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# EU Project Planning and Management Handbook

Based on Project Cycle  
Management (PCM)

**LAPIN AMK**<sup>7</sup>  
Lapland University of Applied Sciences



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# EU Project Planning and Management Handbook

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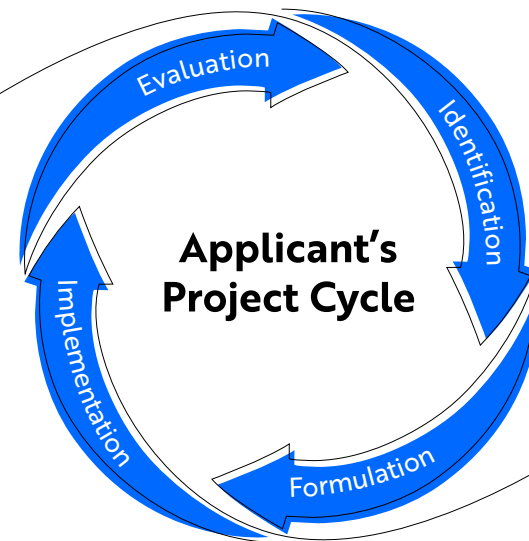
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# Introduction to EU Project Planning and Management



## **AIM: To understand the structure of the handbook and to have an overview of EU project management, to introduce the Project Cycle Management methodology**

The purpose of this handbook is to help you apply for and manage EU projects. An EU project, EU-funded project, and EU project management are terms used in this handbook to describe the working principles of projects funded by the European Commission of the European Union. Our handbook offers a step-by-step approach to the entire project cycle. It starts with project idea development, goes on to the writing of the project plan and application, the steps to be taken to implement the project, and finishes with evaluation.

Project Cycle Management (PCM) is a method of EU project management that is divided into phases to have a systemic, sequential, and logical approach to project work - from an initial project idea to the implementation and completion of a project. The PCM method is used by both project applicants and EU project financing authorities. For the purposes of this handbook, we approach PCM methodology from the applicant's perspective, where PCM typically consists of Identification, Formulation, Implementation, and Evaluation phases.

### **Content and tools**

- Definition of a project
- Characteristics of EU projects
- EU funding and application
- Project Cycle Management (PCM)

### **Key questions**

- What does EU funding mean?
- What is a project?
- What are the characteristics of EU projects?
- What are good methods and tools to succeed in EU projects?

# Applicant's Project Cycle

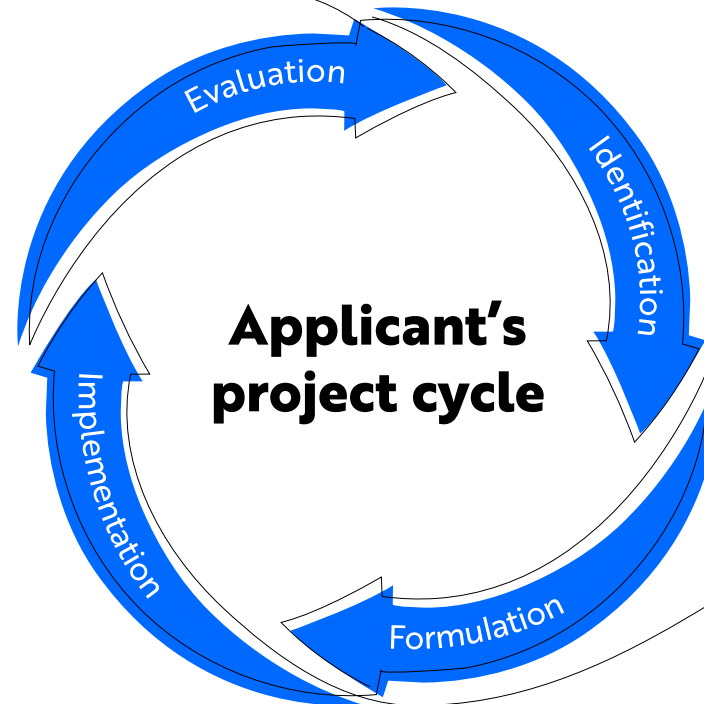
An overview of the stages of the project cycle with steps and tools from the applicant's point of view.

## 4. Evaluation

- Audit
- Evaluation
- Measuring efficiency
- Possible new projects

## 3. Implementation

- Contract with European Commission and partners
- Updated workplan
- Communication and dissemination plan
- Monitoring and evaluation plan
- Actual work on implementation
- Progress monitoring
- Dissemination
- Reporting



## 1. Identification

- Problem analysis: problem tree
- Objective analysis: objective tree
- Strategy selection
- Stakeholder analysis
- Project concept note
- Consortium building
- MoU and Non-Disclosure agreement

## 2. Formulation

- Logical Framework LF
- Work breakdown structure
- Gantt chart schedule
- Resource plan and budget
- Project plan and application

Figure 1. Applicant's project cycle

## Note

EU funding instrument is a term commonly used to refer to EU Funding programmes.

<b>DEFINITION OF A PROJECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A series of tasks to achieve a unique result</li><li>• Has a clearly specified goal or objective</li><li>• Has defined resources</li><li>• Has a clearly defined schedule</li></ul>
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF EU PROJECTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have specific features that other projects do not have</li><li>• The EU enforces strict rules to ensure the sound use of funding</li><li>• Projects are carried out by a consortium of partners</li><li>• Projects have a joint budget for all partners, distribution of which is based on the responsibilities in the project plan</li><li>• Most EU programmes aim at international development work with a multicultural and multinational project consortium</li></ul>
<b>EU FUNDING AND APPLICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financing granted by the European Commission to advance EU policies and EU objectives</li><li>• Funding in seven-year programming periods, which define EU development goals and priorities for each period.</li><li>• Organisations apply for funding by submitting a project plan responding to a call of proposal</li><li>• Project applications are evaluated, based on the programme criteria</li><li>• Only some applications are accepted and funded</li></ul>
<b>PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT (PCM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The method for EU project design and management used by the EU funding programmes.</li><li>• It consists of five phases: programming, identification, formulation, implementation, and evaluation.</li><li>• Uses the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)</li></ul>

Table 1. Basic project terminology

# From Idea to Application

Compiling an EU project application for funding is a time-consuming process that requires significant resources and a large amount of work by a project consortium. It is crucial that a project application is developed jointly by all partners, considering the volume of work and the many steps needed to ensure a good quality application. The submitted and accepted application serves as a base for the grant contract with the EU funding authorities.

