Glossary of Terms used in the Planning and Design of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme[1]

Activities: According to the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), activities are the actions needed to convert inputs into outputs.

Assessment: An examination of a project to determine whether results were achieved, and to analyse challenges and opportunities, that help on-going or future project/programme decision making. An assessment is more comprehensive than monitoring but less rigorous than an evaluation. It may be performed periodically or be needs-based, and is conducted internally (as a self-assessment), or externally (by an external entity).

Assumption: A potential (internal or external) factor, outside the project management team's control, that could affect the progress or success of the project. Mostly, an assumption is a condition that needs to be fulfilled to produce the intended result. An assumption that needs to be in place before a project commences is referred to as a prerequisite or precondition.

Baseline: The situation prior to the project intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparison made.

Beneficiary: The individuals, group or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the project.

Central criterion: The extent to which a project addresses an area of real need in which there is a national programme enjoying strong government commitment and support. Such projects take two forms: (a) those that produce a tangible socioeconomic benefit in an area in which nuclear technology holds a comparative advantage; and (b) those that clearly support an enabling environment for the use of nuclear technologies (such as safety infrastructures or energy planning). The central criterion thus embraces the government's commitment to sustaining the benefits of technical cooperation activities.[1]

Continuous improvement (CI): A quality management principle that strives to apply a consistent organization-wide approach for improving the organizational and/or programme performance. CI may be achieved through internal reviews, internal/external assessments, user feedback and the dissemination and replication of Best Practices.

Counterpart (CP): The institution in the Member State that designs and manages the project and thus plays a primary role in the planning, implementation, monitoring and review processes.

Country Programme Framework (CPF): A strategic programming tool prepared by Member States in collaboration with the Secretariat. It defines mutually agreed priority development needs and interests that can be supported through TC activities. CPFs reflect national development plans, country specific analyses and lessons learned from past cooperation, and seek linkages with United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs).

Country Programme Note (CPN): A document that provides an overview of the Member State's development priorities, to be addressed through the TC programme, for an upcoming programming cycle.

Development Objective (= Overall Objective): The long term, intended or unintended, impact (physical, financial, social, environmental or other benefits), to which the project is expected to contribute.

Development partner: An individual or organization that collaborates with the IAEA to achieve mutually agreed objectives. Development partners would normally include other United Nations organizations, government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations that provide an input to the project or disseminate its results to end users.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the Outputs and Outcome Results are achieved, or expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Efficiency: Measures the productivity of the implementation process and how economically resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results. Efficiency answers the question: "Could the same results have been attained timely and at a lower cost?".

End user: Individual, group or organization that uses the project's outputs or outcome to reach higher level results. This would include, for example, farmers, service users, doctors, or in certain cases even members of society at large.

Evaluation: An objective, independent and systematic examination of the extent to which a programme or project has achieved its stated objective and, therefore, is meeting the needs and priorities of Member States. An evaluation assesses the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability of a programme or project. An evaluation seeks to provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.

Feedback: The transmission of findings generated throughout the programme/project cycle and the evaluation process to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons from experience.

Field Monitoring Methodology (FMM): A methodology that enables to assess the project implementation progress following OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability). It also identifies actions to be taken in order to improve the performance, while the project is still on-going. FMM entails a field visit / mission of expert(s) designated by the Secretariat.

Impact: Positive or negative, primary or secondary long-term effects produced by a project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Indicator: A quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, or to capture results fully or partially generated by a project. Thus the indicator facilitates comparison of actual against planned performance of a project. An indicator should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, reliable and time-bound) so that it describes the planned or achieved result in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness.

Inputs: The financial, human, material, technological and information resources provided for and used in a project to implement the activities. For TC projects, inputs are provided by both Member States (as national financial and human resources, local infrastructure, etc.) and IAEA (such as expert missions, equipment, fellowships, training courses, scientific visits, staff time).

Lessons learned: Refer to experience and/or knowledge gained from the project cycle that can be generalized and relevant for other similar contexts. Lessons learned normally highlight strengths or weaknesses in planning, design and implementation that affect project results.

Logical Framework Approach (LFA): A results-based management tool used to design, implement, monitor and evaluate projects. It encompasses a systematic process of situation, stakeholder, problem/need and objectives analysis, as well as selection of the intervention in a participatory manner. It identifies the cause-effect relationship of problems and their root-causes, and ultimately summarizes the project in a matrix, which is called the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), establishing key design elements.

Logical Framework Matrix (LFM): One of the key documents produced through the LFA while designing a project. It provides a systematic summary of the key design elements (overall objective outcome, outputs, and activities) the indicators, their means of verification and the assumptions or risks that may influence success or failure. It facilitates the project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring: A continuous function used to follow up, inform and take corrective actions when needed for the project management and stakeholders of the progress achieved against the planned results (outputs and outcome). It uses systematic collection and analysis of data on specific, predetermined indicators to track actual project performance for management decision making. It is a key responsibility of the project team.

