# HARMONISED IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS FOR INTERREG PROGRAMMES –
Establishing ETC Programme logic and linking Programme and Project Intervention Logics

The need for knowing to what extent projects contribute to the programme objectives has been growing over the past years. So far it has been quite a challenge to measure this contribution due to the broad programme objectives, variety of themes and projects.

This is why, for the 2014-2020 programming period, the EC is proposing to have more focused programmes and a standardised definition of Thematic Objectives (see Article 9 of CPR Regulation (No 1303/2013)) and investment priorities (see Article 5 of ERDF Regulation (No 1301/2013) and Article 7 of ETC Regulation (No 1299/2013)).

Detailed guidance on the new intervention logic approach suggested by the European Commission can be found in the Guidance Document "Monitoring and evaluation of European Cohesion policy – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – Concepts and Recommendations"[1], in Guidance Fiche on Intervention Logic[2], Guidance Fiche on Building Priority Axes[3] and Guidance Fiche on Performance Framework Review and Reserve 2014-2020[4].

Figure 1: Outputs, results and impact in relation to programming, monitoring and evaluation
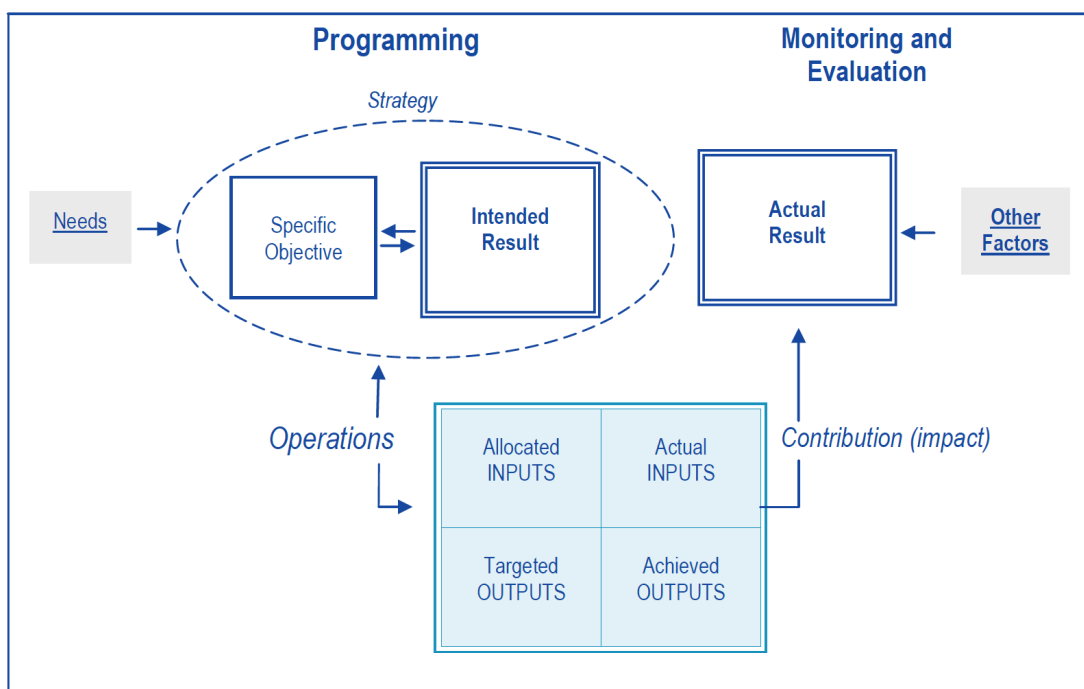
Purpose of the document

This short guidance document sums up the steps required to establish the intervention logic of the ETC Programme and to design its priority axes[5] and shows how to link programme and project level intervention logics. Priority axes are used for the purposes of monitoring and allocation of finances. The maximum co-financing rates for the ETC programmes are also established on the level of a priority axis.

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[1] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/evaluations/guidance_en.cfm#1
[2] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/experts_documents_en.cfm#3 (under Guidance)
[3] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/experts_documents_en.cfm#3 (under Guidance)
[4] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/evaluations/guidance_en.cfm#1
[5] According to legal package for 2014 – 2020 (see Article 7 of ETC Regulation).

How to select and structure priority axes in a cooperation programme?