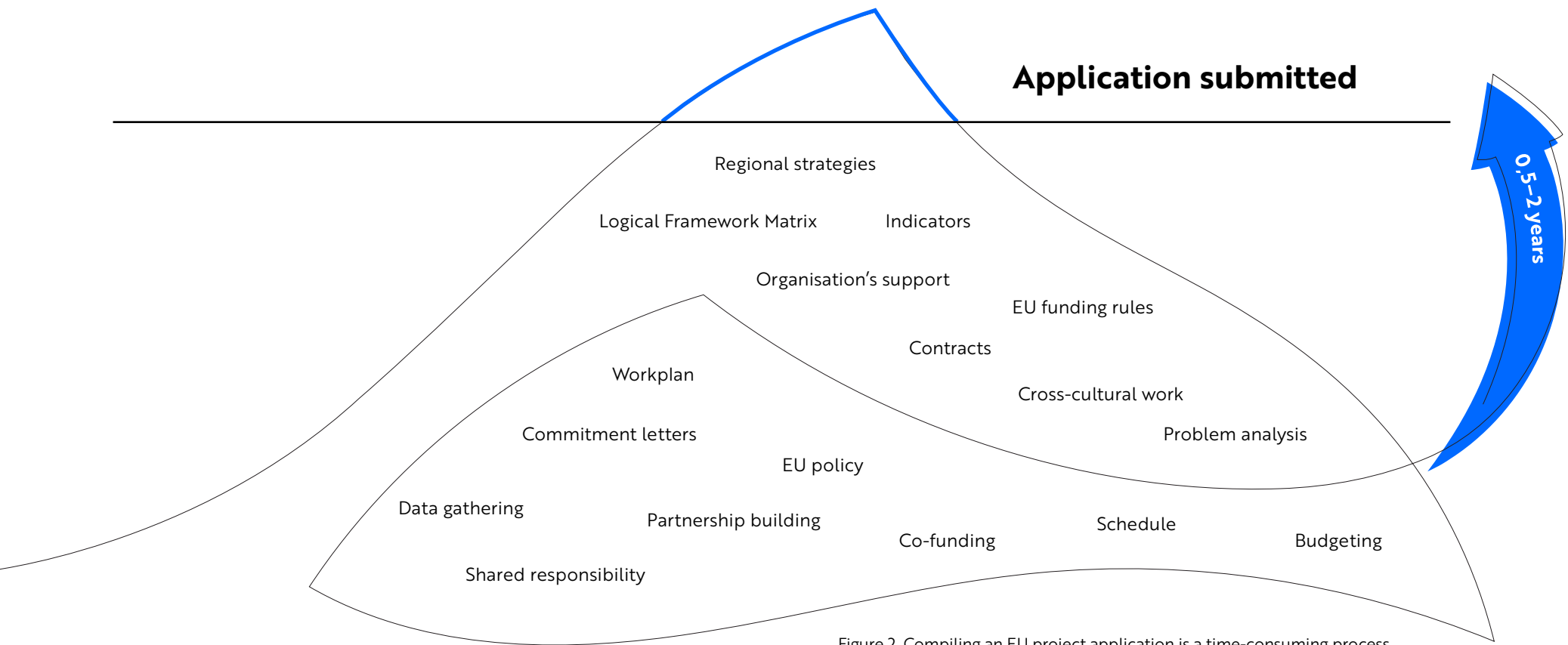
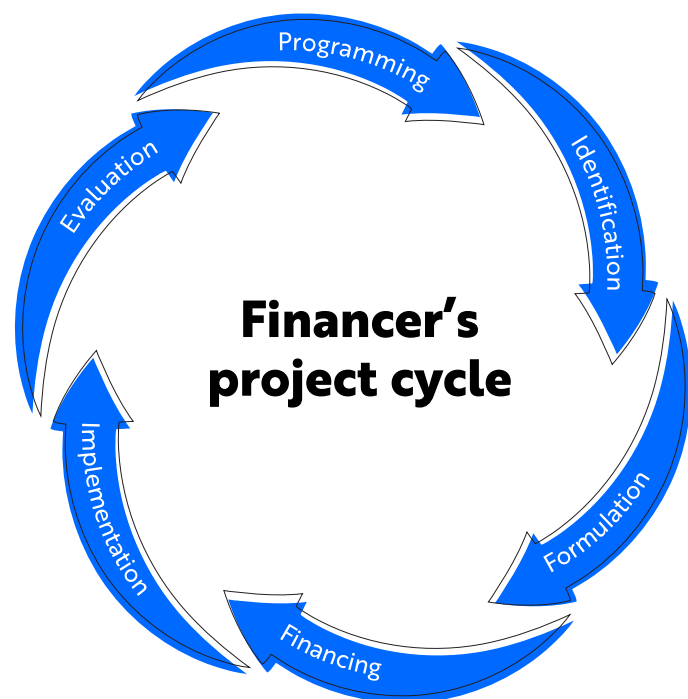


Figure 2. Compiling an EU project application is a time-consuming process



# Financer's Project Cycle

The financer's cycle describes the process of developing large-scale EU funding programmes and guidelines for applicants. While the applicant's cycle focuses on single project planning and implementation financed from particular funding programme, the financer's cycle is devoted to strategic decisions at EU level to decide how EU budget is spent for the implementation of set policies and strategies.



## **Programming**

National, regional and EU strategies are consulted, particular EU funding priorities are defined.

## **Identification**

EU funding financing proposal and action programmes are prepared

## **Formulation**

The financing agreement is prepared with national and EU authorities

## **Financing**

The approval of the multiannual financial framework and the division of funding for specific programmes

## **Implementation**

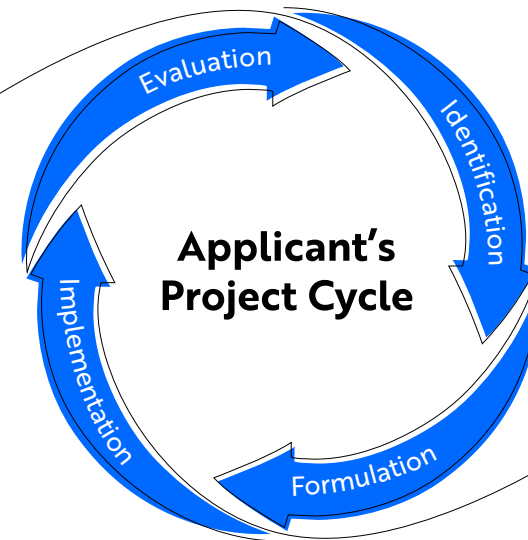
EU funding programme management and monitoring (calls for proposals and reporting)

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation and audit of project reports, as well as programme results.

Figure 3. Financer's project cycle

# EU Project Partnerships



## **AIM: To have a good basic understanding of why we need partners for EU projects, what type of partners there are, how to find and build partnerships.**

EU projects are usually intended to solve problems and attain goals that are common for more than one EU member state. There should be added value, a strong reason and a clear need for an international project. Working in a multicultural and multinational environment requires an open, accepting attitude and frequent interaction between partners.

### **Content and tools**

- Types of partners
- Common requirements by the EU funding programme
- Principles of building a partnership
- How to find a partner
- Consortium building
- Maintaining and strengthening partnerships
- Multicultural project environments
- Successful intercultural communication with partners

### **Key questions**

- What type of things do you need to consider when finding partners?
- How can you find partners?
- How is a project consortium built?
- How to ensure successful intercultural communication with partners?

<b>TYPES OF PARTNERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead partner</li> <li>• Work package leader</li> <li>• Partner</li> <li>• Associated partner</li> </ul>
<b>COMMON REQUIREMENTS BY THE EU FUNDING PROGRAMME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project has to build a partners' consortium that meets the minimum criteria of the funding programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• type of organisation</li> <li>• who can lead, who can be a partner</li> <li>• participant country, often partners from three different eligible countries</li> <li>• can be requirements in experience/less or more developed area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a mutual goal</li> <li>• Commitment and equal participation in project development in all stages</li> <li>• Definition of roles and responsibilities, building trust and transparency</li> </ul>
<b>HOW TO FIND A PARTNER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing networks</li> <li>• Partner search platforms</li> <li>• Participation in thematic events, benchmarking, matchmaking and brokerage events</li> <li>• Previous project partners and their networks</li> </ul>
<b>CONSORTIUM BUILDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose partners with relevant expertise</li> <li>• Make sure the composition of partners best serves the project's goals</li> <li>• Note – consortium building is a demanding and lengthy effort</li> <li>• Often a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed</li> </ul>
<b>MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish good communication principles</li> <li>• Organise face-to-face meetings when possible</li> <li>• Get to know your partners better, also at the personal level</li> <li>• Host project events</li> <li>• Ensure trust and respect</li> </ul>

Table 2. Main elements of EU project partnerships

<p><b>MULTICULTURAL PROJECT ENVIRONMENTS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An international project consortium is always a challenging multicultural working environment</li> <li>• Be aware of your own culture and the cultural differences of your partners</li> <li>• Learn basic principles of “how to do business” with representatives of the cultures involved in your project</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUCCESSFUL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION WITH PARTNERS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish clear principles and channels for communication</li> <li>• Agree on code of conduct</li> <li>• Be aware of cultural differences and time zones</li> <li>• Be open-minded and flexible</li> <li>• Conduct frequent meetings</li> </ul>

Table 2. Main elements of EU project partnerships

**Note**

Be active! Contact people, find common interests. Be prepared! Have a clear objective when attending networking events. Be visible! Share your ideas and experiences.

