

Monitoring Policy Impacts (MPI)

The Application of the LogFrame Method





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by

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for

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO



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1 SUMMARY

The LogFrame method is an instrument employed by analysts, planners and managers for:

- problem analysis,
- objective formulation,
- planning,
- implementation,
- monitoring and evaluation

of selected, objective-oriented interventions that aim at a change of reality from a situation which is perceived as negative towards a positive situation.

Because of its general logic, the LogFrame method can be applied to any type of objective oriented tasks, irrespective of the nature, level of aggregation or complexity of the problem to be solved. Though originally developed as a method for **project** planning and management, the method and its methodological principles can analogously be applied to analysis, planning and management of **programmes and policies**.

The **planning matrix** is the main (physical) output of the LogFrame analysis and planning exercise. It presents, in a concise form, identified objectives, their interrelations within an objective hierarchy (lower level objectives as **means** to achieve higher level objectives as **results**) and the related interventions to achieve them. The matrix also identifies responsibilities, the necessary resources for and specific indicators of objective achievement, as well as critical assumptions on important conditions and risks for objective achievement.

For the purposes of planning and implementation of MPI, the LogFrame method and its methodological principles can be applied to¹:

- Review and analysis of the policy to be monitored (step 2 of MPI). On the basis of available documentation and other evidence, the policy is examined for compliance with strict "means-to end" logic and other criteria such as relevance / significance, effectiveness, feasibility, adequacy, consistency, coherence, between major policy components, i.e. its objectives, strategy, measures of intervention, assumptions, implementation agents, stakeholders, resources and the underlying schedule.
- Development of an impact model for MPI (step 3 of MPI).
- Identification of impact indicators (step 4 of MPI).

¹ As to the different steps of MPI, see EASYPol Module 057: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Eight Methodo-“logical” Steps for MPI](#).

The LogFrame method can also be applied to the planning and management of MPI itself.

2 INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES

Objectives

The **Logical Framework (LogFrame)** method is of paramount importance for policy analysis, planning and impact assessment and recommended to be applied at various stages of the MPI process. Users of this module get acquainted with the main features of the LogFrame method and its applications to monitoring policy impacts.

The module is closely linked to three further EASYPol Modules:

- EASYPol Module 056: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Role of MPI in Policy Formulation and Implementation](#)
- EASYPol Module 057: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Eight Methodo-“logical” Steps for MPI](#)
- EASYPol Module 059: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): Setting-up and Organizing MPI](#)

Target audience

The Module particularly aims at professional staff of government and organisations who are commissioned with the task to conduct policy impact monitoring. It also provides guidance for policy analysis and for performing general impact assessments at policy, programme and project level.

Required background

It is strongly recommended to review Modules 056 and 057 before dealing with the LogFrame method presented in this module.

3 THE STEPS OF THE LOGFRAME METHOD

The LogFrame approach comprises three major phases, i.e. problem and context analysis, objective analysis, and the planning phase, each of which can be further divided into different tasks/ sub-steps to be performed:

Problem- and context analysis

- Identification and analysis of stakeholders.
- Identification and analysis of the existing negative situation, i.e. the problem/s, their causes (problem hierarchy, **problem tree**) and their inter-relationships.

Objective analysis

- Development of a future positive situation by reformulating problems into corresponding objectives (objective hierarchy, objective tree);
- Review, assessment and further amendment of the **objective tree**.

Planning

- Strategy analysis and choice.
- Identification of specific measures / activities to be carried out in pursuance of each selected objective.
- Detailed scheduling and planning of identified measures / activities.
- Documentary summary in form of a Planning Matrix.

3.1 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis has proven to be a useful **starting point** for problem- and context analysis for two main reasons:

In a first step, the stakeholder analysis identifies **all** social groups, institutions, organizations, etc. that are somehow connected with, concerned about or affected by a problem to be addressed by a policy or by the policy itself.

In a second step, the particular characteristics and concerns of the stakeholders with respect to the problem area or with interests in problem solution are analysed. Stakeholders can be directly or indirectly, more or less affected / concerned; they usually differ widely in terms of their political power, capacities, social status and public influence, attitudes, constraints, strengths, expectations and interests. Some stakeholders may reap (or expect to reap) advantages as beneficiaries or service providers, others may experience or be afraid of disadvantages (actual or perceived).

In particular, the analysis of their willingness, respectively their capacity to support or obstruct a change of the status-quo situation and the degree of objective-achievement, requires special attention, since this property alone can make specific stakeholders critically decisive ones. Some stakeholders may have common or divergent interests, form alliances or harbour animosities against each other. As a rule, the majority of stakeholders are of national / local denomination; however, there are often also important international ones (governments of neighbouring countries, international banks, donor- and UN-organizations; international NGOs). Stakeholders can be government institutions at different administrative levels; parastatals, private and community organizations; professional, religious, ethnic groups, women and youth groups and their representations; last but not least the very target- or beneficiary groups.

In a third step, the list of stakeholders is reduced to the very group of **relevant** stakeholders whose active participation and co-operation is considered particularly important or indispensable. Ideally, representatives of this group should jointly undertake the subsequent steps of problem analysis and planning of policy measures in a participatory planning workshop. This is not always practical and/or meaningful for

various reasons; in such cases, alternate arrangements – e.g. separate, preparatory workshops with selected (local) groups – are then called for, the results of which will have to be appropriately considered and incorporated.

