



Development Cooperation Development Education Partnership Fair

**Writing a successful co-financing
application**

3 sessions to guide project preparation

- **Session 1:** Deciding on stakeholders and defining problems/issues. Setting clear objectives using the Logical Framework approach.
- **Session 2:** Describing results, activities and means required. Initial risk assessment and assumptions.
- **Session 3:** Completing the proposal, including sustainability and tips for budget preparation.

Recap: Concept Note Information

5 pages

- 1.1. **Table:** Summary of the action (1 page)
- 1.2. **Relevance**
 - 1.2.1. Relevance to the objective and priorities of the Call for Proposals
 - 1.2.2. Relevance to target countries, sectors
 - 1.2.2. Target groups, their needs and constraints.
 - 1.2.4. Elements of added value.
- 1.3. **Description of the action**

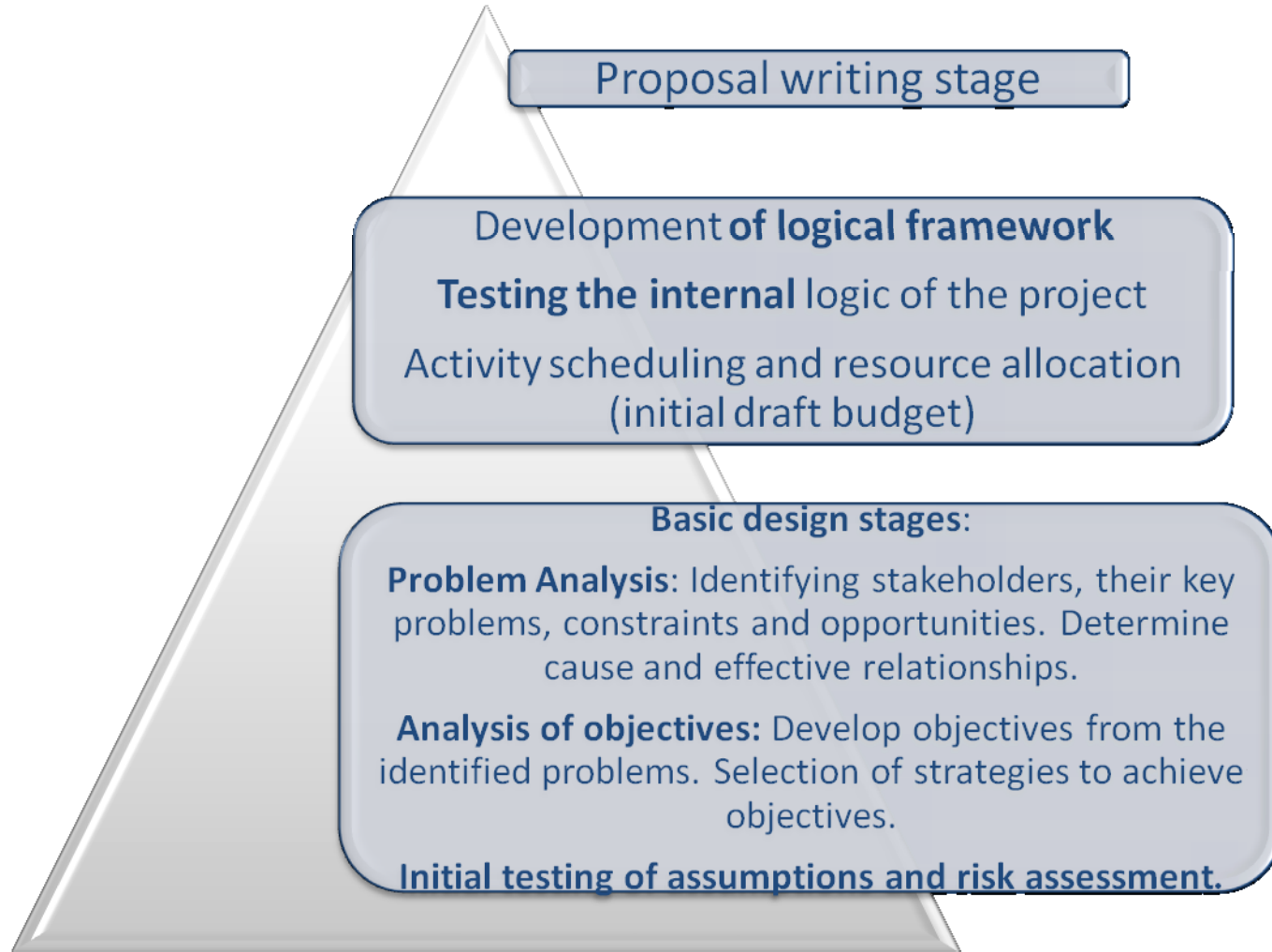
Recap: Full proposal

- 2.1.1. Description of the action and its effectiveness
- 2.1.2. Methodology
- 2.1.3. Work plan
- 2.1.4. Sustainability questions
- 2.1.5. Logframe
Budget

