PROJECT PROPOSAL WRITING TOOLKIT

STANDARD EDITION

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2: The Logical Framework Approach: Analysis

In this stage of project development we will walk through the steps from situation analysis to defining a strategy.

What is the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)?

The LFA was developed in the late 1960s for USAID by consultant Leon J. Rosenberg of Practical Concepts Incorporated. Its use was quickly extended to around 35 countries. The reason the LFA was so widely accepted was that until that time many projects were poorly planned and took little notice of the needs of end-users. Projects had a habit of 'going astray' as they were unable to meet unexpected changes in the external environment. Many projects overspent, and many failed to have much positive impact.

The LFA is now widely used by bilateral and multilateral donor organizations such as GTZ, SIDA, NORAD, UNDP, DFID and the EU. Globally, many NGOs also use the approach. Throughout the 1990s, the LFA was so commonly used by development organisations that it seemed obligatory. More recently, the LFA seems to be more 'optional'.

I'm often asked *'Do we have to include a Logframe?'* and the simple answer is *'if required'*. However, I do believe it's important to be able to create a Logframe for your project, as it's a sure way to test whether the plan actually 'fits' together.

Let's again distinguish between the terms Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and Logical Framework (or Logframe). It can be easy to get them mixed up. The Logical Framework Approach is a project design method – it's the stages you take in identifying problems, setting objectives and designing the project. The Logframe, however, is a document – a matrix, usually a four-by-four table – which is the end result of the method.

The LFA is more than just a tool for analysis and design – it's also a way to present your concept (through the Logframe) and manage your project. Using LFA helps you to:

- Analyse the existing situation (problem to be addressed by the project).
- Develop a logical hierarchy to reach your objectives (i.e. a relationship between Activities and intermediate Outputs that bring your objective into reality).
- Identify the potential Risks in the external environment – things that need to be taken into account over which you have little influence.
- Plan how Outputs and Outcomes can be best monitored and evaluated.
- Summarise your project in a widely accepted format.
- Monitor and review the project as it is implemented.

However, it's not a perfect ‘answer’ to all our project planning and implementation needs – it’s just a tool. Different groups can use the same approach and get different results – it’s still subjective. And, though the result looks neat, it’s a messy world. Things can be quite different in implementation in comparison to how they looked at the planning stage, and things can change. So, however ‘rigid’ the end result may seem, it’s still a process that requires flexibility.

Developing the Logframe is definitely not a case of 'filling in the boxes’. The Logical Framework Approach requires patience, imagination and flexibility. It's not a mechanical process – it needs participation, consideration and care.

Though it’s a linear process with various stages, we might find we have to throw everything away and start again as suddenly we see things in a new light. So, it’s important to be as thorough as we can – not rushing ‘into action’. We should consult others; reflect frequently; and test our logic whenever we can.

Some stages may be easier than others – it varies from issue to issue. Sometimes the Problem Analysis is straightforward, while at others it can take a lot of trial-and-error and mental agility to pinpoint and organise the issues. Sometimes it’s identifying the Outcome that is the hardest part – we find we are aiming too high, or too low, or looking in entirely the wrong direction.

And the end result – the Logframe – is itself just a 'snapshot'. Like any photo, it can only tell us what is 'inside the frame'. It cannot include everything from the external environment. This makes it, to some extent, unnatural – we develop, as a starting point, a Problem Tree – but the tree is part of a whole ecosystem! And, also, while the Logframe can give us an overview of the project and its logic as a whole, there are limits to how much detail can be included.

What's a Logframe?

The Logical Framework (Logframe) is usually a 4 x 4 project table.

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

Vertical Logic

The four rows describe four different levels of events that take place as a project is implemented: these are Activities, Outputs (or Results), Outcomes (or Purpose / Objectives) and Impact (or Goal). Throughout this toolkit we will use Activities > Outputs > Outcomes > Goal / Impact.

The exact terminology can vary from organisation to organisation, but whether you use 'Outputs' or 'Results', the principle is the same. So don't worry too much about what you name each level. It's more important that you have your own clear understanding of the relationship between each level rather than get the terminology 'right' at this stage. (See the earlier Glossary.)

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

Activities

Directly within our control, these are the things we do using the resources we have – time, people, money, equipment. Depending on the overall scale of the project, Activities may be very specific (e.g. '3 x 3-day training for media') or quite broad (e.g. 'Leafleting campaign').

Outputs

Again, at the operational level, these are the end results of our Activities. So, if one Activity was '3 x 3-day training for media', its Output might be '60 journalists able to report responsibly on PLWHA'.

Outcomes

This is what the project promises to deliver in terms of change by its end. Dependent upon external factors (see 'Assumptions' later), it is the sum of all the Outputs, the 'existing negative situation' now as an 'existing positive situation', for example 'Ethical standards are followed by mass media when reporting on issues related to PLWHA'.

Goal

This is the 'higher purpose'. Usually it's not something that the project alone can achieve, as it lies beyond the project's control. However, achieving the Outcome should directly contribute to the Goal.

Goals can branch off in different directions – we will see later when we develop a Problem Tree that the central problem can have a range of negative impacts. This is to our advantage, as we can adapt our proposals to different donors at the Goal level. However, taking the example we mentioned earlier, a Goal could be 'Reduced stigma for PLWHA'.

The Logframe Columns

The Narrative Summary

The four columns give us different types of information about the events in each row. The first column is gives a Narrative Summary (description) of the event, i.e. it describes the event in words.

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

OVIs

The second column lists one or more Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) of the events – specific measures to verify achievement in terms of quality, quantity, time, target group and location. In fact, you could say it takes the Narrative Summary and gives it in very specific detail.

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

MOV

The third column describes the Means of Verification (MOV) for the OVIs. Means of Verification simply means how the information will be gathered. What data sources to verify achievement? These could be surveys, interviews, observation, reports … we will discuss how to gather these when we discuss Monitoring and Evaluation.

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

Assumptions

The fourth (far-right) column (Assumptions) describes the external factors that could affect progress from one level to the next. Assumptions are external factors that might positively or negatively influence the events described in the narrative summary.

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

Assumptions include any factors that could impact on the success of the project, but cannot be directly controlled by the project or its managers. This means that an Assumption is something that must hold true if we are to progress to the next level. A good project design should be able to identify its Assumptions, especially those with a high potential for negative impact.

Sometimes these are called Assumptions (i.e. things that need to be true for us to move forwards); sometimes they are described as Risks (i.e. things that might happen that will cause us to go backwards). Essentially, Assumptions and Risks are the same things expressed in different ways. For example, a capacity building project may have the Assumption that 'trained staff will continue to work with the organisation' or the Risk that 'trained staff may seek jobs elsewhere' – the difference is the same as that between 'half full' and 'half empty' – one of how you look at it.

Preconditions and Inputs

There are two other parts of the standard Logframe at the activities level that deserve a brief explanation – the Preconditions and Inputs. These both precede the Activities, and the logic here is:

If Preconditions are met, and Inputs are available, Activities can be carried out.

Preconditions are, like Assumptions, based in the external environment. However, unlike Assumptions, which can affect project progress / achievement, Preconditions are things that must be true before Activities can start. A Precondition is not about budget (that's an Input) – and not every project will have Preconditions. But if getting started depends on any external factor, this is where it goes. External factors here could be political (getting a 'green light' to operate in a particularly sensitive district); related to the skills availability (you may be dependent on the availability of some specialised technical expertise); legal; or even seasonal (for example, harvests / monsoon flooding). However, as mentioned, not every project will have these, so if you can't recognise any, there's no need to struggle to come up with something.

