Danced Project Management Manual

Project Preparation

Third Version

July 2000

Danced

Manual for Project Preparation
Version 3.0

July 2000

User's Guide to the Danced Project Management System

The Danced Project Management System has four main phases. These are illustrated in the project cycle shown on the cover page of this manual. Each of these phases has it's own manual.

1. The present, Project Preparation Manual deals with the development of projects from an initial idea, through design and appraisal to the final project document ready for formal agreement.

2. A Project Contracting Manual is currently under preparation. This Manual will describe the procedures that are used for contracting by DEPA, and the standard conditions and responsibilities of the contractor.

3. The Project Implementation Manual is intended to facilitate and strengthen project management and monitoring during the implementation phase. The manual provides guidelines and procedures for reporting and project adjustment.

4. Finally, a Project Review and Evaluation Manual is to be issued, at a later stage. This Manual will contain guidelines for reviews and thematic evaluation.

This, the third version of the Danced Project Preparation Manual, provides a sharpened tool for the baseline analysis and design of projects targeting Capacity Development. Comments and suggestions for further improvements are welcome.

The manuals and the references provided in footnotes are available on Danced's homepage: www.mst.dk/danced-uk under the headings Procedures/Manuals.

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The enclosed diskette provides standard formats and guidance regarding the proper use of the mandatory reports. The files are presented in Microsoft Word *.doc format, and requires Microsoft Word 97 or later, or an editor that is able import Microsoft Word 97 format.

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List of Abbreviations

CDE	Capacity Development in Environment
Cph.	Copenhagen
Danced	Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance agency of the Danish MoFa
DEPA	Danish Environmental Protection Agency, within MEE
ICAS	Institutional Capacity Analysis System
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MEE	Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy
MoFa	Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development co-operation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/DAC	OECD's Development Assistance Committee
OOPP	Objectives Oriented Project Preparation
PCC[*]	Programme Co-ordinating Committee
PPG	Project Preparation Groups
PPP	Project Preparation Plan
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RDE	Royal Danish Embassy
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis
TOR	Terms of Reference

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[*] PCC is a generic name for the committee comprising the main stakeholders of the Danced programme in each partner country. In the real world, the PCC has different names in different countries:

Name	Abbreviation	Country / Countries
Programme Steering Committee	PSC	Republic of South Africa Botswana Malaysia
Programme Management Group	PMG	Namibia
Joint Coordinating Committee	JCC	Thailand

1. Introduction

Country programmes for the co-operation countries give rise to project ideas. **Project preparation** is the process of analysing and developing a project idea into a final project ready for implementation. The product of this process is presented in the form of a Project Document. The Project Document forms the basis of the bilateral project agreement and the contracting of external assistance for the project.

This manual describes the typical **process** leading to the Final Project Document as well as the expected (and mandatory) format of this primary **product:** The Project Document, whether draft or final. During the process, a number of additional outputs are necessary to ensure accurate documentation and the facilitation of dialogue and Quality Assurance.

The manual draws on many years of international project development experience that may be summed up in the adage - prior participatory planning prevents poor project performance. Thus, the manual relies on proven tools, procedures and processes in an attempt to develop projects which, when implemented, are relevant, impactful, effective, efficient and sustainable.

1.1   Organisation of the manual

The manual consists of 4 chapters and deals with **Danced policies and strategies** of relevance to projects prepared for possible Danced support (chapter 1), and the typical **project preparation process** on a general level (chapter 2). Further, the manual introduces the main reports and supplementary documents required in this process (chapter 3). Finally, it provides a brief presentation of tools and analyses to be used when preparing projects concerning Capacity Development in Environment (CDE), overall principles for monitoring as well as the quality criteria employed, when evaluating the Project Document and the project performance in general throughout project implementation (chapter 4).

The formats, mandatory requirements and guide texts concerning the expected contents of the Project Document and each of the other outputs and reports required in the project preparation process are available on the enclosed diskette. A printed version of the content of the diskette can be obtained from Danced.

The project development facilitator must be familiar with Danced policies and the expected Danced project preparation process, before he or she will be capable of preparing a Project Document of a sufficient quality. Therefore, the project development facilitator is strongly advised to study this manual, as well as the Danced Reference Notes on Participation in

Environmental Assistance and on Capacity Analysis (see 'Further Reading' below), before proceeding to the formats of the individual reports.

1.2   Danced Policies and Strategy

Overall Objective

The overall aim of Danced support is to help reinforce efforts to combat global environmental problems in accordance with the international action programme for sustainable development adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992) as endorsed by the Danish Parliament, namely, Agenda 21. The development objective of any Danced supported project must reflect this aim as well as live up to the principles listed in the *Strategy for Environment Assistance to Developing Countries* and relevant regional strategies.

At the international scene the efforts of official donor agencies to follow up on UNCED in general and Agenda 21 in particular have been co-ordinated by OECD/DAC. This has led to a reinforced attention to the issue of Capacity Development, and is spelled out in the new concept (or even paradigm) for official development assistance (ODA), namely, "Capacity Development in Environment" (CDE). CDE and Danced's strategic priorities below denote converging efforts, aiming at provision of viable support for the endogenous processes of capacity development.

Coherence with Country Programme

The country programme establishes the specific national framework for Danced supported projects in the country. The Project Document must describe the project's coherence with the country programme and detail how the project contributes to the objectives of the country programme. This description must also include any adherence by the project to the fulfilment of international obligations in the field of environment and energy, e.g. if the partner country is in the process of signing or ratifying a multilateral convention.

Catalysing Capacity Development

Danced co-operates primarily with medium-income countries. Taken as financial contribution, Danced's resources are scarce, compared to the investments needed. Within this context, the strategy followed by Danced in meeting it's overall objective is based on contributing support to the partner country's own progressive changes in environment and development priorities together with support to the development of capacity required to deal with these priorities. In an attempt to ensure both the sustainability and replicability of the results of Danish support, as well as achieving the greatest impact of the funds available, it is not feasible for Danced to subsidise activities or investments that can be financed by the countries themselves.

Therefore Danced supported projects will usually strive to reach the overall objective indirectly through the development of capacity, knowledge, and environmental awareness by acting as a catalyst and mobiliser of the capacity of the partner countries, improving e.g. the national environmental financing strategies. Normally, the immediate objective will be to achieve a situation within a specific area that will put the country in a better position to solve its environmental problems. Activities that directly solve specific environmental

problems may be part of the projects to the extent that such activities support the development of capacity and environmental awareness.

