GUIDE | 06

HOW TO CARRY OUT THE PRELIMINARY DIAGNOSIS
OF AN INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MICROPROJECT

AGENCE MICRO PROJETS
UNE ACTION DE LA GUILDE

This guide, produced at the initiative of the Agence des Micro Projets (AMP), is the result of:

- A survey of almost 50 French international solidarity non-profit associations that have (or have not) received funding from the Agence des Micro Projets to cover a wide range of practices. This survey identified common procedures regarding pre-project situation analyses and uncovered the main obstacles encountered by the non-profits.
- An analysis of reference guides and documents on the subject.
- Discussions with the operational team from Centraider, the Regional Multi-Actor Network (RRMA) for the Val-de-Loire Central Region and the Humacoop non-profit association, a training, information and documentation centre in the field of international solidarity.

The experiences of non-profits are drawn on throughout this guide via a series of testimonials.

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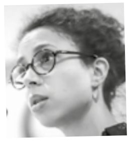
The Agence des Micro Projets (AMP) is a programme operated by La Guilde Européenne du Raid, a recognised public-interest non-profit association that receives financial backing from the Agence Française de Développement. The AMP aims to promote the micro-project approach. It is the national resource centre for supporting and funding small and medium-sized French non-profit associations.



Agence Micro Projets
30 ans de microprojets
Incubateur d'initiatives solidaires

CONTRIBUTOR › Centraider
Centraider is the international cooperation and solidarity network in the Centre-Val de Loire region. It brings together, represents, informs and trains a highly diverse selection of 950 organisations ranging from non-profits to local communities and companies operating on the international stage. Centraider is a non-profit association (constituted in accordance with the French law of 1901) based in Vendôme, Tours and Orléans.

www.centraider.org

THANK YOU TO ALL THE NON–PROFIT ASSOCIATIONS ›

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Sukhali Senegal
Todesol Burkina Faso
Un nom, un toit, une vie Burkina Faso
Village Samaane Senegal
Voiles sans frontières Senegal
Volontaires Unis pour la Dignité des Opprimés (VUDO) Democratic Republic of Congo
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FOREWORD

Before embarking on any project, the smart move is to analyse the initial situation carefully so that you can be sure that – among other things – it is relevant and feasible. Although most key players agree on this point, they do not all adhere to it equally closely due to a lack of time, funding or method.

Differentiating the requests made from real needs, sorting through the large amount of data collected, cross-checking statements between the different interlocutors, identifying partners and so forth does not just require common sense but also the necessary resources and a handful of practical tools.

This guide, which draws on testimonials from non-profit associations, brings together simple methodological aspects to help project holders carry out this phase. As the situation analysis is the basis for identifying and designing a project, the introduction to this guide reviews the project cycle. It then looks at the details of the methodology and data collection either remotely or by means of a field mission before moving on to a presentation of the design phase.

INTRODUCTION

THE SITUATION ANALYSIS IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

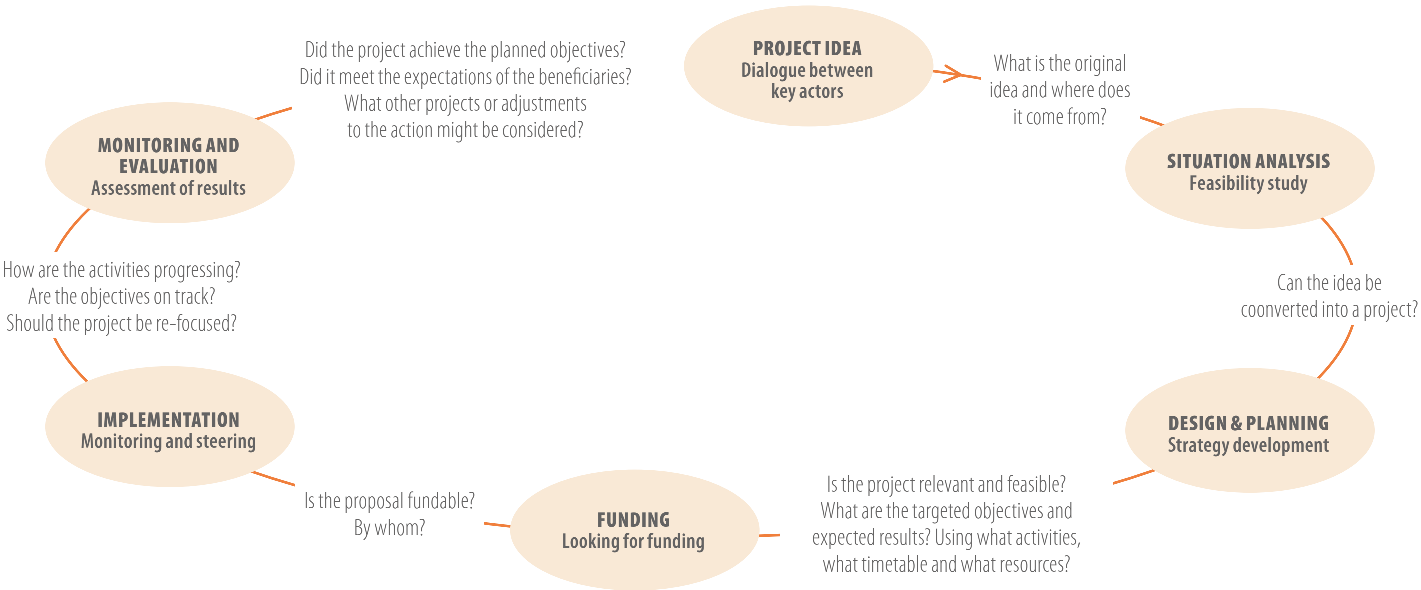
The micro-project approach

A project is defined as “a set of activities designed to achieve clearly-defined objectives within the prescribed deadlines and with a given budget”. (EuropAid, 2004).
A micro-project is characterised by its **low cost** and the **small-scale of its outreach.** It is built on local initiatives based on a balanced “North-South” partnership.
Micro-projects are laboratories for sometimes-innovative solidarity initiatives that can reach areas less affected by development dynamics, replicate successful, small-scale initiatives or serve as the basis for larger-scale programmes.

The stages of the project cycle

The development process approach based on a project cycle is designed to provide tools for:

1. Analysing a situation
2. Defining intervention priorities
3. Developing reciprocal knowledge and dialogue between the partners
4. Defining clear intervention programmes
5. Defining the skills and responsibilities of each of the key players. The project cycle is a dynamic process that must be adapted as and when there are changes to the intervention situation and key players



SITUATION ANALYSIS

The main function of the situation analysis is to analyse the overall context and the situation where the partners plan to intervene. It is designed to identify the stakeholders (whether they are partners or not) and existing resources or resources to be developed, as well as the key problems to be solved. Also known as an “ex-ante evaluation”, this stage uses similar tools to evaluate a project idea or initial situation. The situation analysis is used to decide whether a project should be undertaken or not by comparing the needs observed with the requests expressed and the resources available.

DESIGN AND PLANNING

This consists of formulating the idea validated by the situation analysis in “project” format. It establishes the priority objectives, expected results and activities that should make it possible to achieve them, together with the resources to be mobilised, the implementation timetable and a provisional budget. The indicators and their verification sources, which will be used for the monitoring and evaluation phase, are defined at this point. This stage often ends with the drafting of a comprehensive project file, which can then be used in the search for funding.

IMPLEMENTATION

This consists of executing the planned activities to achieve the expected results. It goes hand-in-hand with monitoring, which is used to collect data about the progress of the project, to measure the achievement of the planned objectives and to carry out a mid-term evaluation if it has been scheduled or if it has become necessary. This phase may be an opportunity to make adjustments to the activities or human resources.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This analyses the monitoring data and compares it to the initial situation in order to measure the results obtained and the achievement of the objectives. It is important to agree in advance on the reasons for the evaluation so the objectives and methods can be determined. The usual evaluation criteria (relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact) may be supplemented by other criteria that are more specific to the set objectives. Writing up an evaluation report will contribute to the dissemination of the results internally and externally.

▶ This guide focuses on the situation analysis phase: the care and precision given to this stage has a strong influence on a future project’s chances of success. Resources on the other phases of the project cycle are available in the micro-projects media library and via a handful of references in the appendices.

The value of the situation analysis

A situation analysis consists of analysing a situation from different angles (criteria) in a structured manner (method) on the basis of observations and assessments in order to formulate recommendations for possible interventions. It may conclude that a project is not feasible if the conditions (safety, technical, financial, human, etc.) are not met.