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

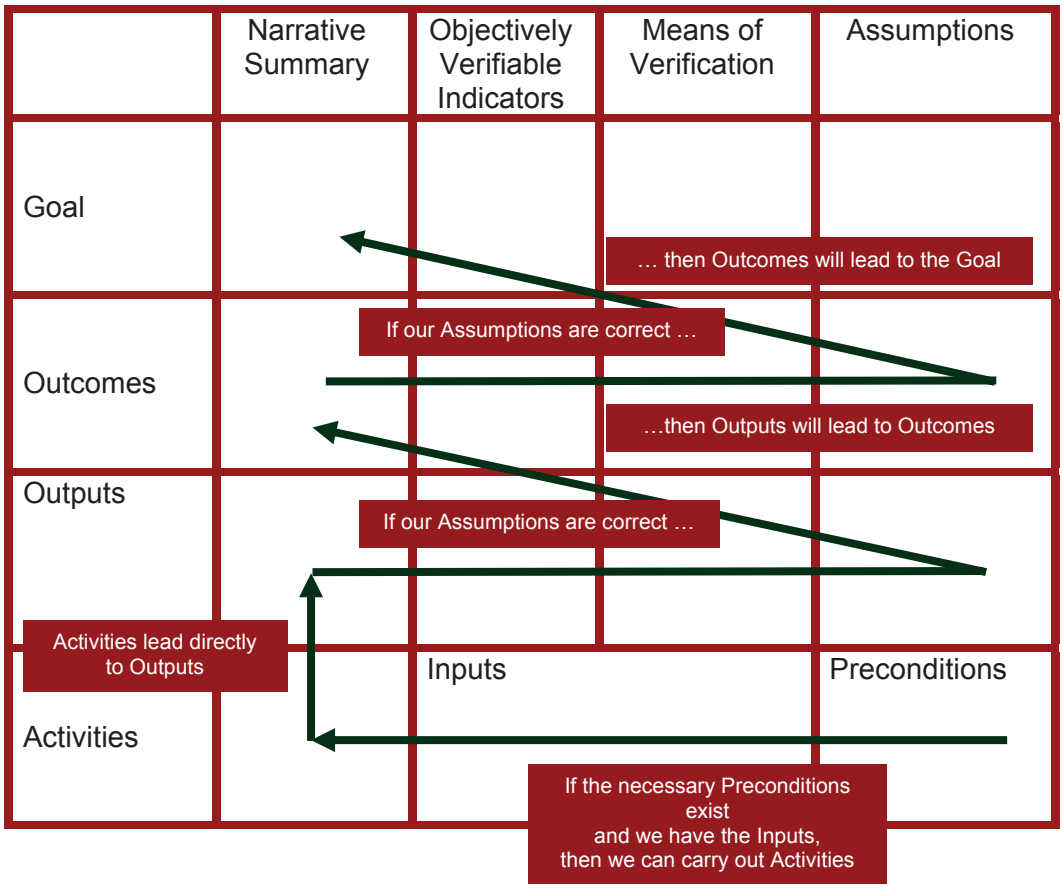
Inputs are what we need to get the job done – money, time, equipment and people. Remember, however, that the Logframe is a summary / snapshot of the project plan, so there's no need for lots of detail here – all these things are fully detailed in the proposal sections on budget and staffing. The level of detail needed here may include overall budget, possibly broken down into sources (if project funding is split between several donors) and into types of cost (equipment / staffing, etc.); number of project staff / support staff (possibly expressed in working days); and any infrastructure / equipment needed (project office, vehicles, computers).

	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities		Inputs		Preconditions

Diagonal Logic

The logic of the Logframe can be tested diagonally, as in the image below. The logic holds that:

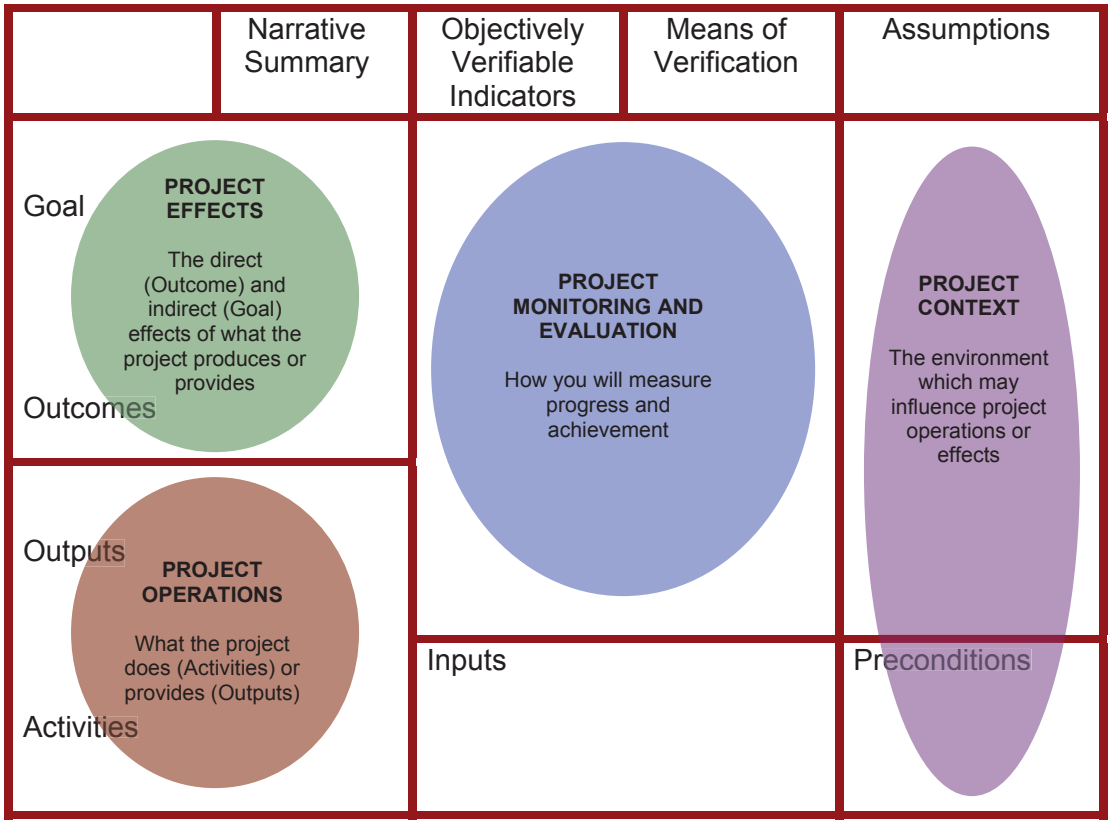
- Activities will lead to Outputs – there are no Assumptions here, as all activities are directly within the project's control
- The Assumptions at the Outputs level must hold true for the Outputs to lead to achieving the Outcomes
- The Assumptions at the Outcomes level must hold true for the Outcomes to lead to achieving the Goal



The Four Core Areas of the Logframe

Now that we have seen what each part of the Logframe is for, and how the logic works, it will be useful to take an overview of the main areas. There are four main areas of the Logframe – Project Effects, Project Operations, Project Context, and Project Monitoring and Evaluation.

The top two rows are related to Project Effects. Here we have our Outcomes and our Goal narrative.



The bottom two rows are related to Project Operations. Here we have our Inputs (resources), our Activities (under direct control) and our Outputs (the end results of Activities).

Everything in the right-hand column is the Project Context – our Preconditions and our Assumptions.

Alongside the Outputs, Outcomes and Goal we have our Indicators and MOV. Together, these make up the part of the Logframe on Monitoring and Evaluation.

Overview of the Steps

Developing the Logframe is a series of steps, all of which we will walk through in this programme. Each one will be explained simply, and examples will be given. To get the most out of this toolkit, you (either alone or with a team) should work through your own case.

Ideally, you should select a problem that you wish to solve, and not just some hypothetical issue. I definitely do NOT suggest you use a project you are already implementing – there will be too much bias towards justifying what you are already doing. So, be prepared to select something current, fresh and real – something you intend to address.

The steps of Logframe development fall into two main stages. The first is the Analysis stage – that's a lot of thinking, experimenting with ideas and lots of consultation (wherever possible). The second is the Planning stage. Here you take the results of the thinking and develop into a coherent, achievable project plan.

Expect the Analysis to take quite some time. Some steps will be easier than others (depending on the issue you have selected), and it can often be trial-and-error until you feel you have got a particular step 'right' and can move onto the next. Unless you are very thorough, you will find yourself backtracking and changing earlier ideas. As each step builds on the previous one, you cannot just go back and make a change – you go back, make the change and resume from the earlier point.

The steps of Analysis are as follows:

Analysis Stage

- Analyse the situation / problem
- Analyse the stakeholders – identify their stakes in the problem and modify the problem analysis if needed
- Create a problem hierarchy (Problem Tree)
- Create an objectives hierarchy (Objectives Tree)
- Analyse the strategy alternatives and select an approach or combination of approaches

Planning Stage

The Planning stage is where we build the Logframe, and will usually go as follows:

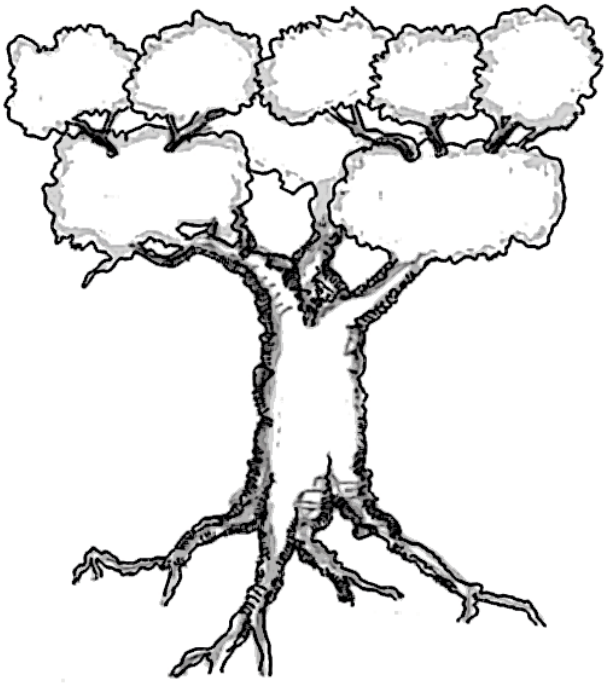
- Describe the project effects (Narrative Summary – Outcome and Goal)
- Describe the project operations (Narrative Summary – Outputs, Activities and Inputs)
- Describe the project context (Assumptions and Preconditions)
- Establish Indicators and define Means of Verification (Project Monitoring and Evaluation)

At the end of these steps, test the logic and you will have a Logframe.