Transfer and Use of the Danish Know-how and Resource Base

Danish environmental assistance should be seen as a part of Denmark's commitment to follow the intentions of Agenda 21 and in particular, the transfer of environmental know-how and sustainable technology. Thus, the environmental assistance programme is a part of the Danish environment and energy policy, and, thus Danced cannot support projects that run counter to Danish policies. Where relevant, the projects should build on Danish experience and know-how through the active involvement of the Danish resource base within the project. The possibilities of twinning between similar institutions in the partner countries and Denmark should always be investigated. In cases where it may prove easier to demonstrate Danish experience in Denmark, the training of representatives of the co-operation partners in Denmark may be considered.

Technology Transfer

In Agenda 21, the rich countries of the industrialised world are committed to provide both funds and know-how, necessary for the sustainable development of both the poor and the newly industrialised countries. Providing the relevant know-how for middle-income countries, Technology Transfer is an important element of Danced's strategy.
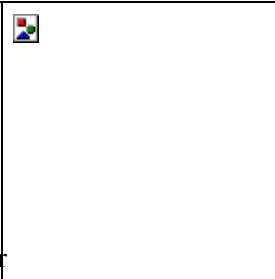
Danced's overall approach to technology transfer should be seen within the context of Danced's support to cleaner production activities which deal with, amongst others, the optimisation of resource use and the minimisation of waste, i.e. "reduction at source" rather than "end-of-pipe" solutions. Within this context of cleaner production support, the launching of demonstration projects are thus feasible elements in the overall endeavour for Capacity Development in Environment.

Ownership and Participation

The co-operation countries should, as far as possible, formulate and manage the projects themselves. Thus, to ensure local ownership of projects, Danced emphasises the importance of employing a participatory approach to project preparation and implementation with the active involvement of the co-operation parties in the countries
To Danced, it is a fundamental element of project planning that all relevant parties are involved, to the greatest possible extent, in the preparation as well as the implementation of the projects. Danish experience shows that environmental problems can never be solved by one single party, and therefore, projects should not focus exclusively on one single party but preferably include and promote co-operation between all relevant stakeholders. The responsibility for the project, however, must be firmly located with only one key stakeholder, the Implementing Agency.

The stakeholders include those who can affect the project as well as those affected by the outcome of the project. Examples of stakeholder groups may include the implementing agency - its management, departments and staff; other government institutions at central and local levels; representative organisations (business organisations, trade unions, NGO's, etc.) and specific sectors of civil society such as consumers, farmers etc. It is of crucial importance to secure the necessary guarantees of local participation as well as to make sure that the legal, organisational and administrative conditions are in place.

Sustainability and Commitment

The achievements of Danced supported projects must be sustainable. Sustainability means more than development activities that are environmentally benign, it also implies that the projects should lead to improvements that will persist and spread beyond the project boundary. Danced assistance should create structures and solutions that will remain institutionally, economically, socially and environmentally viable when the external assistance comes to an end. Close collaboration with stakeholders in the project preparation process promotes this.

It is Danced's experience, as well as that of other donors, that even the most carefully and logically designed project will come to naught if the stakeholders are not truly interested in the project and, motivated by this interest, willing to commit themselves and their resources to support implementation. It is therefore crucial that project design, ownership and the phasing out of external assistance is carefully analysed and addressed to eliminate features that counteract the commitment of the stakeholders and the sustainability of the project.

Flexibility and Monitoring

The project design must be resilient and flexible. To this end, the Project Document must define an effective monitoring approach, which must be seen as an integral part of the project (see section 4.4).

1.3 Main Actors in the Project Preparation Process

A forum[1] referred to as the **Programme Co-ordinating Committee (PCC),** outlines the country programme and prioritises the proposals and project ideas submitted in a Project Pipeline. The members of the PCC are representatives from the main national and provincial institutions in the partner country, and Danced.

The **Executive Agency** is the organisation having overall, national responsibility for carrying out and completing the project in accordance with the Project Document. The Executive Agency is typically a government institution, such as a Ministry or Department; but it may also be an inter-governmental agency, an institution of local or regional government, or a non-governmental organisation (NGO).

A **Project Preparation Group (PPG)** is appointed for each project and serves as the focus group of all preparatory activities. Members of the PPG are typically the expected Implementing Agency proposing the project idea to Danced and other major stakeholders of the issues in focus in the project.

The proposed **Implementing Agency** is the key responsible party in relation to Danced for the efficient preparation of the project and appoints or invites the other members of the PPG. The implementing agency could be a department or division of a government agency, but it may also be an inter-governmental agency or a NGO.

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[1] See the List of Abbreviations for the name of the PCC in the various co-operation countries.

The **Project Preparation Facilitation Team**, which may be an individual, but in most cases is a team made up of Local and Danish[2] consultants**,** supporting the implementing agency in the preparation tasks.

The **main target groups for this manual** are the Project Preparation Facilitation Team in particular and the PPG in general.

1.4   Staff Qualifications for Project Preparation

To prepare a Danced project, staff with special qualifications is needed. The project preparation facilitation team will typically involve specialists with knowledge of the project subject matter, e.g. soil degradation, solid waste management or environmental impact assessment. However, the participatory approach and collaborative stance require skills different from what is needed in the purely expert-driven approach. The team will therefore also include specialists with proven process facilitation capabilities. The qualifications of a process facilitator will typically include:

- Experience in facilitating project planning workshops
- Experience in participatory/semi-structured interview techniques
- Experience in project preparation and project management
- Qualified communication and negotiation skills at all levels
- Knowledge of the specific political and cultural context
- General knowledge of the project subject matter.

To ensure the accomplishment of project preparation processes and project documents reflecting the principles of the Danced environmental assistance scheme; all consultants are expected to acquaint themselves with Danced's requirement. This entails both the approach to the project preparation process as it is reflected in this manual and the reference notes available, as well as the Danced strategies and the programme for the country in question.

1.5   Participation and Process Orientation

Danced project preparation is based on a participatory and process-oriented approach, where participation is defined as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives that affect them, and the decisions and resources involved. This approach should be reflected in the project preparation process in the following ways:

- The co-operation country should take the lead throughout the project design process, normally assisted by Danish and local consultants. The proposed implementing agency and other key stakeholder should all take part in the project preparation. The Executive Agency and Danced should be involved as dialogue partners, when questions regarding the programmatic context arise. The initial preparatory activities should focus on understanding existing capacities and institutional interactions as well as on developing a strong shared understanding of problems and objectives based on a joint in-depth analysis of the existing situation.