▪ **Choice of thematic objectives**

Based on the analysis of the programme area and identified joint needs and challenges, Programmes have to select Thematic Objectives. The choice of Thematic Objectives for cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes is limited as laid out in Article 6 of the ETC Regulation (No 1299/2013). In case of ETC programmes financed solely from the ERDF, actions supporting one Thematic Objective will, in most cases, be implemented through one corresponding priority axis.

▪ **Selection of investment priorities**

A priority axis must consist of one or more investment priorities defined in the Fund specific regulations falling under the same Thematic Objective. Only in duly justified and exceptional cases it is possible to combine investment priorities from different Thematic Objectives into one priority axis. In such a case a separate priority axis may have to be established for the "external" investment priority.

▪ **Definition of specific objectives and results**

A specific objective and limited number (no more than two) of corresponding result indicator(s) have to be defined for each selected investment priority. This implies that result indicators represent a viable measurement of the objectives set.

▪ **Description of actions and choice of outputs**

Actions to be supported that will deliver outputs and lead to attainment of specific objectives and results have to be described. Corresponding categories of intervention should be listed and output indicators chosen.

▪ **Definition and quantification of the indicators**

Common output indicators, as set out in Annex of ETC Regulation (No 1203/2013) shall be used. Where common output indicators cannot be applied, programme-specific output indicators must be identified. Baselines for output indicators shall be set at zero, interim targets need to be fixed for 2018, and cumulative targets for 2023.

Result indicators shall be programme-specific. These can be expressed in quantitative as well as qualitative terms. Changes in behaviour and/or attitudes of target groups affected by the programme could be an example of such a qualitative indicator. Baselines for result indicators shall use the latest available data.

▪ **Definition of the financial allocation**

The scope and targets of each priority axis should be proportionate to the amount of funding available.

Project intervention logic

Project intervention logic has to be coherent and shall provide the necessary information for programmes to assess the contribution of a project to the "achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority", in line with Article 125(3) (a) (i) of the CPR. In order to be able to assess and measure project's contribution to the achievement of programme objectives, the project needs to establish project intervention logic mirroring the programme intervention logic.

The whole HIT Application form has been designed to support this need and two sections (C.2.1 Project objectives, expected results and main outputs and C.5 Work plan per work packages) have been developed specifically for the project intervention logic. All fields are linked to allow entering data only once to maximise data consistency and minimise work.
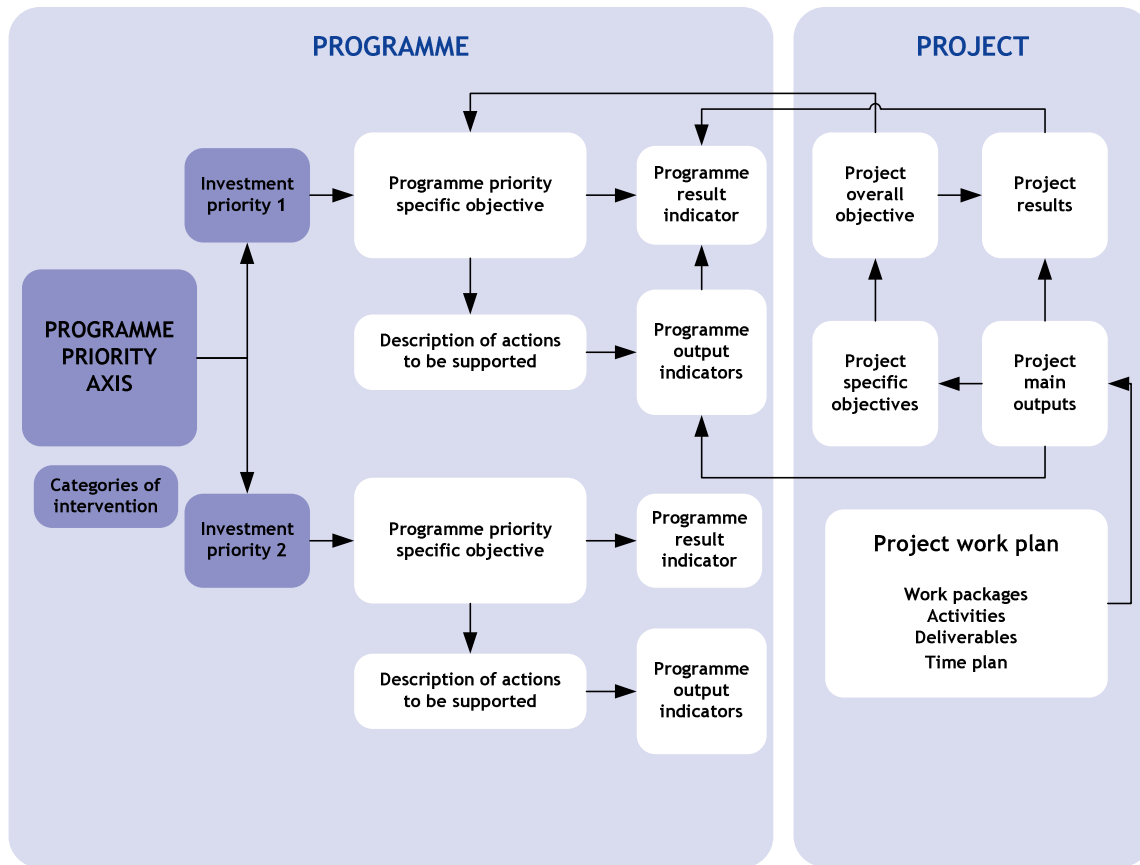
How to build the project intervention logic?