It should make it possible to:
- → **Better understand the local context,** the challenges, key players, (direct and indirect) beneficiaries and their motivations
- → **Collect data** on the real needs, requests and available resources
- → **Identify potential partners,** both in terms of the non-profit association and the area of intervention, using objective criteria
- → **Design an intervention strategy** that is suitable and relevant, as well as determine potential actions to be implemented

"The situation analysis helps us collect information, evaluate the feasibility of the project, define a framework, and assess our strengths and weaknesses in relation to the request."
SOS Casamance

"A situation analysis phase gives a better understanding of the field as well as building this relationship of trust with local key actors. Without this, it would be difficult to ensure that the project is coherent and relevant." **Envol Vert**

A situation analysis is also:

- → **A participatory approach** with the different key players and beneficiaries by means of developing data collection tools, individual and group interviews, defining priorities, communication and dissemination
- → **A decision-support tool** to justify or invalidate an action
- → **Results** for defining the priorities of the project and the action

▶ IMPORTANT › **The situation analysis involves a certain amount of work. Although often required by donors so they can judge, inter alia, a project's relevance and coherence, the related expenses are nevertheless seldom covered (especially travel expenses in the field), with some exceptions. The costs must then be picked up by the non-profit association's own funds, which may cause problems for a project holder. The quality of relations and communication between the key actors is of vital importance.**

APPENDIX #1 P. 25: THE COMPONENTS OF THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

« L'intérêt d'effectuer un diagnostic est d'intégrer le projet dans une démarche systémique et de faire participer le maximum de partenaires à sa réalisation. On s'assure ainsi que les bénéficiaires finaux seront porteurs de leur projet mais aussi que les risques seront maîtrisés le mieux possible tout au long du projet. Le diagnostic permet également d'ouvrir le champ de vision du porteur de projet. »
Association Française de Soutien aux ONG Centrafricaines de développement

LA PÉPINIÈRE DE VALLE HERMOSO. ENVOL VERT (COLOMBIA, PERU) GROUP OF BENEFICIARIES

Partnerships, which reflect changes in development practices, now lie at the heart of cooperation processes.

Definition

A partnership may be defined as **"the relationship between several bodies** to implement a project, built on cooperation and respecting the equal power of the parties, and based on exchange, trust, observing commitments, transparency and reciprocity. It is a **dynamic process** that must be sustainable, using particular skills and a **shared vision** of an international solidarity objective" (Coordination Sud).

Which partners?

Partners may be civil **society organisations** (non-profit associations, informal associations, economic cooperatives, etc.), **public bodies** (institutions, government agencies, regions or municipalities) at local, regional or national level, or **private operators.** Regardless of the type of relationship, it must encourage complementary resources and skills to the mutual advantage of each party.

How can a partnership be started?

The challenge for international solidarity organisations is to make a long-term commitment from the situation analysis phase without creating a dependency or imbalance. From this perspective, the partner in the field must not be reduced to a mere project implementor or bear full responsibility for the project. Responsibilities should be defined and shared out together. The proper conduct of a partnership is fundamental to its success.

> *"With a new partner, building trust is a prerequisite and may take some time. You need to make sure that every word means the same thing to both parties. Identify the challenges properly, anyone that has been left on the side-lines or potential inconveniences resulting from the project for certain groups."* OICD

It is vital to know the parties involved well, initially by asking questions about your own organisation. In fact, it is only once your own expectations have been clarified that it will be possible to go out and meet targeted partners.

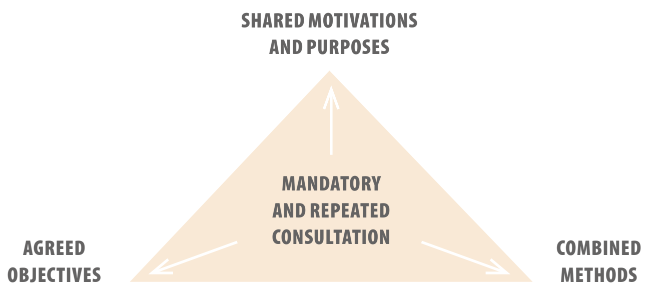
Questions to ask yourself

- → **Motivations :** why are you planning to work internationally: for personal (emotional), ethical, faith-based or political reasons?
- → **Methods of intervention:** is it a question of providing institutional support, financial support, intercultural exchange, development actions, etc.?
- → **Past achievements, skills:** what activities have already been undertaken by our non-profit association? Do we want to continue down the same path? What skills can we mobilise?
- → **Defining the concepts and notions of international solidarity and partnership:** how do we conceive of the partnership? What does reciprocity mean? What are the technical and financial responsibilities expected of each party?

The initial stage may consist of turning to the key players who are already involved, in France or in the field, and to mobilise local international solidarity networks or non-profit associations that are already active. **Every key player must take the time to introduce themselves and get to know each other on an equal footing:** do you share the same motivations? Do you have the same values, the same ideas and concepts, etc.?

APPENDIX #2 P. 26: NGO PROFILE ANALYSIS

The criteria for success



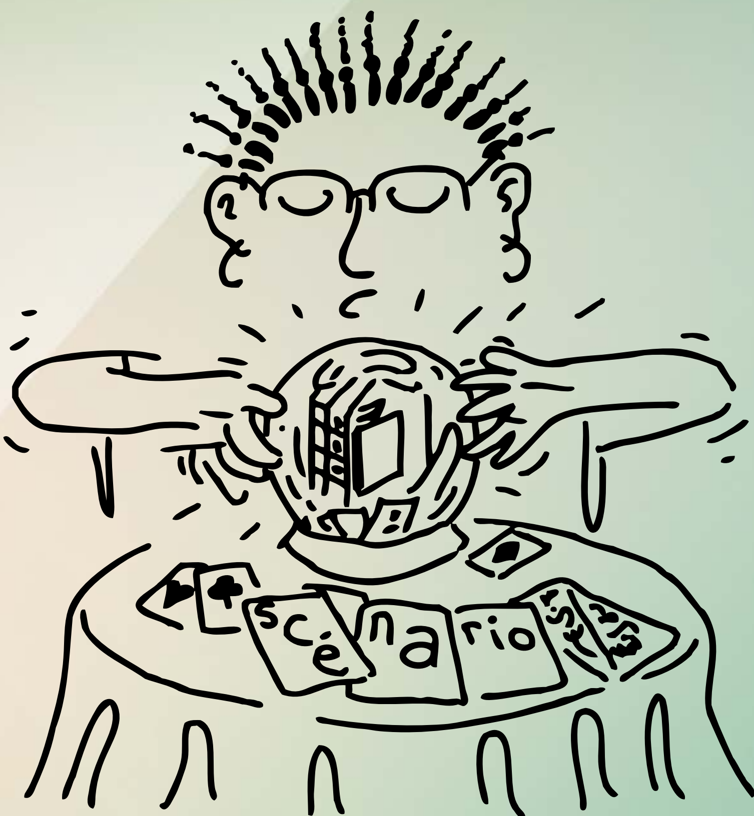
THE PARTNERSHIP TRIANGLE

Source : Guide pratique : Concevoir, suivre et évaluer des actions de Solidarité – Lianes Coopération

- → **Shared responsibilities and work methods:** each partner is involved practically by sharing the risks of any action with transparency and genuine reciprocity.
- → **A sustainable, long-term partnership, even beyond the project timetable:** the relationships forged over time contribute to a better understanding and help reinforce the skills of the key players – facilitated by regular discussions and being available for communication, dialogue and constructive criticism.
- → **A common vision and shared methods of intervention:** agreeing on how to achieve the targeted objectives improves the chances of ensuring the changes brought about by the action are sustainable. This pre-supposes joint work during the situation analysis, planning and scheduling of the intervention and the implementation of the monitoring mechanism.
- → **The contractualisation of the relationship:** the bases for the reciprocal commitments must be clear and recognised without any ambiguity by the partners. These focus on the respective responsibilities, the technical and financial methods employed and the duration of the commitment.

CHAPTER 1

THE STAGES OF THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

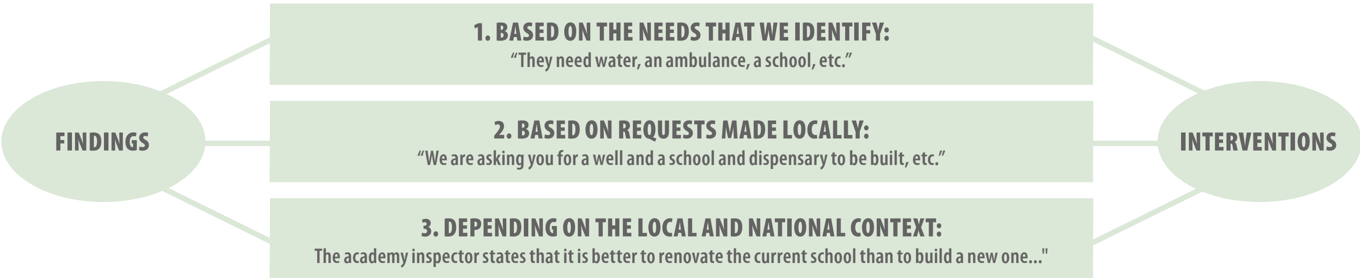


"Any project originates with an idea that is designed to perform an action with a determined goal that is defined in advance. It responds to an existing problem that can be evaluated and recognised in various ways".
Salon des solidarités

No two projects have the same history

The lack of a single approach may sometimes make the identification process difficult. This approach is essential, however: it is used to examine an initial project idea in greater depth by defining the real needs more clearly and by mapping all the stakeholders, including the direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as the partner(s) involved in the future actions

A distinction is generally made between three different situations, grouped together in the diagram below, which may directly influence the positioning during the data collection and analysis. The most important item is to compare views and sources of information in order to limit interpretation bias as much as possible. Carrying out the most exhaustive situation analysis possible by linking enough actors to it means it is possible to limit identification biases.