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[2] In order to meet the Danced commitment to Agenda 21 with regard to the transfer of Danish skills and know-how, the services of Danish consultants are often provided by Danced. Furthermore, other international expertise may also be utilised during the development process where this is considered appropriate.

- Decisions made during the preparation process must be transparent for all parties involved. The aim is to create a joint learning process where knowledge and experience are shared on the spot. This will enable each participant to gradually develop his or her own understanding of the need for possible changes and what these changes may require in terms of input and personal behavioural changes, and thereby provide the basis for informed commitment to the project.

- Participatory interview techniques and workshops should be the main tools in the project preparation process. Participatory interviews, whether with individuals or focus groups, generate data and, at the same time, promote dialogue between the participants determined by the issues in question. Workshops are formal arrangements of 1-3 days duration addressing a specific issue or problem, using participatory tools and techniques.[3]

The project preparation facilitator is advised to consult Danced's Reference Note on Participation in Project Preparation, 1998, for more information on Danced's project preparation approach and the use of participatory tools. Furthermore, this note includes an introduction to a number of analytical tools such as Objectives Oriented Project Preparation (OOPP), Institutional Capacity Analysis System (ICAS) and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis (SWOT).

Focus on analysis

As an outcome of the project preparation process, the Project Document must present an analysis that can inform simple, effective and achievable action. The project preparation facilitator should keep the presentation of general background information in the Project Document as focussed and as brief as possible and should instead focus on project specific analysis of problems, strategic options and stakeholders.

OOPP[4] is the basic tool for problem analysis and project design. OOPP was developed to assist groups in identifying, ranking, and analysing problems and for selecting and designing solutions in a participatory manner. It is based on, and continues the use of, the Logical Framework as the basic Matrix for project planning. This matrix itself, and the assumed logic, must be used as a tool that helps to reduce conceptual misunderstandings.

OOPP helps to define a standard vocabulary and work method, which are used in the mandatory outline and expected content of a Project Document prepared for Danced support. At the same time the LogFrame is indispensable for the definition of the basic quality criterions for projects: Impact, Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency. Knowledge of OOPP is thus necessary for all Danced project preparation facilitators. With this said, although OOPP should determine the basic structure of the project planning process, it should not stand alone.

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[3] For the preparation of projects focusing on Capacity Development, further references will include "Indicators and Monitoring of CDE initiatives", published in the proceedings from the joint Danida/Danced workshop in Snekkersten, May 1998, and Danced's Draft Reference Note on Capacity Development, 1998.

[4] OOPP is introduced in Danced's Reference Note on Participation pp. 30 ff. The elaborated description is found in Danida's handbook: "LFA - A flexible tool for participatory development" 1996. A shorter description is provided by NORAD in their: "LFA-Handbook For Objectives Oriented Planning".

A system for monitoring should be set up as a part of the project preparation process. The monitoring approach shall determine what is to be monitored, e.g. impact, relevance, sustainability and various accountability aspects, how this monitoring is going to take place and who is going to be responsible for and carry out the monitoring processes. Also, the process for changing the monitoring approach itself in the course of the project should be addressed. It is important that the approach to monitoring is participatory and maintains and develops the local ownership to the project activities. Monitoring shall be seen as an element in the capacity building itself.

The preparation of monitoring-systems for project implementation calls for a clear identification of the intended **Results** of the project: The Immediate Objectives. The focus of the project must be clearly stated, in order to support the dialogue and enable a flexible approach to implementation. Otherwise the LogFrame may be perceived as a straitjacket – tying the implementing agency to specified activities and outputs, instead of committing all parties towards the results to be achieved.

This challenge calls for adoption of analytical tools, in order to strengthen the focus on intended results within the LFA framework. Two such analytical tools – a tool for institutional capacity analysis and a tool for organisational capacity analysis - are briefly introduced in chapter 4 on the methodology of project preparation.

Further Reading

Danced's overall objectives, focus areas and approach are described in more detail in various policy and strategy documents. All of these are available on Danced's homepage: www.mst.dk/danced-uk

- Strategy for Danish Environmental Assistance, Danida and Danced 1996
- Danish Strategy for Regional Environmental Assistance in Southeast Asia, Danida and Danced, November 1997
- Strategy for Danish Regional Environmental Assistance in Southern Africa, Danida and Danced 1996
- Country Programmes
- Participation in Environmental Assistance. A Reference Note, Danced, April 1998
- Capacity Development in Environmental Assistance, a draft reference note, Danced, November 1998
- Capacity Analysis, Draft Reference Note, Danced, May 2000

1.6   Summary

It is of great importance that project preparation be carried out in accordance with the national priorities and local needs of the partner countries as well as Danced's overall policy and strategies. Tailoring the individual project calls for early identification of the primary stakeholders, organisational settings, management techniques and monitoring methods to be applied for flexible project implementation. The project preparation process is presented in general terms in chapter 2.

2. The Danced Project Preparation Process

Project ideas are identified according to the overall policy and strategy of the Country Programme in question. If a project idea fits into the Country Programme and is prioritised by the PCC to form part of the project pipeline, the project can be prepared for implementation.

The process of preparing the individual projects encompasses a sequence of steps, before Danced can assume formal commitment to support the implementation of the project. These steps are presented in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Stages in Project Preparation

