-spot decisions that are not in harmony with the project's higher-level objectives. Thus, when completed, the project may fall short of achieving the intended strategic objective. In consonance with the theme of "***Doing the Right Project***" it is imperative therefore that before final project approval, all stakeholders -- *from the executive suite level, through the implementation managers, to the target beneficiaries* – have a common understanding and acceptance of the project's dimensions, implications and aspirations.

---

<sup>1</sup> How to cite this article: Smith, K. F. (2021). Managing Project & Strategic Objectives with Logframe Analysis and the Logical Framework, *PM World Journal*, Vol. X, Issue IV, April.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the World Bank and United Nations; regional entities such as the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, and European Union; bilateral nation-to-nation donors, and even some countries such as the Republic of the Philippines.

Rather than a conscious strategic planning approach, the Logical Framework was initially conceived by two individuals of a small consultant firm PCI<sup>3</sup> in 1969 to facilitate **evaluating** a wide variety of disparate US Agency for International Development (USAID) economic, social and infrastructure projects. After pilot testing a couple of projects in West Africa, PCI standardized a 4 x 4 matrix, identifying essential elements of information (EEI's) common to both. More extensive field testing followed in Asia, Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, the Near East & South Asia.<sup>4</sup> During this feasibility testing, the Logframe was acclaimed as an effective rational model for planning and evaluating project outcomes.

Nevertheless, while lauding the Logframe tool, at this stage Project Managers universally decried the Analysis as inappropriate. In essence, they said, we had the 'cart before the horse' because none of the projects we had assessed -- using our best judgement -- had had the same criteria applied during design! Managers responsible for implementing the projects were absent from the project initiation, formulation planning and detailed design process; so were only vaguely aware of their project's long-term strategic objectives. Planning indicators and targets were not usually carried forward, nor data collected on them to the implementation phase.

Moreover, due to the multi-year, multi-stage project cycle for development projects – *i.e.* 1 to 2 year initiation, planning & design phase; followed by a 5 to 7 year scheduled duration for project implementation -- but significantly shorter (2 to 4 year) USAID rotation and reassignment policies, Project Managers never saw the completion of the projects they participated in designing, nor rarely even the ones they were currently managing.

Consequently, implementation Project Managers accepted little or no responsibility for eventual project outcomes in terms of either meeting immediate needs, satisfying strategic objectives, or their longer-term sustainability! **Instead, Project Managers concentrated on monitoring the immediate deliverables specified in their project's contracts in terms of the traditional "triple threat" -- schedule, cost and technical performance quality.** Furthermore, in most instances, USAID's 'Project Officers' were 'Project Managers' in name only (INO), as the actual Project Managers were their host country counterparts; or even more remotely -- commercial contractors without any stake in the outcome.

That lacuna was rapidly rectified by William Gaud -- the Agency's Administrator. Gaud decreed that henceforth all new USAID projects would be explicated during the design stage in terms of a Logical Framework. Furthermore, all on-going projects were to be reviewed, clarified where

---

<sup>3</sup> Namely Leon Rosenberg & Larry Posner, the principals of Practical Concepts Incorporated (PCI), as consultants to the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

<sup>4</sup> I was on a team to field-test the Logframe's efficacy on several projects in Asia, West & East Africa during 1970 and 1971 on USAID's task force. Similar tests were conducted by other teams in Africa, the Near East, South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

necessary; retrofitted with Logframes as soon as possible; then monitored throughout their life cycle, and ultimately evaluated in terms of those same indicators and targets.<sup>5</sup>

Leon & Larry's PCI Logframe then spread like wildfire within the international development community over the next few years<sup>6</sup> as a **Best Practice** for strategic regional, country and sector development planning, tactical project implementation monitoring, management, as well for post-project evaluation, with several variations evolving.<sup>7</sup>

So, you may ask – **what does a Logframe look like; what are its 'essential elements,' and what is so 'logical' about them?**

**Basically, the logframe is a 4 by 5 Matrix<sup>8</sup> composed of a Project's essential building blocks, as indicated on the following pages.**