Analysing the Situation: The Problem Tree

Tree diagrams are versatile, visual tools identifying and prioritising problems, objectives or decisions. The main issue is represented by the tree's trunk, and the relevant factors, influences and outcomes appear as systems of roots and branches.

Tree diagrams can be used to guide project design and evaluation systems. As a community participation exercise, tree diagrams can help people to uncover and analyse the underlying causes of a particular problem.



Tree diagrams are often part of participatory planning methods, for example in stakeholder workshops, Logical Framework Analysis, and in participatory inquiry such as Participatory Rural Appraisal.

This tree helps us to analyse an existing situation by identifying the major problems and their main causal relationships. The end result is a visual arrangement of problems separated into to 'causes' and 'effects,' joined by a core, central problem.

The Problem Tree helps us understand the context and interrelationship of problems. Using cards – one problem per card – makes the tool useful for group participation in workshops, representing the collective thinking of the participants. The technique is an integral part of LFA and the starting point for all the analysis and planning which follows.

The Problem Tree is not an absolute. It is never static. It's a flexible tool, and different groups of stakeholders will come up with different Problem Trees. You will even come up with a different Problem Tree at different times based on the same issue, so it's important to remember to be flexible – and do this stage as thoroughly as you can until you are satisfied you have a complete and logical analysis of the situation that reflects all stakeholders' points of view.

Consider the Problem Tree not to be an exact picture of the problem / situation. It's more of a device to broaden our thinking. For example, in the task below, the Core Problem may also be seen as a cause or effect depending on the situation and whose point of view we consider.

How to Develop a Problem Tree

There are four main steps to developing a Problem Tree. These are:

1. **List all the problems that come to mind.**

The problems need to be carefully identified: they should be existing problems, not possible, imagined or future ones. Remember that the problem is an existing negative situation; it is not the absence of a solution – so try to avoid describing problems in terms of their solutions. Make sure that you express the problems as negative statements and NOT just titles or key words. For example, 'Children have to walk two hours to reach the nearest school' is OK; *'Distance to school'* is not.

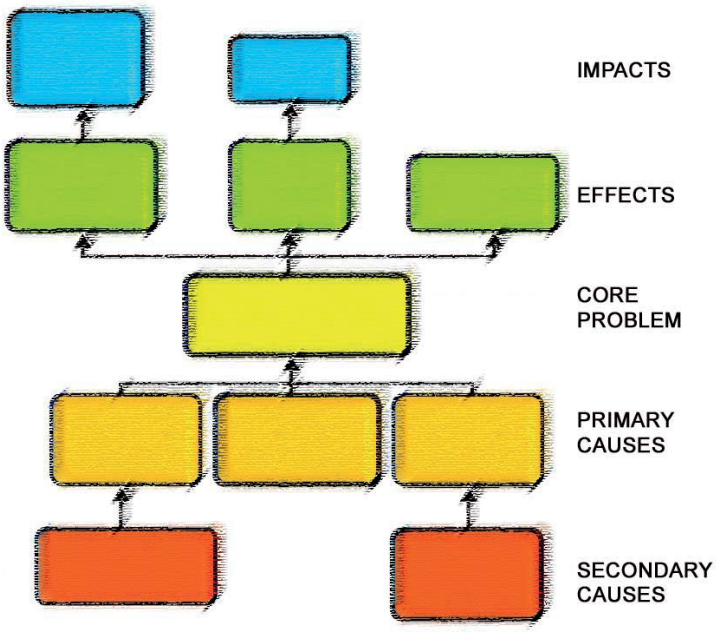
2. **Identify a Core Problem.**

This is the central problem to which everything else, either directly or indirectly, is connected. Such a problem can take considerable time to establish. Also, different groups will see the Core Problem differently. Those affected by the problem will see it in a different light to those trying to solve it.

3. **Decide which problems are causes and which are effects.**

4. **Arrange the causes and effects in a hierarchy.**

Look at how the causes relate to each other. Which leads to the other?



Case Study: Indonesia – Relief for Internally Displaced Persons

We will be using a case study throughout this programme to illustrate and practice the ideas presented. This comes from an international development agency working in Indonesia. Its Disaster Preparedness Team has been presented with the following situation:

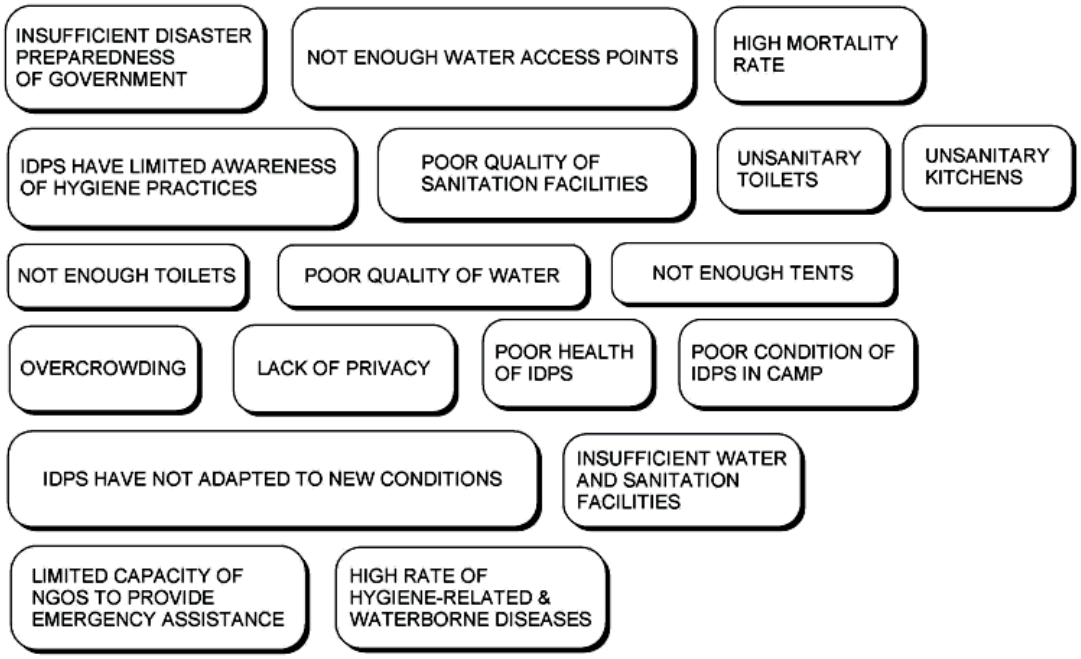
On 17 July, at 3PM local time, a big flood hit the coast of Kampung, killing over 60 people and injuring more than 100. The most severely affected communities were those of poorer families living on the coast.

Over 5,000 people were displaced and took shelter in temporary camps. Although the majority of IDPs (Internally Displaced People) had not lost homes, most were severely traumatised and not willing to return home due to fear of further flood. Of these, over 2,000 people lost their homes.

The displaced were initially accommodated in 20 temporary camps and in local schools. These were typically overcrowded and lacked sufficient basic services. In particular, there were concerns that the unsanitary conditions and insufficient water supply would lead to significant public health risks. The government response has so far not been well managed and may not be adequate.

Problem Tree Task

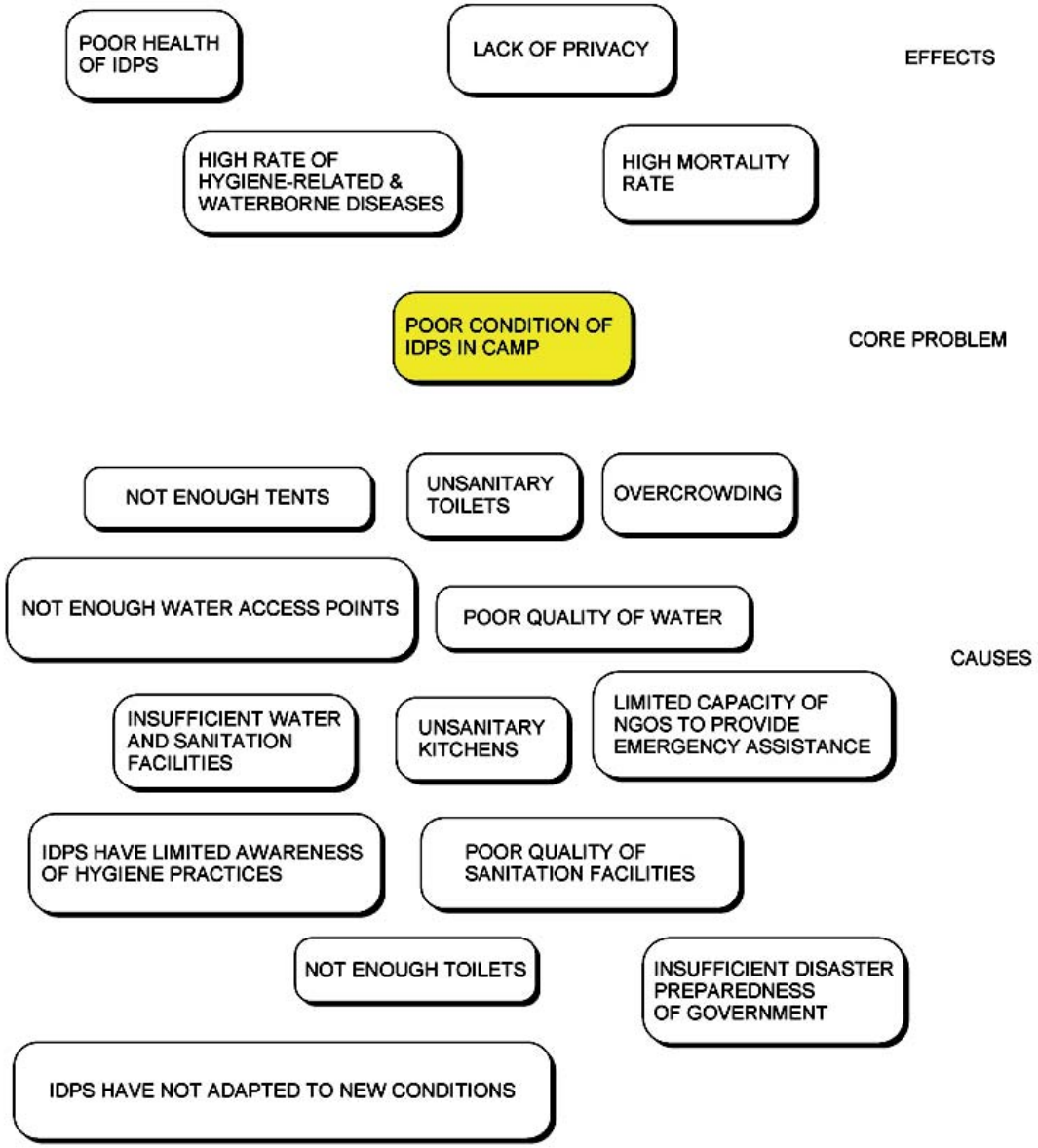
Below are the details gathered by the team.