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┌──────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Project idea in  │         │   Stages covered by the manual  │
│    pipe-line     │         │   ┌─────────────────────────┐   │
└──────────────────┘         │   │                         │   │
        │                    │   │     Project design      │   │         ┌──────────────────┐
        ▼              ═════▶ │   │                         │   │ ═════▶  │ Formal Agreement │
┌──────────────────┐         │   └─────────────────────────┘   │         └──────────────────┘
│   Mobilisation   │         │              │                  │                  │
└──────────────────┘         │              ▼                  │                  ▼
                             │   ┌─────────────────────────┐   │         ┌──────────────────┐
                             │   │    Project appraisal    │   │         │  Tendering and   │
                             │   └─────────────────────────┘   │         │   contracting    │
                             └─────────────────────────────────┘         └──────────────────┘
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                                                                         ┌──────────────────┐
                                                                         │ Start of Project │
                                                                         │  Implementation  │
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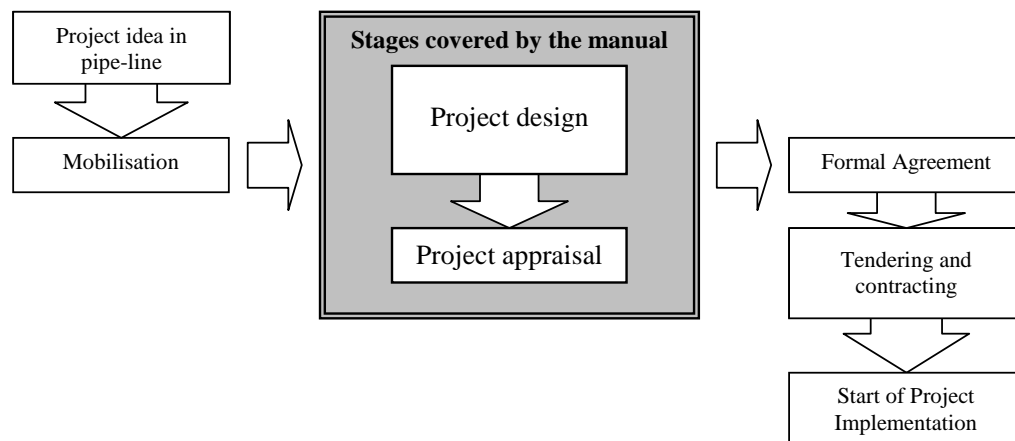
The project preparation process starts when a project idea is prioritised and included in the project pipeline. After a short mobilisation phase, a Draft Project Document is elaborated in **the design phase**, after which the **appraisal phase** leads to a Final Project Document, ready for formal project agreement, followed by tendering and contracting. Deviations can be decided on a case by case basis in order to keep flexibility in the preparation process.

2.1   Danced Country Programme and Project Pipeline

The Danced Country Programme constitutes the strategic framework of all Danced supported projects in each partner country. The published Country Programme is a milestone in an ongoing programming process. The programming process is a framework for dialogue, ensuring that the bilateral co-operation is strengthening and supplementing the

national efforts in the fields of environment and development, in correspondence with the objectives of the Danced assistance scheme. The process incorporates sector and policy analysis, problem definition and prioritisation of areas of co-operation.

The programming process is managed by the PCC, comprising representatives of the main national and provincial institutions in the partner country and Danced.

There are two main outputs of the programming process. One is the **Country Programme**, pointing out the priority areas for the Danced assistance to the partner country within a period of 3-5 years. This programme is based on an analysis of how Danced's strategies match the national priorities and efforts to address the environmental problems in the partner country and in the region. The issue is to identify the areas where Denmark can provide relevant environmental know-how, and thus fulfil the intentions of global co-operation laid down in Agenda 21.

The other main output of the programming process is a prioritised short-listed **Project Pipeline**, identifying projects for further preparation. The Project Pipeline is based on a long list of project ideas within the priority areas of the Country Programme, submitted to the PCC by potential Implementing Agencies. Danced pursues active participation by the main national and provincial level stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, in the establishment of the list.

Apart from the mainstream of Danced projects, co-ordinated by the PCC, Danced supports twinning arrangements between private companies (Partnership Facility[5]) and NGO's. These activities are presented for the PCC for information, but are managed by Danced.

Table 2.1 Programming

Step	Action	Responsible Parties	Outputs
Programming	Policy Dialogue	PCC	Country Programme
	Prioritisation of requests for Danced assistance	PCC	Pipeline of prioritised project ideas

2.2   Mobilisation

The Implementing Agency, having the overall responsibility for the project, forms a Project Preparation Group (PPG) to co-ordinate the efforts invested in the preparation of the project. Members of the PPG comprise representatives for the Implementing Agency and other relevant stakeholders.

The implementing agency may want the preparation team to provide certain inputs during the process, or may want the entire design process to be managed and facilitated by the team. In most cases the team will include Danish as well as local consultants. Being the main carrier of the project idea and responsible for the contents of the Draft Project Document, the Implementing Agency must control the use and interpretation of the inputs provided by the consultants.

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[5] Only in Thailand and Malaysia

The implementing agency elaborates (in co-operation with Danced) Terms of Reference (TOR) for the necessary assistance by the preparation team. The TOR provides an outline of the tasks of the consultants, a description of the project idea in question, information on the actual context in which the project is to be implemented including an initial identification of stakeholders to be involved in the design process. Furthermore, the TOR provides recommendations regarding which types of analysis to conduct as a part of the design process and a preliminary time schedule for the course of the design process.

Table 2.2 Mobilisation

Step	Action	Responsible Parties	Outputs
Mobilisation	Planning of Project Preparation process. Initial stakeholder analysis and institutional screening	Implementing agency Danced	Project Preparation Group established TOR for Project Preparation Facilitation Team, including: • Preliminary time Schedule for the course of the design process • Identification of key stakeholders to engage

2.3   Project Design

The purpose of the design phase is to analyse the problems to be addressed by the Danced supported project and prepare a coherent and realistic project specification (the Draft Project Document), describing how the project can achieve its results effectively.

On the basis of a **Project Preparation Plan** (see chapter 3), an iterative process takes place including fact-finding, viability assessment of the project idea (the initial definition of project objectives and intended outputs), and draft design of the project. At the very beginning of the process, it must be ensured that the implementing agency is fully aware of the Danish policy on the issues concerned. The process includes one or more visits to the project by Danish and local consultants. If the situation calls for it, a visit to Denmark by representatives of the implementing agency and other key stakeholders to share Danish experience may be considered as an option. Visits must be documented in **debriefing notes**.

Each step in the process may necessitate a revision of the Project Preparation Plan, and call for additional analysis, and even a revision of the objective stated in the initial project idea. Danced must be notified on all such revisions as a feed back to the overall programming dialogue in debriefing notes or otherwise.

The collaborative stance and joint learning approach should be applied to the design of all Danced supported projects[6]. The focus should be on specification of objectives, results, outputs, activities, organisational set-up, roles and responsibilities and a budget and accounting framework. A detailed description of a monitoring set-up should form part of the resulting project document.

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[6] Participation in Environmental assistance, Danced reference note April 1998 p.7f

At an early stage of the design step, an explicit **stakeholder analysis** must be conducted with a focus on identification of all stakeholder groups, their relations and interactions in relation to the project idea. This may lead to a revision of the composition of the PPG. This should be combined with a **capacity analysis**[7] including a comprehensive screening of the institutional context of the project, considering both the organisational structure and the social preconditions for the project as vital parts of the initial capacity for the management of environment and development. Project planning workshops may be used, both to identify options and reach agreement on the design of the project.