---

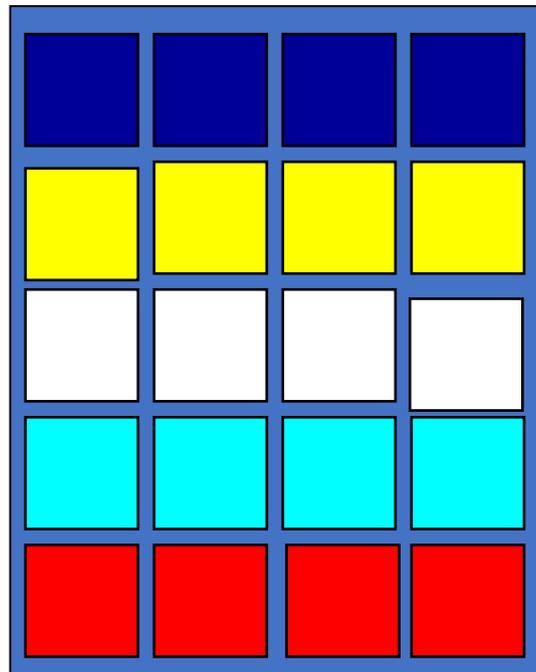
<sup>5</sup> I wrote the initial implementation instructions and guidelines for AID's Handbook 3, as well as a "Blue Book" for training; conducted several training workshops, and participated in early field applications.

<sup>6</sup> While with USAID, I introduced the Logframe concept to the World Bank's Economic Development Institute (EDI) managers Price Gittinger and Robert Youker. As a consultant later with Moses Thompson's Team Technologies we briefed the UK's Department for International Development (DIFID) while Moses also did pioneering work with the German Foundation for International Development, who renamed it "**ZOPP**" (Ziel Orientierte Projekts Plannungs) and -- in the best German tradition -- took the logframe to new levels of detail and precision! Building on earlier efforts by the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Cedric Celdhana & John Whittle, I also collaborated with Graham Walter in ADB's Evaluation office to incorporate the Logframe in ADB's Project Planning & Monitoring System (PPMS), and furthered its implementation with Bob Hood and his Australian Continuous Improvement Group (**ACIG**); then subsequently with ADB's Andrea Iffland -- who produced a Red Book guide and more explicitly redesignated the Logframe a "**Design & Monitoring Framework (DMF)**." During the same era, I reviewed the World Bank's guidelines -- also prepared by Team Technologies, and -- worked with Charles Chandler of Assumptions Analysis -- then helped implement the Logframe throughout the World Bank Group. Many others worked with the European Union (EU) to institutionalize the Logframe for its projects.

<sup>7</sup> Just as floor plans for human habitation differ, although containing many of the same essential elements. For example, while retaining the original Logframe elements, in addition to restructuring the format, ADB renamed some components as more compatible with its international stakeholder members comprehension of English terminology. Other organizations made less drastic structural changes, but also added or deleted rows and columns as well as changing nomenclature -- to suit their internally-perceived purposes.

<sup>8</sup> Following field work testing and feedback, a leap in logic from **Inputs** to **Outputs** was perceived, and a fifth row -- **Activities** -- was advocated. However, the proposal was decried vociferously as unnecessary because Activities were more completely -- **and logically** -- addressed in the Project Implementation Plan (developed by Critical Path methodology and depicted by Gantt Charts). As a compromise, the **Activities** row was ultimately included as an **Optional** item.

**FIGURE 1**



**FIGURE 2**

<b>NARRATIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS &amp; TARGETS</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES &amp; MEANS OF VERIFICATION</b>	<b>ASSUMPTIONS &amp; RISKS</b>
<b>GOAL</b> (VISION: Strategic Impact)			
<b>PURPOSE</b> (MISSION: Immediate Outcome)			
<b>OUTPUTS</b> (Project Deliverables)			
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <i>[Optional Row]</i>			
<b>INPUTS</b>			

More explicitly:

FIGURE 3  
**The LOGICAL FRAMEWORK  
 (Logframe)**

	<b>DESIGN SUMMARY (NARRATIVE)</b>	Performance Indicators & Targets	Data Sources / Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks
<b>D e m a n d</b>	<b>GOAL (Vision )</b>	<b>Desired EFFECT after Attaining the PURPOSE</b> <i>Strategic Management Levels</i>		
	<b>PURPOSE (Mission )</b>	<b>NEED</b> The intended <i>Change</i> <i>after target beneficiaries Utilize</i> _____ the Outputs provided by the Project		
<b>S u p p l y</b>	<b>OUTPUTS Deliverables</b>	<i>Project Deliverable Level</i> The Infrastructure, Facilities, Goods/Products &/or Services provided by the intervening organization’s Project, and related efforts		
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>			
	<b>INPUTS</b>	The Resources required to Implement the Project		

\*Supply/Demand concept conceived by Dr. Charles G. Chandler, Assumptions Analysis, Inc.