Task

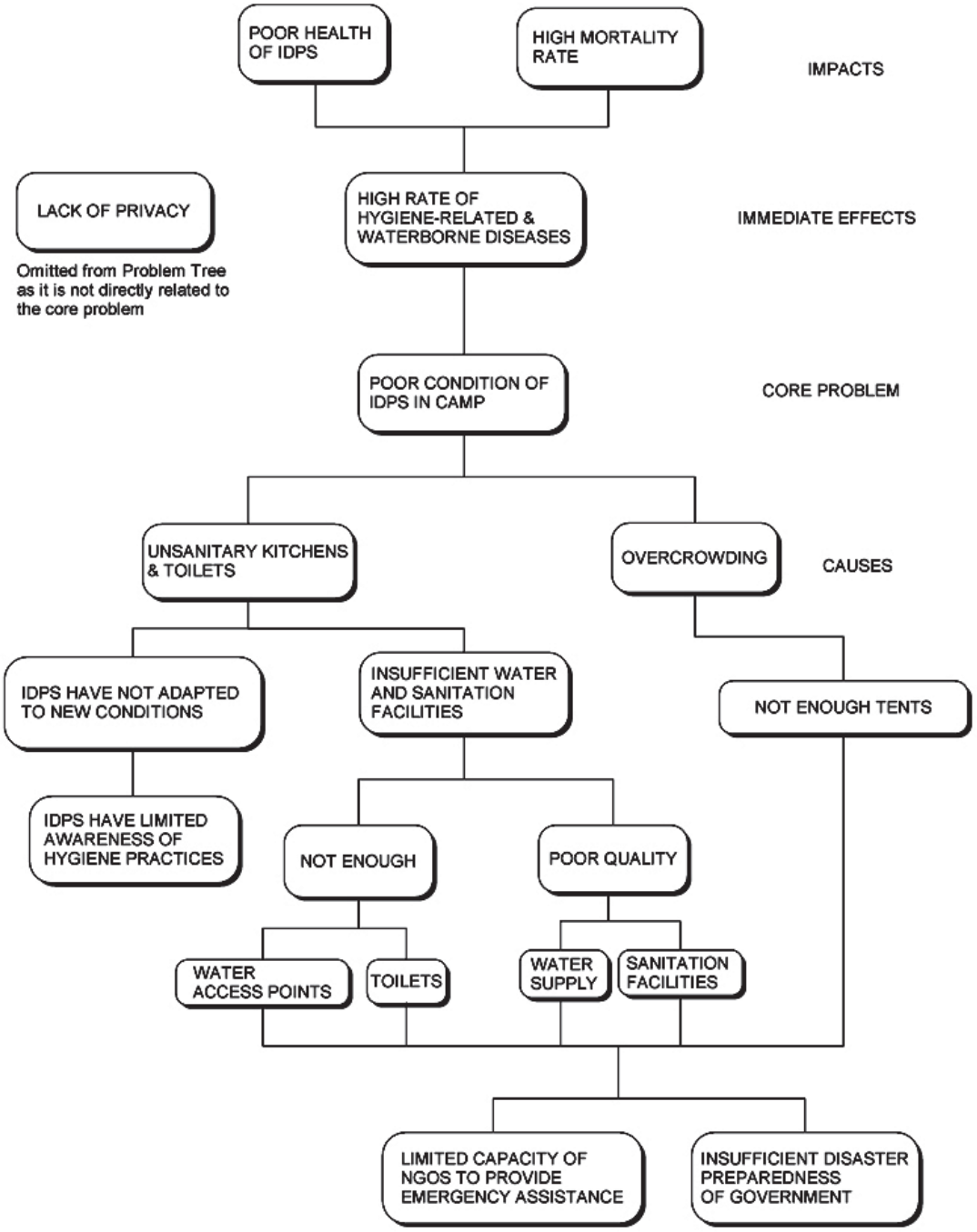
Based on the information above, do Step Two (identify the Core Problem) and Step Three (separate the causes from the effects). Our solution follows.

Possible Solution: The Core Problem



The team selected the Core Problem as 'Poor condition of IDPs in camp'. The effects and causes have been separated, but are still not organised. Do Step Four – arrange the causes and effects in a hierarchy. Our solution follows.

Possible Solution: Hierarchy of Cause and Effect



Creating a Participatory Problem Tree

If you wish to involve target groups in planning (and not just 'consult'), then you will want to involve them in the problem analysis. To expand the four steps above for use with end-users / communities, you can use the following process:

- Brainstorming: each group member contributes one or more problems drawn from personal experience. These can be collected on cards.
- Cluster the problems identified during the brainstorming.
- Identify the cause of each problem.
- Identify the consequences if the problem is not solved.
- Review the major problem orally.
- Draw a tree trunk is drawn and a word or a symbol that represents the core problem in the trunk.
- Draw branches and leaves in several directions.
- Participants suggest different effects of the problem, and each branch is used to represent a separate effect.
- A root system, symbolising the causes of the problem, is drawn under the trunk.
- The group suggests possible causes of the problem. Each root is marked with a picture or a phrase that represents a cause.
- Once the tree is completed, participants discuss the causes, deciding how much each one affects the major problem.

Stakeholder Analysis

Now that we have looked at the problem, we need to look at who is involved and affected. Here we don't just mean who is affected by the problem – but who will be affected by the solution. A key stakeholder is any person or organisation that can be positively or negatively affected by, or have an impact on, the project's success. Stakeholder Analysis identifies the key stakeholders in the project and evaluates their interest in and expectations from the project. It looks at how their interest may affect a project and identifies what the project needs from them.

Any intervention we undertake will have indirect effects upon – and require cooperation from – other stakeholders. For example, a rural microcredit programme for women will involve more than just the women themselves – families (particularly husbands) may have a strong influence on success, as will other existing institutions. So, we analyse the stakeholders – identify their stakes in the problem – and modify the problem analysis if needed.

As well as the people who are directly affected by the problem, we must look at who benefits and who loses out in the current situation, and whose interests might be threatened by change. Understanding our stakeholders' interests and concerns helps us identify which individuals or organisations we should include in project design and implementation; and what roles each should play and when. It helps us better understand what the stakeholders need from the project, and what we need from them (participation, permission, support). Identifying stakeholders whose concerns need to be addressed can help us better design interventions that minimise threats from others – we know who we need to develop relationships with. Stakeholder Analysis also helps us know who to inform and consult about the project.

As a result, we can involve the most powerful stakeholders early on in designing the project – in identifying problems, outcomes and approaches. As well as gaining stakeholders' cooperation and support, their input will greatly improve the quality of the project. Stakeholder Analysis can also help us develop our communication strategy so that the right stakeholders receive the right kind of information at the right time. Involving stakeholders as early as possible is, then, crucial to project success.

Several stakeholder mapping processes exist. Representing data collected about stakeholders as maps – using tables, diagrams or pictures – is common practice. The mapping process helps us to present our analysis with a degree of objectivity and transparency and helps others understand the social dynamics of the situation.

Even so, all of the mapping techniques use a qualitative perception of a stakeholder's 'importance' and do not represent a fully objective value for that person's 'importance'.