# EU Funding Instruments

**AIM: To have a good understanding of the different types of EU funding available and how to find them.**

The European Union makes funding available in several different forms, such as grants, loans, and guarantees. When we talk about EU projects in this handbook, we are focusing on grants. The European Commission gives out funding to further EU policies and aims.

## Content and tools

- What Is EU funding?
- Types of EU funding
- Funding and Tenders portal

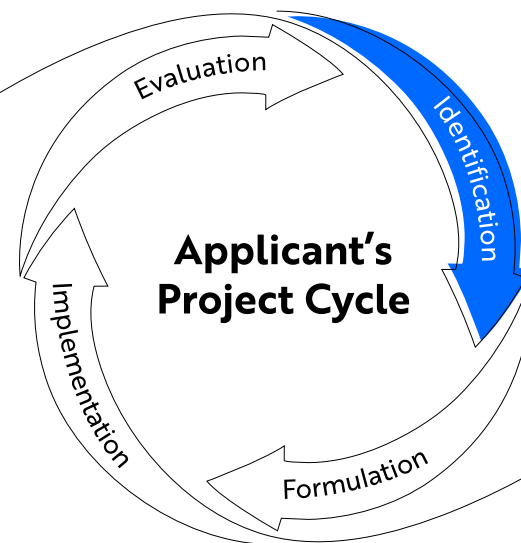
## Key questions

- How does the EU give out funding?
- Why does EU give funding to projects?
- Who can apply for EU project funding?
- How do you apply for EU project funding?
- What does direct and indirect EU funding for projects mean?

<b>WHAT IS EU FUNDING?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants, loans and guarantees</li> <li>• EU projects = grants in this handbook</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT IS FUNDED?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding is made available to further EU's policies and aims</li> <li>• A funding Programme opens a call for projects for specific priorities, i.e. a call for proposals</li> <li>• A project receives funding to complete a specified set of activities as outlined in the project application, to achieve a certain goal</li> </ul>
<b>HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls for proposals are usually published on the website of the managing authority of a given EU Funding Programme and/or the Funding and Tenders portal</li> <li>• Calls for proposals outline application packages, guidelines, eligibility criteria and timetable</li> <li>• Submit an application fulfilling the criteria by closing date</li> </ul>
<b>WHO CAN APPLY?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different types of organisations can apply</li> <li>• The programme will outline eligibility criteria for the applicant</li> </ul>
<b>TYPES OF EU FUNDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct funding is managed by the European Institutions directly</li> <li>• Indirect funding is managed by either national or regional authorities</li> <li>• This handbook focuses on direct funding</li> </ul>
<b>HOW TO FIND THE CALLS OF PROPOSALS?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different funding programmes have their own websites to publish their programmes and calls of proposals</li> <li>• The funding and tenders portal is a digital platform with information about EU funding programmes and calls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the calls for proposals, electronic form of application, application guides, application deadlines, as well as past and ongoing projects.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• You can search for partners, use a keyword search for programmes, register as an applicant, and submit an application.</li> </ul>

Table 3. Key information on EU Funding Instruments

# EU Project Planning Process and Tools – Identification





## **AIM: To understand the process of how to go from an idea to an analyzed and well thought-out problem, and having a plan on how to solve it.**

The identification phase is about the development of the project idea. Projects often start with a marvelous idea. To turn this idea into a good project, you need to analyse and define the problem it will solve. Every project solves a particular problem or challenge. You must have a thoroughly analysed problem in order to decide how to solve it with your project – in other words what activities and results you need to include in your project.

The identification phase results in defined project ideas that solve the most acute problems, and are consistent with partner strategies and EU funding programme priorities.

### **Content and tools**

- Problem analysis
- Objectice analysis
- Strategy analysis
- Stakeholder analysis
- Concept note
- Feasibility study

### **Key questions**

- What problem(s) does my project solve?
- How do we mean to solve the problem?
- Who benefits when we solve the problem?
- Who can we work with to solve the problem?
- How do I share my idea with others clearly and briefly?

## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

KEY STEPS	OUTCOME	DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION
<p><b>Problem analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define core problem</li> <li>• Ask “What causes this problem?” – establish a cause for each problem and sub-problem</li> <li>• Ask “What negative impact this problem has?” – define the effects</li> <li>• Create a cause-relationship diagram</li> </ul>	<p><b>Problem tree diagram</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause-effect relationship reflecting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core problem</li> <li>• Causes</li> <li>• Effects (consequences)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>What is the actual situation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the core problems</li> <li>• What we are trying to solve in our project</li> <li>• A better understanding of the problem and actual situation from the target group’s point of view</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn negative statements of the problem tree into positive statements</li> <li>• The problem tree is turned into an objective tree - reflecting the desired state</li> </ul>	<p><b>Objective tree diagram</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the hierarchy of objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The problem is turned into the overall objective</li> <li>• Causes are turned into specific objectives</li> <li>• The effects are turned into impacts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Overview of alternative solutions to the core problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hierarchy of objectives gives a better understanding about possible solutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the objective tree as a solution tree</li> <li>• Analyse each branch of the tree</li> <li>• Define the most feasible, relevant and viable solution</li> <li>• Turn the solution into your project strategy (select a particular branch on the tree)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Highlighting a specific branch of problem tree diagram</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of the best solution for the core problem</li> <li>• How we are going to reach that aim</li> <li>• Selecting the best possible solution to the core problem that becomes the main project strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholder analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and list all project stakeholders</li> <li>• Assess and prioritise the people and organisations who will be affected by your project</li> <li>• Define their social characteristics, needs, fears, expectations, roles, strengths, weaknesses</li> <li>• Map out power/interest grid</li> <li>• Check mutual relationships within the project context</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stakeholder analysis table</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact</li> <li>• Power</li> <li>• Interest</li> <li>• Roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are potential beneficiaries?</li> <li>• Who are potential target groups?</li> <li>• Stakeholder roles in the project</li> <li>• Who could be partners</li> </ul>

Table 4. Key steps of identification

## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

KEY STEPS	OUTCOME	DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION
<b>Concept note</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write a summary about the initial project idea</li><li>• Summarise your analysis in brief</li><li>• Include a short problem statement and your solution to the problem</li><li>• Formulate objectives, expected results, activities and target groups</li><li>• Add information about the possible funding instrument</li></ul>	<b>Concept note document 2 pages max</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title</li><li>• Background</li><li>• Objectives</li><li>• Target group, beneficiaries and impacts</li><li>• Outputs</li><li>• Activities and duration</li><li>• Min/max budget if defined in the call</li></ul>	<b>The initial project idea is formulated and shared with potential project partners</b>
<b>Feasibility study</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct SWOT analysis</li><li>• Conduct risk analysis</li><li>• Assess the financial, human resource, technical capacity to run the project</li><li>• Assess external and political environment</li></ul>	<b>Feasibility study report</b>	<b>Do we have enough resources, competence and capacity to conduct the project</b>

Table 4. Key steps of identification

### Note

Pay enough attention and take your time in defining the problem: if you skip steps, you will have trouble writing the application and later in implementing the project.

