Project Cycle Design and Quality Enhancement WFWO’s Operation Policy Guide
WHAT IS A PROJECT CYCLE?

1. Introduction

A project is “a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time-period and with a defined budget”. In reality, this simple definition covers an enormous variety of project types, in terms of size, aims, focus and methods. Nevertheless, there are many basic similarities.

The ‘project cycle’ is a way of viewing the main elements that projects have in common, and how they relate to each other in sequence. The precise formulation of the cycle and its phases varies from one agency to another, but the basic components are shown in Figure 1 below.

The various stages from country programming to project completion and post evaluation are known collectively as WFWO’s project cycle. Given the number of poor countries, WFWO’s project cycle activities are generally very active and painstaking, starting since the establishment of the resource mobilizations team and Task Force to develop with notably country resource allocations and core operational lending for the funding cycle. The project cycle activities are however often carried out expeditiously and with the strictest professionalism on the part of the WFWO or its financial partners. Actual project investment cycle activities are expedited in active participatory approach with all sections of the project beneficiaries.

The documents produced under the project cycle are disclosed according to specific disclosure requirements and criteria for confidentiality under the WFWO’s Information Disclosure Policy.

The definitions of the terms commonly used in the WFWO project cycle operations have enhanced the understanding of the WFWO’s mission and commitment to project results and impacts in the field. Examples of definitions of terms and concepts which are now well appropriated by WFWO beneficiary countries, and partners include: ownership, country performance indicators, the human development indicators, the eight millennium development goals, result-based or performance based country allocations, fragile states, good governance, development effectiveness etc.

The WFWO and its financial partners provide grant assistance to low and middle-income in developing countries to support development and change to contribute to the Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The development projects are implemented by soliciting countries or selected country, including NGO, CBO ect, following certain rules and procedures to guarantee that the funds reaches its intended target and the beneficiaries country, communities, NGO.

The WFWO main assistance focused for co-financing projects and provide grants that will effectively contribute to the economic and social development of the country concerned and have the strongest poverty reduction impact in conformity with the country and WFWO strategies, to contribute to the implementation of the Eight Millennium Developments Goals (MDGs).

2. The Project Cycle aims

The main aims of the WFWO project cycle guide is to contribute to eight MDGs objectives to low and middle-income countries to support development and change. Development projects are implemented by beneficiaries countries, NGO, CBO or local community, following certain rules and procedures to guarantee that the funds provided and approved by the WFWO’s Board Directors and Resource Mobilizations Team and its financial partners reaches its intended target.
The projects represent the backbone of WFWO’s mission and objectives, is to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) achievement.

Typically the project cycle has a number of distinct components, beginning with conceptualization, a feasibility or cost-benefit analysis, proposal development and funding, project start-up and baseline procedures.

Project Design in the context of Project Cycle Design Management Procedures Guidelines (PCDMPG), surveys, implementation, periodic reporting and evaluations, and close-out or development of a subsequent phase. The main phases of the project cycle design below in Figure 1.

3. The principal phases of the project cycle

The most important point in the project cycle is the design phase, and this aspect of the project cycle will be treated in the most depth in this course. It is at this initial juncture that the direction, objectives, tactics and scope of the project in relation to WFWO’s global development issue priorities are defined.

The phases in the project cycle are progressive – each phase needs to be completed for the next one to be tackled with success. The project cycle draws heavily on monitoring and evaluation to learn from existing projects, and build this experience into the design of future programs and projects. Experience has shown that too many decisions concerning projects have been taken without sufficient consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders, and without the necessary information. The key to good project cycle management is to ensure that the stakeholders have a voice in project decisions, and that project decisions are based on relevant and sufficient information.

The PCMD involving as broad a range of potential stakeholders and expected beneficiaries as possible in the project design phase is essential to ensure that the final project document is an accurate reflection of reality, a feasible project, and has the potential to become an effective conservation intervention.