3.2 Problem analysis

It cannot be overemphasised that it is the **quality of problem analysis**, namely the compliance with logic stringency that determines the value of the ultimate result of the entire LogFrame exercise and its usefulness for the planning and successful implementation of problem solving, objective-oriented action.

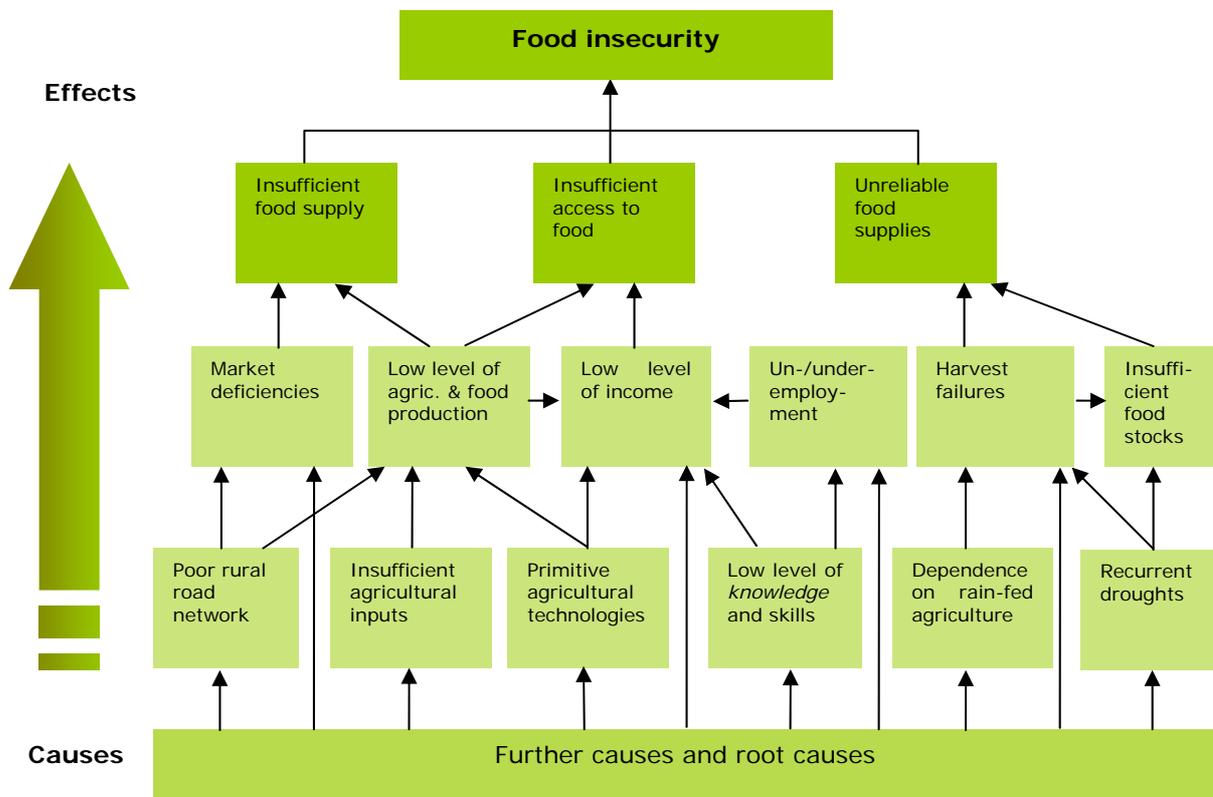
Collectively, the participants of a participatory planning workshop ought to represent a wide range of experience and knowledge about the pre-identified problem; this collective expertise is exploited and should guarantee a quality in-depth problem analysis. Such a result can only be accomplished by extensive, free, non-discriminatory and thorough deliberations and –if need be - discussions between participants.

The start of the problem analysis is made with a brainstorming exercise of participating stakeholders who will individually **indicate** what they consider as the key problems of a prevailing situation. Such brainstorming produces a fairly comprehensive list of heterogeneous problems in an unsorted order. A suitable tool to list and visualise each identified problem and to bring them into order is the metaplan technique: individual problems are noted on cards (one card per problem) which are stuck to a (pin- or magnetic) board.

In a second step, the identified problems so noted on metaplan cards will be arranged, re-arranged, grouped and re-grouped and brought into a hierarchical order which shall illustrate the cause-effect relations between and among problems. Starting with any of the aforementioned unsorted problems, a problem tree (See Figure 1 below) successively develops by linking problems which each other.

This is done by making use of the criteria of "**causes**" and "**effects**". The relationships among problems are shown in such a way that a problem x (=cause) being a causing factor of another problem y (=effect) finds its place at a lower level in the **problem hierarchy**. If any problem can - at this stage of problem analysis - neither be categorised as a cause nor categorised as an effect of another problem already identified, such a problem is treated - for the time being only - as an "independent" problem and a corresponding, yet unrelated position within the problem hierarchy is allocated. Such "independent" problems only indicate that the opening brainstorming has yielded an incomplete result and needs further improvement.