Most presentation styles use a matrix to show two dimensions – Interest and Power / Influence. 'Interest' represents their stake in the problem and the solution; while 'Power' / 'Influence' represents the ability of the stakeholders to positively or negatively influence the project.
How to Conduct Stakeholder Analysis
There are four main steps to analysing stakeholders' influence and interest:

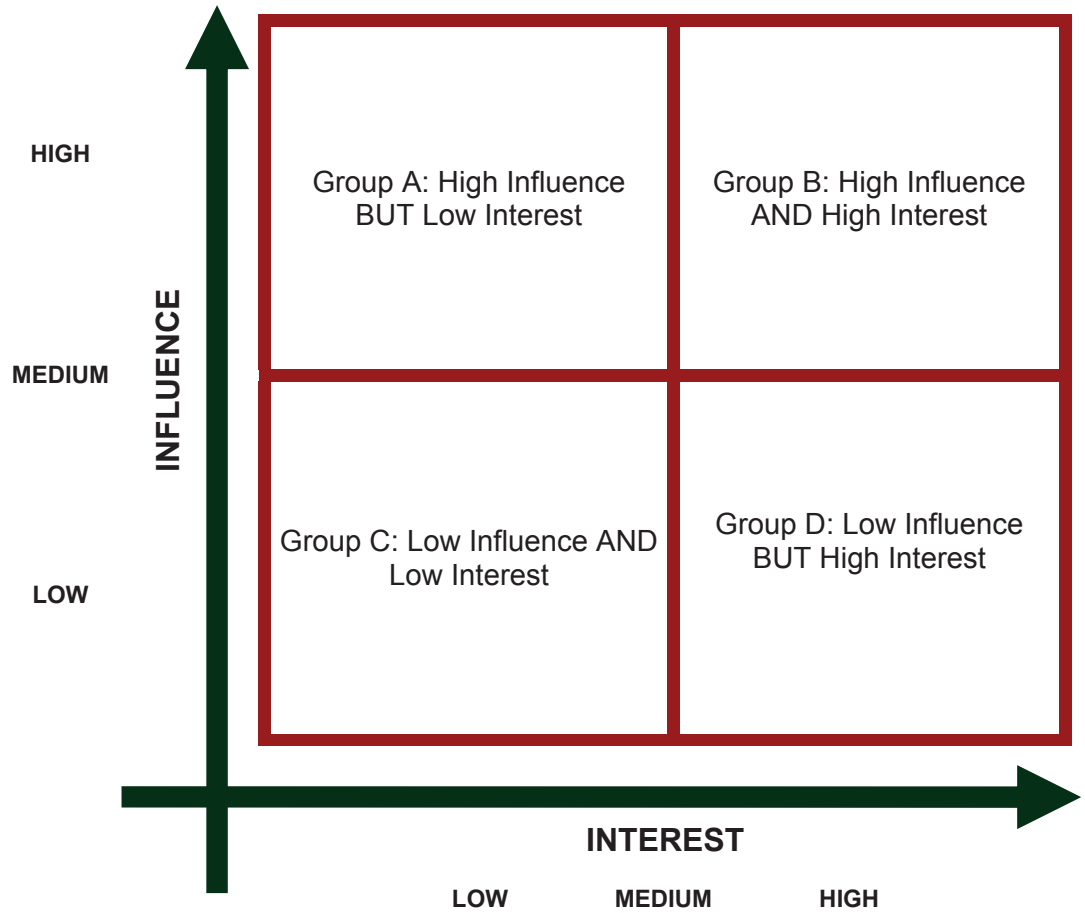
1. Identify the Stakeholders
2. Prioritise the Stakeholders
3. Determine the Needs of the Stakeholders
4. Document the Results in a Stakeholder Analysis Plan

1. Identify the Stakeholders

- Who stands to win or lose from the project?
- Who could potentially affect project success?

2. Prioritise the Stakeholders

Place each stakeholder at the appropriate point in the Influence / Interest grid. Knowing someone's position on the grid helps us understand how to interact with them.



Each part of the grid represents a different type of stakeholder. Their relative positions within the grid also illustrate differences between them. The four parts are:

Group A: High Influence BUT Low Interest

These are stakeholders whose actions can affect the project's ability to meet it objectives. However they will neither gain nor lose much from the project. They may, for example, be local government bodies with no great involvement in the issue, but their cooperation is still necessary. We should still keep these stakeholders informed and engaged enough so that they do not hinder the project. It is also good to develop relationships with the most influential from this group, for example through regular executive reports, invitations to project-related events and participation on committees.

Group B: High Influence AND High Interest

These are stakeholders who stand to lose or gain significantly. They may have a powerful interest in change or an equally strong interest in maintaining the current situation. All the stakeholders in this group also have the ability to obstruct or support the project's ability to meet its objectives. Within this group we may find powerful supporters such as donors or potential threats from employers, landowners, local politicians and even families. These are our most important stakeholders and thus need to be managed closely. We have to engage them fully, address their concerns and work hardest to satisfy them.

Group C: Low Influence AND Low Interest

Stakeholders in this group will neither benefit nor suffer much whether the project goes ahead or not. Furthermore, they have limited power to impact the project. Their inputs will have little effect on our planning, and they usually will only need the minimum of communication.

Group D: Low Influence BUT High Interest

These are stakeholders who are likely to win or lose as a result of the project but they have little power to affect the project. We still need to communicate enough to keep these stakeholders satisfied because they have specific project interests.

3. Determine the Needs of the Stakeholders

Next we need to explore each stakeholder's needs in more depth. Depending on the group / individuals involved, this consultation may be through interview, survey or focus group discussion. Consider the following questions to help you better understand the stakeholders' individual needs and motivations, and to decide the best way to involve the stakeholders in the project.

- What kind of interest do they have in the project outcome? Is it financial gain / loss? Is it emotional interest (e.g. attachment to tradition)? Is it positive or negative? What motivates them?
- What support do you need from them? What role will they play in the project?
- What do they need from you? What expectations do they have? What kind of information will they need?
- If the stakeholder's attitude to the project is negative, what is their underlying fear? What actions can you take to address their fears or gain their support?
- If they are going to oppose the project, how will you deal with their opposition?
- Will dissatisfied stakeholders / opponents be able to influence or mobilise others? Do we also need to address these others as stakeholders before they join the opposition?

4. Document the Results in a Stakeholder Analysis Plan

The Stakeholder Analysis Plan is a table that describes how you will engage the identified stakeholders in the project. Sometimes you may wish to include this plan in your proposal, especially when dealing with issues where there are strong opponents to the project.

Stakeholder	Level of interest / level of influence	What support do we need from them?	What is the stakeholder's role	What are the stakeholder's interests and concerns	What is our strategy to gain support or minimise opposition?	How will we communicate with this group?

At this point, return to the original Problem Tree. Add to – or, if necessary, redesign – the tree to reflect all points of view from groups which have either high influence or interest. Don't forget that during project monitoring it is common to review and update the Stakeholder Analysis frequently, as things do change.

Setting Objectives

The Objectives Analysis is the stage where the problems expressed in the Problem Tree are converted into objectives. The result is an Objectives Tree, which is analysed and fine-tuned to give us a basis for selecting project strategy.

There are three steps:

- Restate the negatives from the Problem Tree as positives
- Review your objectives
- Test the Objectives Tree

1. Restate the negatives from the Problem Tree as positives

This seems very straightforward and simple, and many people try to rush this important stage. After all, isn't project implementation about action? However, it is extremely important to be 'problem-driven' and not 'activity-led', so be patient. By doing this stage thoroughly, you better understand the situation, and ensure that you are doing what you should, and not just what you think you can.

To make an Objectives Tree, we simply rephrase the statements in the problem tree as positives. So, if your Problem Tree includes the statement '*There is insufficient access to clean water*' then your Objectives Tree will state '*There is sufficient access to clean water*'.

Perhaps you may be thinking, who needs to write this down? However, by transforming every statement to a positive, we are not excluding any courses of action because we think they are impossible, whether because of political, financial or any other imagined constraints.

In a way, then, this is an 'imagining' stage in the process, where we try to visualise an ideal world. This is also reflected in the language used in Objectives Trees. We do not say 'will' as that is only a wish or prediction – use the present simple tense. What we are looking at is the future as the present.

Note that if a particular problem cannot easily be converted into a positive statement it could mean that the original statement of the problem was unclear. In this case, you should look at the problem again and see if it needs to be redrafted.

2. Review your objectives

Are they both desired and realistic? Are they achievable? Those which are not should be modified or removed. (Some of those removed may emerge later as Assumptions). Are the objectives expressed clearly? If needed, rewrite them to make them less ambiguous.

Are any of the objectives already covered by other organisations or institutions? These should also be omitted from your Objectives Tree.