Session 1: Project preparation

Getting the internal logic right

Proposal writing is the tip of the Pyramid



Planning: A logical framework approach

- **Step One:** Stakeholder analysis
- **Step Two:** Problem/needs analysis
- **Step Three:** Analysis of objectives
- **Step Four:** Choice of strategy for intervention

Stakeholders, target groups

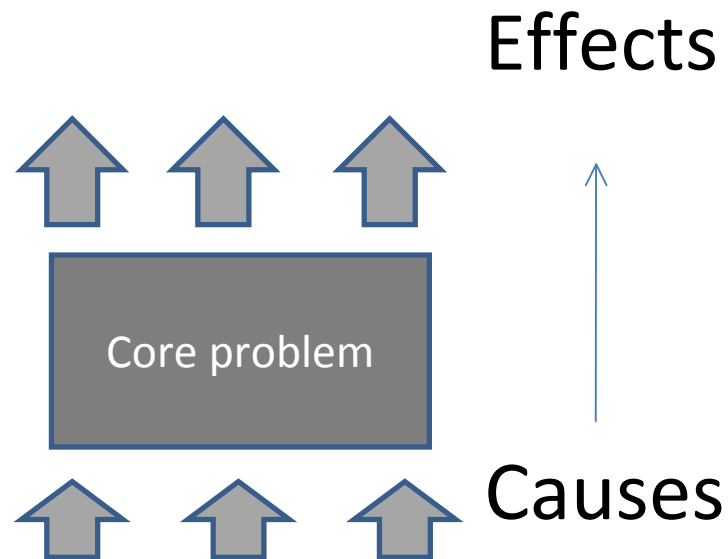
- **Stakeholders:**
- Individuals or institutions that may – directly or indirectly, positively or negatively – affect or be affected by a project.
- **Target groups:** The group/entity who will be directly/positively affected by the project at the specific objective level. They can include partner organisations.
- **Final beneficiaries:** Those who benefit from the project in the long term at the level of society or sector. For example: ‘Children’ who will benefit from improved policies for child protection.