Source : Guide pratique : Concevoir, suivre et évaluer des actions de Solidarité – Lianes Coopération

BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE ORGANISATION THAT WANTS TO LEAD A PROJECT

The needs analysis is generally undertaken intuitively or on the basis of a more precise situation analysis.

− An external view may identify constraints that are difficult for the interested parties to see, and an external intervention may bring skills with it that are not available locally.

+ It is not enough to detect a need and respond to it to create a real process of change.

What if the needs identified do not correspond to the priorities of the relevant parties? Did the selected intervention take into account the constraints and challenges of the target group? Have the knowledge, resources and constraints of people on the ground locally been integrated? This approach may also lead to the emergence of an excessive list of needs on the part of the partners or targeted beneficiaries, with the latter unconsciously positioning themselves in answer to the question: "What are your needs?"

BASED ON REQUESTS EXPRESSED LOCALLY THAT REQUIRE THE CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNERS

+ The expression of a local request always indicates a desire for change, which is an integral part of any development process.

These requests promote dialogue between the key players and may be used to identify needs. They may be formulated by civil society, institutions or the state.

− Not all requests are necessarily well-founded, priorities or accessible, and they may be influenced primarily by the perception of what the project holders could contribute.

Accordingly, the following questions should be asked: How was the request received? Is it a real request (driven by the desire to do something)? Is it in imitation of what has already been done in a neighbouring locality? This echoes the previous situation where identifying needs results in the emergence of new requests, which it must then be possible to prioritise.

BACKING LOCAL INITIATIVES ASKING FOR SUPPORT

+ Starting from existing local initiatives means supporting actions that go beyond meeting needs or reproducing projects that have already proven themselves.

− If the basic actions are not coherent or relevant, support for these local initiatives cannot guarantee their success.

In addition, requests for support do not always correspond to the philosophy of the non-profit association or its skills. The social issues must also be observed in order to avoid creating tensions between the key players who might be supported and others who might not be.

The choice of intervention, it follows, is based on the knowledge of the key players and their environment, as well as enhancing local resources and the interests already announced.

▶ FACTOR IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

"We built a new school after being asked to by the residents and after our own observations. However, the academy inspector - whose priority is to renovate and extend existing schools - wasn't included in the preparation phase, and today no teacher has been assigned to the school."

Government agencies and local authorities are responsible for defining local investment priorities, even though they do not always have sufficient resources to implement them. They initiate some projects, but often rely on external collaborations to set them up. It is essential to integrate local and national institutions so that, once the project has been finalised, these institutions can take over and continue to support it without it turning into an additional burden they have to deal with.

Knowing and interpreting the context is the starting point for any action. The challenge is to find a compromise between one's own experience and the observed reality in order to ascertain whether the planned project is legitimate and ethical, and whether the needs are relevant. It is also a question of assessing the sustainability of the planned courses of action. Three levels of context can generally be distinguished, each with its potential for influence.

"It's important that the projects we undertake meet the needs of the local community and beneficiaries, as well as the skills of our stakeholders (members and partners) and the priority socio-political contexts defined by the local authorities" **Aide pour le Développement Durable (ADD)**

General context

This involves the **national context** together with the historical, geographical, political, environmental, socio-economic, socio-cultural, etc. context into **which the project fits.** It is not influenced by the project but it may condition it, which is why it must be known and taken into account.

"Our method is constantly adapting to the reality on the ground, and we constantly keep abreast of the latest political and social developments. We monitor the local press on a daily basis so we can keep up with the infrastructure projects proposed by the Senegalese government". **Lire en Afrique**

Local context

This is limited geographically to the area that the **relevant locality or region reports to.** In addition to the historical, geographical and socio-economic aspects, it is also important to factor in the key players active in the region, including institutional actors. This context is linked to the project and may influence it in the medium term, just as it may be influenced by the actions that might be put in place.

APPENDIX #3 P. 27: ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL CONTEXT

Context of the project

This is the context that will have a **direct influence on the future project.** In addition to the areas addressed above, it is essential at this point to analyse the key players, including the partners, and above all everything that concerns the beneficiaries: expectations, limits, resources and existing capacities. This is the context for action and it is essential, therefore, to understand the mechanisms.

Other more specific tools may be used depending on the theme identified for the future project, such as an agrarian situation analysis, a prospective study of water resources, an epidemiological situation analysis, etc. All things considered, the source (origin) and date (year) of the data collected during the context analysis must be stated in the situation analysis phase.

▶ USEFUL INFO ›

Country framework documents or regional or municipal development plans that set the priorities and objectives for a given period are available and can be consulted on site or using the internet. Some resource sites are suggested in the appendices to this guide.

APPENDIX #4 P. 28: ADDITIONAL THEMATIC RESOURCES

A stakeholder is a key player, an individual or group, actively or passively concerned by a decision or a project; in other words, their interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of its execution (or non-execution).

The stakeholder may be an individual or **a group of people organised into a non-profit association** or belonging to institutional or informal groups. All have their own interests, functions, strategies and resources, their common characteristic being that they play a key role in the development process. In fact, a development key player is an individual or organisation that actively intervenes to bring about socio-economic change to the advantage of the local community.

How is it possible to distinguish between them?

- → **The project holders or initiators:** Individuals or organisations behind a project
- → **Beneficiaries :** Persons or organisations affected directly or indirectly by the impact of the project
- → **Partners :** People, organisations or institutions likely to be involved in the project or to be linked to it in various ways (technical, financial, institutional partner, etc.)
- → **Key players:** Any individual, organisation or institution involved in and / or affected by the process but that does not fall specifically into the previous categories

Note that the categories are not set in stone and beneficiaries may also be partners in the same project if they have an active role in executing it.

Why analyse them?

The analysis of these stakeholders, who form a sometimes-complex network in the same locality, region or national territory, is designed to highlight the interactions, issues regarding power and competition, and the risks of conflict that may emerge within the context of a project. The aim is to make the action more effective and efficient.

How to analyse them

The analysis can be carried out in four stages:

1. **Identification** › This involves first identifying any individual, group of people or institutions potentially concerned by the future project and in a position to influence it either positively or negatively. Not all the key players listed will necessarily be relevant to include in the remainder of the analysis, and information on some may be lacking.

2. **Missions and functions** › This involves assigning functions to each key player (inform, approve, execute, etc.) for the various activities that are planned: context analysis, project monitoring, political support, technical assistance, implementation of activities, etc. The information compiled in this way will then serve as the basis for a future partnership agreement and will be re-used during the monitoring of the project.

3. **Positioning** › The main objective of this stage is to identify issues on which the key players might hold opposing views, and to define their interests, expectations and resources that can be mobilised. This approach is designed to enable better characterisation and to anticipate and manage the potential conflicts that arise, almost inevitably, in the life of a project.

4. **Summary** › The summary table (evaluation matrix) is used to compile the data. It should be filled in as and when meetings are held with the various key players. As many columns can be added as needed for the areas of further study.

Example of a stakeholder evaluation matrix

KEY PLAYERS	FUNCTIONS	INTERESTS & EXPECTATIONS	DEGREE OF INFLUENCE ON THE PROJECT	RESOURCES & WEAKNESSES	POSSIBLE ACTIONS
WHO ARE THE DIFFERENT KEY PLAYERS CONCERNED BY THIS PROJECT?	WHAT ARE THEIR MISSIONS AND TO WHAT EXTENT IS EACH OF THEM CONCERNED BY THE PROBLEM?	WHAT DOES THE KEY PLAYER GAIN BY TAKING PART IN THE PROJECT AND WHAT CAN IT BRING TO IT?	HOW IS THE PARTICIPATION OF THIS PLAYER LIKELY TO ACCELERATE OR HINDER THE PROJECT?	WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE KEY PLAYERS IN THIS AREA OF INTERVENTION?	HOW WILL THE KEY PLAYERS INTERVENE IN THE PROJECT?
List of key players	List of social, economic and structural characteristics, organisation, status, attitudes	Description des besoins, des buts, attentes, craintes, des intérêts de chaque acteur et dans quelle mesure chacun est concerné par le problème.	Measurement of the level of influence on, and commitment to, the project. May be positive (becomes a resource) or negative (becomes a competitor).	List of the key player's human, material, technical and financial resources, know-how and experience (credibility).	Description of the actions that the player is able to undertake and the actions that might be required to encourage their involvement..

