

List of terminology applied in evaluations and project cycle management

The terminology used in development cooperation projects/programmes and in related evaluations is often rather complicated and even confusing. The terms may also vary, depending on the funder or the funding instrument. The following vocabulary describes the terms commonly used in evaluations and in project cycle management. The term project is used as a common term to cover both projects and programmes.

Activity (Toiminto); Action taken or work performed within a project in order to transform the inputs, such as human resources and materials, into results (new/improved systems, facilities, skills, etc.).

Appraisal (Ex-ante evaluation) (Ennakoarviointi); Assessment of a project plan prior to its final approval and implementation. The aim is to assess the relevance, feasibility, sustainability and risks of the project and identify possible revision needs.

Assumption (Oletus); External factor upon which a project's success may depend.

Accountability (Vastuullisuus, tilivelvollisuus); Responsibility for delivering the planned results and for compliance with commitments.

Baseline (Lähtötaso); The values of the project indicators when the project is launched. Initially baselines are defined during project preparation and completed during the inception phase.

Beneficiaries (Hyödynsaajat); Those groups at whom the project's benefits are aimed. Direct Beneficiaries are the groups who directly benefit from the project e.g. through improved professional skills. Final Beneficiaries are those groups at whom the project's impacts are ultimately aimed ("end users"). In addition to the beneficiaries, a project may involve also several other stakeholders. When using the human rights-based approach, the beneficiaries are typically referred to as rights holders and duty-bearers.



Coherence (Johdonmukaisuus, yhteensopivuus); The compatibility of the project with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Coherence answers to the question how well does the intervention fit? This includes internal coherence and external coherence. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context.

Evaluation (Evaluointi, arviointi); Independent and objective assessment of the project, conducted in accordance with the OECD/DAC evaluation principles and criteria. During the project cycle, various evaluations may be conducted: Mid-term Evaluation mid-term of a project or its phase; Final Evaluation at the end of the project; and Ex-post Evaluation and/or Impact Evaluation some years after the project has been phased out.

Effectiveness (Tuloksellisuus); The extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. Effectiveness answers the question is the intervention achieving its objectives?

Efficiency (Tehokkuus); The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Efficiency answers the question how well are the resources being used?

Human rights-based approach (Ihmisoikeusperusteinen lähestymistapa); Approach to development cooperation based on human rights. It involves a distinct set of characteristics and principles to be applied.

Impact (Vaikuttavuus); The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. Impact answers the question what difference does the intervention make?

Indicator (Indikaattori, mittari); factors whose follow-up enables the assessment of how the project has reached its targeted results and what kind of impact it has made. Indicators need to be both quantitative and qualitative. Indicators must have clearly defined baselines, targets, realistic monitoring methods and sufficient resources for monitoring.

Monitoring (Seuranta); continuous or periodical surveillance of the project implementation carried out by the project implementers. On the one hand, monitoring focuses on the follow-up of work plans and budgets, and the operational context and its risks. On the other hand, it focuses on achievement of results and impacts. Systematic monitoring is essential for learning and it also provides information for evaluations. The findings of monitoring are presented in progress and annual reports.

Results (Tulokset); the targeted and positive changes brought about by the project. Results are normally divided into three levels:



- Impact (Pitkän aikavälin vaikutus); the ultimate goal of the project.
- Outcome (Välitön vaikutus); the planned end-result of the project or its phase.
- Output (Tuotos, suorite); a term used for describing the key deliverables of a project.

Review (Arviointi, katsaus); An assessment of the performance of an intervention, periodically or on an ad hoc basis. Frequently, "evaluation" is used for a more rigorous, comprehensive and/or more indepth assessment than "review". Reviews tend to emphasize operational aspects. A Mid-term Review is a lighter version of a Mid-term Evaluation.

Participation (Osallistavuus); an approach through which the beneficiaries and other stakeholders are able to influence the project's planning, decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring processes. Participation is usually a pre-requisite for ownership, successful implementation and sustainability.

Performance (Suoritus, saavutus); Level of achieving planned results.

Programme (Ohjelma); a group of related projects or actions directed towards the attainment of specific objectives. A wide ranging and long-term project may also be considered as a programme.

Project (Projekti, hanke); a planned undertaking designed to achieve clearly defined objectives within a given time and with the allocated resources by a specific organisation.

Project Cycle, Project Cycle Management (Projektisykli, projektisyklin hallinta); the system whereby a project advances from one stage to another through certain steps. Project Cycle Management combines the various planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages into a learning process.

Project Plan, Project Document (Projektisuunnitelma); A strategic plan and management tool for the project (ref. business plan in enterprise management). The Project Plan defines the beneficiaries, results, institutional arrangements, and resources, as well as the main activities and their schedule.

Relevance (Relevanssi, tarkoituksenmukaisuus); The extent of how relevant the project is in relation to the needs of the beneficiaries and/or other key stakeholders, and to the partner country's and Finland's development plans, strategies and policies. Relevance answers to the question: Is the intervention doing the rights things?

Resources (means, inputs) (Resurssit, panokset); The resources are financial, human or material such as staff and experts, equipment, venues etc., which are required for implementing the project. The budget is calculated on the basis of the required resources.



Results Framework; (Tuloskehikko); Structure where the objectives, indicators and assumptions of a project are defined, logical and causally linked. Various models are available for this (Results matrix, Logical framework, etc.).

Risk (Riski); internal or external factors which may threaten the achievement of project results, impact and/or sustainability. The risk level should be moderate. A risk management plan is a key tool to mitigate risks.

Risk management (Riskien hallinta); The mechanism whereby risks are identified and mitigated.

Stakeholders (Sidosryhmät); All groups and organisations that have an interest in the project or participate in it. Beneficiaries are part of the stakeholders. In addition, other stakeholders may include various partners, administrative bodies as well as parties with whom a conflict may arise.

Sustainability (Kestävyys); The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue. Typically, sustainability consists of financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. Sustainability answers to the question “will the benefits last”?

Theory of Change (ToC, Muutosteoria); the strategy behind the project. A ToC describes the logic of how activities are understood to lead into results and impacts, and define the critical assumptions behind the strategy. It is often presented in the forms of a diagram or matrix and a narrative that explains the logic for the change expected.

Work Plan (Työsuunnitelma); the practical operational plan of a project. It is usually prepared annually and adjusted quarterly or monthly. The focus is on detailed definition of activities, schedules, and use of resources/inputs/means.