Stakeholder analysis

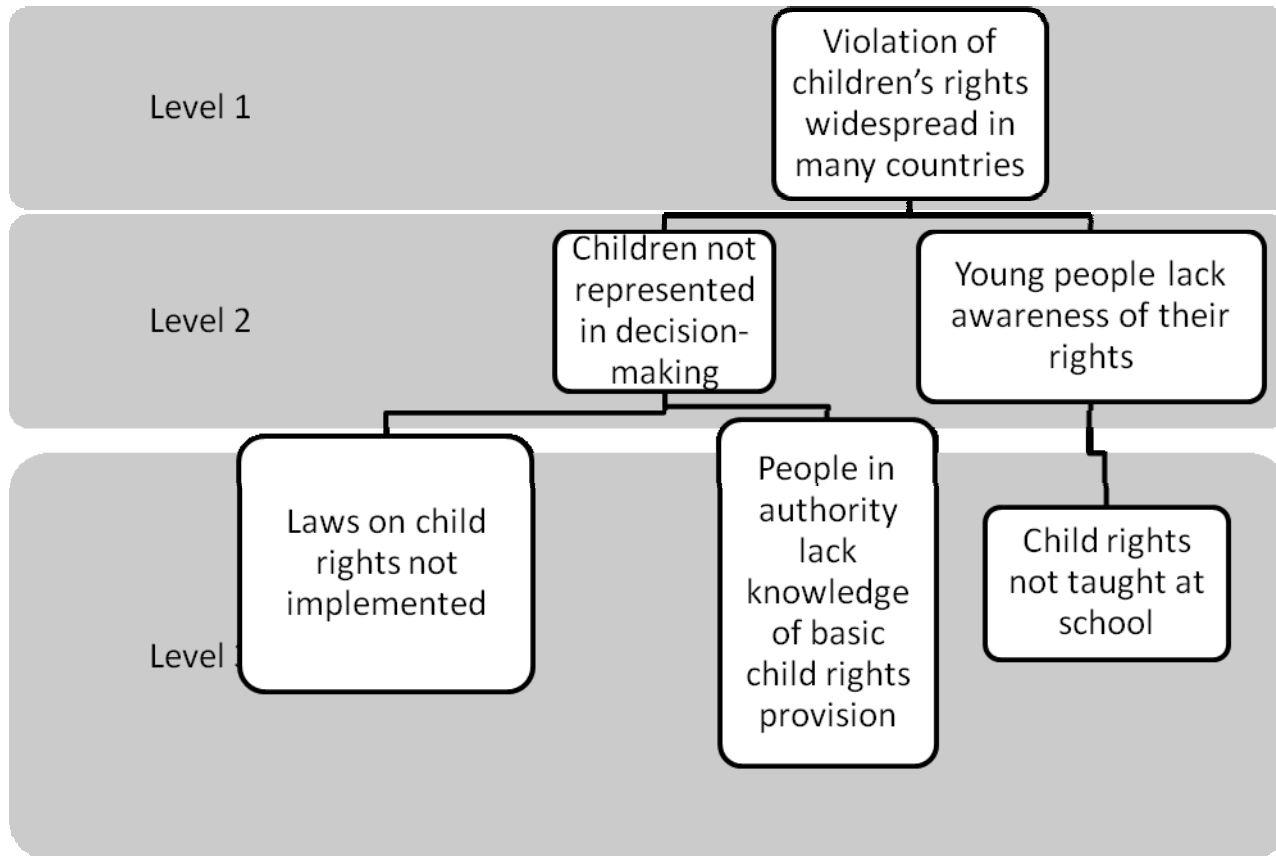
Stakeholder	Needs	Role in the action	Numbers
Trade union organisers in EU member states	Better understanding of MDGs and ways of linking with TU in partner countries Skills to raise awareness of MDGs	Build solidarity in EU member states among trade union members. Link with sister unions in developing countries.	Trade Union branch organisers in xxx provinces in country x