Collaborative work

It is of fundamental importance that beneficiaries and local key players are involved from the identification phase. It provides a plural vision of the context, the problems to be tackled and the expectations of the beneficiaries. It is also designed to ensure that the problems identified are given priority by gathering information from the people directly affected. Finally, it facilitates the involvement and support of beneficiaries during the project and after the implementation phase for sustainability.

Getting to know each other

Asking questions about the skills (know-how) and capacities of your organisation at different levels (financial, human, temporal, material, etc.) is as important as thinking about its identity, values and objectives. If the conditions are not met, especially in terms of human resources, for monitoring the pre-project phases or financial resources for covering the initial expenses, it may be wise to strengthen the organisation prior to planning more concrete actions. Before even designing a project and estimating a budget, it is essential to examine the financial capacities specific to your organisation. Another option may be to mobilise resource persons or external partners who will have the required know-how or useful resources for your organisation.

Detailing your strengths and limitations

SKILLS IN THE ORGANISATION

- What are the areas of competence in your organisation and level of expertise?
- Do you have the skills (technical, cultural, linguistic) required for the targeted theme in order to intervene?
- If not, is it possible to acquire them internally (training) or mobilise them externally (provider, partner, other resource organisation)?

STRUCTURAL CAPACITIES

- Are the human resources (paid charity workers, unpaid volunteers and employees) available in the long term to monitor the entire project cycle, manage budgets, interact with the key players and beneficiaries, take notes, write mission reports, etc.?
- What are the non-profit association's material resources?
- What financial resources are available?
  Is the budget adequate to cover all the project's expenses, not just its implementation but also its monitoring and evaluation? What are the potential and guaranteed sources that can be mobilised to meet the different expenses?

▶ FURTHER READING

For more information, consult the guide Modèle d'Autodiagnostic et d'Amélioration Continue (MADAC) developed by Coordination SUD and F3E: https://www.coordinationsud.org/wp-content/uploads/MADAC-LivretWEB.pdf

WORK MEETING.
AFSOC (RÉPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE)

WORK MEETING.
SOS CASAMANCE (SÉNÉGAL)

In development actions, certain issues regarding gender, the environment, disability, and young people – or other social, religious or sexual exclusions – are even now too often considered peripheral subjects. However, these are key, cross-cutting issues that must be taken into account from the very beginning of the project cycle.

Encouraging an inclusive approach

Inclusive development means **expressly including marginalised or excluded groups at every stage of the project cycle,** and ensuring that they participate effectively and meaningfully in development processes. This approach is based on the principles of **participation, non-discrimination** and **accessibility** with the idea of promoting equitable and sustainable development for the beneficiaries and the surrounding context.

In terms of cross-cutting themes, this means asking specific questions at every stage by collecting data, contacting key players, organising meetings, etc. The expenses generated must be included in the budget for the situation analysis from the outset. However, they will be less than they would be for implementing corrective actions once the project has been started, without factoring in the financial or social cost linked to repairing environmental damage or strengthening inequalities.

Questions and tools to make it easier to take these themes into account

THEME	METHOD	EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK
GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION	• Collect data by sex • Analyse the situation of men and women and the sub-groups within them (needs, strategic interests, opportunities, obstacles) • Analyse the key players present	• What is the gender distribution in the social and professional environment? • Is there equal access for girls to school and women to paid employment? • What is the nature of the social relations between men and women? • Is there evidence of violence against women and young girls (sexual mutilation, forced marriages, difficulties in accessing infrastructure, etc.)? • Who has been consulted (how many men and how many women)? Using what procedures? • What are the discrimination factors related to cultural obstacles and sexual orientation? • How are sexual minorities included in overall terms and within each of these groups? Are there exclusion factors?
YOUNG PEOPLE	• Collect specific data on the target age group: status, role, specificities related to age in the relevant field • Analyse the specific situation of young people in the relevant area (needs, strategic interests, opportunities, obstacles) • Identify the key players and analyse their roles	• What is the quality of the existing systems (vocational training, education, support for employment, health, etc.)? What are the difficulties in accessing these mechanisms? • What is the proportion of young people who are direct and indirect beneficiaries of the action? • What is the proportion of young people among the targeted direct and indirect beneficiaries? • What measures are planned to change inequalities in access to rights and resources?
ENVIRONMENT	• Define whether the project includes specific objectives, results or activities linked to the theme of the environment • The state of play regarding biodiversity, and the management of natural environments and resources in the locality covered by the project	• What is the activity's risk level? • What are the potential effects and impacts of the project's actions on the environment and climate (positive and / or negative)? Examples: water or soil contamination, threat to fauna or flora, atmospheric pollution, etc. • What are the planned corrective measures in the event of a negative impact?
DISABILITIES	• Collect data on people with disabilities, the extent of their civic participation and their access to rights • Include people with disabilities in the situation analysis and design phase • Collect data / needs from people with disabilities and non-profit association networks • Raise key players' awareness about disabilities (type, disability creation process, deficiency, incapacity)	• What is the situation of people with disabilities in terms of knowledge about and access to rights? • What are the representative organisations or non-profit association networks for people with disabilities, and have they been consulted? • What is the level of awareness of the population and the authorities regarding people with disabilities?

EQUALITY

ÉQUITY

"A project is an 'open system': you write down the basic elements of the project in a circle with all the internal data (what kind of schemes, the material resources, human resources, standards, costs, etc.). Outside the circle, you note all the external elements that may have an impact on the project and that you will need to analyse (the geographical and human contexts, sources of risk, various support mechanisms, the role of the beneficiaries, skills, leadership, the coherence of the group... all issues and information that may influence the project). As and when discussions make progress, new questions and information are added and linked to the ones in the central circle. You can even plan for the worst..." **Fédération Enfants-Soleil**

What is a risk?

Risk management is not restricted to emergency projects. Risk is the probability that an event will occur in relation to the magnitude of the negative consequences that the event may have. In other words, it means **"the possibility of one or more events occurring that prevents the project from achieving one or more of its objectives".** In the context of development micro-projects, therefore, risk management consists of identifying the events in advance that might thwart the implementation of the activities and the achievement of the objectives so you can avoid or minimise the losses that may occur.

Identifying risks

The risks may be of different types: economic, health, climatic, environmental, political, legal, security, land, social, technical, human, etc.

The Groupe Initiatives (GI) non-profit association has five **main families of risk** (financial, quality, human resources, legal and reputation) that it combines with the internal and external components of a project. The whole represents a total of **120 sub-risks.**

→ **Internal components:** project team, internal procedures, equipment, etc.

→ **External components:** country context (including security risk), partners/providers, target populations, funder agreement, funding, etc.

Example ›

	FINANCIAL RISK	HUMAN RESOURCES
INTERNAL COMPONENT	• Misappropriation • Under or over-estimation of resources • Lack of knowledge about procurement rules	• Work overload • Faulty management • Intercultural management
EXTERNAL COMPONENT	• Variations in the exchange rate • Eligibility of expenditure	• Lack of support from partners • Status of the job market

Evaluating risks

The level of each risk may be assessed based on three criteria:

→ the seriousness of the consequences **(intensity)**
→ the probability of occurrence **(frequency)**
→ the organisation's level / capacity to respond to the risk **(potential vulnerability)**

It will normally be possible to mitigate risks by:

→ Coordinating with and cooperation among key players
→ Anticipation based on learning, accountability and responsiveness
→ Continuous action by the project's key players

The a priori identification of a risk is designed to reduce its effects and impacts as far as possible and to adapt activities in advance. For example, identifying an accessibility risk for marketing a project with an economic aim may lead to a change in the planned location for the project.

▶ FURTHER READING
Consult the publication by Groupe Initiatives Traverses 46: Quelle prise en charge du risque-projet par les OSI
groupe-initiatives.org/IMG/pdf/traverses_46_-_quelle_prise_en_charge_du_risque_projet_par_les_osi_web_.pdf

The growth in new technologies has contributed indirectly to improving practices regarding the situation analysis, thanks in particular to the development of specific applications that are now available in many areas and countries.