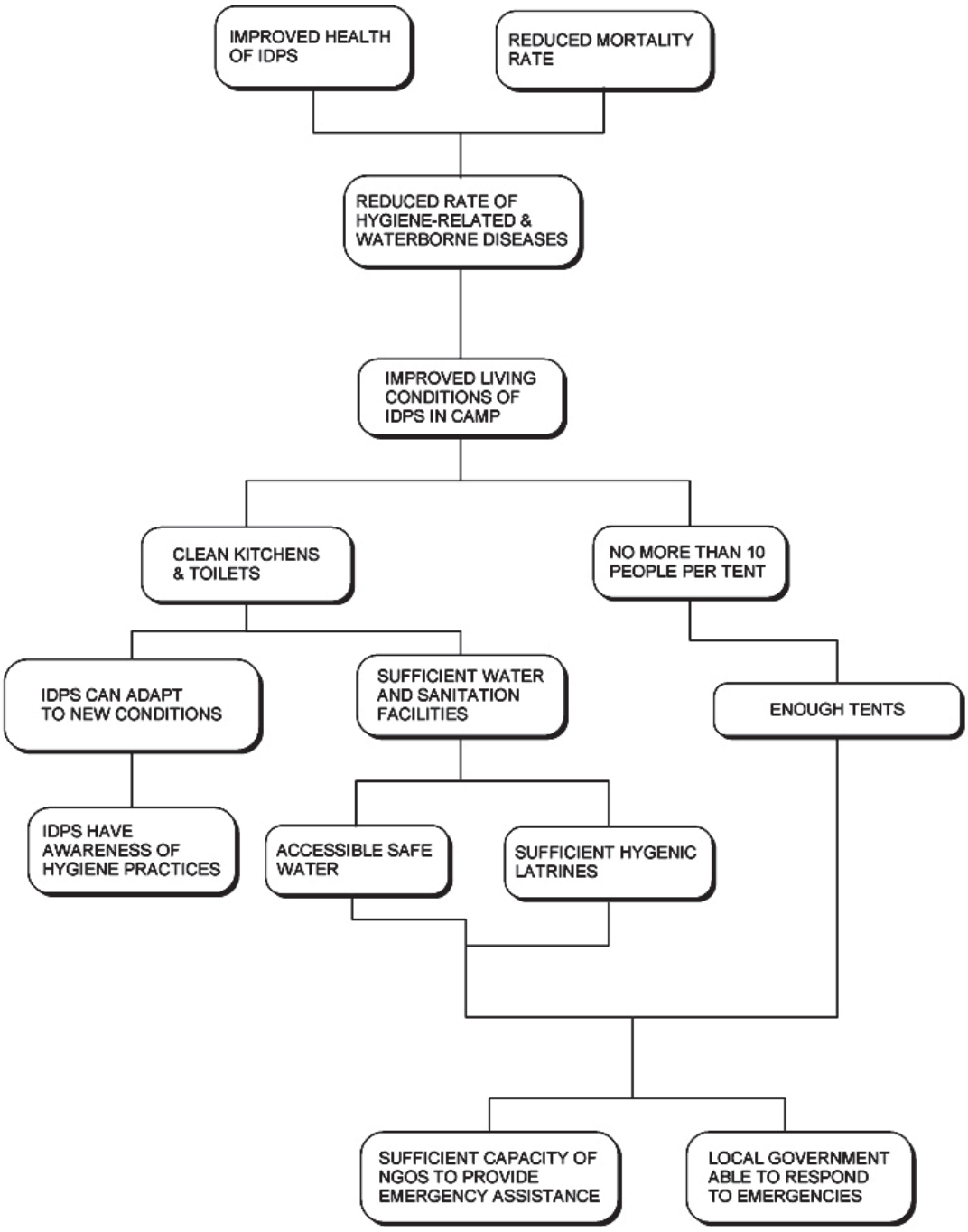
3. Test the Objectives Tree

You will now have, instead of a cause-and-effect relationship, a visual means-ends relationship. You now need to examine this closely. Working upwards from the bottom of the Objectives Tree, are the positive actions enough at each level to bring us to the next one? Is there any gap in the logic? Are there any ideas missing? If necessary, add further objectives to make the logic more consistent.

Task

Take the Problem Tree on IDPs in Indonesia and restate the negatives as positives.

Possible Solution



By starting at the bottom the Objectives Tree and working upwards, we can see that the achievement of the lower level objectives will lead to the achievement of the objective at the next highest level.

Each objective seems to be realistic and attainable within the project context so we can conclude that the objectives are viable and can give direction to the projects.

Some general points to consider:

- The Core Problem, when restated, will, in most cases, become our main objective or project Outcome.
- The positive impacts of the change can be used to focus a project towards different sectors. Often, an Outcome will have a range of positive impacts.
- Not all negatives can be turned into positives. These will usually turn up later as Assumptions.

Now that there is a clear, logical Objectives Tree we can move onto developing a project strategy.

Designing a Strategy

Before we can move into the Planning phase of development, we have one more analysis stage –Alternatives Analysis. This is where we scope the project – select a strategy to achieve the desired outcome, usually combining one or more approaches.

Although it is still too soon to start planning project activities, we will, naturally, at this point, start thinking ahead to how each of the approaches might be realised. Unless we know what might be involved, it will be hard to analyse and compare the possible courses of action.

The next stage, then, is to consider which general approaches we can take to solve the problems identified. This is not a time to consider either your perceived constraints or your preferred course of action. Certainly, it is very likely that the course of action you originally identified as the appropriate way to address the problem may turn out to be the most effective at this current time.

The Problem Tree will have shown us that there are several root causes of the Core Problem. When we turned this into an Objectives Tree, we saw those roots transformed into positive changes. Now we need to look at those changes and see what possible approaches they suggest.

It is essential at this point not to think about what you can / can't do, but to consider each approach on its own merits. Otherwise, we are likely to be more influenced by what we think is within our capacity than the problem itself.

We will do the Alternatives Analysis in four steps:

1. Firstly, we will identify the different approaches we can take
2. Next, we will draw up a range of criteria
3. Analyse each approach against your criteria
4. Compare the approaches

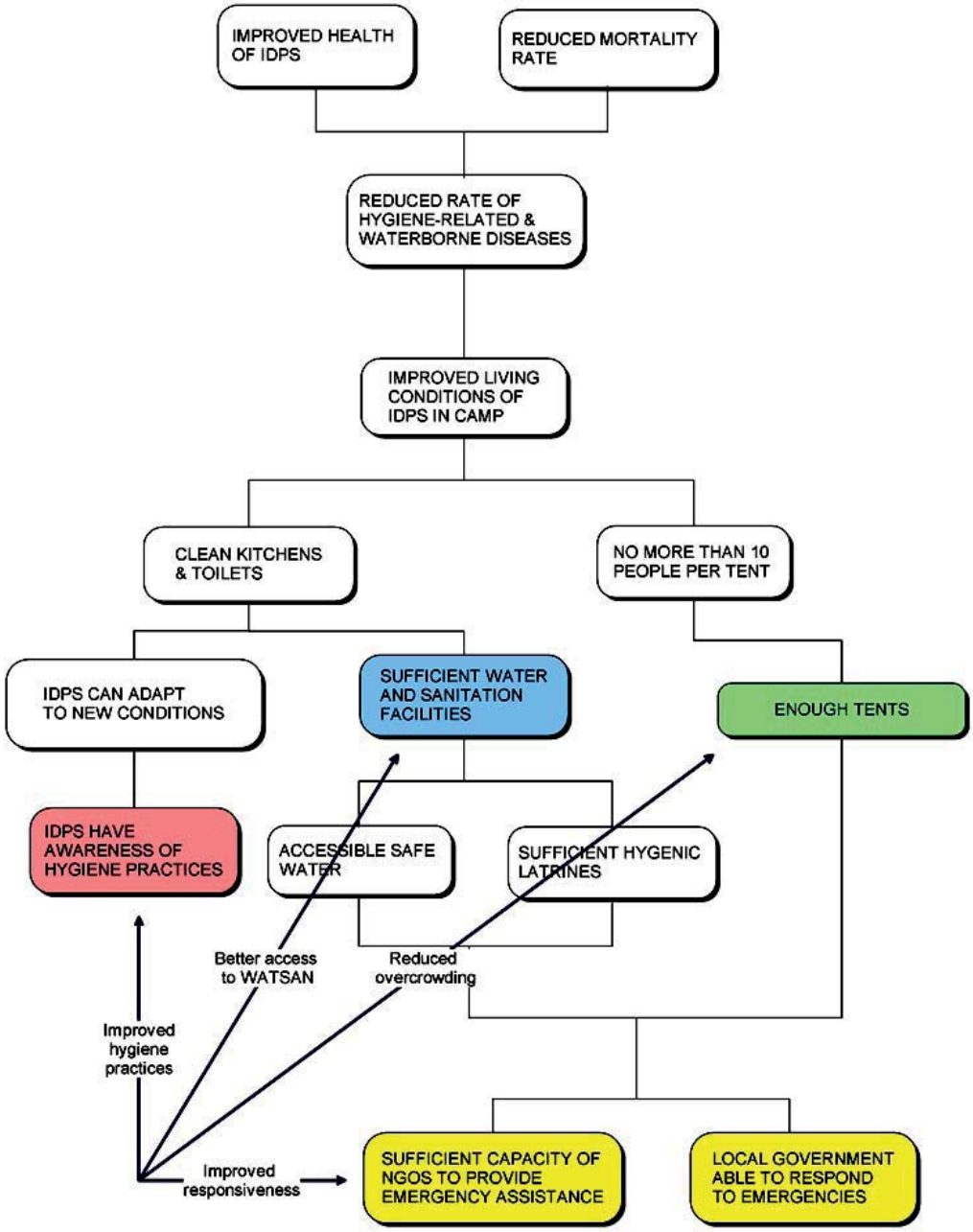
This will help us to identify the potential strengths and weaknesses of each approach separately, and influence how we might combine these. It is also useful to end this analysis by doing a SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) summary of each approach.