Trade union members.	Better understanding of MDGs and ways of linking with TU in partner countries	Attend meetings and workshops on MDGs	Xxx union members
Partner NGO	Better understanding of working with TUs	Provide skills in awareness raising	1 NGO 10 staff

Problem and situation analysis

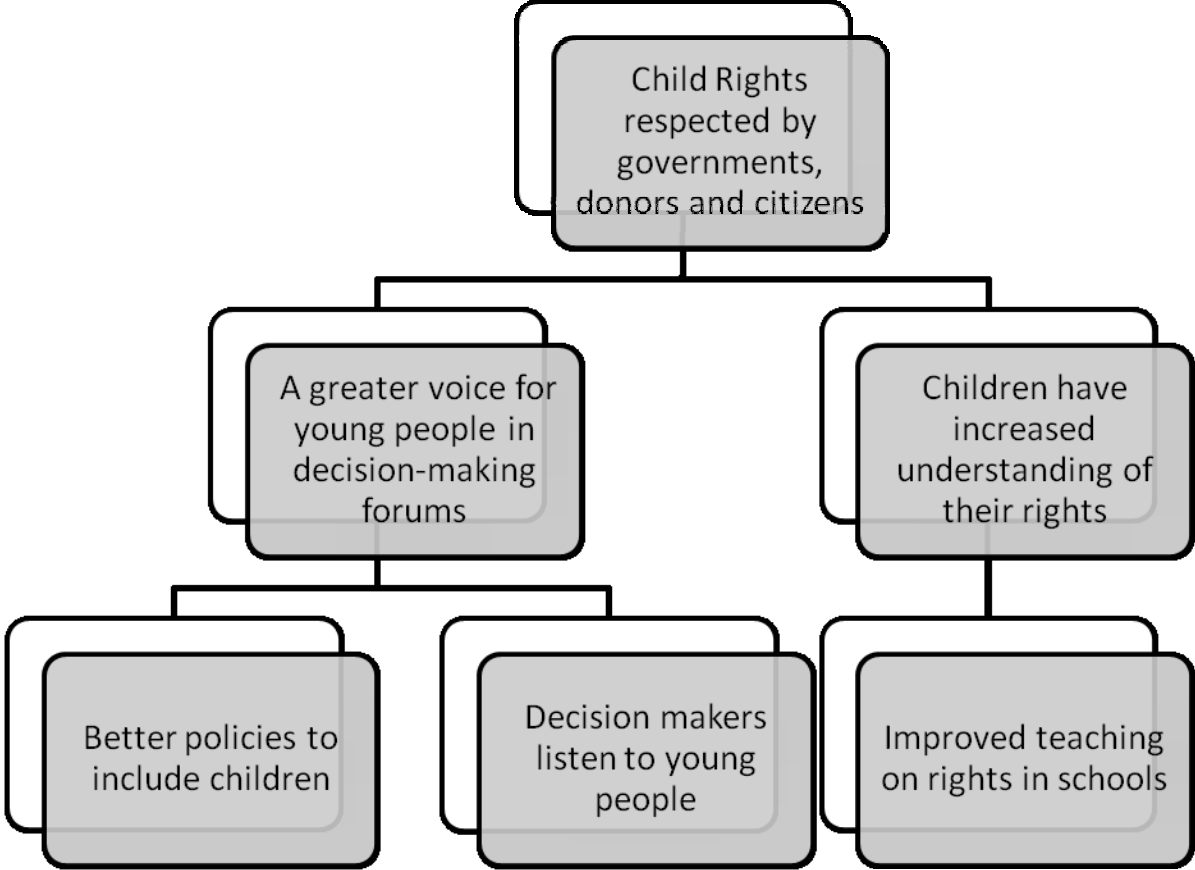
- Use brainstorming and ranking techniques to get to the CORE PROBLEM
- What are the causes of the core problem?
- What are the effects of this core problem?