- **Define project overall objective and result and link them to the programme intervention logic**
  - Specify project overall objective and project result.
  - Choose a programme priority specific objective to which the project contributes and describe how it will contribute. It is important to secure consistency between project objectives and programme priority objective.
  - Choose a programme result indicator corresponding to the chosen programme priority specific objective to which the project will contribute. A quantification of the projects' contribution to the programme result indicators is not required - the programme result indicator shall not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population[6]. It's also not feasible, because results often materialise only after the project closure. However the project shall demonstrate the direct link between programme and project result, possibly also indicating to what extent it will contribute to the programme result.

- **Define project specific objectives**
  - The project should specify up to three specific objectives to stay focused.
  - The project specific objectives need to show direct contribution to the project overall objective.
  - It should be possible, at least to some extent, to measure achievement of project specific objectives with project main outputs. Ideally direct link should be established.

- **Define project main outputs and link them to the programme output indicators**
  - Project main outputs are defined in the workplan (C.5) and only then linked to objectives in section C.2.1 – thus both parts have to be developed in parallel which forces projects to carefully think about what they want to achieve and how they want to achieve it. Not every work package must have a/several main outputs (in fact, a project may have only one main output).
  - A project main output is one that can be captured by a programme output indicator and that directly contributes to the achievement of the project result. Project main output and programme output indicator need to have the same measurement unit to be able to aggregate them.
  - An aggregation of project main outputs based on programme output indicators is essential for the achievement of output targets set on the programme level. Project specific output indicators are not encouraged, because they fall out of programme intervention logic and therefore don't contribute to the achievement of programme objectives and indicators.

- **Develop work plan**
  - Project objectives, results and outputs have to be logically linked to project work plan (work packages, activities, time plan). The project work plan shall explain what needs to be done to deliver project main outputs and achieve project specific objectives.
  - The work plan is divided in several work packages, which are broken down into activities. The number of work packages should be limited to five to encourage projects to be focused. The number of activities, however, is unlimited.
  - A side-product of the project that contributes to the development of a project main output can be listed as a deliverable of an activity in the work package, however not every activity has to have a deliverable.

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[6] Article 16 (3) of the ETC Regulation

Elements of the programme intervention logic in accordance with the legal framework for 2014-2020 and links between programme and project intervention logics

Figure 2: Programme and project intervention logic links

Project intervention logic glossary[7]

Term	Definition
Project overall objective	Provides overall context for what the project is trying to achieve, and aligns to programme priority specific objective. It relates to the strategic aspects of the project.
Project specific objective	A concrete statement describing what the project is trying to achieve. It refers to the project main outputs. It can be evaluated at the conclusion of a project to see whether it was achieved or not.
Project result	The immediate advantage of carrying out the project, telling us about the benefit of using the project main outputs. It should indicate the change the project is aiming for.
Project main output	The outcome of the activities funded, telling us what has actually been produced for the money given to the project. It can be captured by a programme output indicator, and directly contributes to the achievement of the project result.
Project work package	A group of related project activities required to produce project main outputs.
Project activity	Specific task performed for which resources are used. It's a work package component which may or may not result in a deliverable or an output.
Project deliverable	A side-product or service of the project that contributes to the development of a project's main output.

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[7] Programme intervention logic terminology is explained in the relevant EC regulations and guidance papers.