At this stage it is a good idea to consider others' inputs (particularly other stakeholders and impartial colleagues). Alternatives Analysis is best done as a participatory exercise, especially as you may be so close to the project / problem that it is hard to be impartial.

1: Identify the Approaches

Look again at the Indonesia Case Study. Examine the problems it addresses and consider what possible approaches you could use to improve the living conditions of the IDPs.

Here's an example of the Objectives Tree with the possible approaches highlighted.



Notice that we have four possible approaches –improving hygiene practices, better access to Water and Sanitation, reduced overcrowding and improved responsiveness of NGOs / local government. We need to evaluate each of these approaches in order to select which are the most viable and how they can best be combined into a strategy.

2: Select the Criteria

To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach we should select a range of criteria. The exact criteria will vary, although the following will certainly be present:

- Likelihood of achieving the project outcome – this is the most important criterion
- Short-term results / medium-term results – will the approach under consideration bring about change in the short term? Early victories are important for retaining the support of end-users.
- Sustainability – how likely is the change to be sustainable after project inputs and activities have ended?
- Cooperation from key stakeholders – here you may wish to break down this into several sub-criteria, one for each high influence stakeholder group. Is their attitude likely to be positive, neutral or negative?
- Cost – in terms of results delivered, does the option under consideration represent value for money?
- Risk – how risky is the approach? Does it depend upon too many external assumptions we cannot influence?
- Other factors you may add to this will vary from case to case, but may include some of the following if appropriate:
- Involvement of end-users in decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – participation of end-users is always a desirable design factor.
- Involvement of marginalised groups / positive discrimination
- Technical feasibility
- Environmental impact
- Social impact
- Political environment – to what extent is the proposed course of action in line with government policy? Are there other political factors (such as instability) to consider?
- Relationship between organisations involved

Note that you do not need all the criteria above and you may select others relevant to the issue you are addressing. Also, not all the criteria are equally important. What matters is that you cover the most important points and that there are enough criteria – between 7 and 10 is usually fine – that you are considering a range of aspects for each approach.

3: Analyse the Approaches

Next, put the criteria into a table like the one you can see below.

	Approach 1	Approach 2	Approach 3
Likelihood of achieving project Outcome			
Short-term results			
Medium-term results			
Sustainability			
Cooperation from key stakeholders			
Cost			
Risk			
Etc.			

Now, it's time to go through the approaches. We suggest:

- Work vertically down each column, ignoring the others. It's important to deal with each approach on its own merits, doing one approach at a time. This will stop you from subconsciously cross-comparing. If you fill in the fields from left to right you might be weighting the analysis to your preferred course of action.
- Work in a team with various points of view. Be prepared to discuss each point until you reach consensus.
- Use a simple 'scoring system' to keep track of your thoughts. For example, each criterion can be given 'marks out of 10' at then end of each discussion. However, be consistent – all high scores should be positive and low scores negative. However, how you fill the fields is up to you.

Note any key points about each criterion.

It is also a good idea to take a break between analysing each approach, so that you are not subconsciously showing bias to your preferred action.

Once the discussion is finished and all the relevant boxes are filled, you will have a raw score at the bottom of each column. This gives you a rough idea of which solutions are most likely to succeed. You might find the initial results surprising. It's not uncommon for alternatives we initially thought undesirable to actually score relatively highly.

Task

Go through the table and highlight where each approach scored either very high or very low. Now that each column has been completed, it's time to start reading the table from left to right. If you are doing this with a group, expect it to take some time as you discuss the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Possible Solution: WATSAN Approach

	Improved access to WATSAN
Likelihood of improving camp conditions	10/10: Definitely
Short / medium-term results	10: Yes!
Sustainability	6: Some of the inputs could be reused / recycled in future programmes … but if IDP numbers increase, things will not improve much in the longer term
Cooperation from stakeholders	No objections expected
– End users	10
– Local government	10
– Health workers & NGOs	10
Cost	9: A good (high) rating – 5000 people at a cost of 10,000 GBP = 2 GBP per head
Risk	10: Fully within our control
Schedule uncertainty (probability of efficient delivery of services)	5: It may take some time to get the Inputs to the camps – we will need fast local government support and prioritising of government resources for addressing the emergency
Involvement of end users in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	3: This is totally top-down, though we will aim to involve IDPs in M&E
Technical feasibility	10: Straightforward
Relationship between organisations involved	10: We have a strong partnership with NGOs active in the camps, relations with local government are stable
Rough Score	110

Possible Solution: Reduced Overcrowding Approach

	Reduced Overcrowding Approach
Likelihood of improving camp conditions	9
Short / medium-term results	8: Will make an immediate difference to living conditions
Sustainability	8: Tents can be stored for future crises – it's not throwing money away
Cooperation from stakeholders	No objections expected
– End users	10
– Local government	10
– Health workers & NGOs	10
Cost	9: 100 tents (capacity 5 persons) = 5000 GBP = 1 GBP per person
Risk	10: Fully within our control
Schedule uncertainty (probability of efficient delivery of services)	10: We can get these within 48 hours
Involvement of end users in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	0: This is totally top-down
Technical feasibility	10
Relationship between organisations involved	10: We have a strong partnership with NGOs active in the camps, relations with local government are stable
Rough Score	104

Possible Solution: Improved Hygiene Approach

	Improved Hygiene Approach
Likelihood of improving camp conditions	6/10: Improving hygiene alone won't immediately avert any health crisis
Short / medium-term results	5: No great results immediately, but presents an opportunity for promoting good practice
Sustainability	9: Awareness matters in the long-term – will have positive impacts in non-crisis situations in the future
Cooperation from stakeholders	Little resistance anticipated
– End users	7: IDPs are more conscious of overcrowding and poor sanitation as urgent needs
– Local government	10: No objections anticipated
– Health workers & NGOs	10: Falls within the mandate of many NGOs active in the area
Cost	9: Time, expertise, IEC budget
Risk	7: Doesn't come with a guarantee
Schedule uncertainty (probability of efficient delivery of services)	10: We have available resources to implement this at any time
Involvement of end users in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	8: Strong role for community to participate
Technical feasibility	10
Relationship between organisations involved	10: Strong partnerships with NGOs in the camp
Rough Score	101

Possible Solution: Improved Responsiveness Approach

	Improved Responsiveness Approach
Likelihood of improving camp conditions	0/10: Will help in future emergencies, but not this one
Short / medium-term results	0: None
Sustainability	9: Any improved preparedness of government and NGOs will have long-term impact
Cooperation from stakeholders	Mixed responses expected depending on group
– End users	8: We expect most communities to be responsive to this
– Local government	5: Local government has resource constraints, can be slow to change practices and may resist outside agencies' attempts to 'improve' their services
– Health workers & NGOs	10: They will welcome any capacity strengthening
Cost	10: Basically costs us time and expertise
Risk	7: Resistance to change from local government needs to be overcome
Schedule uncertainty (probability of efficient delivery of services)	5: Will take time coordinate stakeholders
Involvement of end users in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	8: Community participation in disaster preparedness is a high priority
Technical feasibility	10
Relationship between organisations involved	8: Relationships are good when we act as a donor, but when advocating change we can meet more resistance from some stakeholder groups
Rough Score	80

4: Compare the Results

In the table below, we can see the overall 'rough scores' for each approach. Three of them all rate similarly highly, though this is no reason to disregard the fourth option. We have highlighted, also, the areas where scores are low (in green). These represent weaknesses, where the 'score' is 5 or lower. The areas shaded yellow are positive aspects, with a rating of 8-10. Before we make any final decision on which approaches to use in our strategy, it's useful to dig a little deeper with a SWOT analysis.