Figure 1: Example of a problem tree related to the core problem "food insecurity"



The problem tree will be completed step-by-step by:

- reformulation of problems and making them more specific,
- adding relevant, but yet missing "cause" factors / problems and resulting "effect"-problems,
- elimination of "problems" found to be of marginal relevance or irrelevant and,
- making re-arrangements within the problem hierarchy so as to more accurately reflect cause-effect relationships between problems and their causing factors.

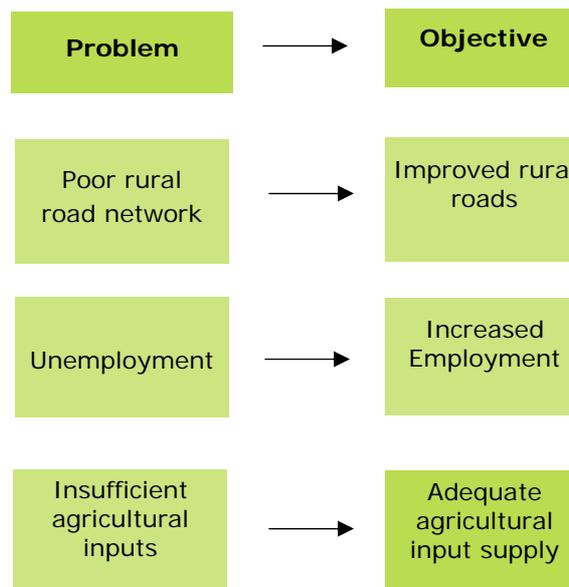
In a third step, a **central** or **core problem** can be identified. This is usually the one that presents itself at the top of the problem tree as a climax effect within the problem hierarchy. The core problem, to be addressed by a policy, programme or project.

3.3 Objective analysis – objectives tree

Whereas problem analysis deals with the aspects of a negative reality situation (problems and their causes), the objective analysis describes the positive aspects of a desirable future situation and means to achieve them. To this end, **problems are reformulated or transformed into corresponding objectives** as is shown in Figure 2 below.

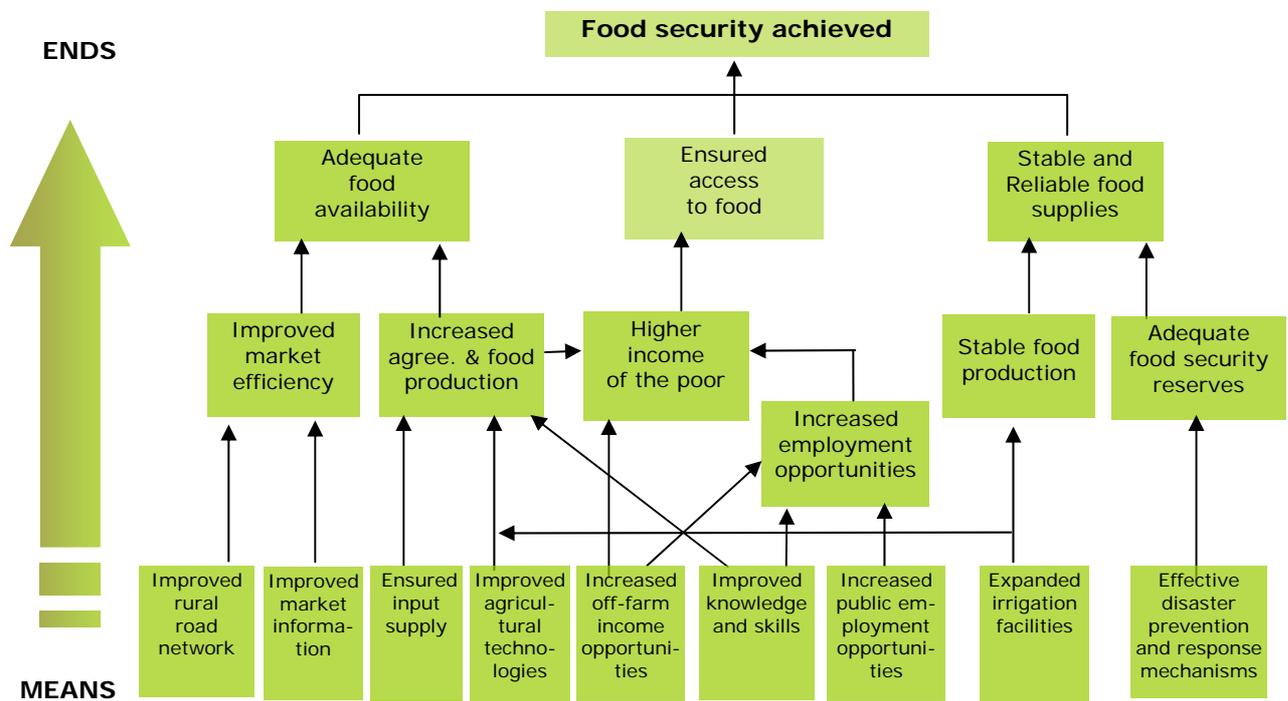
By transforming the problems of the problem tree into objectives, a corresponding objective tree is developed – as presented in Figure 3 below. It can be seen that what have been "cause – effect" relationships between problems of different hierarchies (refer to Figure 12: Problem Tree, above) turn now into "**means to end**" relationships between objectives. In a graphically condensed form the objective tree shows **impact paths** and **impact areas**².