© 2020 2019 2001 Dr. Kenneth F. Smith, PMP

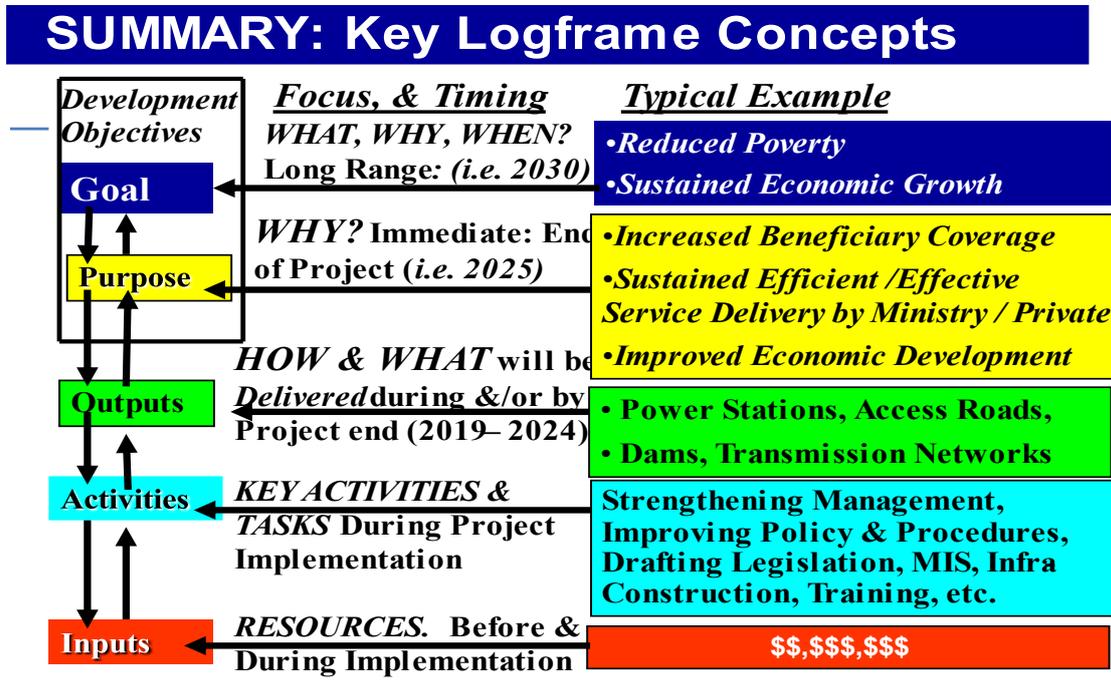
Slide 6

By starting at the top row and working down, conceptually the essence of a “*What – How*” high-level ‘Theory of Change’ (TOC) discussions to formulate a “**Development Hypothesis**” can be summarized in a hierarchical linear structure by the “**Logic**” of the Framework. When clearly identified, the strategic Objectives can then be reviewed for implementation feasibility by an “*If -- Then*” questioning ‘Cause & Effect’ approach on the part of pragmatic tacticians.<sup>9</sup>

This process is illustrated in Figure 4 on the following page.

<sup>9</sup>The “**Problem, Solution, Results Tree**” methodology was later introduced to enhance addressing this aspect.

