International Development

Project Management Cycle

Expectations of Australian NGOs in the International Development Sector

The NGO is expected to:

- **Play an <u>active role</u> throughout the life of a project**

- **Have a <u>deeper</u>, <u>engaged</u> & <u>qualitative role</u> beyond the provision of financial support – e.g. oversight & quality assurance**

The Project Management Cycle (PMC)

**PMC is central to the work of international development NGOs**

The keys to effective development are:

- **Good planning**

- **Good risk management**

- **Close involvement of primary stakeholders**

The Generic Project Cycle

The sequence in which projects are planned & implemented

1. Identification

2. Design

3. Appraisal

4. Implementation

5. Monitoring

6. Evaluation

7. Reflecting, Learning & Adapting
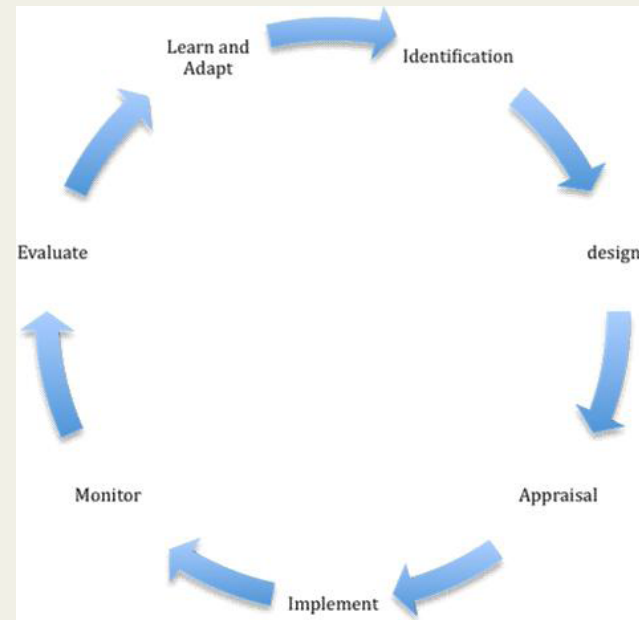
The Project Cycle is a conceptual process which provides a structure and discipline

Phases 1 & 2 inform ERFA Funding Application requirements

Poor Project Performance

Poor project performance is usually linked to:

- **Poor planning & preparation**

- **Project not relevant to beneficiaries**

- **Risk insufficiently taken into account**

- **Long-term sustainability ignored**

- **Lessons from past experience rarely incorporated into policy & practice**

Identification & Design

Project design involves the identification of communal problems and their causes and consequences and the planning of interventions.

Design Process
- **Identifying and understanding a community's needs**

Design Documentation
- **Designing and documenting solutions**

Identification & Design – The <u>Design Process</u> (1)

Identification & understanding of community needs / a listening presence / spend time without an agenda

Projects designed in partnership with their target community

Projects designed in response to identified & documented community needs

Identification and assessment of community needs involves research and analysis to accurately identify and understand community needs and their causes and consequences

(ERFA Project Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Policy)

Identification & Design – The Design Process (2)

Project design should evolve from wide community engagement and participation, which facilitates joint identification and assessment of community needs, especially for those groups in the community most in need

The community engagement process should enable communities to gain insight into any differences between their perceived and real needs and facilitate a common understanding

In addition to target communities, research and analysis should include engagement with other relevant stakeholders such as civic authorities, civic organisations, community leaders and other relevant NGOs

(ERFA Project Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Policy)

Project Design – <u>Design Documentation</u> (1)

Project Identification Details & Management Structure

Statement of Development Needs
- ➤ **why project is necessary**
- ➤ **needs project designed to address**
- ➤ **process by which needs identified & assessed**

Project Objective
- ➤ **development objectives**
- ➤ <u>**outcomes**</u> **expected** (<u>impacts</u> predicted / differences anticipated)

Beneficiaries / Stakeholders
- ➤ **details of those who will benefit**
- ➤ **evidence of their involvement in identification & design**

Project Design – <u>Design Documentation</u> (2)

Project Plan
- ➤ **<u>Outputs</u>** (i.e. <u>activities</u> through which <u>outcomes</u> will be achieved)
- ➤ **Project Duration & Implementation Schedule**
- ➤ **Personnel required**
- ➤ **Physical Resources required**

Cross-Cutting Issues identified & strategies planned

Project Budget – including budget for ERFA funding

Risk Identification and Risk Management Strategy

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan – at project site level

Sustainability Plan – i.e. beyond ERFA involvement

Appraisal of Project Proposals / Applications (1)

Appraisals are carried out:

- **to inform ERFA's decisions re funding**

- **as a quality assurance instrument**

- **to enable ERFA input into project design**

- **to ensure delivery of best possible outcomes**

Appraisal of Project Proposals / Applications (2)

What is Project Appraisal?
- **A critical & quality assessment of a project proposal against pre-defined criteria**

Twin Aspects of Appraisal:

- **Appraisal of Project Proposal / Design** (i.e. quality)
- **Appraisal of Project Partner Capacity to Implement**

ERFA utilizes the Funding Application Form as an Appraisal implement

Appraisal of Project Proposals / Applications (3)

In general, project appraisal is carried out for:

- New project proposals

- New phase or extension of existing project

- Significant development of existing project e.g. size, content, approach

Assessing Quality of Proposal / Design

Appraisal Criteria:

- **Relevance & Alignment with ERFA vision & mission**

- **Internal logic** - will planned outputs enable achievement of objectives

- **Budget** – is feasible

- **Cross-cutting Issues** – how well addressed in the design

- **Risk Management Framework**

- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plans**

- **Sustainability Strategies** – beyond ERFA involvement

- **ERFA capacity to attract funding**

<u>Assessing Capacity</u> to Implement

Key Capacities

- **Governance arrangements** – if relevant

- **Vision, Mission & Values** – are articulated

- **Strategic Planning** – is in place

- **Leadership & Management Arrangements** - in place & adequate

- **Financial Management** – internal systems in place

- **Policies** - relevant policies are in place

- **Programming** – staff has requisite knowledge & skills

- **Inputs** – resources, equipment & logistics in place

Project Implementation

- Implementation is the responsibility of the project partner

- ERFA should play an oversight, support & quality control role

- Project progress should be reviewed & monitored during implementation

- Plans should be adjusted where necessary

- Progress should be reviewed against the implementation schedule

- Expenditure should be reviewed against budget

- Reassessment should be made of risks to project

Project Flexibility

ERFA recognizes the importance of flexibility when, for a variety of reasons, an implemented project may not be working according to plan.

ERFA acknowledges the importance of advising relevant donors of any necessary adjustments to a project's design and the reasons for these.

Assessing Project Performance

Monitoring & Evaluation

Objectives:

- **Accountability & Transparency**

- **Learning** – to inform and improve future planning

<u>Monitoring</u> asks: *Are we doing this right?*
<u>Evaluation</u> asks: *Are we doing the right thing?*

Monitoring (1)

Systematic tracking to ensure project is on track

Functions:

- **ensure effective implementation & funds are accounted for**
- **verify progress against agreed objectives**
- **assess project health and capacity**
- **ensure plans are adapted as required**
- **assess future project needs**
- **follow-up on issues such as:**
  - ➤ **risk management**
  - ➤ **cross-cutting issues**
  - ➤ **stakeholder concerns**

Monitoring (2)

ERFA utilizes the Quarterly Report as a Monitoring instrument

ERFA Monitoring & Evaluation Working Group assesses Quarterly Reports and provides feedback to project leaders

Evaluation (1)

Evaluation is <u>time specific</u> and undertaken to establish whether a project has reached its objectives and delivered what was expected according to its original plan.

Evaluation is usually undertaken at the end of a project or at a specific point in time to assess a project's achievements.

Evaluation (2)

ERFA utilizes the Annual Acquittal as an Evaluation instrument.

ERFA Monitoring & Evaluation Working Group assesses Annual Acquittals and provides feedback to project leaders.

Evaluation (3)

In Project Evaluation, ERFA focuses on:

- **Relevance** - has project engaged with real community issues

- **Efficiency:**
  - ➢ have resources been used wisely
  - ➢ have strategies for continuous improvement been developed

- **Effectiveness** - were planned outputs delivered

- **Impact** - was there a positive, long-term impact on improving the quality of the lives of the community

- **Sustainability** - is the project sustainable

- **New Knowledge** - what new knowledge emerged re effective development practice

Field Visits

Field Visits are an essential instrument in ERFA's Monitoring & Evaluation of funded projects.

It is ERFA's intention that funded projects will be visited at least once every 3 years.

Field Visits are undertaken by ERFA staff or an ERFA representative.

Reflection, Learning & Adaptation

The Purpose of RL&A is to learn & apply learning to ongoing or new projects

- **Many organisations do not do this well**

- **Time and resources need to be allocated for RL&A**

- **RL&A provides an opportunity to ask bigger questions about:**
  - ➢ **Relevance**
  - ➢ **Efficiency**
  - ➢ **Effectiveness**
  - ➢ **Sustainability**
- **Ideally, RL&A is undertaken in co-operation with project partners & beneficiaries**