# Problem Tree

The problem tree is a great tool for analysing your problem, its causes and effects.

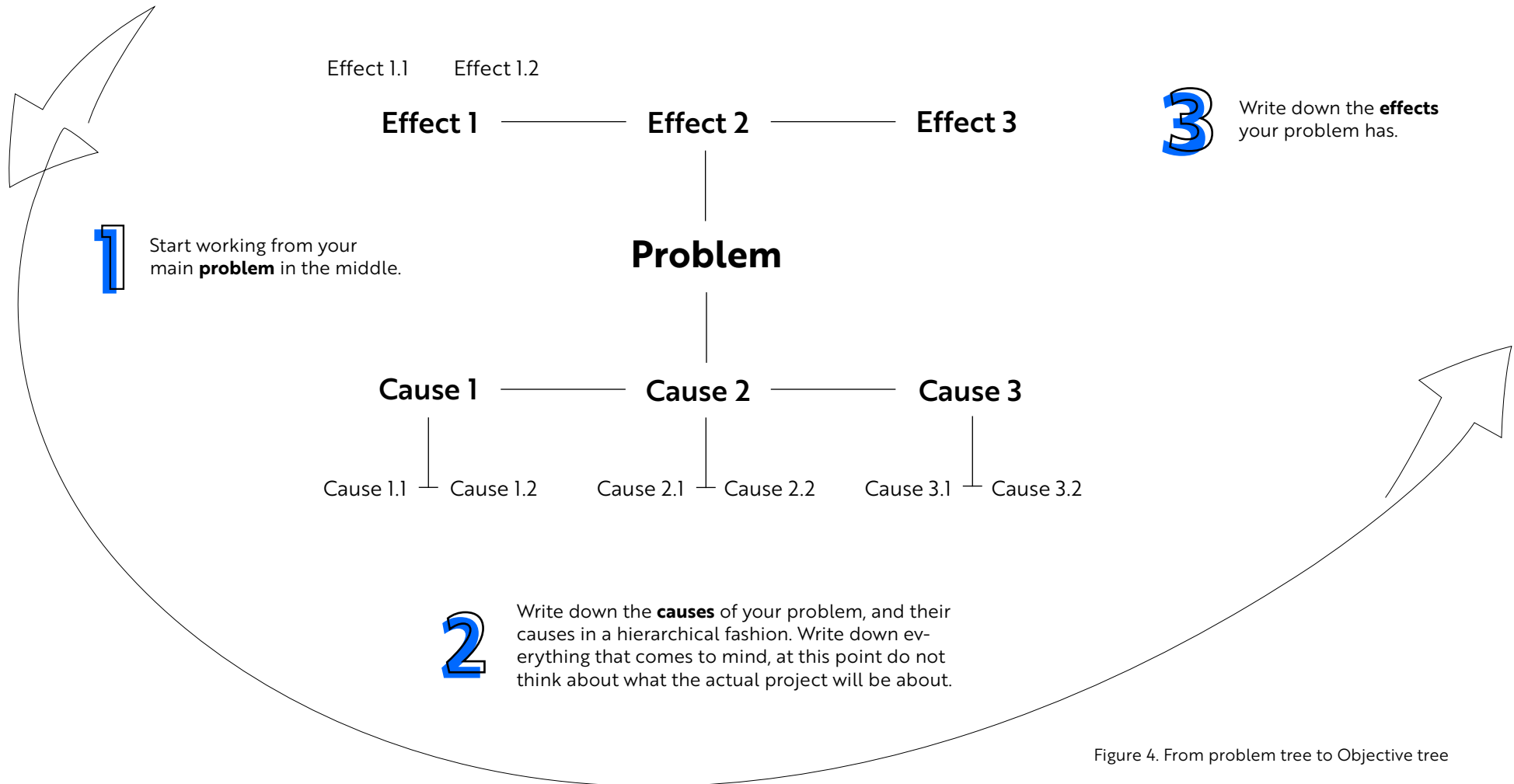


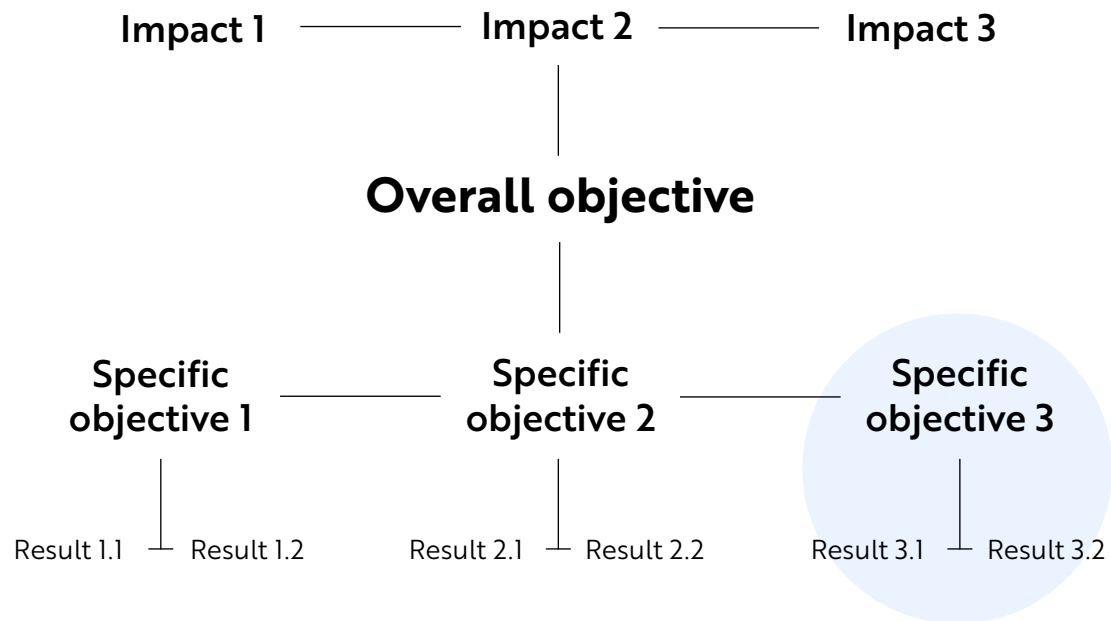
Figure 4. From problem tree to Objective tree

# Objective Tree

The objective tree is the tool with which you, by turning your problems into positive statements, come up with your project objectives and project strategy.

**4**

Turn your **Problem tree** into an **Objective tree** by turning problems into positive statements. Work your way down.

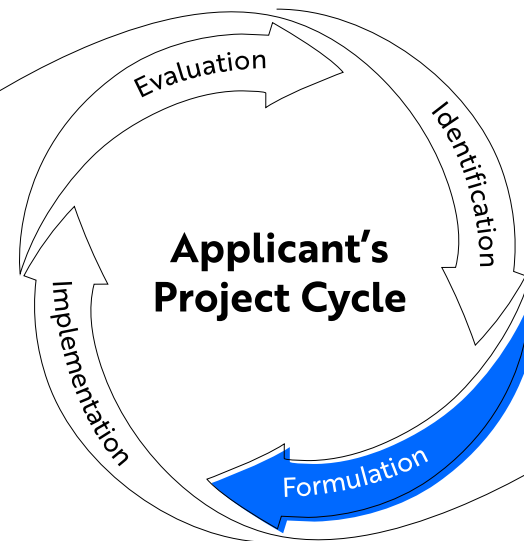


**5**

Choose your project strategy. **Pick which branch** (specific objective and results) will, in fact, become your project.