Figure 2: Transforming problems into objectives



² See EASYPol Module 057: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Eight Methodo-“logical” Steps for MPI](#), Step 3: Development of impact model.

Figure 3 : Example of an objective tree



3.4 Strategy analysis and choice

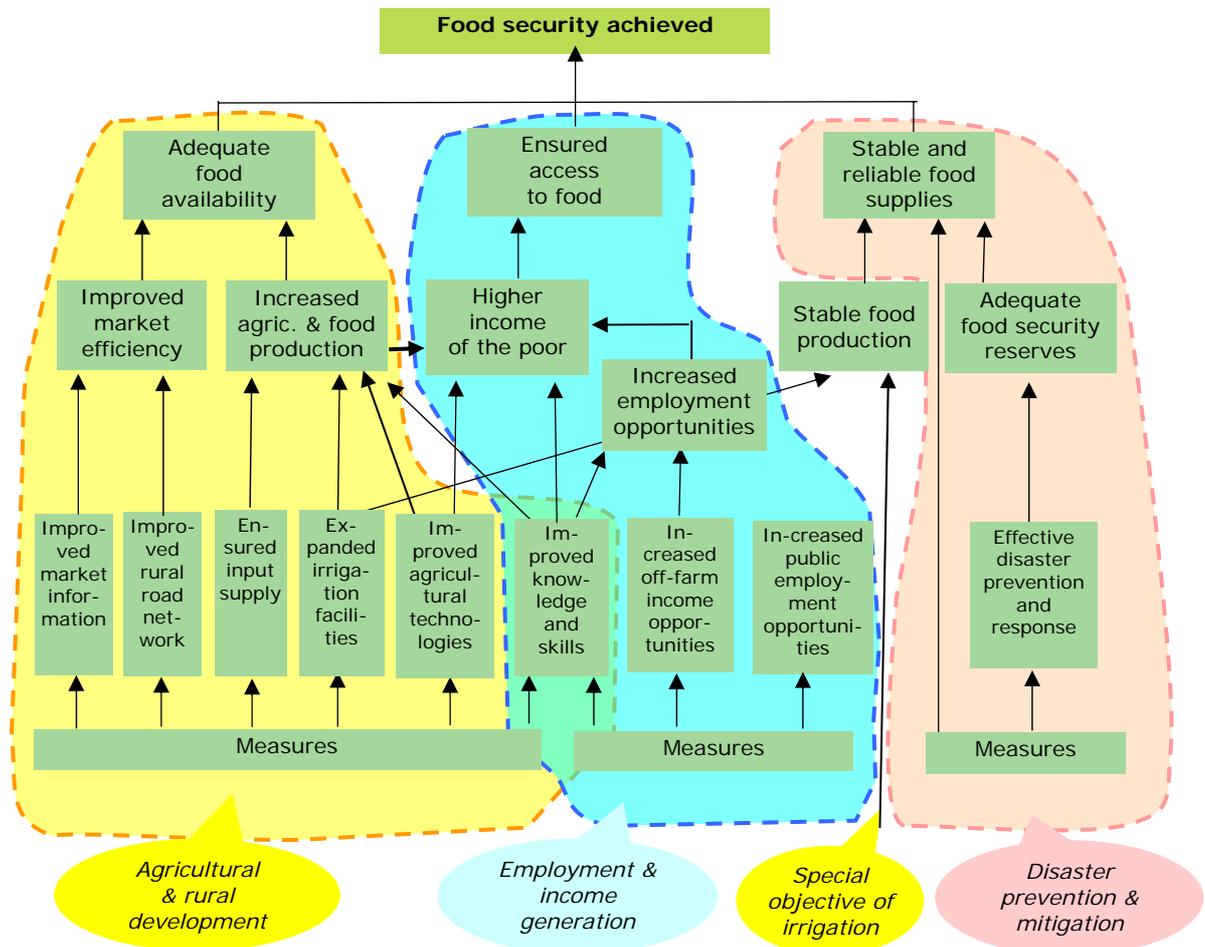
As a result of a so far **purely analytical effort**, the developed objective tree identifies **an array of objectives**, hierarchically positioned as objectives of an ascending order (sub-objectives, objectives and an overall objective) and interrelated by means-to-end relationships. Up to this stage, neither have any specific objectives to be pursued been selected, nor have any specific activities been identified which were to be carried out, nor have any other practical, (policy-, programme- or project-) implementation-relevant aspects yet been considered.

As a final step of the analysis phase, these open issues will now have to be addressed requiring **decisions** regarding:

- which objectives will be pursued? and which not?
- what will be the scope of interventions?
- which strategy or strategies will be chosen to best achieve selected (priority) objectives?