Problem tree analysis



Restate each problem as a positive statement



Analysis of objectives

- Turn problems into objectives
- Reword statements in the problem tree into positive statements showing a future achievement.

TIP: When working on your project ideas, if you cannot decide on the Specific Objective go back to the problem tree and check the CORE PROBLEM

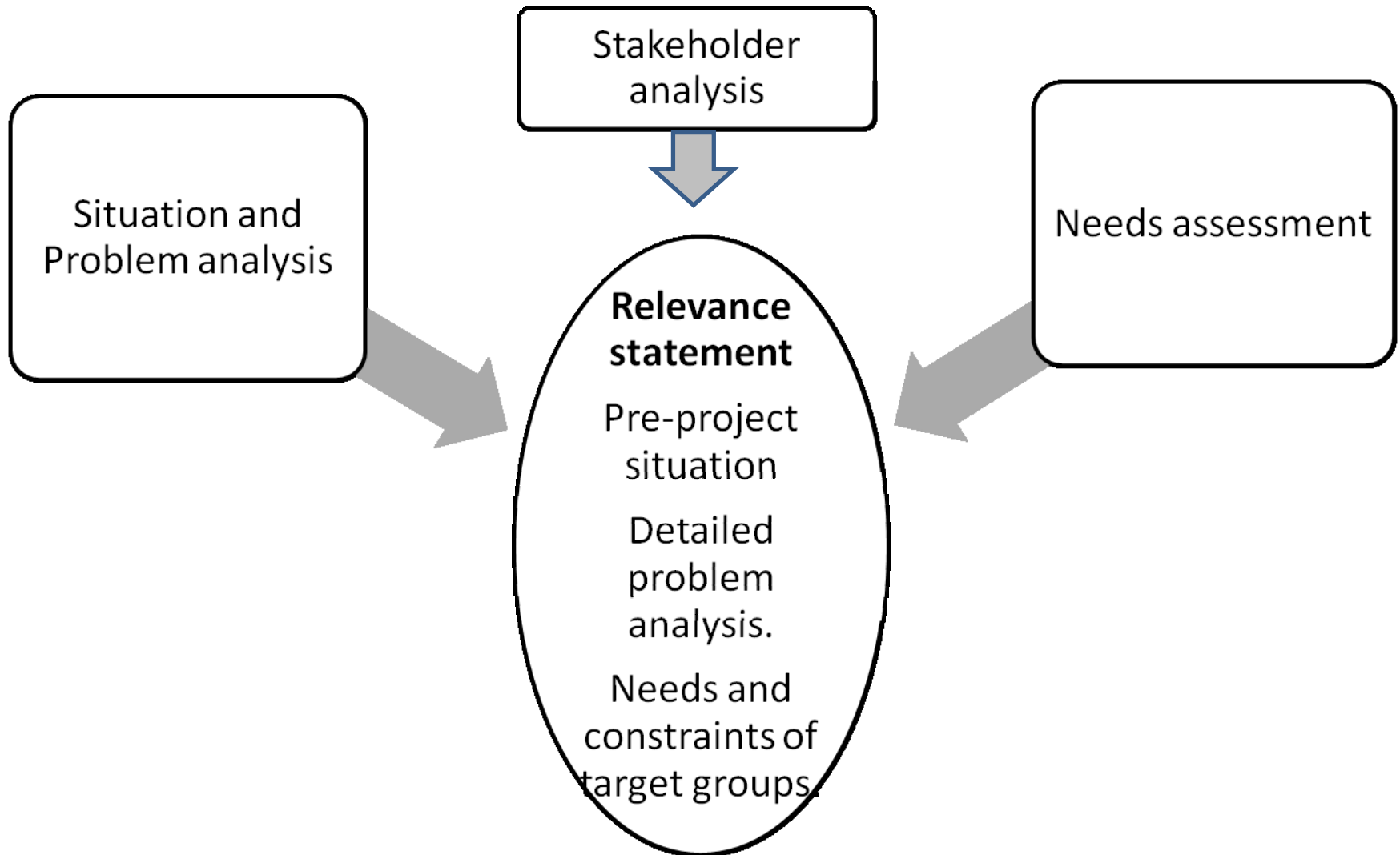
Concept note: Summary table

Narrative summary Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objectives			
Specific objective			
Results			
Activities			

Logframe definitions

Overall objectives	<p>What is our vision of the future?</p> <p>Broad objectives to which your project will contribute. The project is not expected to achieve these during the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>Can have one or more.</p> <p>They should be in line with the overall objectives as published in the EC Call for Proposals</p>
Specific objective	<p>Where would we like to be in the next 3 (or 4 or 5) years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The positive change that the project intends to bring about in the lives of the beneficiaries.•Should be more or less within project control, achievable and MEASURABLE by the end of the action.•ONLY ONE specific objective
Results	<p>Tangible services/changes in target groups produced by the activities</p> <p>Must be measurable</p>
Activities	<p>What needs to be done to deliver each of the results?</p> <p>Activities should be grouped by result.</p> <p>If there is a lot of overlap, is your hierarchy of results clearly set out?</p>

Concept Note: From problem tree to relevance



Session 2:

**Describing results and activities.
Initial assumptions and risk analysis**

Logical framework - assumptions

Narrative summary Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objectives			
Specific objective			
Results			
Activities			

Pre-conditions

Assumptions

- External factors that are important for the success of the project
- They summarise factors which the project cannot, or chooses not to control
- They may be factors which the project does not address, but should monitor

Assumptions

Things to consider:

Stakeholder attitudes and expectations

Government plans, attitudes and expectations

Geographic and climatic conditions

Economic conditions

Political context

Risk Assessment

An essential part of project design.

From stakeholder analysis onwards.

Assess each activity for risk – political,
environmental, social, economic and
physical

Risks can be assessed as high, medium or
low.

How will the project act to minimise risk?
(mitigation)

Example of risk

Activity:

Project will recruit
volunteer health
promoters

Risk:

Volunteers may drop out
after initial training.

Mitigation:



Mentoring system:
Community involvement in
selection

Sustainability issue:

Will volunteers continue to
function after end of
project?

Completing the logical framework

SMART indicators to measure achievement

Narrative summary Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objectives			
Specific objective			
Results			
Activities			
			Pre-conditions

Results and Activities

Concept Note : Description of the action
1 page – possibly 2

- General information on the background of the action.
- Describe the objectives of the action.** (Elaborate here on the objectives mentioned in the table in Summary Table.)
- Provide **brief information** on the **type of activities** foreseen and specify related outputs and results.
- Indicate the broad timeframe for the action.

Full proposal: Description of the action and its effectiveness
14 pages

- Elaborate** on expected results.
- How will they improve the situation of the target groups
- How will they improve the technical and management capacity of target groups and partners
- Describe the activities
- Justify the choice of the activity
- Who will carry it out?