The PCDMPG obliges practitioners in project design to focus of the real needs of the beneficiaries by requiring a detailed assessment of the existing situation, and by applying the logical framework method. From the outset, aspects assuring sustainability and critical assumptions are incorporated into the project design.

PCDMPG is designed to ensure relevance, feasibility and sustainability. The PCDMPG system makes the project concept and context clear and visible, and thus enables better monitoring and evaluation. At each stage in the project cycle, these issues are examined, revised as necessary, and feedback is provided to improve project implementation. The monitoring, reporting, and evaluation components of the project cycle are essential for effective implementation.
The Project Cycle  Strategy Priority

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<tr>
<th>Guidelines for Project Cycle</th>
<th>Strategy Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Does the project contribute towards the achievement of the higher-level program goals, namely WFWO’s Global Development Priorities MDGs and the WFWO Mission? Sustainability of Results and Impact</td>
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<td>2. To what extent will the project produce lasting conservation results? How does the project ensure that the conservation impacts continue beyond the period of intervention?</td>
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<td>3. Who are the beneficiaries and stakeholders? To what extent will they be involved in project design and implementation? What are the expected impacts of the project on intended beneficiaries? Design</td>
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<td>4. Have the overall project goal and the proposed targets and outputs been clearly defined?</td>
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<td>5. Have underlying assumptions and external factors that may affect progress been identified? Are these critical assumptions well thought out?</td>
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<td>6. Have adequate costs for monitoring and evaluation been included in the budget? Feasibility</td>
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<td>7. What are the expected costs of the project, both through implementation as well as potential impact on stakeholders? What are the expected benefits of the project, local regional or global? Will the expected benefits outweigh the foreseeable costs?</td>
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<td>8. To what extent does WFWO/OT and its partners have the capacity to implement the project? Are proper skills available? Is the necessary administrative, technical and supervisory support in place?</td>
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<td>9. Is the political and socio-economic environment an enabling one? Conclusion</td>
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<td>10. What is the probability of success?</td>
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<td>11. Should WFWO/RMT endorse this concept, agree to seek funding for it, and develop it into a full project proposal?</td>
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<td>12. Once the project concept is approved by all parties the OT / Resource Mobilizations Team (RMT) can start, and the project formulation phase can begin in earnest.</td>
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4. Project Cycle Phases Operations

The WFWO’s project operations cycle is a logical flow that stimulates people to share the same perceptions, speak the same language and use the same tools and formats. Typically, the project cycle comprises 6 or more standard project phases or activities, arranged in a logical sequence to accomplish a project’s goals or objectives.

Phase 1 Policy setting
Phase 2 Project Identification
Phase 3 Appraisal
Phase 4 Formulation/planning
Phase 5 Contracting/ commitment
Phase 6 Implementation, monitoring & midterm evaluation
Phase 7 Final evaluation

These phases make up the project life cycle process. For each phase, the required technical outputs, activities and expert consultants or partner organizations involved of the project.

The WFWO, have developed their own operation policy of the project cycles design with their own specific phases, but in general they more or less follow the same standard of international procedures.
The WFWO project cycle design is divided into several distinct phases or stages. Each stage is marked by a number of deliverables or phase outputs. Usually one phase consists of several sub-phases or activities. The stages are progressive – each stage should have ‘phase exits’ or completion points that allow the next stage to be tackled with success. Common terminology is used to describe a project cycle. For example: programming, identification, formulation, financing and evaluation; (words used to describe various stages may differ slightly but the way of thinking remains the same). A technical review should be carried out at the end of each phase, to review if all the phase outputs have been achieved. This way, a project manager can monitor the application of PCDMPG in a sequential manner.