The outcome of the design step is the **Draft Project Document**, which should be circulated for comments among Danced, the Executive Agency and the Implementing Agency.

Table 2.3 Project Design

Step	Action	Responsible Parties	Outputs
Design	Iterative analysis and draft design process.	Implementing Agency and the Project Preparation Group – assisted by Danish and local consultants.	Viability assessment of the project idea Analysis of problems and capacity constraints Specification of: • Objective, Results, Outputs and Activities • Organisational set-up, roles and responsibility • Budget and Accounting framework • Monitoring set-up, and the use of indicators
	Communication with Programme level.	Implementing Agency and the PPG – assisted by consultants Executive agency Danced	Debriefing notes Revised Project Preparation Plan Revised Project Objectives.
	Completion of Draft Project Document	Implementing Agency and the PPG – assisted by consultants.	Compiled project preparation process documentation Draft Project Document

2.4 Project Appraisal

The purpose of the appraisal phase is to check that the Draft Project Document is ready to be used as background for a formal Agreement, tendering and contracting. The appraisal is an independent quality control of the Project Document. Appraisal is managed by Danced, assisted by new consultants. The appraisal of the project design and process may either be a desk appraisal or a field appraisal. Danced, in consultation with the implementing agency, will decide whether to use a desk or field appraisal on a case by case basis. The decision will depend on the size and complexity of the project, the quality of the Project Document

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[7] Capacity Analysis, Draft reference note, Danced May 2000

and of the process leading to it. The appraisal will focus on the methods applied during the design phase, and the adequacy of the Project Document as the cornerstone for project implementation. If a desk appraisal identifies the need of a minor revision of the Draft Project Document, the recommendations of the appraising consultant(s) must be forwarded to the responsible counterpart for comments, before the Final Project Document is completed. If an appraisal mission is fielded, then the Final Project Document is to be obtained through a participatory process.

In any case the appraisal must scrutinise the Draft Project Document, in order to assess whether:

- All major assumptions (especially potential killer assumptions) are presented and addressed

- The Project Document is ready to use in the Tendering Process, ensuring e.g. that there are no unfair competitive advantages for individuals and companies involved in the design phase

- Preconditions are specified, providing unambiguous statements on the bilateral commitments to be made, as well as the contextual preconditions for implementation

- Key problems are adequately addressed, with specific attention to the institutional set-up and to the sustainability of the project results

- An appropriate monitoring set-up forms part of the Project Document, based on detailed and operational indicators for outputs as well as results.

Table 2.4 Project Appraisal

Step	Action	Responsible Parties	Outputs
Appraisal	Quality control of the Draft Project Document	Danced Independent consultants Implementing agency	Appraisal Report Final Project Document

2.5   Formal Agreement, Tendering and Contracting

On the basis of the Final Project Document, which is the outcome of the Appraisal Phase, a formal agreement is signed. In most cases this agreement takes the form of a **Government Agreement**. However, in case of NGO-projects, Danced issues a **Letter of Grant** to the Danish or local NGO in question. In case of projects under the Danced Partnership Facility, Danced issues a **Deed of Grant** to the Danish company participating in the partnership project.

After the signing of a Government Agreement, the tendering procedures and contract negotiations will take approximately 6 months, before project implementation can start. NGO projects and Partnership Facility projects can start implementation immediately after the NGO or company in question has returned a **Letter of Confirmation**, comprising an acknowledgement of the Grant and the standard conditions applicable hereto.

Table 2.5 Formal Agreement

Step	Action	Responsible Parties	Results
Formal Agreement	Signing of Government Agreement	Representatives of Danish Government Representative of Counterpart Government Representative of Executing Agency.	Bilateral commitment to Project Project ready for Tendering and Contracting
	In case of NGO projects or Partnership Facility projects, issuing a Letter/Deed of Grant	Danced Representative of Implementing Agency	Bilateral commitment to project Project ready for Implementation

2.6   Summary

The Danced Country Programmes contains the specific national guidelines for Danced assisted projects in each country, as a published milestone of the ongoing dialogue in the PCC. The Project Pipeline is the short-listed project ideas, prioritised by the PCC.

The individual Projects are prepared in detail by the proposed Implementing Agency through the establishment of a Project Preparation Group, assisted by Danish and local consultants.

The preparation of a project to be supported by Danced is based on a participatory and process-oriented approach, which should be reflected both in staff qualifications, the tools used in the process as well as in the documents produced in the preparation process. These documents are presented in Chapter 3.

3. Project Preparation Reporting

During the preparation period a number of reports are written to facilitate transparency and quality assurance in relation to the individual project. In this chapter both the main project preparation reports and the various supplementary documents are presented in brief to provide an overview. The enclosed diskette provides standard formats for all reports, and guiding text on the issues to be covered.

As a general rule, all project reports and documents should be short and concise. If lengthy descriptions are unavoidable, they should be placed in annexes. Reports and documents should be written in the English language and printed in an easily legible font and provided as one file.

3.1   Project Document

The Project Document has several audiences. Immediately after appraisal it forms the basis of both a formal Agreement and (in most cases) open tendering procedures, but the primary function is to serve as a tool for flexible implementation of environmental assistance.

The Project Document must provide a clear and unambiguous presentation of purpose, context, intended results and outputs. The organisational set-up of the project must be designed, alongside with a strategy for the use of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of project performance and achievements. The detailed planning of activities is an issue during the Inception phase, and the preliminary Project Implementation Plan should, therefore, not be over-prepared in details, if the project is to be tendered. If the project is to be implemented on the basis of a Letter of Grant, the details are however necessary in order to sustain the detailed budgets needed for proper financial management.

The Project Document serves both the purposes of tendering and contracting the Danish input for project implementation, and the transparency of the bilateral commitment made in the Government Agreement. On the other hand, the Project Document - the LogFrame and the preliminary Project Implementation Plan - must not be a straitjacket, once the project is to be implemented. The concept of the project document as a "living document" is fundamental to the reporting and documentation requirements specified in Danced's Manual for Project Implementation.