Figure 4. From problem tree to Objective tree

# EU Project Planning Process and Tools – Formulation



## **AIM: To understand how Logical Framework Approach works and why it is needed. To be able to complete a logical and detailed project plan and application.**

Formulation is the phase of the project cycle during which you define the structure of your project, test its inner logic and risks, and define how you will measure project success (indicators). You do this with the Logical Framework Approach. At the end of the 'Formulation' phase, you will have a logical, detailed, measurable plan of the why, what, who, how, and when of your project.

### **Content and tools**

- Logical Framework Approach LFA
- Workbreakdown structure and work packages
- Gantt chart
- Milestones and deliverables
- Resource plan and budget
- Project plan and application

### **Key questions**

- What are project objectives: long term objective, specific project objective, expected project results?
- How will we attain these results?
- What resources do we need to produce the results?
- When will we do which activities to produce the results?
- Am I using simple language to explain the what, when, why and with whom of my project? Would an outsider to the project team not familiar with the topic understand what it is about?
- Did I adjust my project idea to meet the requirements of the funding programme and its objectives for the application?

# Logical Framework Approach

Logical Framework (Logframe) Approach, LFA, is the methodology used for objective-oriented project planning in EU projects. Through the LFA you define the overall objective, specific objective, results and activities, their indicators and sources of verification, as well as the assumptions and risks of the project. This is the basis for your project plan. The end result is the Logical Framework Matrix.

## How to fill in the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM):

- Take your **objective tree**, and start filling in your Logical Framework Matrix based on that.
- First work on your **objectives, results and activities** After that, fill in the **assumptions and risks** for your results/objectives.
- Next you need to write out **indicators** for your overall objective, and **the sources of verification** for those indicators (data source). Then do the same for your specific objective, and lastly for your results.
- Make sure your Logframe is logical: your activities should produce the results, results should lead to the specific objective, and the specific objective should contribute to reaching the overall objective.
- The logic of the LFM should now be clear, and writing a project application based on your LFM will make the application clear and logical.

### Note

Pay particular attention to project indicators, these are often a weak spot even in good applications. You want clearly measurable results!



## Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) base for EU project application

	Project planning	Project monitoring and evaluation		Project planning
	Project Summary – objectives Intervention logic	Indicators (Quantity, quality and/or time)	Data source Sources of Verification SoV	Risks/Assumptions Factors that may affect the success of the project
<b>Overall Objective</b> (Impact). Your project only contributes to these goals ie. programme objectives.	Broader, long-term change. Project will contribute to this objective. Outside of your project's direct control. Linked to development strategies at organisational, national, regional or international level. 1	Impact Indicator: how will you measure and observe the actual impact in the long run. 8	Sources of information and methods used – where will you get evidence about the impact intended. 9	It is hard or impossible to assume the risks or assumptions at the OO level and therefore this box is usually left empty.
<b>Specific Objective</b> (Project Purpose, Outcomes). Your project is responsible for and delivers at the end of the project. 2	Direct effects or benefits for the target group. Contributes to the overall objective	Measurable performance indicators, change in attitude, a new way of doing things. 10	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report the achievement of the specific objective. 11	Risks that are out of the project's control; assumptions: define factors that are sufficient to guarantee the success of the project at SO level. 7
<b>Results</b> (Outputs). Up to 5 results – potential work packages	The direct/tangible outputs or improved situation (training, network, infrastructure, goods, services) delivered by the project. The sum of the results should lead to the specific objective. 3	Measure the degree of delivery of the outputs. Products/services produced as a result of actions taken. 12	Sources of information and methods used to prove the actual existence of a result. 13	Risks that are out of the project's control; assumptions: define factors that are sufficient to guarantee the success of the project at Result level. 6
<b>Activities</b> What are the key activities to be carried out to produce the Results (outputs)? Inputs to reach outputs. Group the activities into Work Packages by Result.	Group the activities into Work Packages by Result: WP1 (related to Result 1) 1.1.1. – "Title of activity " 1.1.2. – Title of activity " WP2 (related to Result 2) 2.1.1. – "Title of activity " 2.1.2. – Title of activity " 4	<b>Means</b> What are the means required to implement these activities, e. g. staff, equipment, training, studies, supplies, operational facilities, etc. <b>Costs</b> What are the costs of the activities? How are they classified? (Breakdown in the Budget for each Activity)		Activities or situation required for the successful implementation of activities. 5

Table 5. Logical framework matrix. \*Numbers indicate sequence of steps during the work filling in LF.

## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

KEY STEPS	OUTCOME	DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION
<p><b>Logical Framework Approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use objective tree and project strategy branch to start building the Logframe</li><li>• Define the hierarchy of objectives<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall objective</li><li>• Specific objective</li><li>• Expected results</li><li>• Core activities to reach objectives</li></ul></li><li>• Add to each objective specific and measurable indicators of achievement, and expected sources of verification</li><li>• Define the risks</li></ul>	<p><b>Logical Framework Matrix</b></p>	<p><b>Clearly defined goals on four levels</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Overall objective (long term goal)</li><li>2. Specific objective</li><li>3. Expected results 3–5</li><li>4. Key activities for each expected result</li></ol>
<p><b>Work Packages (WP) and Workbreakdown (WBS) structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select the core results from the Logframe and core activities for each result</li><li>• Form a work package under each result</li><li>• Break activities down into more specific and manageable tasks</li></ul>	<p><b>WBS diagram</b></p>	<p>3-5 work packages with detailed sets of tasks to be performed to achieve the project result.</p>
<p><b>Workplan</b></p> <p>Create a breakdown of implementation work packages, tasks and activities with specifically defined deliverables at each stage.</p>	<p><b>Workplan</b></p>	<p>Workplan for each milestone with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• key action steps</li><li>• timeline</li><li>• expected outcome</li><li>• source of verification</li><li>• responsible person/s</li></ul>
<p><b>Scheduling activities (Gantt Chart)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use WBS and add all activities in sequence for each WP</li><li>• Define how much time is needed to complete each task</li><li>• Define dependencies of activities and tasks</li><li>• Define the milestones and core deliverables</li></ul>	<p><b>Project schedule in Gantt chart</b></p>	<p>Timeline for all activities</p>

## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

KEY STEPS	OUTCOME	DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION
<b>Milestones and deliverables</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use Milestones to mark the completion of major phases</li><li>• Review the activities included under each milestone to make sure they contribute to the achievement of the result</li><li>• Indicate key deliverables for each milestone (tangible or intangible outputs)</li></ul>	<b>Milestones marked in Gantt Chart</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project milestones</li><li>• Deliverables</li></ul>
<b>Resource planning and budgeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use Gantt chart to assign needed resources for each activity and task (human, material, technical, travel etc)</li><li>• Group and categorize the resources</li><li>• Define the cost of each resource</li><li>• Sum up and create the budget table</li></ul>	<b>Resource plan and budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly defined needs for the resource categories</li><li>• Identified costs of project activities</li><li>• Total project budget</li></ul>
<b>Project plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transfer the information gathered while using the analysis and planning tools into written text</li><li>• Follow project plan outline</li></ul>	<b>Project plan document</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan including project goals, implementation and budget</li><li>• Clearly defined roles and tasks of project partners</li></ul>
<b>Project application</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use EU funding format</li><li>• Use project plan content and adjust to the requirements of the application form</li><li>• Take the programme indicators and evaluation criteria into account</li><li>• Adjust the language of the project plan to the project application jargon</li><li>• Submit the application</li></ul>	<b>Project application and required attachments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalised project application</li><li>• Final budget and clear division of budget by partners</li><li>• Signed and legalised commitment by partners</li></ul>

Table 6. Key steps of formulation

# Gantt Chart Schedule

The Gantt chart is a visual tool to help plan and schedule projects. The Gantt chart is a vertical representation of WBS, showing the breakdown of work packages into activities and tasks. It defines timelines and dependencies between activities for the completion of tasks. A Gantt chart displays what has to be done (activities, tasks) and when (timeline). In the example below, 'D' refers to deliverables.