5. Technical Review of the project life cycle

6. Policy Operation Procedures Setting (POPS)

The WFWO’s PPS contains detailed guidelines, and format to guide strategic planning for project cycle design. **Phase 1. The WFWO** project cycle is policy setting and this is the establishment of the development vision guiding partners including the beneficiary country (BC) local authority (LA), NGO, CBO and the Local community (LC), the policy setting includes the strategic planning process whereby the long term direction of the Local partners is established to ensures that all systems and budgets support that strategic direction. The strategic plan therefore is considered a long-term plan and is often inspired by the country for project cycle delivery, and also by the operations policy framework of the WFWO and CLA) strategy plan, and national poverty reduction goals. Once the strategic plan is adopted, it becomes the policy guideline or strategic framework of a Local Community (LC) and the strategic goals and objectives are then implemented in a systematic, incremental manner.
7. Integrated Planning Approach

Integration here refers to consistency and close relationship between the various plans that constitute local authority planning; i.e. integration between strategic structure plans, corporate strategic plans.

This type of planning provides a strategic framework for democratic local governance, setting out the needs, vision, priorities goals and strategies for 1 to 4 years. This plan is revised annually, and provides guidelines for local community (LC) participation.

- Strategic Planning: from 1 to 4 years rolling plan
- Operation Planning: This is the short-term plan e.g. annual budget or project plan.

8. Salient Considerations in Integrated Planning for the project result

Capacity building

The WFWO internal issues of capacity building and project management are equally important to support the implementation of integrated development plans, because, strategic planning requires strong institutional capacity. The CLA or local Community (LC) must find ways to support their teams to learn the skills of strategic planning and how to implement strategic plans. They must also address operational and human resource weaknesses and threats so that the strategic plans can become a reality. Investing in organizational development programs is therefore necessary to sustain project operations.

9. Local Community/Stakeholder Participation

The WFWO straighten its assistance in planning and implementing project cycle design related to the participation to CLA/LC, in order to involve the local communities, stakeholders, beneficiaries, benefactors, NGO, CBO, private sector; while looking out for the interests or concerns of special groups such as the poor, women headed households, the marginalized and vulnerable requiring affirmative action, focused on the Eight Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs). Throughout the planning cycle of the CLA/LC, community participation is a crucial ingredient. Community participation harnesses the ideas and resources from the community. It also engenders ownership of the plans and projects, thus guaranteeing sustainability of the planned projects and programs. Throughout these plans local communities participation is assured through stakeholder workshops and consultations.

Local community participation should be institutionalized through the CLA Act regulations, and promoted though local population advisory groups or community consultative groups, public fora, workshops and seminars, neighbor-hood groups such as NGO, CBO etc.

Joint ventures participation agreement with local communities, NGO, CBO, and private sector partnerships should be encouraged all parties involved in the project.

The participatory nature of strategic structure planning encourages stakeholder participation so that it is as inclusive as possible of all the groups, individuals, community, and entities within the CLA area of jurisdiction. This ensures that good practices are observed at stage 1 of ‘Policy Setting’. Projects emanating from such a process are more likely to be sustained because all stakeholders have a common interest for the achievement of the project target.
10. Strategic Framework and Planning

The WFWO/OT Strategic planning may only succeed if it has obvious support of the CLA/CL and all actors involved in the project. The lack of high level support creates a strategic plan with a very short life span. The experiences learned have shown that projects supported by a strategic planning framework have a considerably higher success rate.

- Strategic planning is a best practice
- Today's vision becomes tomorrow's reality
- Provides a realistic workable framework for results
- Responds best to population interests
- Promotes accountability
- Strategic planning requires strong advocates
- Enhances efficiency, effectiveness & good decision-maker

The WFWO/OT has put a substantial effort into strategic planning, and this has been particularly relevant with the development of the Target Driven Programs, focusing on MDGs.

The action strategy planning below shown how the WFWO/OT activities starting at the project level contribute to successively higher layers of the WFWO/OT planning hierarchy, and ultimately its mission to contribute to the global development issues (MDGs targets).