3.2   Project Preparation Process Documentation

Naturally, the Project Document is the primary outcome of each and every project design process. Tailoring the preparation of the individual project, however, a number of

supplementing outputs may be stipulated in the TOR for consultant assistance, or they will be appropriate to use on an ad hoc basis:

<u>Inception Note</u>. The Inception note will be the format for the Danish consultants hired in to support the PPG and the proposed Implementing Agency to provide their professional comments on both their own TOR and the general project idea. The Inception Note is written by the consultant(s) before the first mission and includes references to the pertinent background papers read. Based on the TOR, background papers and personal experience, the Inception Note has the purpose to present the approach to the project design, applied by the consultants. This includes the elaboration of a draft Project Preparation Plan (see below), based on the preliminary time schedule for the course of the design process included in the TOR. This Project Preparation Plan is to be discussed and confirmed during the first mission. Also, the Inception Note contains the work plan of the consultants during the first mission. The Inception Note needs approval by Danced ahead of the first mission. The format of the Inception Note is provided on the enclosed diskette.

<u>Project Preparation Plan</u>. In the Project Preparation Plan it is described what activities should be undertaken in the project preparation process until appraisal. A basic format for the Project Preparation Plan is provided on the enclosed diskette.

<u>Debriefing Note(s)</u>. After each field visit, the consultants will perform formal debriefing at the RDE in which counterpart representatives participate, too. A Debriefing Note is prepared in which the team presents their findings while at the same time providing Danced and the counterparts with the opportunity to pose questions to the scope and contents of the design process. Each debriefing note should contain a revised Project Preparation Plan that schedules the activities and milestones for the remaining part of the design process. The Debriefing Note is to be approved by Danced. The format of the Debriefing Note is provided on the enclosed diskette.

Compilation of Process Documentation

The requirement for information on and documentation of the project preparation process is additional to the demand of a proper Project Document, but not in any way marginal. Using the Process documentation as a vehicle for the substantiating documentation of why the project has been designed in this way instead of another, it is possible to keep the Project Document brief and functional.

Much of the process documentation needed is already provided in separate notes, prepared as an integrated part of the design process:
- Inception note
- Debriefing note(s)
- Workshop reports or proceedings
- Study reports
- List of PPG-members
- Minutes of PPG-meetings, if any

At the end of the design phase, these are to be compiled and handed over as the basic process documentation to be revisited during appraisal. When the documentation is compiled, a brief cover letter should provide a table of contents and summarise the major events and issues of the process:

Regarding the Objectives and Outcomes:
- When, Why and How were the objectives or outcome of the request revised?
- Which alternative ideas were considered – and why were they rejected and by whom?

Regarding the Stakeholders:
- Who was mobilised first – and who was identified and included later (when and how)?
- How were the stakeholders involved?: Tools (e.g. workshops), frequency, purpose and outcome

3.3   Appraisal Report

The appraisal will specify changes and adjustments in the Draft Project Document, which after revision can be approved as the Final Project Document. Depending on how the project has been prepared, and depending on the size of the Danish commitment, the project document may be appraised either by a field mission or a desk study. The Preparation Process Documentation will provide Danced with the information necessary to perform an initial screening of the needs for an appraisal - and to choose either a desk- or a field appraisal.

Either way, the need for an appraisal is to ensure that the product of the design phase (the Draft Project Document) as well as the course of the process is of adequate quality. In that case Danced can assume formal commitment to support the project, entering into a formal Agreement.

3.4   Summary

The preparation of a Danced funded project comprises two main documents: The Project Document and the Appraisal Report. These two main documents along with the compilation of the process documentation are prepared in a co-operation between the project preparation facilitator and the implementing agency. In addition, an Inception Note is prepared prior to the first mission undertaken by the consultant(s), and Debriefing Note(s) are prepared by the end of all missions.

Formats and guide texts for the different elements of the project documentation are found on the enclosed diskette. Chapter 4 below contains a brief introduction to the analytical approach to CDE project design.

4. Methodology

This chapter contains a brief introduction to various analytical tools for problem analyses and identification of the capacity gaps to be addressed by the project intervention. Capacity analyses promote the identification of the intended results of the project. At the same time the capacity analyses establish the contextual background for the testing of various project strategies for achieving these results, using the LogFrame approach.

Furthermore this chapter provides the basic quality criteria the project should adhere to, and which are employed in the appraisal of the project. These criteria are also relevant as aspects of the monitoring framework during the project implementation, and will denote the focus of the midterm review.

4.1   Approach to Project Design process

Prior to the detailed preparation of the individual project, a formal request is prepared by the proposed implementing agency. In this request both the Objectives and desired Outputs are stated, alongside with a preliminary estimate of the resources required by both Danced and the Counterpart. The idea is summarised, providing references to the Country Programme and on-going activities related to the issue, whether donor supported or not. This request may stand alone, or it may be based on initial identification efforts providing the parties responsible for the detailed preparation with most of the information needed.

Given the request as point of departure, the process ahead is somewhat different from the traditional OOPP, since the Objective to be pursued is stated. Nevertheless the specific wording of the Objective are not carved in rock. It must be considered to be subject for dialogue and eventually rewording, if the analytical effort addressing the viability of the project, as a solution of the problems implied, proves it necessary.

Danced's use of OOPP

The design process must be approached as both a viability analysis of the project idea, and an elaboration of the prerequisites for success. These two aspects can not just be considered to be two phases in chronological progression – they must be treated as equally important aspects at all time. This is basically why the preparation process may be iterative and must include the stakeholders of the project: The specific context of the project can not be analysed before the specific focus of the project design is identified – and then the stakeholders are the true experts.

Any attempt to utilise an objective oriented approach to project preparation relies on a thorough analysis of the problems to be addressed. The problem analysis is not just a first

step of the design process, but a continuos effort to interpret the specific context. Establishing a problem-hierarchy ("problem-tree") gives a clear presentation of the conceived logic between cause and effects. The effects, also called the "starter-problems", provide the reasons in environmental terms, why the project is being prepared. The cause-problems in terms of capacity constraints provide the reason why the project is focusing at certain aspects instead of others. When the problem analysis is finalised – preferably at a workshop, bringing together all key stakeholders, the more detailed analyses of capacity constraints should be available. This way the shared understanding of problems and objectives should be obtained and confirmed as a well-informed outcome of the design process – and not considered to be achieved at a kick-off workshop at the beginning of the process.

Danced's use of OOPP is similar to Danida's – and the primary source for further reading should be Danida's "LFA – a flexible tool for participatory development"[8]. Given Danced's focus on Capacity Development, however, further guidance on the proper tools for Capacity Analysis is given below.

The proper use of LFA techniques and of the basic planning matrix (the LogFrame, to be included as Annex 1 of the Project Document on the enclosed diskette) provides a clear presentation of the internal coherence as well as the external context of the project. The means identified for the project to obtain the results must be scrutinised, the concepts of Results, Objectives, Outputs, Activities and Assumptions must be properly used and the assumed logic must be easy to follow. This is not just a matter of presentation – it is crucial when it comes to the instructions given in the manual for project implementation.