Digital tools dedicated to situation analyses

Numerous activities have been hugely facilitated by new advances in technology: making calls and receiving photos more easily from abroad, sharing folders and files, using GPS to survey and monitor water points or infrastructure, collecting mobile data in questionnaire format, etc.
Although these tools are not a substitute for a trip to the field, they do make it easier to understand and / or prepare for it remotely in collaboration with a project's key players. Google Earth, Maps, WhatsApp, Dropbox (or OpenStreetMap, GeoMapApp or Signal, their free software equivalents), when linked to the mobilisation of local partners, can become precious allies for gaining an overall idea of the geography of a locality and its key infrastructure as well as for obtaining recent images of the area of intervention at regular intervals. The principle of cross-referencing information, especially remotely, is still essential. Note that most of the tools are open access and participatory.

"Setting up a WhatsApp group for all the members of the Goutte à Goutte non-profit association, the young people from the club (project partners) and the driller, means that there is real transparency in the relations. We have put several different sources of information in place so we can cross-check what people say."
Goutte à Goutte

WATER SOURCE
PRE-PROJECT

DRILLING.
GOUTTE À GOUTTE (CAMEROUN)

▶ FURTHER READING
More applications can be found in the "Toolbox" resulting from the study "Usage des NTIC dans les microprojets"

CHAPTER 2

THE SITUATION ANALYSIS IN PRACTICE

POPULATION SURVEY
AFRIQUE 70 (TOGO)

Information collected remotely through bibliographic research, discussions with partners, contact with experienced organisations, etc. provides a preliminary overview of the situation. It is often relevant to compare this information as closely as possible with the key players in the field.

"First we have a socio-economic study of the beneficiary villages carried out by our partner NGO in Togo, then we analyse the results before validating the field mission or not. Next we prepare the situation analysis in advance (the quote, making appointments and planning) so we can meet all the requested partners (companies, authorities beneficiaries, NGO partners) in the field and at the beginning of the mission". **Afrique 70 Togo**

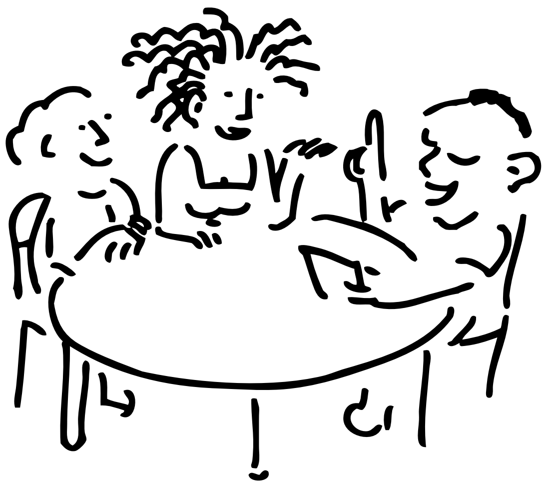
Drafting the terms of reference

Drafting the terms of reference is based on an initial understanding of the national and local situation using data from the literature and discussions with local key players. The terms of reference are used to define the duration of the mission, the origin, objectives, estimated cost, participants, etc. They can be created jointly with the partners and / or shared in advance – in order to work transparently – as well as with the other members of the non-profit association to present the challenges of the mission.

Planning the activities

The success of a mission will depend on the quality of the information gathered and the resource people who are met. It follows that advance planning work is necessary from the outset in order to identify the various locations to be visited, the questions to ask and the people to contact and meet. This may involve bibliographical research, making contact with networks of key players, taking part in meetings, meetings on specific themes, and so forth.

The timetable may, of course, be altered depending on the opportunities and availability of all the key players involved in the mission. Some meetings may be cancelled or postponed at the last moment, when it will be useful to specify the discrepancies and reasons.



If your non-profit association is already in touch with a resource person or partner, a simple table for monitoring exchanges may be used to record the various advances in the preparations.

TOOLS: TABLE OF PEOPLE INVOLVED
(SURNAME AND FIRST NAME, FUNCTION, LOCATION, REASON FOR THE MEETING),
PROVISIONAL MISSION TIMETABLE
(ACTIVITY, DURATION, MANAGER, KEY EXPECTED RESULTS).

Putting the team together

Forming a team can be relatively simple if you do not call on external parties. However, the knowledge or skills of each individual must be known so you can distribute the roles properly. Do certain skills (technical, project management, linguistic) need to be strengthened so that the mission can be carried out as well as possible? Where feasible, forming an intercultural team is a definite advantage so you can blend knowledge of the field (including linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge) with a more external perspective.

AMITIÉ FRANCE MADAGASCAR
(MADAGASCAR)

FIELD MISSION.
AMITIÉ FRANCE MADAGASCAR (MADAGASCAR)

Financing the situation analysis phase is often the most difficult step. Indeed, many donors consider this stage as a prerequisite for putting together a grant application, since the information gathered in advance will normally lead to the identification of the project and the drafting of the application. However, this phase has a real cost, especially when it involves one or more trips to the field.

Funding the mission

Where there is no ready-made solution for covering these costs, a few strategies may be put in place, such as:

→ **Self-funding:** as the main resource for non-profit associations, this is most often used in the context of the situation analysis phase, with plane tickets and living expenses rarely covered by donors. Joint financing between several organisations operating in the same area may be considered.

"We take advantage of the holidays of one of the members in the field to hire a professional who works with the local partner" **FEASO**

"During professional support missions, members visit libraries and meet non-profit and institutional actors in the cultural and educational sectors. This helps us collect (long-term) information that can be used to prepare situation analyses when new requests for support are submitted." **COBIAC**

→ **Combine the trip with a monitoring-cum-evaluation mission,** which is more easily funded by donors, to collect new data for a future project. This underscores the importance of preparing the content and objective of the situation analysis in advance, via terms of reference, in order to avoid mixing up the two missions.

→ **Include the cost of the situation analysis in the overall cost of the project:** some (rarer) donors may fund the association's operating costs and / or may not specify the destination of the allocated funds or the non-eligibility of these expenses. The situation analysis therefore corresponds to phase 1 of a project that will be implemented on the basis of the results obtained.

→ **Have the costs of the situation analysis specifically funded:** Some specific donors agree to cover part of the costs of the preliminary study with the aim of ensuring the funding of a high-quality project. However, this information is clearly specified in the funding arrangements and is more often the exception than the rule.

Mobilising existing resources

If a trip to the field has been very highly recommended, particularly to strengthen the ties between stakeholders, it should be remembered that several key players may be active in the same project area. Targeted analyses may already have been produced and used, on site or remotely, for another project (inquire with local organisations or the competent authorities). Where applicable, these steps may be an opportunity to create or expand your network! It is also possible to recruit local experts who will monitor the situation analysis approach that has been defined in advance.

FIELD VISIT.
BURKIN ARDENN AVENIR (BURKINA FASO)

FIELD VISIT. DISCUSSION WITH BUILDER.
VOILES SANS FRONTIÈRES (SENEGAL)

Overall monitoring of the mission

The best option is to **record the programme day-after-day in a hardcopy logbook or in digital format,** where you note the significant facts of the mission in chronological order, the difficulties encountered, and the concerns and questions raised. This will form the basis in the future for reporting to third parties about what has been done in the field, as well as helping to draft the mission report. In addition, it will help to **identify deviations from the forecast.**

Collecting data in the field

Qualitative and quantitative methods are two ways of collecting data to provide in-depth knowledge about a particular subject. Depending on the purpose of the data, it can be used separately or additionally.

> *"The quantitative approach consists of three questions you ask 1,000 subjects. The qualitative approach consists of 1,000 questions on three subjects".* **Médecins du Monde**

- **The quantitative approach** describes and explains phenomena using indicators and aggregates at population level. The principle of recurrence is used by asking the same questions repeatedly in order to have a significant number of answers to compare. The key tool is the questionnaire.
- **The qualitative approach** follows the same objective in detail and is based on a limited number of observations. It is easier to combine interviews with it.

The basic principles

Do not influence the answers, do not ask questions that are too closed (restrictive) **or too open** (risk of straying from the subject), **choose an appropriate time** (when people are available and can focus), and **cross-reference information** in order to reduce interpretation bias. Data collection may require human resources (people to carry out surveys, translators) together with technical (travel) and financial (per diem) resources, which need to be provided for in the mission's budget.

> *"Listen properly, ask the right questions, and ask them several times to several interlocutors who don't necessarily have the same interests".* **OICD**

Collection tools

- **The questionnaires** are a structured way to collect information using different types of question (closed, open or multiple) in the form of lists or tables. It is important to use language that is appropriate to the respondents as well as clear and precise terms, and to organise the questions in a logical sequence and limit answers that have been prompted by the question.
- **Interviews** are more comprehensive and "informal" than questionnaires but also need more time to analyse. They can be structured to varying degrees depending on the number of questions planned and the preparation upstream. They may be individual or collective (pay attention to the power issues involved when talking) and set limits to the responses to varying degrees (from a directive to a free interview).
- Observation consists of a descriptive approach to behaviours, events and facts in concrete reality. It may be direct or participatory (the respondent's opinion is taken into account), and be carried out in systematically or using simple observation grids.