National Participation Costs (NPCs): Costs charged to Member States (excluding Least Developed Countries) receiving technical cooperation, and are assessed at 5% of their national programme, which includes national projects and fellows and scientific visitors funded under regional or interregional projects.

Objective (generic term): An end that can be reasonably achieved within an expected timeframe and with available resources. In the Logical Framework Approach, the objective(s) have different connotations depending on the level and perspective of the project owners. Related terms: overall objective, outcome, and outputs.

Objectives tree: An LFA tool for analysis of the intervention choices, identifying and consolidating the cause-effect hierarchy and the logic of a project, using a diagram or graphic illustration. It provides clarity for identifying the project scope and context, and the respective objective levels (i.e. overall objective, outcome, outputs).

Outcome (= Project Specific Objective): The 'reason to be' of a project, achieved through the collective effort of the project team, stakeholders and partners. An outcome represents changes or improvement in conditions, services, and situations, which occur after the achievement of outputs and as a consequence of their use. Depending on the scope of the intervention, an Outcome can be at a Project, Programme or Policy level.

Outcome Monitoring (OM): A process / mechanism for measuring the extent to which the expected change or improvement (outcome result) was (or is being) achieved in the Member State, once planned outputs are successfully accomplished. This requires the monitoring of a) progress in the completion of planned outputs during the implementation period, and b) the change that occurred beyond the implementation time, as a result of the project outputs.

Outputs: The products, deliverables, and tangibles which result from the completion of activities within a project. Completion of all envisioned project outputs will normally result in the achievement of the outcome.

Overall Objective (= Developmental Objective): The long term, intended or unintended, impact (physical, financial, social, environmental or other benefits), to which the project is expected to contribute.

Ownership: The expected level of commitment and leadership demonstrated by the counterpart vis à vis the project.

Partner (= Development Partner)

Performance: The degree to which a project operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated objectives or plans.

Performance Indicator: A variable that allows the verification of change or shows results achieved by the project.

Project: An undertaking or intervention with a specific objective (outcome) that addresses an identified problem or gap in a specific area. A project has a start and an end date, an allocation of resources and defined roles and responsibilities for the project team and other stakeholders.

Project Cycle: The process involving planning, approval, implementation, monitoring, closure and evaluation.

Project Document: Describes in detail the shared and agreed understanding between the Member State and the IAEA on the project scope and all its elements, including project background and justification, project description, implementation aspects, LFM and the workplan.

Project Progress Assessment Report (PPAR): A tool that allows the counterparts (CPs) to analyze and report project progress in terms of achieving planned results (outputs and outcome). It also enables to provide feedback on the quality of inputs and activities implemented, as well as the project performance. It is mandatory and should be submitted at least once a year.

Quality criteria (or quality standards): The parameters established or adopted by an organization to measure the compliance of its products, services and processes to a certain defined standard. For TC, the quality criteria encompass: relevance, ownership/commitment, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.

Relevance: The degree to which the project objectives are consistent with end users' or beneficiaries requirements, country needs, and partners' or donors' policies. Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

Results: An output, outcome or impact of a project, constituting observable and measurable changes in a state, condition or behaviour of the beneficiaries and/or end users. Results can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, as well as direct or indirect.

Results Based Management (RBM): A management approach by which an organization ensures that its processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) with clearly defined accountability. RBM requires monitoring and evaluation of progress and achievements towards results, reporting and feedback on performance for continuous improvement.

Review: An assessment of the performance of the project, periodically or on ad hoc basis.

Risk: The probability that an event or condition may adversely affect the achievement of the project. Risks are composed of factors internal and external to the project, and emphasis is generally placed on those factors outside the project management team's direct control.

Self-Evaluation (SE): A self-analysis and reflection exercise carried out by the project team itself, with the aim of critically reviewing the project/programme performance, documenting evidence of results achieved, and identifying lessons learned for continual improvement. Similar to the FMM, the analysis follows the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Stakeholder: An agency, organization, group or individual that has a direct or indirect [positive or negative] interest in the project. This may also include entities that may be affected by, or affect the project.

Sustainability: The continuation of benefits after the completion of a project; the probability of continued long term benefits.

Sustainable Development Goals: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is an intergovernmental set of aspiration goals popularly known as The Future We Want. They are a broader intergovernmental agreement that act as the Post 2015 Development Agenda (successor to the Millennium Development Goals). There are 17 goals with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues. These include ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests.

Target Group: The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit the project is undertaken.

Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF): The main fund for financing the IAEA's technical cooperation activities. It is funded by the voluntary contributions of Member States, national participation costs, assessed programme cost arrears and miscellaneous income.

Technical cooperation (TC) programme: The Agency programme through which the IAEA assists its Member States to obtain benefits of nuclear science technology and applications for sustainable socioeconomic development.

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF): A UN strategic programme planning framework at the country level. It lays the foundation for cooperation among the United Nations organizations, government and other development partners through the preparation of a complementary set of programmes and projects.