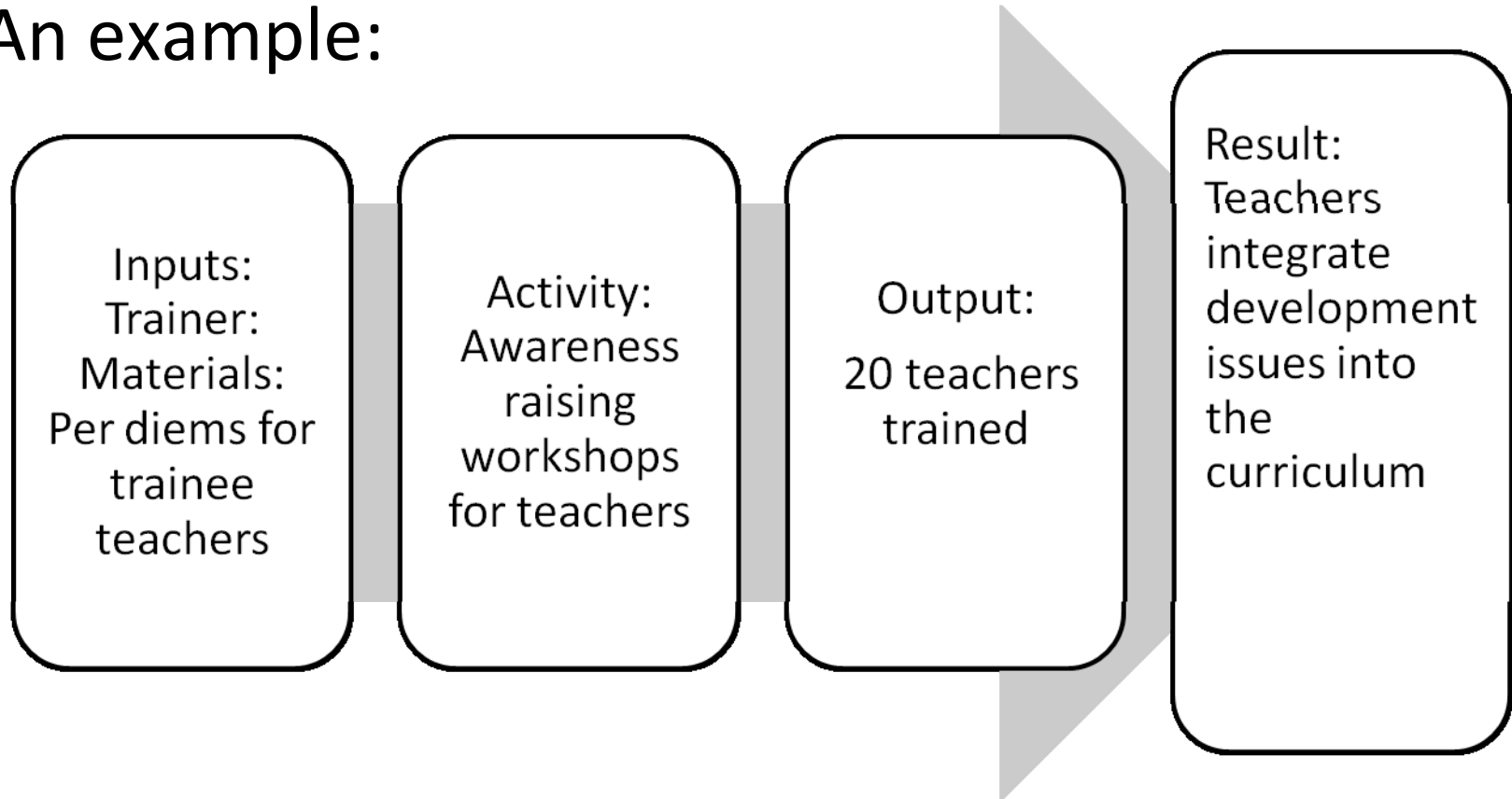
Describing Results

- Describe the future situation.
- What positive changes will the action bring about for the target groups/beneficiaries.
- Use the logframe to structure.
- Indicators will help to describe results in SMART waysBUT
- DO NOT simply repeat the indicators from the logframe



Inputs and outputs

An example:



Describing activities

- There may be several activities to achieve one result.
- Group activities by group in the logical framework
- Identify the resources (inputs) required to carry out activities. (human, technical, material etc)

Checking effectiveness

- Will the specific objective contribute to the overall objectives?
- Will the specific objective be achieved in the results are delivered?
- Are the activities sufficient to achieve the results?
- Are the means (human resources, equipment, funds) sufficiently justified by the activities and results?

Participation and Partnerships

- **The cross-cutting message:**
- The people who will benefit from your project, including your partners, have been and will be fully involved at every stage.
- You have good partnerships, built on trust, transparency and mutual support.
- Capacity building is an integral part of the project.