VILLAGE			DISTRICT										
Number	Head of family	Activities	Number of adults		Number of children		Total	GPS coordinates			Branchement		Comments
	Surname & first name		Women	Men	Girls	Boys		North	West	Altitude	Yes	No	

ENQUÊTE SOCIALE ET TABLEAU DE RELEVÉS DANS LE CADRE D'UN PROJET D'ADDUCTION D'EAU POTABLE (Source : Migration et Développement – étude 2011)

Defining the population to be interviewed

It is important to **define the target population you want to survey in advance and the reasons why** so you can limit the number of people who are overlooked. For example, in the context of a project to supply water to a particular locality, the data collection should interview all the potential future users of the proposed service (families, farmers, breeders, craftsmen, etc.) as well as the stakeholders (technical services, decentralised institutions, etc.). With a quantitative approach, if the totality of the population that the project wants to study is not available, a so-called "representative" sample should be selected as far as is practicable i.e., that has the same characteristics as the parent population but in a smaller proportion. For good data collection, you are strongly advised to **prepare interview or observation grids and survey templates.** Other, more specific material can be used for collecting data, such as market studies, health surveys, an agrarian situation analysis, etc.

Working with an interpreter

Working with an interpreter has a clear advantage: it enables **two people who do not speak the same language to communicate.** Moreover, the translator may play the role of mediator between two cultures. However, this collaboration also has a certain number of limitations that should not be underestimated, including:

- the limitation of **fluidity in the exchange** and spontaneity of the conversation
- the risk of **interpretation** rather than translation (subjectivity)
- issues relating to **confidentiality.** This risk may be heightened depending on the individual's position within the project (as a member of the local partner or stakeholder in the project with interests at stake), which may have the effect of directing the discussions more easily.

It is not always possible to go into the field for safety or financial reasons or due to personal availability. In this case, the situation analysis phase is assigned to a third party, a partner or external player, who acts as an intermediary for the non-profit association in France.

Choosing your intermediary in the field

Contacting an external organisation to carry out a remote situation analysis can be risky, especially when you are not familiar with it. Indeed, the interpretation, requirements and expectations can vary between interlocutors. Yet, it is on the basis of the information collected that any intervention strategy will be decided – which means that it must be of optimal quality. If a partner organisation is already known, **it is easier to continue a relationship that has already started on known ground** by defining the conditions of the mission together. If conditions permit, an alternative solution may be to shift the interviews to a more accessible location. It is also possible to bring the project partners into the field of the French association to keep the link.

"The members have not been able to go into the field for six years for safety reasons. The last project carried out in 2018 was done entirely remotely. However, one of the members of the non-profit association already knew the locality… We don't plan to work in a location that no one would know. The distance forces the partners to set the priorities themselves, and they're attentive to the level of expenditure too, since joint conditions were set at the outset."
Goutte à Goutte

In overall terms, this involves following the same stages as for the situation analysis and preparing for a field mission, with the notable difference that an external person will go into the field. Some additional watchpoints linked to remote communication, the reliability of the interlocutors, and the quality of data collection and interpretation also need to be anticipated.

"It's sometimes more difficult to say things at a distance, and solving important problems has to be done in writing. When the means allow us, we use a works supervisor, someone who is external to the project. You have to be patient but human contact is essential."
Goutte à Goutte

Harnessing new technologies

New technologies, including remote communication applications, have helped bring about many changes in practices. **Remote meetings** can take place on Skype, **strategic points can be geo-located by GPS** and then transmitted to the various key players, and **important documents can be signed and scanned electronically faster.** However, the distance sometimes makes communication less fluid, depending on the internet network, telephone system and, fundamentally, electricity.

At the same time, bibliographic research, making contact with organisations or resource persons, networking with other local or international associations, and working in the area should be reinforced in order to increase the number of sources of information. This results in the most comprehensive database possible and leads to more equal discussions with the partners.

Calling on external service providers

It is also possible to have someone who is already on site but external to the project intervene directly in the field. The methodology of the situation analysis can follow the usual steps, i.e. analysing the context, key players and organisation, and collecting and analysing data – but this will be discussed with the service provider. The objective of the mission, the expected results and the resources allocated must be recorded in the terms of reference and service agreement.

"We funded a socio-economic analysis in the 18 villages, which was carried out by the local project manager. It is on the basis of this document and successive developments that the situation analyses are carried out."
Amitié France Madagascar

GROUP OF BENEFICIARIES
AFSOC (CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC)

CHAPTER 3

FINALISING THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

- ANALYSING THE COLLECTED DATA
- DEFINING THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY
- FORMALISING THE BASICS OF THE PROJECT

At the end of a field mission, a significant amount of data may have been collected. The main difficulty then is to sort through and cross-check the information so you can draw lessons and recommendations from it. A quick review of the mission's terms of reference may help recall the initial objectives as well as the expected results of the situation analysis. The main challenge will be to convert the data into the first intervention paths or future learning.

Cross-referencing information

> *"You have to be careful to disentangle the real needs and priorities of the populations properly."*
> **Village Samaane**

The potential project priority areas are to be found at the convergence of observed needs, expressed requests and available resources. It follows that the data collected during the situation analysis must be analysed in relation to these three pillars. The risk is to start with an unbalanced intervention strategy with little chance of success.

The common mistake is to consider information collected from beneficiaries more than information about resources, or to focus on your own observations or those of a third party. If in doubt, it is better to try to obtain additional information on the missing subject matter.

- By **needs,** we mean the problems identified by external individuals or organisations, in this case the people undertaking the situation analysis
- **Requests** are the expectations expressed by the population or an organisation internally, i.e. the beneficiaries or partners
- **Resources** include all the goods, services, organisations, human resources, etc. mobilised to carry out the action.

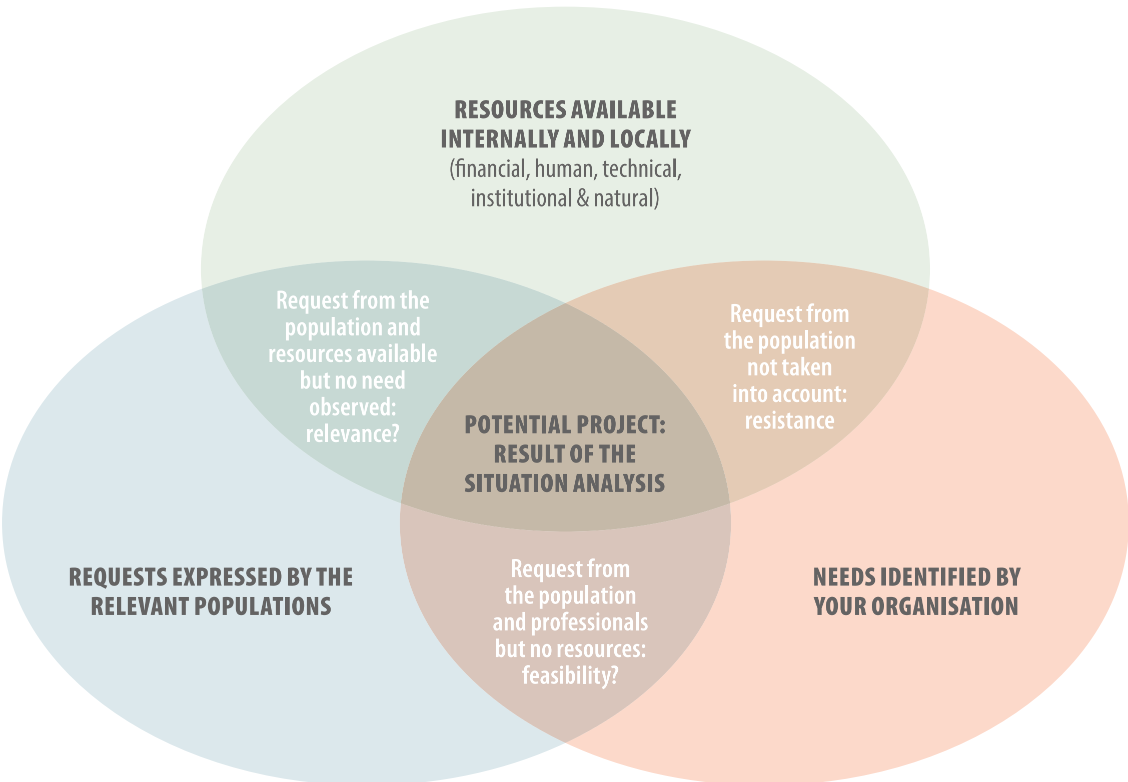
Converting data into an intervention strategy

Several priority areas of intervention or "initial situations" responding to the "needs-demand-resources" trio may emerge from the analysis of the collected data. It is necessary, therefore, to decide between them in agreement with the various key players involved. The following approach can be adopted:

1. **Identify the different intervention strategies,**
2. **Analyse the feasibility of each strategy,**
3. **Validate the strategy.** It is important that these steps are carried out collectively, if possible directly involving the local partner and / or the beneficiaries.