If the LogFrame is properly used in the Project Document – the implementing agency will find it easy to comply with the reporting demands during implementation. The specification of outputs and critical assumptions are of crucial importance to the fulfilment of reporting requirements. Outputs must be identified both as specific entities to be produced and delivered according to schedule, and crucial steps towards the achievement of project results. Critical assumptions must be identified both as measures for contextual risk-management, and as elements of the underlying hypothesis, inherent to the assumed logic of implementation.

The combined use of LFA and capacity analysis should be undertaken in a manner leading to the compliance of the final project design to five criteria of project quality, each of which is focusing on certain central characteristics of the project, which should be highlighted in the project design process. These criteria are presented in section 4.3 below.

Analytical facilitation

Taking the formal Request as point of departure, the Project Preparation Group is established in the Mobilisation phase, and the Project Preparation Plan and the Terms of Reference for support by consultants is elaborated. Entering into the design phase, the first task is to analyse the problems inherent to the request for assistance. The problems must be systematised, enabling the identification of the core problem to be approached by the project. Here, the project preparation facilitator is responsible not just as a moderator of a brainstorming session, but as conveyor of appropriate tools and analytical inputs. The

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[8] Logical Framework Approach – a flexible tool for participatory development, Danida 1996

"analytical facilitation" is aiming at an interpretation of the nature of the problems that is unlikely to just emerge on its own.

Performing the analysis and designing the project it is important to use participatory techniques. A traditional top-down approach, performed by an external management expert, is most likely to overlook vital details, and thus risking that the project will end up unable to achieve the intended results. As stated above, the stakeholders are the true experts and must be treated as such. How and when to use workshops, focus groups or tête-à-tête interview sessions is entirely dependant on the context and the specific problems to be analysed, in order to enable the strategic choices of the design process. Participatory tools that might be used in this process are found in the literature under the names ICAS[9], SWOT[9] and "Capacity Gaps Identification"[10].

4.2 Two primary approaches to Capacity Analysis[7]

Analysing Capacity Gaps must include both the internal organisational capacity, and the external institutional context. In general terms this is part of the ordinary Logical Framework Approach (LFA)[8], but more specific tools are necessary in order to support the LogFrame as a useful tool for Capacity Development projects.

Institutional Aspects of Capacity Development

The strategic considerations on Capacity Development relevant to the Programmatic dialogue and the mapping of the project baseline should include the concepts developed by OECD, regarding "Capacity Development in Environment" (CDE). The tools and principles established for this purpose, identifies five different management functions to be considered necessary for environmental management:
- Information management and awareness raising
- Policy making and planning
- Establishment and maintenance of institutional frameworks
- Implementation and enforcement, and
- Mobilisation of resources

The five management functions enable an overall identification of the strategic purpose of the individual project. At the same time it serves as a simple tool for the mapping of the capacity constraints in the institutional context of the project: Is the capacity to be developed in the actual project taking place in the relevant institution? Is it viable or should another institutional set-up of the project be considered? This issue is elaborated and exemplified in one of the special papers introduced at the CDE workshop in Snekkersten, Denmark 1998[10.]

Six aspects of Organisational Capacity

Focusing any specific intervention on Capacity Development requires another vocabulary, enabling the differentiation of different aspects of organisational capacity. Danced uses a definition of Capacity build upon the concept of several inter-linked aspects, determining

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[9] Participation in Environmental Assistance, Draft Reference Note, Danced April 1998 (available on Danced Homepage), and World Bank Participatory Sourcebook, 1996

[10] International Workshop on Danish Assistance to Capacity Development in Environment - Snekkersten 12-14 May 1998, Workshop Proceedings, Special Paper on Monitoring and Indicators in CDE – available on Danced's Homepage.

the overall capacity of any organisation, whether Government agency, private company, NGO or local organisation. In the outset these where identified as five S'es[11], identified as Strategy, Structure, Systems, Skills and Incentives. Later, a sixth S for the InterrelationShip of the organisation with the external, institutional context has been added.

Focusing the intervention, using the LogFrame approach, it is pertinent to identify the achievable, immediate outcome of the efforts – the Result. This must be identified as an achievable improvement in terms of a limited number of aspects of the overall capacity – leaving the other aspects as issues for the analysis of critical assumptions inherent to the chosen focus.

As an example, many projects are based on a request for assistance to the development of manuals, guidelines and training programmes (i.e. improving Systems and Skills). In order to ensure the sustainability of such efforts it is of paramount importance to ensure that the approach is viable, based on the current capacity in the other aspects. In this example, this will include the Structure and Strategy of the organisation in question as well as the co-operation and sharing of responsibilities with external partners (interrelationShip).

These vital assumptions on anticipated constraints to project implementation may just identify simple bottlenecks in the organisational structure, which can be integrated into the project design and solved during implementation. It may however also identify external constraints, outside the possible scope of the project, which must be addressed in Debriefing Notes, looping back to the programme dialogue. Thus, Debriefing Notes should be used as vehicles, both addressing needs for rephrasing the objective of the project and possibly suggesting additional initiatives to be undertaken, in order to enhance project impact or sustainability.

4.3   Five criteria of Project Quality

Project quality can be assessed in terms of the project's Relevance, Impact, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability[12]. These are the quality criteria that will be used at a later stage, during appraisal and during implementation when monitoring, reviewing or evaluating the project. The same criterions should be considered as guidance to the establishment of monitoring procedures and principles. The contents of the five quality criterions, and their implication on project preparation can be summarised as follows:

Relevance

The project must be in line with Danced policies and strategies as well as the policies and strategies of the partner country in general, and in compliance with local needs and priorities.

Ensuring relevance of the designed project at all levels, points to the following analyses to be undertaken:
- Testing the project idea against the programming framework, i.e. compliance with the general strategies and priorities of the partner country and the strategies and support principles of Danced.

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[11] Capacity Development - in Environmental Assistance, Draft Reference Note, November 1998 (available on Danced's homepage).
[12] Methods and procedures in aid evaluation, OECD, Paris 1986

- Analysing the immediate institutional context of the project, i.e. testing various institutional set-ups of the project, e.g. comparing the objectives and stipulated results of the project with the strategy and needs of the organisation in question. Danced projects may never be designed as external appendices to the implementing agency.
- Stakeholder analysis, identifying the primary stakeholders within and outside the organisation, which are to be represented in the PSC, as well as the stakeholder-groups which are to be involved or consulted in other ways.

