

MODULE IV – PROJECT AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Course Title: **Development Cycle Management, Results & Adaptive Design**

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Course Introduction:

Project and Programme Management has evolved significantly in the last two decades. While Project Cycle Management (PCM) and the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) remain essential tools in development cooperation, contemporary practice increasingly requires integrating results-based management (RBM), Theory of Change (ToC), adaptive management, and robust monitoring, evaluation and learning systems (MEL/MEAL).

In a context of constrained budgets, increased donor scrutiny, climate uncertainty, and complex socio-political environments, development professionals must be able not only to design technically sound projects but also to ensure strategic alignment with donor priorities, sustainability beyond funding cycles, and measurable, credible impact.

This course provides students with a comprehensive and practical understanding of modern development cycle management. It combines classical PCM and LFA tools with Theory of Change, results frameworks, OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, adaptive implementation approaches, and real donor application mechanisms (e.g. EU Funding & Tenders, PRAG, humanitarian proposal formats).

Throughout the week, students will work intensively on a practical case study that will allow them to apply all tools step by step: from problem analysis to logframe construction, results measurement, risk management, donor alignment and proposal drafting.

The role of International Organizations (IOs) and major bilateral and multilateral donors will also be analysed from a strategic perspective: how they shape development agendas, condition programme design, and influence accountability frameworks.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the module, students will be able to:

1. Apply Project Cycle Management (PCM) in development and humanitarian contexts.
2. Construct a Theory of Change and translate it into a coherent Logical Framework.
3. Design a results framework including SMART indicators, baselines, targets and verification sources.
4. Develop a basic Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL/MEAL) plan.
5. Identify and manage risks and assumptions within complex environments.
6. Apply the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) to assess interventions.
7. Align project design strategically with donor requirements and scoring criteria.

8. Understand how International Organizations and major donors influence development programming and accountability standards.
9. Prepare key components of a funding proposal responding to a real call for proposals.

Course Methodology:

The course follows an intensive, practice-oriented format (5 days).

It combines:

- Short conceptual inputs
- Interactive quizzes and digital polling
- Guided group exercises
- Structured case-based work
- Simulation exercises (donor panel / evaluation critique)
- Peer feedback

Students will progressively develop a complete project design portfolio during the week (problem tree, strategy analysis, Theory of Change, logframe, indicators, risk matrix, MEL outline, donor concept note).

Course Content:

DAY 1 – Foundations of Contemporary Development Project Management (5h)

- Evolution of Project Management in development cooperation
- Constraints and trade-offs (scope, time, cost, quality, risk, resources)
- Complexity in development contexts (climate, fragility, governance)
- Stakeholder analysis and political economy considerations
- Introduction to Project Cycle Management (PCM)
- From linear cycles to adaptive management
- Role and competencies of the Project Manager in development

DAY 2 – Project Cycle Management & Adaptive Implementation (4h)

- PCM phases: programming, identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation
- Risk management and assumption logic
- Adaptive management and learning loops
- Introduction to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL/MEAL)
- Accountability standards in development and humanitarian action
- Practical exercise: stakeholder mapping & problem analysis

DAY 3 – Logical Framework Approach & Theory of Change (4h)

- Problem tree and objective tree
- Strategy analysis and intervention logic
- Theory of Change: causal pathways, assumptions, boundary conditions
- Translating Theory of Change into a Logical Framework
- Vertical and horizontal coherence
- SMART objectives and indicator formulation
- Practical exercise: full logframe construction

DAY 4 – Results-Based Management & Evaluation (4h)

- Results chains: outputs, outcomes, impact
- Indicator quality and measurement challenges
- Baselines, targets and data sources
- Designing a basic MEL framework
- OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (2019 update)
- Evaluation questions and judgement criteria
- Sustainability: institutional, financial, environmental and social dimensions
- Practical exercise: indicator refinement & evaluation critique

DAY 5 – Donor Architecture & Proposal Development (4h)

- Strategic role of International Organizations in development
- Bilateral vs multilateral donors
- EU funding mechanisms (overview of Funding & Tenders Portal)
- Grant procedures and proposal logic
- Donor scoring criteria and strategic alignment
- Writing a concise concept note
- Simulation: donor evaluation panel

Reading List:

- European Commission (ECHO) – Project Cycle Management Manual
- World Bank – The Logframe Handbook
- OECD/DAC – Better Criteria for Better Evaluation
- World Bank – Ten Steps to a Results-Based M&E System
- CHS Alliance (2024 edition) - Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)