The above mentioned **objective clusters** can serve as good starting points for the search of a strategy of choice. Well arranged objective trees often virtually show and suggest different strategy options at hand - as can be seen from Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 : Strategy selection



Design adapted from: European Commission, 2001

Strategies usually comprise a bundle of measures directed at few closely related (sub-) objectives, which themselves are **major** components of the overall objective aimed at. Strategy selection and the selection of suitable measures to be undertaken vary depending on the **level** of planning:

- At the **policy level**, the chosen strategy may consist of **programmes, projects and/or legislative and regulative measures** which are considered essential and effective to achieve objectives of a relatively high hierarchical order and complexity.
- At the **project or programme level**, the strategy may comprise a number of **measures or activities**, aimed at achieving specific project/programme **results**. These represent selected sub-objectives at lower hierarchical levels of the objective tree.

With reference to Figure 4 above, three major strategies have been identified:

- a) an Agricultural & Rural Development Strategy;
with possible interventions such as: rural road construction, establishment of a rural credit system, provision of improved seeds to farmers, etc.
- b) an Employment & Income Generation Strategy;
with possible interventions such as: income generation schemes, public employment schemes, skill training programmes, etc.;
- c) a Disaster Prevention & Mitigation Strategy;
with possible interventions such as: building-up emergency food reserves, establishment of an early warning system, relief operations, etc.

The choice of a strategy of preference – or also a combination of strategies (!) - to be pursued will be based on a comparative examination of *plausible and meaningful* strategy alternatives. The choice is often made in favour of such strategies that address the most pressing problems or priority objectives or those which can yield quick visible results. Whether or not such a choice is really the best to eliminate root causes of problems is sometimes debatable.

Strategy choice requires judgement and a pre-assessment of respective relative advantages / disadvantages of alternate strategies with the help of **criteria** such as:

- effectiveness with respect to priority (sub-) objectives,
- feasibility,
- sustainability,
- pre-conditions for implementation,
- potential to generate short-term, intermediate and long-term effects,
- general social acceptance,
- response of stakeholder groups,
- other time-implications,
- risks involved and dependency on critical assumptions,
- consistency with other important objectives and policies,
- resource and capacity requirements and availability,
- costs and budgetary implications,
- probability of any positive / negative (side-) effects on , e.g.: poverty, employment, income distribution, ecology, gender, youth and children,
- reliance on own resources versus dependency on foreign aid assistance, et al.

Once the aforementioned decisions (on strategy and specific objectives) have been made, the objectives to be aimed are to be defined **in measurable terms** and the specific measures / activities to be carried out in pursuance of **each** concerned objective / sub-objective are to be identified. The definition of objectives in measurable terms is likely to require some re-adjustments, so as to be in line with the outcome of the

subsequent identification and planning of specific activities to be carried out and their respective targeted results.

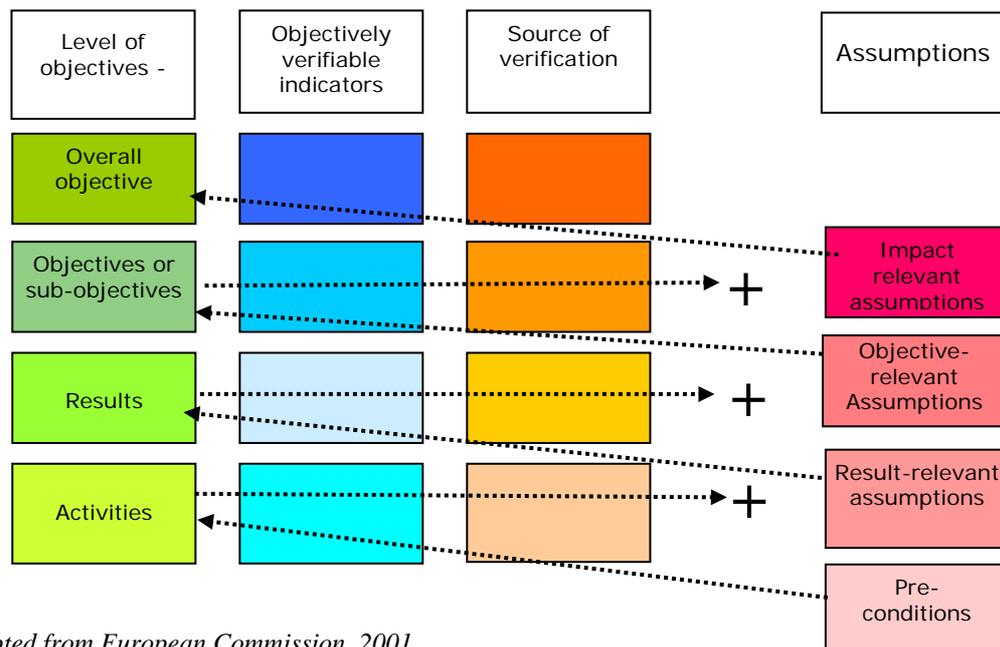
The identification and planning of these specific activities and the determination of their results in measurable terms is a major and time-consuming task that often also demands specific know-how in various fields of specialisation. Depending on the magnitude of the planning task and heterogeneity of subject matters to be considered, this planning step may lend itself for work in sub-groups.

Two key criteria for the selection of suitable and necessary activities / measures are their **feasibility and** (preferably) **direct impact relevance** for the realisation of defined results, because **their** collective realisation is the prerequisite and basis for the achievement of objectives at higher hierarchical orders.