11. Project Identification

The WFWO works in close cooperation with its financial partners and country local authority, based community organization (CBO), non-governmental organization (NGO) and other stakeholders to determine how financial and other assistance can be designed to have the largest impact. After the review of the analytical work is conducted, by parties involved, the country local authority produce strategies and priorities for reducing poverty and improving living standards. As per the Poverty reduction and the country and the WFWO strategies and procedures guidelines.
The WFWO works in close consultation with solicitant country, NGO, CBO and local community to define a medium-term to long-term development strategy and operational program in a document called country strategy paper report (CSPR), formerly Economic Prospects and Country Programming (ECPC) papers. The CSPR or CSPAR taking into consideration an exigency for performance and results, is aligned to the country's own development plan and poverty reduction goals, and its preparation or planning cycle.

In preparation for a new CSPR, the WFWO OT conducts multidisciplinary economic analysis and studies in close consultation with the government and other stakeholders including financial partners, civil society (CS), nongovernment organizations (NGO), community base organization (CBO) private sector, as well as the country’s other development partners in a participatory approach. The CSP is thus a general macro-economic study of the major economic, fiscal and financial features of the country; evaluating its past performance, economic trends and development prospects. In the light of the overall sectoral analysis, priority sectors and sub-sectors likely to benefit from WFWO and its financial partners financing are outlined as per terms and conditions. This therefore is a major instrument of WFWO policy dialogue with the developing countries.

The review of the of CSPs proposal are shared and reviewed with in-country stakeholders during its development and preparation. This also affords an opportunity for aid coordination and synergic partnership with other development partners involved in the project.

The identified projects should be focusing on the Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), can range across the economic and social spectrum from infrastructure, to poverty education, to health. The WFWO and the SC/BC/LA, NGOs, CBO agree on an initial project concept and its beneficiaries, and the WFWO’s operation? Resource mobilizations teams and its financial partners outline the basic elements in a Project Concept Note. This document identifies proposed objectives, imminent risks, alternative scenarios, and a likely timetable for the project approval process, are generated during this phase. The Project Information Document contains useful public resources for tailoring bidding documents to the proposed project, and the publicly available Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet identifies key issues related to the WFWO’s safeguard policies for environmental and social issues for the sustainable development of the projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Official request from solicitant country or BC, NGO, CBO</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Summary of the project proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Project information concept</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Country assistance strategy paper or report</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Integrated safeguards data sheet of the project</td>
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12. Project Preparation

The beneficiary country (BC) local authority (LC) or NGO, CBO and its implementing are responsible for the project preparation phase, to conduct feasibility studies and prepare project designs project as per WFWO procedures and guidelines.

The beneficiary country or NGO, CBO contracts with consultants and other public sector companies for goods, works and services, if necessary, not only during this phase but also later in the project’s implementation phase. Beneficiaries and stakeholders are also consulted now to obtain their feedback and enlist their support for the project. Due to the amount of time, effort and resources involved, the full commitment of all actors to implement the project is vital.

The WFWO generally takes an advisory role and offers analysis and advice when requested, during this phase of the identification through its external expert consultants partners. The WFWO does assess the relevant capacity of the implementing agencies at this point, in order to reach agreement with the beneficiary country or CBO, NGO to facilitate the process of the arrangements for overall project management, such as the systems required for financial management, procurement, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation.
Earlier reviewed by WFWO Operation Team (OT), may have determined that a proposed project could have environmental or social impacts that are included under the project concept. If necessary, the beneficiary country or CBO, NGO needs to prepare an Environmental Assessment Report that analyzes the planned project's likely environmental impact and describes steps to mitigate possible harm. In the event of major environmental issues in a country related to the Environmental Action Plan, the beneficiary's country or CBO, NGO describes the problems, identifies the main causes, and formulates policies and concrete actions to deal with them. From a social point of view, various studies aimed at analyzing a project's potentially adverse effects on the health, education, poverty, environment issue, productive resources, economies, and cultures of indigenous peoples may be undertaken. An Indigenous Peoples Plan identifies the BC's, LA planned interventions in indigenous areas that may be needed, with the objective of avoiding or lessening potential negative impacts on the people. These plans are integrated into the design of the project procedures and guidelines of the Safeguard Policies.