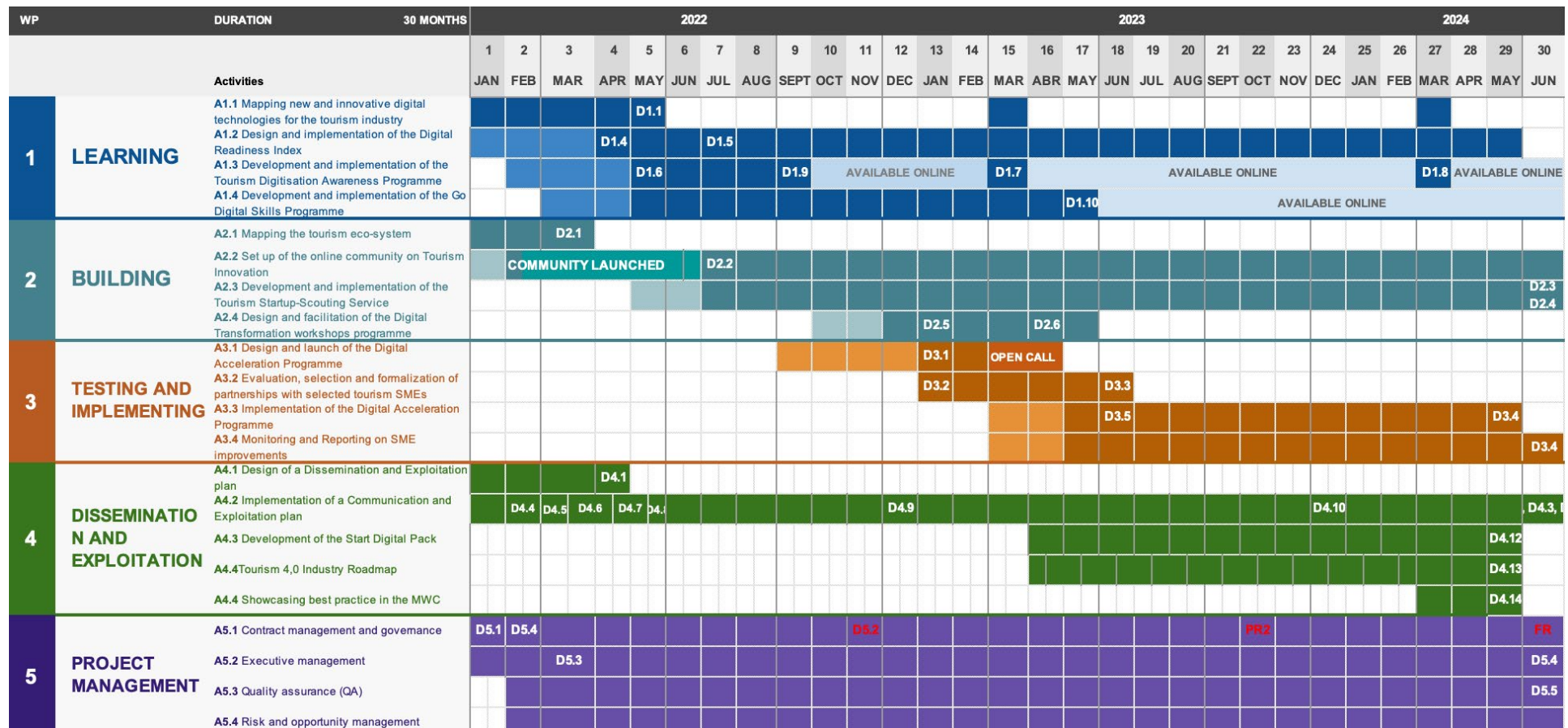


Figure 5. Example of a Gantt chart © 'TOURBIT Fostering digitalization of European tourism SMEs' Project 2022.

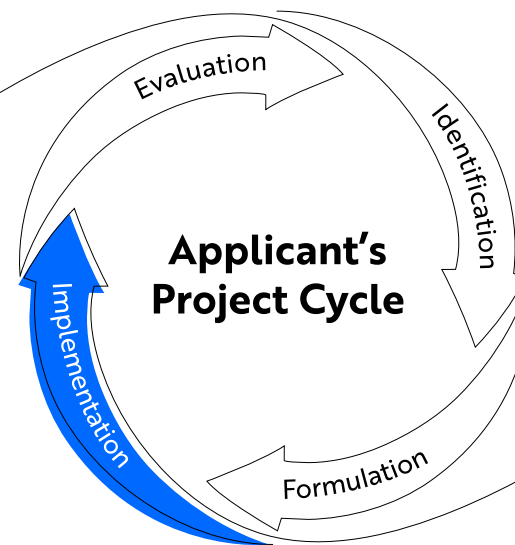
## Note

Partner involvement is crucial in both Identification but especially Formulation. Everything is done together with your partners, not alone.

## Some tips for a good application

- Make sure your application is in line with the funding programme indicators and evaluation criteria. Double check that you meet these and write them out clearly in your project application.
- Make sure your summary is clear and includes: objective of the action; problems/needs it solves; target groups and final beneficiaries; expected results and main activities. A well written summary is half of the success of your application.
- Explain everything in simple language, always explain abbreviations. Every application evaluator cannot be an expert on the topic of your project, therefore do not go overboard with complex terminology.
- Use figures, statistics, headings, bullet points, and tables if possible. Make it easy for the reader to understand your project by skimming through the application.

# Project Implementation



## **AIM: To understand what it means to implement an EU project, and to monitor a project's progress successfully.**

Project implementation refers to actually doing what you planned to do. Once the EU project application is accepted and the grant agreement is signed, the project consortium will start the implementation phase. The core elements of implementation work are to deliver the project purpose and project results you committed to in your application in your contract with the European Commission, to manage available resources, and to monitor and report project progress.

### **Content and tools**

- Contract with EC and partners
- Update project plans
- Workplan
- Monitoring
- Communication and dissemination
- Reporting
- Project management software tools

### **Key questions**

- What kind of contracts do you need to have signed to begin implementation?
- What should be included in your workplan?
- How do you track project progress?
- What things must your communication and dissemination plan contain?
- How do you manage changes?
- How does the financier know how your project is going/went?

## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

<p><b>Lead partner signs the grant contract with EC</b></p> <p>EC provides a framework agreement that needs to be revised and signed by the authorised person in the organisation. Sometimes partners also need to cosign the contract. There can be changes to the workplan at this point.</p>	<p><b>Signed grant contract</b></p>	<p>Agreement with EC and detailed specification of project implementation rules within EU funding framework</p>
<p><b>Signing partners' agreement</b></p> <p>Lead partner prepares the partnership agreement and an authorised person from each organisation signs the agreement.</p>	<p><b>Signed agreement between lead partner and project consortia partners</b></p>	<p>Agreement with partners clearly specifying commitments, tasks and funding of each partner</p>
<p><b>Update Logical Framework</b></p> <p>Revise the Logframe together with your partners and adjust if needed to changed circumstances</p>	<p><b>Logical Framework Matrix</b></p>	<p>Logical framework with revised objectives, indicators, sources of verification, assumptions (risks)</p>
<p><b>Update project Gantt chart schedule</b></p> <p>Update the schedule based on the actual timeframe once the project agreements are completed.</p>	<p><b>Gantt Chart schedule</b></p>	<p>Gantt Chart schedule adjusted to current circumstances</p>
<p><b>Update and track resource schedule and budget</b></p> <p>Assign personnel to the project, as well as material, technical, travel, and other resources to actual implementation plan</p> <p>Review resources and budget frequently</p>	<p><b>Resource schedule and budget</b></p>	<p>Decision on resources and budget</p>

Table 7. Key steps of project implementation



## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

<b>Update project plan and workplan</b> Revise and update the project plan based on Logframe, schedule and other amendments needed to ensure that it is realistic to reach the objectives set.	<b>Updated project plan and workplan</b>	Revised project plan adjusted to the current situation and detailed specification commitments by all partners. Often attached to the partner's agreement .
<b>Monitoring</b> Create a plan to perform regular reviews of project progress	<b>Monitoring plan</b> <b>Frequent progress reports</b>	Regular review and updating of operational plans, schedule, budget
<b>Communication and dissemination</b> Create internal and external communication plan and plan how you will disseminate the results to others	<b>Communication and dissemination plan</b>	Decision on how, what, and who will be informed about project processes and results
<b>Reporting</b> Use the EU project reporting template and write a narrative project mid-term report, and the final narrative and financial report	<b>Payment applications and activity reports</b> <b>Mid-term report</b> <b>Final project report</b>	Assessment of project results and funding use
<b>Project management software tools</b> Use appropriate software platform for project management	<b>Software tools in use to help efficient PM</b>	Decide on the use of PM tools

Table 7. Key steps of project implementation

# Leadership in EU Projects

As a leader in an EU project, there are many steps you need to take and decisions to make along the way. These are outlined in each of the chapters of our Handbook.

## As project leader, you need to

- Communicate your vision
- Set goals and priorities
- Direct others
- Motivate others

### Note

“Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.”

*Peter Drucker*

## Strategic project leadership

LEADERS	SYNERGY	MANAGERS
Provide vision	<b>Empowerment</b>	Provide resources
Pursue opportunities	<b>Communication</b>	Reduce risks
Inspire	<b>Creativity</b>	Coordinate
Lead improvisation	<b>Teamwork</b>	Provide structure
Do right things	<b>Innovation</b>	Do things right

Table 8. Strategic project leadership

# Multicultural working environments

International projects are always conducted in a sometimes challenging multicultural environment. It is important to be aware of cultural differences of your partners, and to learn the basic principles of “how to do business” with representatives of particular culture.

## Leading a multicultural project

When leading EU projects, you are always leading a multi-cultural team. It is very important for project leaders especially to anticipate, take into account and manage various cultural differences. These affect various aspects of project work: communication, scheduling, completing activities etc.

EU project language and logic is a culture of its own as well.

## Key points

1. Learn about your own culture, and how it affects the way in which you work and see the world
2. Learn about and understand the ways in which cultures differ
3. Keep an open mind and be aware that culture differences can affect your project

## Hofstede's cultural dimensions

One widely used way to construe the differences between national cultures was developed by Geert Hofstede in the 1980s. His six-dimensional model classifies cultures based on the following dimensions:

- Power distance
- Collectivism vs Individualism
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Femininity vs Masculinity
- Short-term vs long-term orientation
- Restraint vs Indulgence

Hofstede, G. 2001. Cultures consequences.

# Different roles in implementation

Managing EU projects is a complex task that is carried out jointly by the partner organisations, not solely by just one organization. There are clearly defined roles for partners during the project's implementation. All partners have a common goal, and responsibilities for the activities that will lead to the achievement of the goal or specific objective of the project.

## Lead partner

The lead partner is the organisation responsible for the overall management of the project. The lead partner signs a contract with the European Commission, and draws up a partnership contract with all the partners. The contract clearly defines the tasks and responsibilities of each partner. However, it should not mean that the lead partner does all the work. Project tasks are shared among project partners.

Project partners frequently report to the lead partner, and the lead partner consequently reports to the EU funding authority.

## Work package leader

Project content is divided into work packages (WP), and each one has a leader. The work package leader can be any partner as decided by the project consortium, based on their expertise. Usually, each work package will have its own WP leader. WP leader is responsible for leading the implementation of the WP, dividing the tasks and responsibilities among partners, leading project communication, the delivery of project results, and the project's reporting.

## Partner

Every partner has a specific role in the project based on their expertise and task in the project. Not every partner has the role of leading a WP, but every partner has clearly defined tasks and responsibilities, and conduct project activities in collaboration with other partners.

## Commitment to the project

The workload among partners differs based on their role in the project. This has been taken into account during planning and budgeting.

During implementation, it is important that all partners feel that they are an integral part of the project. Work package leaders have a key role in ensuring the commitment of the partners to the project. Communication not only with the lead partner but also with all other partners is a very important part of this. In a successful project all partners are committed to working together to achieve the goal of the project.

## Communication among partners

Communication is the key to project success. Partners overall, and specifically in each WP, need to establish clear communication principles and agree on communication channels to ensure smooth and frequent communication.

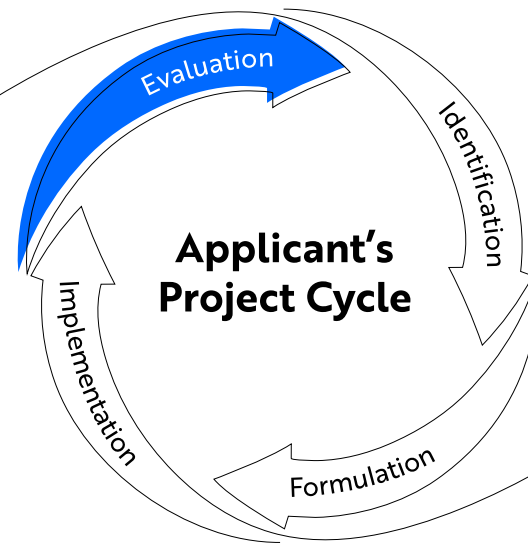
The cross-cultural communication factor needs to be considered when working in international projects, as it can lead to misunderstandings and hinder the project's progress.

### Note

It is important to have a good communication plan to not only external stakeholders, but also within the project. Communication is essential to ensure partners' commitment to the project.

# Project Evaluation

## - Final Reporting, Evaluation, Auditing



## **AIM: To understand how we assess the success and quality of our project, how reporting to the financier is done, and to discover lessons learnt.**

Evaluation means assessing whether the project delivers the end result it promised, and its quality. How efficient, effective, relevant and sustainable has the project been? What impact has it brought? Evaluation is usually performed by an external evaluator. Some EU funding programmes require a mid-term evaluation that is done during the project, as well as the final evaluation. Evaluation costs should be included in the project planning phase. Evaluation is closely linked with monitoring and auditing.

### **Content and tools**

- Monitoring
- Evaluation
- Audit
- Reporting
- Lessons learnt

### **Key questions**

- Why is evaluation an important part of the project cycle?
- Have you assessed project efficiency, effectiveness, project impact, relevance and sustainability?
- Have you submitted all required reports to the financier?
- Can the financier determine whether your project is a success from the reports you have submitted?
- Have you shared your project results with all relevant stakeholders?