3.5 The Logframe matrix

The **planning matrix** is the main (physical) output of the entire LogFrame analysis and planning exercise. It summarises the results of all preceding steps of analysis and planning in a condensed form.

Figure 5 : Basic structure of a LogFrame matrix



The **standard LogFrame matrix** consists of a 4 x 4 table:

- The upper three rows refer to **objectives** of different levels of the objective hierarchy whereas the lowest row refers to all identified **activities** in pursuance of the objectives.

- In the first column, the **objectives** are positioned according to their appropriate level in the objective hierarchy.
- The second column identifies **objectively verifiable indicators** for each activity and objective. To enable verification of objective achievement, objectives need to be expressed in measurable, preferably quantifiable terms (targets) and specified units of measurement.
- The third column indicates the **sources of verification** (sources of data for the objectively verifiable indicators), also specifying format and a time of reference when the respective data and information will be collected and provided.
- The fourth column lists – separately for each activity and objective - any critical assumption on **additional, necessary conditions** (horizontal arrow line) to realise achievement of targeted results and objectives of the next higher hierarchical level (upward arrow line).

Table 1 presents an example of a basic LogFrame matrix for a programme component (improved access to food) of a food security policy.

Table 1: Basic LogFrame matrix for a programme component of a food security policy

Strategy / Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions / risks
Goal: Overall policy objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security achieved / improved. 	E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutritional status. No. of households below (food) poverty line; no. of population depending on relief assistance. Perception of stakeholders on changes in food situation. 	National statistics, quantitative and qualitative surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decent economic growth. Peace, no internal or external conflicts.
Purpose: Programme objectives, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSP: Ensured / improved access to food in food deficit / food insecure areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural production and income by different farm income groups. Income level by different income groups, particularly of groups that had been identified as poor and vulnerable. Food availability / consumption by different population / income groups, Perception of stakeholders concerning changes in income and food consumption. 	National statistics, surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major natural disaster (drought). Good governance. Consistency with other policies. Donor contribution to promote FSP ensured.
Outputs of programmes, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved farm input packages utilised by farmers. Income and employment generated by food-/cash-for-work schemes. Rural infrastructure improvements (to be specified, etc.). 	E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of participating farmers using improved techniques. No. of jobs and amount of income generated. Type and amount of infrastructure works completed. 	Programme records, programme M & E.	To be defined in programme related planning and log-frame.
Programme activities , e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of improved farm input, linked extension and credit. Implementation of EGS. Implementation of rural infrastructure works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of input packages distributed, credit provided, extension staff trained, etc. Participants selected and working teams organised. E.g. km of feeder roads, irrigation channels etc. constructed. 	Programme records, programme M & E.	To be defined in programme related planning and log-frame.

Notes:

Dark grey areas: Subject of MPI (and evaluation)

Light grey areas: Subject to programme monitoring and evaluation, monitoring results used for MPI.

An extended version of the LogFrame matrix additionally records - separately for each identified planned measure / activity:

- the required human, physical, financial **resources** in terms of quantity, quality and timing;
- the **schedules and duration** of measures / activities, especially highlighting any possible risks with regard to **critical** schedule implications;

- the **responsibilities** of organizations, units, groups or individuals for the implementation of respective measures / activities and their monitoring.

The summing up of the financial requirements for the individual interventions leads to a consolidated budget.

The planning matrix reflects the intervention rationale of the LogFrame method that can be summarised as follows:

- 1) If there is/ are any pre-condition/s for any or all planned positive action – this/ these have to be fulfilled *before* planned activities commence.
- 2) If identified measures/ activities are carried out in the planned manner **and** if assumptions concerning critical conditions for result achievement are fulfilled, then defined results/ sub-objectives will be achieved.
- 3) If results/ sub-objectives are achieved **and** if assumptions concerning critical conditions for objective achievement are fulfilled then defined objectives are realised.
- 4) If defined objectives will have been achieved **and** if assumptions concerning the impact hypothesis and external factors will hold true, - then the overall-development objective will be realised.