Impact

Project impact is the consequences of the project, whether foreseen or not. Using the LogFrame terminology, project impact denotes the causal relation between the achievement of the intended result and the fulfilment of the overall objective, i.e. having actually achieved the project result, the overall objective should be obtainable.

Impact is a criterion of a more ex post character, utilised at best when evaluating the project. At the project design stage, however, impact points to the importance and necessity of defining explicitly not only the concrete outputs of the project, but also the results in terms of CDE to be achieved. This brings forward the demand for a proper analysis of the relevant capacity gaps when the project baseline is identified.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness denotes the usefulness of the outputs actually produced, as means of achieving the intended result of the project.

Effectiveness points to the need for considering alternative ways of producing the desired result as an integrated part of the viability analysis of the project idea. It follows that both impact and effectiveness may be enhanced by applying the Danced conceptualisation of Capacity Development (the 6 S's, above) in the analyses, as means of better result-identification.

Efficiency

Efficiency denotes the cost-effectiveness of the project, i.e. that the means involved in the project are going to be utilised as productively as possible in attaining the outputs of the project.

In project design, efficiency points to the necessity to ensure that the draft project implementation plan enclosed in the Project Document reflects the most cost-effective way of utilising the means made available for the project in producing the outputs stipulated. This includes the management aspect of proper procedures for detailed planning, monitoring and rescheduling of activities.

Sustainability

Sustainability concerns the lasting effects of the project – more specifically the institutional sustainability. Results of the project should show an impact, also after the project, defined as the Danced supported activities, has been terminated.

Given the CDE focus of Danced assistance and having ensured relevance of the project, it follows that sustainability becomes the utmost important quality criterion related to the

project design. Ensuring sustainability means ensuring that the results of the project in terms of improved capacity lead to lasting improvements of the performance of environmental management, and enhancing any opportunities for synergy effects. Efforts in the preparation of the Project Document should therefore comprise the following:

- Analysing the critical assumptions related to the overall objective, in order to strengthen the awareness of both opportunities and risks regarding the relevance of the project during implementation
- Identifying mechanisms for dissemination of project achievements, in order to enhance the opportunities for others to learn from the project
- Undertaking the preparation process in a participatory manner, involving the stakeholders responsible for further initiatives in the area, in order to establish both networks and agreement on shared goals, necessary for the achievement of the overall objective

4.4 Monitoring

Preparing a project for implementation it is of utmost importance to prepare the process of monitoring and the procedures for interpretation and decision-making. The key-responsibility for this rests in all Danced projects with the PSC. Therefore it is pertinent to identify the specific mandate of the future PSC, and the stakeholder groups to be represented. The PSC must be able to perform an overall management function – and should therefore not be too big. Additional committees could be considered, to provide technical advice or to be used for broader consultations with marginal stakeholders.

Placing the overall responsibility for project monitoring with the PSC, Danced has allowed a significant amount of self-regulation to take place. This should be seen as an option for further delegation, achieving substantial dialogue and local ownership within the stakeholder groups involved. Delegation can be introduced in many ways – e.g. by outsourcing monitoring efforts of a technical/objective character, and by introducing participatory monitoring techniques.

Information needs – Monitoring requirements

The information needed to enable a flexible and result-oriented management approach can roughly be divided according to three purposes:

- Documentation of the achievement of project results,
- Continued assurance of the strategic relevance of the project – i.e. the Assumptions Monitoring stipulated in Danced's manual for project implementation, and
- Process management, including the detailed planning/revision of scheduled activities and budget control.

The identified Results of the project should be considered the centrepiece of all monitoring efforts. The PSC must always be in a position to assess the progress of the project, and enter into dialogue on the implications of changing context and unfulfilled assumptions. If processes outside the control of the project decrease the strategic relevance of the project, the PSC must emphasise the issue, and provide recommendations for adjustments in the LFA, using the formats provided for Progress reporting in Danced's manual for project implementation.

The identification of Critical Assumptions serves as the primary vehicle for risk-assessment – and monitoring of the prospects for project success in the longer run (impact and sustainability). This important function must be sustained by the integration of the identified assumptions into the monitoring framework, in this way providing the project managers with the information needed according to Danced's reporting requirements during project implementation.

This points to the importance of bringing forward all assumptions (inherent to the capacity analysis), how to address them explicitly and to ensure that the assumptions reflect the hypothesis and uncertainties of the project – thus enhancing the dialogue so crucial for flexible implementation.

Monitoring approaches

Assessing progress in a Danced supported project calls for the introduction and co-ordination of a number of approaches.

If the project contains components for demonstration purposes, specific and objectively verifiable indicators must be applied, in order to actually demonstrate the effects. This may be an issue for outsourcing – obtaining independent assessments of the achievements.

Concerning softer aspects of the capacity development it is often very hard to identify quantifiable indicators, and if these are identified, to assume consensus regarding interpretation. It is strongly recommended to apply a participatory approach to monitoring in these areas – allowing the stakeholders to identify, reassess and interpret the indicators.

Identifying the need to readdress problems must never be considered a failure – on the contrary it is the only way ahead. Thus the use of participatory approaches will enhance the ability of the PSC to provide the information needed for progress and completion reports. Addressing the critical assumptions and deciding on alteration of the outputs of the project is a major concern inherent to Danced's reporting requirements – and the dialogue between the PSC and Danced must address any signs regarded as early warning of constraints to the achievement of project results.

Identifying the principles for project monitoring it is important to assess the opportunities for stakeholder-based monitoring procedures. If such opportunities are used, it serves the purpose of sustaining a flexible management approach, enhancing the management capacity on the PSC. Using a participatory approach to the monitoring of project effectiveness supports the dialogue on improvement and rescheduling activity-plans as well as an iterative identification of additional indicators to be included in the monitoring framework. The PSC is authorised to approve such revisions, unless it implies revision of the part of the project budget covered by Danced's contribution.

4.5 Summary

The primary result of the preparation process is the Draft Project Document – but the quality of this result is to a large degree dependent on the quality of the process of preparation. In the preparation of most projects, the Project Document is not the only outcome. The analytical process, the strategic dialogue and the resulting design, is both dependent on and contributing to the capacity and awareness of the potential partners - sometimes to the extend, where the preparation process works as a project in itself. The

project is designed to support, initiate, enhance or enable changes in the larger context – but in itself it is designed to achieve specific results by specified means.