## KEY STEPS

## OUTCOME

## DECISIONS OR CONCLUSION

<b>Monitoring</b> Regular review of project progress during implementation.	<b>Regular progress reports</b>	Regular review and updating of operational plans, schedule, budget
<b>Mid-term evaluation</b> Internal or external independent assessment of the project implementation and results in the middle of the project	<b>Mid-term evaluation report</b>	Whether to continue with the project  What has been done well and what should be changed or improved
<b>Final evaluation</b> Internal or external independent assessment of project implementation and project results at the end of the project	<b>Final evaluation report</b>	Concluding on project implementation and outcome from the point of view of efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability  Conclusions on possible follow-up projects
<b>Auditing</b> External checking of funding spent	<b>Audit report</b>	Conclusions on the project's financial management
<b>Lessons learnt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summarize lessons learnt and draw conclusions for the future</li><li>• Outline the planned vs actual outcomes</li><li>• Describe the reasons if the project has not reached its planned outcomes -&gt; helps future projects</li></ul>	<b>Lessons learnt document</b>  <b>Possible new project plans</b>	Conclusions on project success  Steps for the future

Table 9. Key steps of project evaluation



	<b>MONITORING &amp; REGULAR REVIEW</b>	<b>EVALUATION</b>	<b>AUDIT</b>
<b>WHO?</b>	Internal management responsibility – all levels	<b>Usually incorporates external inputs (objectivity)</b>	Incorporates external inputs
<b>WHEN?</b>	Ongoing	<b>Periodic – mid-term, completion, ex-post ongoing and upon</b>	Ex-ante (systems review), completion
<b>WHY?</b>	Check progress, take remedial action, update plans	<b>Learn broad lessons applicable to other programmes/projects and as an input to policy review</b>  <b>Provide accountability</b>	Provide assurance and accountability to stakeholders  Provide recommendations for improvement of current and future projects
<b>LINK TO LOGFRAME OBJECTIVE HIERARCHY</b>	Inputs, activities, results	<b>Results, purpose, overall objective (&amp; link back to relevance)</b>	Inputs, activities and results

Table 10. Definition of monitoring, evaluation and audit

European Commission. 2004. Aid delivery methods : Project cycle management guidelines.

# Summary

- The Project Cycle Management (PCM) methodology and the Logical Framework Approach are useful tools for understanding, planning and implementing EU projects.
- EU terminology might differ from programme to programme, but the core logic remains the same.

## Note

PCM or Project Cycle Management is a methodology that brings predictability and structure to EU project planning and management.

## General

- The foundation of a successful project application and project implementation is based on careful project planning together with the partners
- EU project planning requires sufficient resources and time
- EU projects are designed in partnership and therefore good communication is a crucial factor
- The multicultural environment of international EU projects requires good intercultural skills and knowledge in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings or conflicts
- Partnership or project consortium building requires a lot of work and effort. It needs to be well planned, and resources should be secured to conduct partnership building before the actual project

## Identification

- Identification is about understanding the problem and deciding on the solution
- The identification phase can be the definitive part of the success of your project – it is about ‘to be or not to be’ – do not ignore the importance of this phase!
- The better you understand the core problem you wish to solve, the easier the rest of the project planning will be
- Choosing the best solution for the project strategy is based on problem analysis

### Note

Pay attention to outlining how you are meeting the programme’s priorities. Adjust your basic project idea and plan so that it meets the criteria.

## Formulation

- Formulation is about defining project goals and detailed project planning
- Once identified problems are turned into solutions, clear project objectives can be formulated
- Project objectives and scope are designed with the help of the Logical Framework (LF) tool
- Objectives are always subdivided into four hierarchical levels: overall objectives, specific objectives (project purpose), project results, and activities
- Project scheduling and budgeting are directly linked with the LF
- Project plan is a foundation for the project application, which is based on the specifics of the particular programme

## Application (part of Formulation)

- EU funding application writing is not for a single person, but a joint process by partners following Project Cycle Management steps, using all relevant tools for the best possible result
- The application needs to meet the criteria of the call of proposals and the funding programme
- The application format can be different in different programmes, but mostly it is based on the Logical Framework Approach, with some differences in terminology

## Implementation

- Implementation is about actually doing what you planned to do
- When the funding is received, it will take some time to sign contracts with the funding authority and partners
- Project activities must to be executed with the budget agreed on in the contract
- Every project plan and application needs to be updated
- It is important to have a good monitoring plan to assess the progress of the project
- Project communication and dissemination are very important parts of every EU project
- Reporting to the financer is an integral part of implementation
- Implementation follows the same Logical Framework Approach as the planning phase

## Evaluation

- Project documentation should be kept in good order
- Project results should be transparent, accessible, and disseminated to the wider audience – EU project results are usually public
- At the end, we review the results of the project and draw conclusions for the future
- At this stage many new or follow-up projects are born

### Note

Evaluation means assessing whether the project delivered the end result it promised, as well as evaluating its quality.

# Conclusion

At the end of this handbook, the authors wanted to conclude on the most important points of EU project planning and management.

First of all, EU projects are designed and carried out together with your partners. It is important to keep this in mind, because building and maintaining partnerships requires a lot of effort, and the project partnership (consortium) should be at the core of your project – why does this problem need an international consortium to solve it? How can we best work together to achieve the goal we all agree on?

Secondly, thorough project planning is crucial. Take the time to define your problem and build the basis of the project plan with the Logical Framework Approach. Meticulous and skillful planning will make your project application better, ensure the quality of your project, and make its implementation much easier.

Thirdly and finally, planning and managing EU projects is not rocket science - especially with the tools outlined in this handbook, it is a human-sized job. Working in EU projects is often very rewarding, enables you to learn new things and ways of working, meet new people, and have interesting experiences.

We hope that this handbook gives you a good understanding of the lifecycle of EU projects, as well as concrete tools with which to plan and manage EU projects. We would also like to encourage you to take part in EU project planning and management - it is a rewarding, fascinating field of work.

# About the Authors

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Eeva Helameri is a Specialist at the Lapland University of Applied Sciences. She has worked on many EU-funded projects in various organisations, and in many roles within these projects, such as Project Planner, Project Manager, International Communications Specialist. In the KATOS project Eeva participated in executing the international project management training program, as well as undertook extensive research in EU project management.

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## **KATOS project, Vitality for Lapland by International RDI Competence**

This handbook has been developed as a part of the KATOS project. The KATOS project has been executed by the Lapland University of Applied Sciences and the University of Lapland, Education and Development Services. The project included a pilot training program on International Project Management. Education Manager Katri Kuusela and Coordinator Inga Koskitalo (University of Lapland) have been responsible for organizing the training program.

The students of the KATOS International Project Management training program have also contributed to the format and content of this publication. Their ideas, needs and feedback have been utilised throughout the handbook.

# Abbreviations

EU	The European Union	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
EC	The European Commission	PCM	Project Cycle Management
LF	Logical Framework	WBS	Work breakdown structure
LFA	Logical Framework Approach	WP	Work package
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix		

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Tourbit. Fostering digitalization of European tourism SMEs. <https://tourbit.eu>

# EU Project Planning and Management Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to help you apply for and manage EU projects. Our handbook offers a step-by-step approach to the entire project cycle. It starts with project idea development, goes on to the writing of the project plan and application, the steps to be taken to implement the project, and finishes with evaluation.

This handbook has been produced as a part of the KATOS project, 'Vitality for Lapland by International RDI Competence'. The project included an international project management pilot training program, whose students contributed to the development of this publication. The pilot group's ideas, needs and feedback have been invaluable in designing this handbook.

KATOS is a three-year (2020-2022) project implemented by the Lapland University of Applied Sciences and the University of Lapland. It is funded by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment with the European Social Fund.

Learn more about KATOS: [www.kv-projektiosaaminen.fi](http://www.kv-projektiosaaminen.fi)