Converting the situation analysis into learning

Whether for internal reasons (lack of human, financial and material resources, available skills, etc.) or external reasons (the partnership is too fragile, a lack of support from local authorities, a lack of support from the populations, risk of conflict, etc.), **data analysis may lead to the initial project idea being abandoned.**
However, all the work is not wasted! If the data is well structured, dated and made available to other development key players, it can in turn enrich the database of resource documents. If it is easily searchable, it may serve as a basis for work or research for other project holders who want to intervene in the same field and / or same locality.



The same finding regarding a starting situation may lead to proposals for different intervention strategies, which are difficult to handle simultaneously.

Identifying possible areas of intervention

FINDING RESULTING FROM ANALYSING THE DATA

Producers cannot sell all their fresh produce at local markets.

RELATED ISSUES (causes and consequences)

- Part of the harvest goes unrewarded
- There are no means to preserve fresh produce
- Producers have low profitability from their business

AXES OF INTERVENTION IDENTIFIED

1. Improving the existing marketing channel in order to expand the sales area
2. Developing a complementary processing business to reduce post-harvest losses

Analysing the feasibility

The strategy that appears the most interesting in theory is not always the most relevant in practice or the most realistic. It is **with regard to the local context, skills and available resources or selected sector of intervention** that the feasibility of each can be studied. Several tools can be used for this, two of which are presented below. As a reminder, prioritising does not mean assigning more importance to one axis than another, but determining the precedence of one axis over another on the basis of precise criteria.

TOOL 1 : PRIORITISATION GRID

The criteria may be related to the main orientations of the non-profit association, local directives or the guidelines of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Alternatively, they may relate to the level of urgency of the situation, the legitimacy of the key players or the ethics of intervention. The key is to perform this step with rigour and transparency. The Association Voiles Sans Frontières (VSF) has grouped together a number of criteria that can be used to justify accepting or refusing a project in a tool called "a project cruncher".

VSF's "Project cruncher"

- → Viability (economic, social, environmental, cultural)
- → Capacity for long-term empowerment
- → Collective approach (in the interests of the community)
- → Coherent with local development policy
- → Agreement and / or support from competent authorities
- → Local partner identified
- → Availability of a project point of contact
- → Respect for local culture
- → Coherent with general and specific objectives of the association
- → In line with available resources and / or resources mobilised in the future

The axes of intervention are then evaluated against these criteria using a simplified rating system: Strong (F), Medium (M) and Weak (f). Other rating systems may be used. The axis presenting the strongest evaluation becomes the priority.

	AXES OF INTERVENTION	
PRIORITISATION CRITERION	IMPROVE THE EXISTING MARKETING CIRCUIT	DEVELOP A COMPLEMENTARY PROCESSING ACTIVITY
1. Coherent with local development policy	Strong	Average
2. Empowerment capacity in the long term	Average	Average
3. Coherent with the objectives of the non-profit association	Weak	Weak

EXAMPLE OF USE OF THE PRIORITISATION GRID FOR THE IDENTIFIED AXES

Tools 2 : SWPO grid

A SWPO (Success – Weaknesses – Potentials – Obstacles) or SWOT grid (Strengths – Weaknesses –Opportunities – Threats) can be used to provide an additional level of analysis.

AXIS 1: To improve the existing marketing channel in order to expand the sales area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Young people are available to provide a collection and distribution service for agricultural products	• Cost of investing in a collection truck
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Unmet urban demand for agricultural products	• Major agricultural project in progress to supply urban households (competition)

AXIS 2: To develop a complementary processing business to reduce post-harvest losses

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Land available to set up the unit • Empirical processing know-how	• Lack of training in entrepreneurial management methods
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Training centre for food processing, hygiene and safety nearby et la sécurité à proximité • Consumer awareness about local food	• Price competitiveness of processed products already on the market

SELECTED AXIS › Developing a complementary processing business by involving young people

OECD EVALUATION CRITERIA

RELEVANCE
Is the strategy relevant to the objectives pursued?

COHERENCE
Is the intervention strategy in line with national policy and legislation, and with the strategy of other stakeholders?

EFFECTIVENESS
Will the resources that can be mobilised produce results?

EFFICIENCY
Are the resources to be implemented acceptable in relation to the expected results?

SUSTAINABILITY
Will the project be sustainable, and under what conditions?

IMPACT
What direct and indirect, positive and negative effects can be predicted (economic, technical, political, socio-cultural, etc.)?

Validating the chosen strategy

The situation analysis is also called an ex-ante evaluation. The evaluation tools can be used to assess the feasibility of the selected strategy. All of these specific criteria – such as the quality of the partnership, including cross-cutting themes, etc. – may be added to the six standard criteria of the OECD Development Assistance Committee presented below. These same criteria can be employed at each stage of the project life cycle to assess the development action. It may make more sense to study an alternative strategy or resume the data analysis to identify other courses of action if the strategy does not respond positively to all of these criteria. **It is better to take the time to properly validate the project idea than to launch an initiative that could be the source of difficulties in the future.**

▶ DON'T FORGET › **It is also important to provide details about the reasons that may have led to a project idea being abandoned and to make sure they are accessible. In addition to enhancing the history of the projects, this allows other key players to avoid repeating exactly the same work; instead, they can use it as a basis for possibly updating or even implementing it. Some obstacles may indeed have disappeared and other criteria come into consideration.**

The entire situation analysis process (the analysis itself, the findings and recommendations) must as far as possible (taking account of language barriers and support) be recorded in writing and submitted to everyone who contributed to it, with the partners and beneficiaries the main priorities.

The report on the situation analysis

The report is the most common format, and is generally structured around the following:

- → Context
- → Situation analysis approach
- → Criteria for choosing priorities and selected priorities
- → Prospects for action

The document is designed to:

- → Record in writing the work carried out during the mission: the people met, objectives and results
- → Provide an overall view of the activities carried out and facilitate subsequent decision-making
- → Serve as a record that can be handed to other members and/or submitted to technical or financial partners

"On returning, the report on the exploratory mission includes a situation analysis section – also known as the 'state of play' – which is matched with another section, called 'courses of action'. This situation analysis is submitted to the partners for approval. The development stage of the project can then begin."
COBIAC


PROJETS SOLIDAIRES

Compte-rendu de la mission au Burkina Faso
(du 26 octobre au 10 novembre 2012)

Sommaire

1. Introduction 1
2. Compte-rendu des rencontres faites à Banfora 3
3. Compte-rendu des autres rencontres 10
4. Synthèse des projets potentiels 14
5. Conclusions 16
6. Annexes 17

Objectif de la mission : Identifier des partenaires de Banfora et des projets potentiels auxquels apporter notre soutien.

Carine SZTARK (Secrétaire) et Christian CABRIT (Président)
Projets Solidaires

Report on a mission undertaken by the Projets Solidaires non-profit association. The aim of the mission, the points addressed and the dates of completion are stated on the first page.

▶ USEFUL INFO › **An initial situation analysis is often requested to justify the identification of a project, in the case of a funding request for example. In this sense, the summary situation analysis report forms a very pertinent appendix to attach to a file. The most useful information can be extracted and included in the body of the file.**

Once this stage has been completed, the design tools – such as the problem tree, solution tree, logical framework and provisional budget – can be used to take over and help formulate the future project. The objectives, expected results and corresponding activities will be defined at this stage.

Special attention should be given to formulating the project's objectives in order to avoid contradicting or mis-using the results of the situation analysis.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS STAGE ›
See Guide #1 *Concevoir une demande de financement*.

Pitfalls to be avoided

- → Starting a project without verifying the reality of a request made
- → Starting a project based exclusively on observations external to the beneficiaries
- → Setting up a project without looking at what has already been done or already exists in the region
- → Creating a tool to find out about the requests by targeting a theme in advance
- → Failing to report the results of the situation analysis to the public and partners
- → Setting up a collaborative situation analysis process and not taking any further action (positive or negative)

APPENDICES

1 : THE COMPONENTS OF THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

2 : NGO PROFILE ANALYSIS

3 : ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL CONTEXT

4 : ADDITIONAL THEMATIC RESOURCES

KEYS QUESTIONS

History of the country and area studied

General data

- System of production and economic activities
- Geographical and socio-cultural data
- Transport arteries and areas of concentration
- State of environmental resources
- Heritage management and promotion

Economic situation

- Identification of actors and their strategies
- Identification of legal, illegal, formal and informal businesses
- Existence of surplus and lean seasons
- Household solvency and savings capacity
- Manpower resources
- Business investment capacity
- Community resources (taxation, heritage, etc.)