	Improved access to WATSAN	Reduced Overcrowding Approach	Improved Hygiene Approach	Improved Responsiveness Approach
Likelihood of improving camp conditions	10/10: Definitely	9/10	6/10: Improving hygiene alone won't immediately avert any health crisis	0/10: Will help in future emergencies, but not this one
Short / medium-term results	10: Yes!	8: Will make an immediate difference to living conditions	5: No great results immediately, but presents an opportunity for promoting good practice	0: None
Sustainability	6: Some of the inputs could be reused / recycled in future programmes … but if IDP numbers increase, things will not improve much in the longer term	8: Tents can be stored for future crises – it's not throwing money away	9: Awareness matters in the long-term – will have positive impacts in non-crisis situations in the future	9: Any improved preparedness of government and NGOs will have long-term impact
Cooperation from stakeholders	No objections expected	No objections expected	Little resistance anticipated	Mixed responses expected depending on group
– End users	10	10	7: IDPs are more conscious of overcrowding and poor sanitation as urgent needs	8: We expect most communities to be responsive to this
– Local government	10	10	10: No objections anticipated	5: Local government has resource constraints, can be slow to change practices and may resist outside agencies' attempts to 'improve' their services
– Health workers & NGOs	10	10	10: Falls within the mandate of many NGOs active in the area	10: They will welcome any capacity strengthening

Cost	9: A good (high) rating – 5000 people at a cost of 10,000 GBP = 2 GBP per head	9: 100 tents (capacity 5 persons) = 5000 GBP = 1 GBP per person	9: Time, expertise, IEC budget	10: Basically costs us time and expertise
Risk	10: Fully within our control	10: Fully within our control	7: Doesn't come with a guarantee	7: Resistance to change from local government needs to be overcome
Schedule uncertainty (probability of efficient delivery of services)	5: It may take some time to get the Inputs to the camps – we will need fast local government support and prioritising of government resources for addressing the emergency	10: We can get these within 48 hours	10: We have available resources to implement this at any time	5: Will take time coordinate stakeholders
Involvement of end users in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	3: This is totally top-down, though we will aim to involve IDPs in M&E	0: This is totally top-down	8: Strong role for community to participate	8: Community participation in disaster preparedness is a high priority
Technical feasibility	10: Straightforward	10	10	10
Relationship between organisations involved	10: We have a strong partnership with NGOs active in the camps, relations with local government are stable	10: We have a strong partnership with NGOs active in the camps, relations with local government are stable	10: Strong partnerships with NGOs in the camp	8: Relationships are good when we act as a donor, but when advocating change we can meet more resistance from some stakeholder groups
Rough Score	**110**	**104**	**101**	**80**

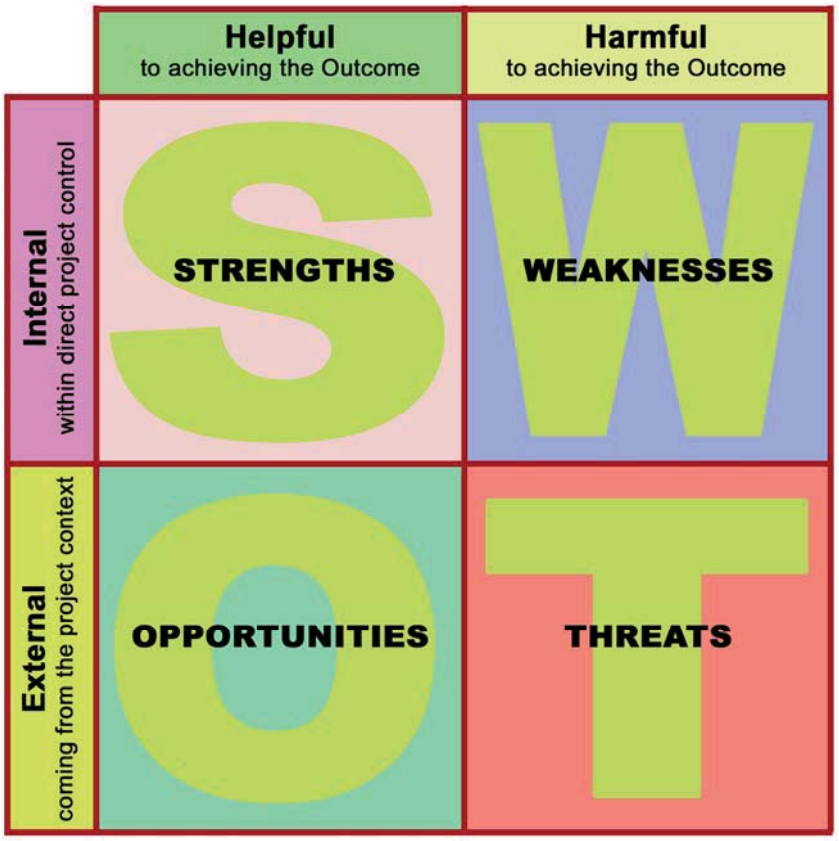
SWOT Analysis

At this point it's good to go into more depth using a SWOT analysis for each approach.

SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats involved in a course of action. It helps us to identify the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieving any outcome.

You have already highlighted the cells in the table and highlight where each approach scored either very high or very low. The higher scores represent either Strengths or Opportunities the approach presents; the lower scores are Weaknesses or Threats / Risks.

For each approach, note down its particular Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the box below.



Repeatedly ask yourself how you can:

- Use the strengths?
- Address the weaknesses?
- Exploit the opportunities?
- Defend against the threats?

Converting Weaknesses and Threats

Once we have completed a SWOT for each approach, let's not stop there. The weaknesses and threats need to be further investigated and converted into strengths and opportunities. (Those that cannot will, if we take the approach forward, remain as Assumptions.)

Most weaknesses will be internal, i.e. within our control. This gives us an opportunity to address these. For example:

- If the weakness is related to technical skills, we can factor into our own capacity building into the project
- If the weakness is related to sustainability, we need to consider how we can design the project to remove this
- If the approach is weak because we cannot deliver early victories, we need to examine how we can retain end-users' commitment
- Looking at the threats that exist, ask yourself what you can do to minimise or remove them. Some will be beyond your ability to influence (and will emerge later as Assumptions), while others – particularly those from stakeholders in opposition to the project – could be mitigated through a good communications strategy or greater involvement of project opponents.

Selecting the Strategy

While we have been analysing each alternative approach separately, it is clear that, except in very unusual cases, a single approach is not enough. We need a strategy which combines several approaches if we are to:

- Be sure of achieving the project outcome
- Ensure long-term, positive change while giving early results to stakeholders
- Keep the majority of key stakeholders satisfied and involved

However, some of our approaches may be disregarded. This could be due to:

- High cost
- High risk
- High level of opposition
- Schedule uncertainty

The remaining approaches, however, clearly are not equal, and will need to be combined in order for us to have an effective project strategy.

Final questions to consider when defining the strategy include:

- Which approaches are going to give us the greatest contribution to achieving the outcome?
- Which represent the best value?
- Which present the least (political, economic, social, technical, legal or environmental) risk?
- Which are most likely to be popular with key stakeholders?
- Which approaches can be added / incorporated with little effort and for little extra cost?

Some less desirable alternatives could be incorporated as secondary approaches – for example, in the case from Indonesia, we can see that the core intervention is related to WATSAN, but during the process it would cost very little to address hygiene practices; and, while conducting advocacy for greater preparedness may not have any relevance to the immediate crisis, adding this will be an economic way to mitigate the negative impact of future, similar events.

Developing a Strategy Table

List the approaches in order of importance, i.e. the first one will be the one which will contribute most to achieving the outcome and be given priority by the project in terms of attention and resources.

OUTCOME						
STRATEGY	Narrative Summary	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Comments
Approach 1						
Approach 1						
Approach 1						
Approach 1						

Task

Do a SWOT for the four approaches for the Indonesia Case Study. Our suggestions follow.

Possible Solution

OUTCOME						
STRATEGY	Narrative Summary	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Comments
Improved access to WATSAN	Providing water supply (tanks, boreholes, buckets) and clean latrines	Of all the approaches, this is going to have the maximum results as unsafe water and lack of sanitation are the most pressing concerns	Doesn't involve end users so much	Gives us an opportunity to move our community health agenda forward and involve end users in construction and maintenance	There may be some delay with construction IDPs should feel responsible for maintenance	This component will contribute most to reducing health risks
Reduced overcrowding	Providing extra tents to reduce average occupancy	Will reduce health risks from airborne disease and give IDPs more privacy / dignity	No real involvement of end users	If we work closely with partner NGOs we can build their response capacity and ensure tents are available in future emergencies		This component will be positively received by all stakeholders
Improved hygiene practices	Ensuring end users are aware of disease transmission routes and follow basic preventive practices	Will involve end users while reducing disease transmission risks Has potential for longer-term impacts on communities	May not have immediate benefits	Allows us to target key agents in family health to contribute towards our long-term health goals	There are never guarantees that what is learned is practiced	A worthwhile component that involves end users and has potential long-term benefits beyond the current scenario
Improved responsiveness	Developing the capacity of partners (NGOs, health workers, local government) to respond efficiently and appropriately to future emergencies	Will help to respond to crises in the future through more efficient and appropriate responses and can be while conducting project Activities.	Will contribute little to the current situation – this is more forward-looking	Chance to develop better relations and a shared vision with counterparts and partners	Local government can be sensitive to criticism and slow to adopt new practices	We need this component to develop better future responses

Endnote

By doing the analysis in as unbiased a way as possible, you will be doing yourself and your proposal justice. Doing this stage thoroughly will help you to justify your course of action to donors. You will be able to answer the question *'What about trying this approach?'* with a sound and reasoned justification of why you selected to address some causes and not others, or why you 'weighted' your inputs towards some aspects more than others.

On previous workshops, as a result of this process, most participants felt more confident that they had selected the right course of action. In two cases, however, results were different. One participant expanded the scope of his proposed project beyond what his organisation had traditionally considered 'possible': another came to the conclusion that he couldn't actually justify the proposed action he had arrived at the workshop with!

At this point, you will have selected / prioritised your approach and will be able to move from the Analysis to Planning phase of the Logical Framework Approach.