4 EMPIRICAL THE LOGFRAME INTERVENTION RATIONALE FOR POLICIES

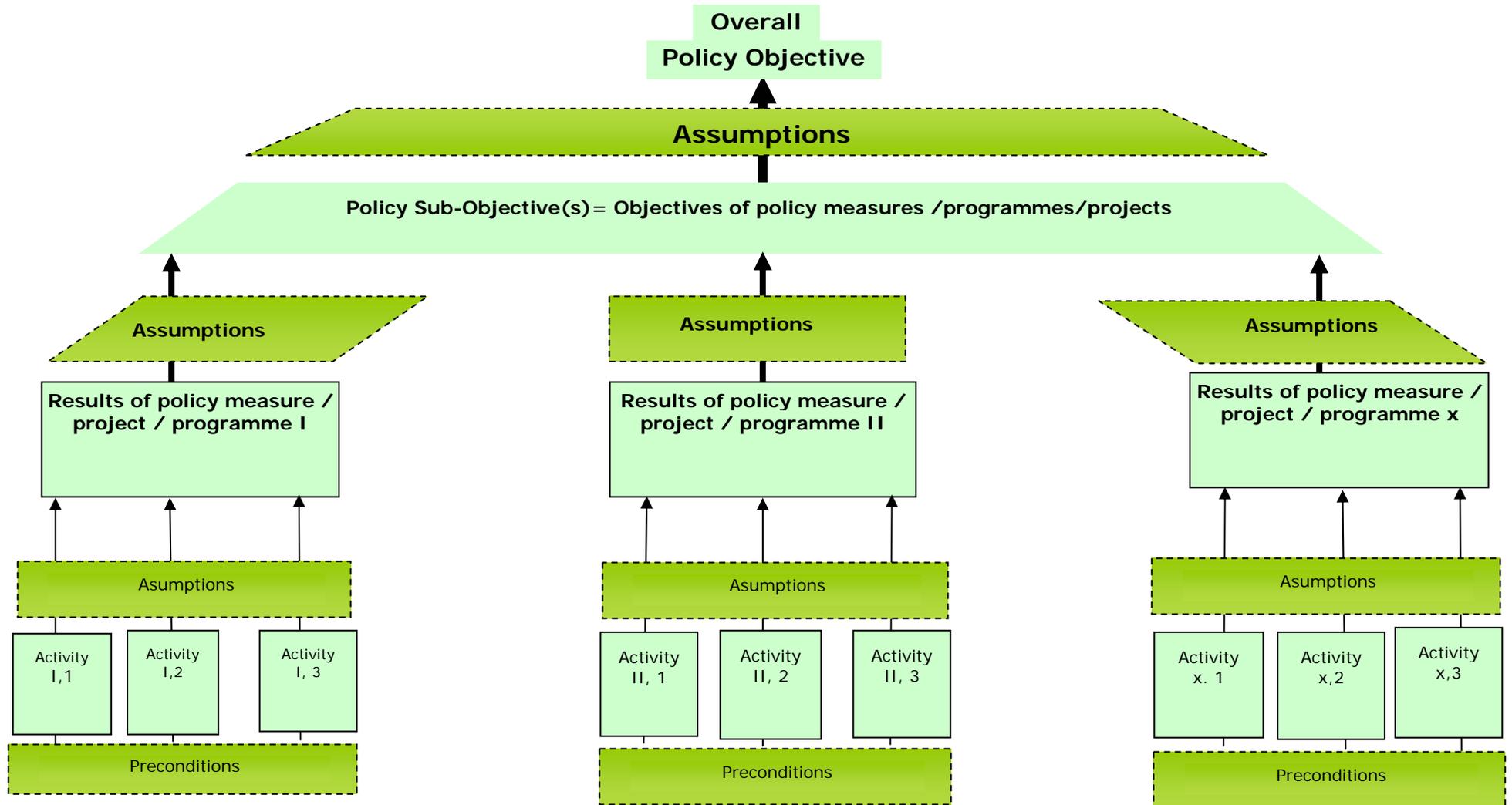
The LogFrame method has been developed for and is widely applied for project planning. However, because of its general methodological applicability to problem solving and planning tasks, the method can be equally applied to the analysis and planning of **policies**.

Figure 6 below provides an overview of the LogFrame intervention rationale at policy level. It shows the levels of objectives which are particularly relevant for MPI: Since a policy is usually implemented through a number of different policy measures, projects and/or programmes which **together** contribute – in differing proportions - to the achievement of their "common" objective of next higher hierarchical order³, their (partial) policy impacts cannot be separately ascertained and attributed to the individual programme or project⁴. Their impact can only be assessed as a collective or compound impact. This is the very subject of MPI.

³ See example of a food security policy presented in EASYPol Module 057: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Eight Methodo-“logical” Steps for MPI](#)

⁴ See discussion on the "attribution gap" in EASYPol Module 056: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Role of MPI in Policy Formulation and Implementation](#) section 6.7.

Figure 6 - Basic structure of LogFrame intervention rationale for policies



Design by Norbert Jost

5 COMPARING CONCLUSIONS: APPLICATION OF THE LOGFRAME METHOD TO MPI

For the purposes of planning and implementation of **MPI**, the LogFrame method and the application of its methodological principles is particularly relevant and useful for the following tasks and reasons:

a) **Review, analysis and assessment of the policy to be monitored**⁵

On the basis of available documentation and other evidence, the policy to be monitored is examined for compliance with the method's strict cause-effect logic (quality of problem analysis and problem hierarchy) and "means-to end" logic (objective hierarchy), with its intervention rationale and adherence to important principles (relevance/significance, effectiveness, feasibility, adequacy, compatibility, vertical and horizontal consistency, coherence) **between and among major policy components**, namely: i) overall objective, selected objectives and quantitative targets; ii) chosen strategy and instruments; iii) the measures of intervention; iv) implicit and explicit assumptions on conditions and risks; v) the choice of implementation agents; vi) main target groups; vii) allocated resources in terms of quality, quantity and time; and viii) the underlying time schedule.