FIGURE 4



© 2020 2019 2001 Dr. Kenneth F. Smith, PMP

Slide 8

And the ADB LogFrame Variant:

FIGURE 5

### The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Design & Monitoring Framework (DMF)

RESULTS CHAIN	Performance Indicators with Targets & Baselines	DATA & REPORTING	RISKS
IMPACT			
OUTCOME			
OUTPUTS			
KEY ACTIVITIES WITH MILESTONES			
INPUTS			
ASSUMPTIONS			

© 2020 2019 2001 Dr. Kenneth F. Smith, PMP

Slide 9

Strategically, the Goal represents the longer-range Vision of the organization’s managers; while the Purpose is the shorter-range result they expect after the project has successfully delivered its

deliverables. Tactically, the Project Manager focuses attention during implementation on delivering those Outputs, However, **achievement of the Purpose** is dependent upon appropriate utilization of those deliverables by the target beneficiaries – which necessitates behavioral changes; so **is usually beyond the Project Manager’s control or capability**.

In conclusion, **Logframe Analysis is a useful technique** and the **Logical Framework a useful tool** to facilitate Portfolio, Program and Project Management.

At first blush, the 4 x 5 matrix may appear to be deceptively simplistic. But although meaningful Objectives & Indicators, with Specific Baselines, statistically-significant Targets, coupled with a good management information system (MIS), are “**Necessary,**” *they are not “Sufficient.”* It must be emphasized that the resultant **Logframe** is not merely a form to be filled out and set aside<sup>10</sup> after the initial surge of enthusiasm and energetic stakeholder working groups during initiation and planning stages; and retained for submission during the project proposal funding stage. While achievement of the **Purpose and Goal** are beyond the Project Manager’s responsibility, nevertheless, they **should still be embodied in the Project Manager’s charter as items for his/her constant cognizance in addition to the scope of work and contractual requirements; as constant follow-up is a pre-requisite for success.** Indeed, because the Logframe requires constant attention to detail, and updated with each change order -- to paraphrase Charles Chandler’s observation many years ago -- **it is easy to do the logframe poorly, but difficult to do well!**

Since the managerial interest is fragmented between the strategic and tactical levels – *and realistically will remain so* – without constant attention to implementation progress and problems by the executive suite, and realignment of change orders with the higher-level Purpose by the project manager, the project will more than likely fall short of its ultimate Objectives – i.e. Purpose & Goal.

**Hopefully, you will find this description of Logframe Analysis and the Logframe useful** – either as an ‘**old hand**’ to revisit and reaffirm its concepts, or as a ‘**newbie,**’ seeking ways to enhance your current practices.

---

<sup>10</sup> Problems I all too often encountered on the job. Or even worse: the framework form was poorly prepared after the fact and assigned to a subordinate or clerical assistant with instructions to use their imagination and fill out the blocks; in essence ignoring the analysis aspect, and treating the Logframe as merely another component of the project’s documentation requirements, to submit to the organization’s review board for final funding approval!

## About the Author



### **Dr. Kenneth Smith**

Honolulu, Hawaii  
& Manila, Philippines



Initially a US Civil Service Management Intern, then a management analyst & systems specialist with the US Defense Department, Ken subsequently had a career as a senior foreign service officer -- management & evaluation specialist, project manager, and in-house facilitator/trainer -- with the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Ken assisted host country governments in many countries to plan, monitor and evaluate projects in various technical sectors; working ‘hands-on’ with their officers as well as other USAID personnel, contractors and NGOs. Intermittently, he was also a team leader &/or team member to conduct project, program & and country-level portfolio analyses and evaluations.

Concurrently, Ken had an active dual career as Air Force ready-reservist in Asia (Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines) as well as the Washington D.C. area; was Chairman of a Congressional Services Academy Advisory Board (SAAB); and had additional duties as an Air Force Academy Liaison Officer. He retired as a ‘bird’ colonel.

After retirement from USAID, Ken was a project management consultant for ADB, the World Bank, UNDP and USAID.

He earned his DPA (Doctor of Public Administration) from the George Mason University (GMU) in Virginia, his MS from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT Systems Analysis Fellow, Center for Advanced Engineering Study), and BA & MA degrees in Government & International Relations from the University of Connecticut (UCONN). A long-time member of the Project Management Institute (PMI) and IPMA-USA, Ken is a Certified Project Management Professional (PMP®) and a member of the PMI®-Honolulu and Philippines Chapters.

Ken’s book -- **Project Management PRAXIS** (available from Amazon) -- includes many innovative project management tools & techniques; and describes a “**Toolkit**” of related templates available directly from him at [kenfsmith@aol.com](mailto:kenfsmith@aol.com) on proof of purchase of PRAXIS.