Session 3:

Completing a proposal

Sustainability

Budget tips

Methodology Section

- A catch all section that covers (in 4 pages) :
- Project methodology
- Repeat questions on synergy with EC and fit within larger project (if any).
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Roles & attitudes of various actors and stakeholders
- Organisational structure and team
- Means required to deliver project
- Visibility

Methodology of the action

- Describe the 'approach' of the action
- Do not repeat the activities.
- Can include: the key intervention principles of your organisation; participatory approaches; training methodologies, methods to ensure equality of access for men, women, different groups.

Work plan

- Fill in gantt chart as requested.
- Note new requirement to limit this to 4 pages.
- Must fit numbering of the Description of activities.
- During implementation, the work plan for the following year will be detailed by month.

Sustainability of the action

5 key questions in 3 pages

- Expected impact of the project
- Plan for dissemination and multiplier effects
- Risk and contingency plan
- Main pre-conditions and assumptions
- How will sustainability be secured

Statement of impact

- Use EC's own wording to create subsections in your statement.
- Technical
- Economic
- Social
- Policy levels
- Use quantified data where possible.

Means of dissemination and audiences

- Share information with:
- Partners from EU Member States
- Local partners, other NGOs, donors, government, other local CSOs.
- Means of dissemination:
- Reports, broadcast and print media, internet, through seminars, conferences etc.

Sustainability Issues

Financial, institutional, policy, environmental

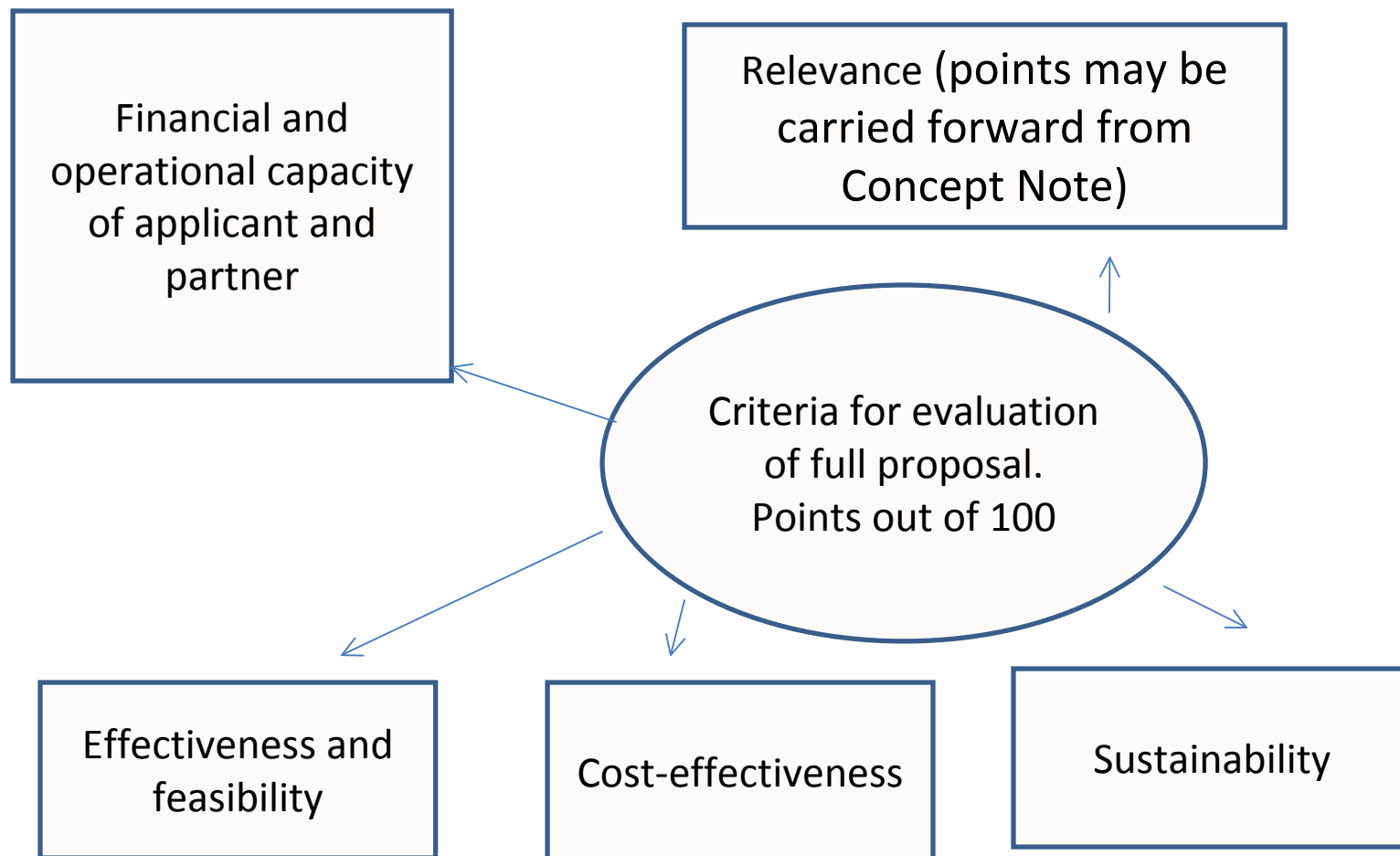
Unpick sustainability by thinking about the following issues:

- **Ownership by beneficiaries:** What evidence is there that they support the project.
- **Gender equality:** Will project reduce inequalities and meet needs of both men and women?
- **Financial:** Will further funding be required and if so from where?

More Sustainability Issues

- **Institutional:** Structures in place to allow activities to continue if necessary?
- **Social/cultural:** What measures will the project undertake to ensure behaviour change is sustainable?
- **Policy:** e.g. changes in law, codes of good practice, evidence of support by authorities
- **Environmental:** Measures to mitigate any possible harmful environmental impact?

Evaluation of full proposal



Annex B: The Budget

- A standard excel spreadsheet with 4 worksheets
- **Worksheet 1:** The budget for total duration of project and the first year budget.
- **Worksheet 2:** Justification of the budget.
- **Worksheet 3:** Amount requested and sources of financing
- **Worksheet 4:** Claim sheet for contingency fund.
Do not submit with budget.

Budget basics

- Budget covers 100% of project costs, not just those funded by the EC
- The EC makes a pro-rata contribution to the total budget. The budget line items are not ear-marked by donor.

5. Budget and cost-effectiveness	15	
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget	5 x 2	
5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5	
Maximum total score	100	

Guiding principles

- A good budget makes for un-complicated financial management and reporting
- Aim to strike a balance between a budget which is not detailed enough and may leave you open to accusations of putting in undefined 'lump sums' and a budget that is so detailed that reporting becomes too heavy a task.

Eligible and acceptable costs

- **Eligible total costs** = all direct costs less VAT and other indirect taxes
- **Acceptable total costs** = all costs including VAT and other indirect taxes
- The 7% administrative charge and contingencies are calculated on the eligible costs
- See EC Document: New Co-financing Approach to Grants

Direct and Indirect Costs

- **Direct** : All costs required to implement the action including contingency
- **Indirect**: A fixed percentage not exceeding 7% of total direct costs to cover the administrative overheads of the Grant Beneficiary.
- This flat-rate funding does not need to be supported by accounting documents.

Common problems with budgets

- Over-estimated total budget leading to accusations of unnecessary costs e.g. Too many administrative posts etc.
- Inaccurate: e.g. costs not carefully budgeted leading to significant over or under expenditure.
- Often Year One budget is over-estimated leading to heavy under expenditure at outset.
- Partners not fully consulted so that not all their costs included.

And finally... Style, language, layout

- Answer every EC format question in the right order, using their questions edited down to make paragraph headings.
- Do not expect the EC evaluator to read between the lines of your CN to find the answers to their questions.
- Concept Notes: We know that it is difficult to get all the information into 4 pages, but remember LESS can be MORE. At the least, make sure there are gaps between the main question headings, making it easier to read.
- Do not use your own organisation's jargon unless it is essential in which case give a foot note in explanation.
- Use foot notes sparingly. They take up too much space.

Tips on Concept Note Writing

- Work out the logical framework first – at the very least the first column for the CN. This gives you the structure for the whole proposal.
- You cannot make significant changes between the concept note and full proposal so get it right from the start.
- Do not be afraid of stating the obvious when answering the first question in the CN about fit with EC objectives and priorities.
- The questions have a logical flow, it is not necessary to be repetitive. If you find you are repeating the same information, then you are missing something out or you are not answering the question!
- Remember that the Relevance statement (questions under 1.2) should not start telling HOW you are going to do the project. Concentrate on the WHY.