Any deficiencies or omissions that can be found regarding logic compliance and adherence to the above principles, must be assumed to be (or to have already become) performance and impact relevant during the course of policy implementation. Such deficiencies would call for an early re-adjustment of the policy itself or selected policy components⁶ and need to be suitably incorporated in the subsequent steps 3 and 4 of MPI.

b) **Development of an impact model for MPI**⁷;

The policy's underlying impact model – which has either been explicitly stated or has to be distilled from available documentation and evidence – forms the basis for the development of the impact model for MPI purposes. Both models need not necessarily be identical, and - as a matter of fact - they rarely are. Particular attention should be paid when reviewing the policy makers' model on any critical **implicit assumptions** that may be "hidden" in the underlying impact model. Generally it can be assumed that, as a result of the foregoing policy analysis and assessment (step 2 of MPI) and taking the specific objectives of the monitoring task into consideration, the impact model for MPI purposes has to be an enlarged and a more widely faceted one. This is so because monitoring – by definition of its purpose - has to widen its field of observation beyond the scope of intended effects and defined objectives. In addition to this, MPI also has to pay particular attention to any possible unintended impacts / side-effects of policy measures, to possible risks

⁵ See step 2 of MPI, EASYPol Module 057: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Eight Methodo-logical Steps for MPI](#)

⁶ To this end an early policy analysis report can be prepared which identifies any critical weaknesses of policy design if they can be diagnosed already at this stage of MPI.

⁷ See step 3 of MPI, EASYPol Module 057 [see above footnote].

that have not been identified earlier, or even to possible "hidden" undeclared objectives of a policy.

c) **Identification of policy impact indicators**⁸

Identification and selection of impact indicators is a core task of MPI. The choice of indicators for MPI is based on the impact model developed under step 3 of MPI and, therefore, also takes into account possible impacts not intended or overseen by the policy makers at the time of policy design. For the task of definition of indicators, special consideration ought to be given to the observation of:

- risk factors;
- external factors;
- any sensitive context factors in the realm of environment, health, gender, or alike;
- the possible effects on minorities or any other vulnerable group of the society (children, elders);
- possible effects on possible / likely resistance groups;
- effects resulting from inconsistencies of policy or employed policy measures;
- possible effects resulting from conditions which were implicitly or explicitly assumed.

Beyond the detailed presentation concerning selection of impact indicators in EASYPol Module 057, here it suffices to (re-)emphasise that - whatever indicators are chosen – they have to be **suitable** to measure or gauge (significant) impacts and **necessary**, i.e. critically relevant.

d) **MPI planning**

Last but not least, the LogFrame method can also be applied to the planning and management of MPI itself. In this case, the activities to be undertaken for purposes of planning MPI are treated as those of a "normal" project - starting with step 1, i.e. clarification of the objectives of MPI and (pre-) identification of the tasks to be performed in planning and implementing of MPI. As examples of a basic LogFrame matrix for MPI, related to the case study presented in section 3 of EASYPol Module 057.

⁸ See step 4 of MPI, EASYPol Module 057: [Monitoring Policy Impacts \(MPI\): The Eight Methodo-logical Steps for MPI](#)

6 FURTHER READINGS

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Module metadata

1. EASYPol module 058

2. Title in original language

English Monitoring Policy Impacts (MPI)

French

Spanish

Other language

3. Subtitle in original language

English The Application of the LogFrame Method

French

Spanish

Other language

4. Summary

The LogFrame method is an instrument employed by analysts, planners and managers for problem analysis, objective formulation, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of selected, objective-oriented interventions that aim at a change of reality from a situation which is perceived as negative towards a positive situation.

Because of its general logic, the LogFrame method can be applied to any type of objective oriented tasks, irrespective of the nature, level of aggregation or complexity of the problem to be solved. Though originally developed as a method for **project** planning and management, the method and its methodological principles can analogously be applied to analysis, planning and management of **programmes and policies**.

The **planning matrix** is the main (physical) output of the LogFrame analysis and planning exercise. It presents, in a concise form, identified objectives, their interrelations within an objective hierarchy (lower level objectives as **means** to achieve higher level objectives as **results**) and the related interventions to achieve them. The matrix also identifies responsibilities, the necessary resources for and specific indicators of objective achievement, as well as critical assumptions on important conditions and risks for objective achievement.

For the purposes of planning and implementation of MPI, the LogFrame method and its methodological principles can be applied for the review and analysis of the policy to be monitored (step 2 of MPI), development of an impact model for MPI (step 3 of MPI), identification of impact indicators (step 4 of MPI).

The LogFrame method can also be applied to the planning and management of MPI itself.

5. Date

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6. Author(s)

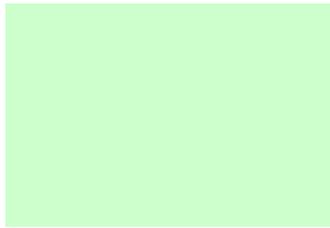
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7. Module type

- Thematic overview
- Conceptual and technical materials
- Analytical tools
- Applied materials
- Complementary resources

8. Topic covered by the module

- Agriculture in the macroeconomic context
- Agricultural and sub-sectoral policies
- Agro-industry and food chain policies



- Environment and sustainability
- Institutional and organizational development
- Investment planning and policies
- Poverty and food security
- Regional integration and international trade
- Rural Development

9. Subtopics covered by the module

10. Training path

[Analysis and monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic impacts of policies](#)

11. Keywords