Socio-cultural organisation

- Characterisation of types of power organisation (economic, political, social, cultural, religious, etc.)
- Means of access to power
- Current power relations
- Conflict analysis

Resources and potential

- The ability to undertake, design and lead a process of change
- Coherence between the action and the political and legislative framework
- Possibility of partnership potential in the North and South
- Existence of support organisations
- Existence of a collective identity
- Economy or craft industry fabric
- Infrastructure and equipment

Internal and external constraints

- Human resources available and skills' level
- Access to the financial circuit, timescales for financial transfers
- Inflation
- Communication problems
- Political stability of the area and its environment

DETAILED GUIDELINES

Information derived from a situation analysis undertaken by Humanité & Inclusion (HI – formerly Handicap International) in Cambodia in 2008.

INFORMATION FOR OUTLINING A NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION'S LEVEL OF MATURITY:

Structural aspects
- Ministry approval
- Registration
- Existence of a board of directors
- Existence of a management committee

System of organisation
- Action plan
- Organisational chart
- Information channel
- Decision-making circuit
- Project management

Internal capacities
- General management
- Methodology
- Administration
- Accounting
- IT
- Languages
- Project Management
- Reporting system
- Fundraising
- Marketing

External capacities
- Investment in networks
- Partners
- Relationships & network
- Other

Financial resources
- Donors
- Budget
- Own funds

Ressources matérielles
Computers, vehicles, photocopiers, telephones/fax/email, office ownership, etc.

Human resources
Permanent staff, charity workers, number of qualified individuals

THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE COMPARED TO OTHER CONCEPTS SUCH AS:

Legitimacy
- Representativeness: alignment between members and the social environment
- Collaboration with local authorities
- Type of contact with other non-profit associations

Trust
- Information flow
- Acceptance among members
- Recognised know-how
- Previous results
- Reputation of the non-profit association and its members

Motivation & availability
- Attendance rates at meetings organised by the project
- Non-profit initiatives

Durability
- Dynamism
- Own financial resources

Decision-making process
- Decision-making methods
- Availability and transmission of information
- Use of the participatory approach
- Conflict management

Technical capacities
- Identification capacity
- Prioritisation capacity
- Self-assessment capacity
- Action plan
- Estimated budget, account keeping, human resource management
- Negotiating: ability to defend and canvass a project

KEY QUESTIONS

based on a document produced by Centraider

TYPE OF CONTEXT	QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF
POLITICAL & INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT	• What is the political situation in the country and area of intervention? Are there reforms in progress? • What it the political history of the country? • Are there any upcoming milestones (national or local elections)? • How is foreign intervention in the area perceived and interventions by non-profit associations in particular? • What is the strategy defined in the sector of intervention? • What institutional actors are present? What are the competent institutions and benchmark organisations, municipal development plans and intervention programmes? • Is the project registered in the development plans of the municipality and the state?
ECONOMIC CONTEXT	• What is the country's economic level? And the area of intervention's (average salary)? What is the social class and what are the economic disparities? • And the population's purchasing power? Are the beneficiaries able to bear the financial costs of the service provided? Or are they able to purchase new foodstuffs produced at the defined price? • What local resources are available? • What are the main sources of income? • What informal businesses are there in the area of intervention? • What legislation is in place for business activities? • Does the project contribute to developing local employment?
ENVIRONMENTAL & GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT	• What natural resources are available? • What are the different agro-climatic and agro-ecological zones? • Is the environment an opportunity or a constraint in terms of deploying your project? Why?
SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT	• What is the local social organisation (local power / traditional power)? • What "ethnic groups" are represented? How do they relate to each other? • What religions are found in the area? • What is the standard of living, schooling rate, access to health, etc.?
CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT	• Analysis of past experiences as well as possible earlier failures • Other existing initiatives and organisations working in the same area of expertise or a complementary area (possible synergies) • Collection of specific data according to themes (health, education, agriculture, access to water, etc.).

WHAT DATA SHOULD BE COLLECTED?

LOCAL CONTEXT	FIELD OF INTERVENTION (WATER, HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, ETC.)	DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE	PRACTICAL INFORMATION
• News • Political organisation • History, demography, geography • Culture, religions	• Sector policy (international, national and local) • Technical studies carried out • Advances in the sector	• Local development key players • Projects already carried out in the same field of intervention as yours	• Costs and availability of resources • Means of communication • Taxation, local tax

WHO SHOULD YOU COLLECT DATA FROM?

Primary and secondary sources of information

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS	RESOURCE PERSONS
• Administration • Local authorities • Universities, hospitals • Research centres	• Private institutions (chambers of trade, unions, religious organisations) • Professional or thematic networks • Other NGOs on the ground	• Local specialist in the subject • Voluntary workers on site • People in France with field experience • Researchers

The format of a general guide means it is impossible to go into the details of each theme and project. Accordingly, we suggest you consult a handful of thematic resources available online from other organisations – as well as in part in the media library of the Agence des Micro Projets – so you can deepen your knowledge of the subject.

HEALTH

Humatem

Humatem has been committed to developing the practices of key players in health and international solidarity in the area of support for medical equipment since 1999. It coordinates donations of medical equipment between health actors and international solidarity actors involved in support projects to provide equipment for health facilities via a bank of medical devices. The application file is in itself a very good aid for starting the situation analysis of a health organisation. Humatem provides a resource centre referencing a number of methodological tools including a *Méthode de diagnostic pour les pro jets d'appui à l'équipement médical des structures de santé des pays en développement.*

www.humatem.org

WATER AND SANITATION

Programme Solidarité Eau

The Solidarité-Eau (pS-Eau) programme is a French multi-actor network that is committed to guaranteeing access to water and sanitation for everyone, and to the sustainable management of water resources (SDG 6) in developing countries. The association prioritises support for local actors, enabling exchanges and organising consultations between key players in decentralised and non-governmental cooperation for over 30 years. It makes reference publications in the field available to everyone, including a guide analysing requests from users and future users of water and sanitation services.

www.pseau.org/fr/nos-publications-reference

Toilettes du Monde

Toilettes du Monde is a non-profit association (constituted in accordance with the French law of 1901) that aims to promote, design and implement sustainable sanitation in order to safeguard human health and preserve the environment and natural resources. It makes many resource documents available, including a Guide d'Accompagnement participatif sur la Précarité Sanitaire en France, produced with the Terr'eau association, which provides methodological tools that can also be used in the context of international situation analyses.

www.toilettesdumonde.org

EDUCATION

UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund is an agency of the United Nations Organisation dedicated to improving and promoting the condition of children. UNICEF's website includes a range of publications and resources on the situation and rights of children around the world.

www.unicef.org/fr/recherche-et-rapports

Global Partnership for Education

The GPE brings together developing countries, donors, international organisations, civil society, teachers' bodies, the private sector and foundations. It aims to strengthen the education systems in developing countries in order to significantly increase the number of school children engaged in effective learning. Numerous resource documents classified by country are available online.

www.globalpartnership.org/fr/data-and-results

SOCIAL & CHILDHOOD

Samu Social International

Samu Social International is a non-profit association created in 1998 that focuses on excluded populations. Its resource centre includes several documents on interventions with street children and young people.

www.samu-social-international.com/site/centre-de-ressources

AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK

For a more advanced study tool, see the methodology of "agrarian situation analysis" and participatory situation analyses.

Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)

CIRAD is the French agricultural research and international cooperation body for the sustainable development of tropical and Mediterranean regions. Its online database provides documents and publications on agricultural innovation and development.

www.cirad.fr/publications-ressources

Inter-réseaux développement rural

Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural is a non-profit association that brings together a community of individuals and organisations that exchange information about the profession of actor or "advisor" in agricultural and rural development in Africa. Their website offers various resources on the challenges of rural development for agriculture and livestock.

www.inter-reseaux.org

LEGAL NOTICES Guide méthodologique 06

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SUMMARY

Although numerous publications cover the project cycle, very few focus on the situation analysis. There is even less documentation on this phase for micro-projects and small French international solidarity non-profits (which are mostly run on a voluntary basis), where the funding of human resources and travel to project sites is often a major concern.

The situation analysis is a key stage in the progression from a simple idea to a genuine pre-project, and its usefulness is no longer in question. The practices employed by non-profit associations, which are heterogeneous and empirical, reflect the concern for the quality of partnership relations, the inter-cultural dimension and the integration of stakeholders. The benefits for a future project in terms of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability justify the time and resources devoted to this phase.

Through this document, the Agence des Micro Projets aims to provide some methodological information to organisations that are keen to embark on an international solidarity micro-project. Based on testimonials from non-profit associations about their practices and the compilation of existing resources, this guide is designed to identify the key questions to ask when conducting a situation analysis, and thereby lay the foundations for a potential future project.

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