This first phase of the preparation/identification of the project with WFWO's interest to co-finance the project or program, needs the review of all collection of information and data which will help the WFWO's OT and its Experts to appraise the project. A preparation mission to a country is multi-disciplinary and usually led by an Expert from a Sector of the WFWO OT. During the preparation mission WFWO Experts review the project in line with the country's CSP, obtain existing documentation such as feasibility studies on the project, and cross-check information with the authorities of the country.

The WFWO usually hires expert consultants to work with government counterpart OT team to undertake the project's feasibility study. The Expert consultants work closely with the various stakeholders including the government, civil society, project beneficiaries, and other development agencies working in those sectors. WFWO OT closely monitors the consultants' work. The draft final report is reviewed at a tripartite meeting attended by representatives of the government, WFWO, and the consultants. During this process, the WFWO with the government agrees on an executing agency for the project or program.

13. Project Appraisal

Appraisal gives stakeholders an opportunity to review the project design in detail and resolve any outstanding questions. The beneficiary country or CBO, NGO and the WFWO review the work done during the identification and preparation phases and confirm the expected project outcomes, intended beneficiaries and evaluation tools for monitoring progress. Agreement is reached on the viability of all aspects of the project at this time. The WFWO (OT) team confirms that all aspects of the project are consistent with all WFWO operations requirements and that the beneficiary country or CBO, NGO has institutional arrangements in place to implement the project efficiently. All parties agree on a project timetable and on public disclosure of key documents and identify any unfinished business required for final WFWO approval. The final steps are assessment of the project's readiness for implementation and agreement on conditions for effectiveness (agreed upon actions prior to implementation). The Project Information Document is updated and released when the project is approved for funding.

14. Project Co-Financing Negotiation

After the review by the Resource Mobilizations Team and TRC Committee has completed its work and recommended the project or program for Board approval, a draft project proposal is submitted to all parties involved including the soliciting Country for review.

Feedback is collected, and the soliciting country is then called for negotiation with WFWO. During negotiations, agreement should be reached or reconfirmed on the following: a) Objectives and description of the project, studies or programs; b) amount in foreign and local costs of the project and the financing plan; c) a tentative list of goods and services to be procured; d) the schedule of execution and expenditure;
e) the disbursement methods selected by the beneficiary country; f) the tentative schedule of disbursements including the precise information on the account numbers and correspondence banks; g) the procurement methods and dates of bidding announcements; h) the precise information on the executing agency and the project implementation unit; i) proposed realistic date for co-financing agreement signature and deadlines for first and last disbursements; j) for co-financed projects, respective financing plans, cross-effectiveness and other miscellaneous information.

15. Project Approval

Upon the WFWO’s project details are negotiated and accepted by the country beneficiary or CBO, NGO, the WFWO project OT team prepares the Project Appraisal Document (for investment lending) or the Program Document (for development policy lending), along with other financial and legal agreement documents, for submission to the WFWOs Board of Executive Directors for consideration and approval. When funding approval is obtained, conditions for effectiveness are met, and the legal documents are accepted and signed, the implementation phase begins the WFWO will confirm the grant assistance to implement the project.

16. Board Directors Approval

After negotiations with the beneficiary country, related to the co-financing project proposal is submitted to WFWO’s Board of Directors for approval. This report is known as the Board Resolution and Executive President recommendations, after Board approval, along with the associated legal agreements will be posted on website.

The procedure will take effect once certain conditions agreed are met. This is also known as loan or grant effectiveness. In addition to “other conditions” which may be fulfilled later, the following are some of the standard conditions said to be precedent to first disbursements: a) designate authorized signatories for the grant resources; b) present a legal opinion; c) submit the investment schedule; d) present a list of goods and services to be procured; e) open and maintain a special project account; f) establish a project implementation unit; g) any other condition agreed during negotiation as necessary to precede first disbursement.

Generally, these conditions are limited to the legal requirements as mentioned above, as well as cross-effectiveness of co-financing, and execution of subsidiary agreements. The requirements and deadlines for grant effectiveness are stipulated in the grant agreement.

WFWO’s Legal Counsel and Project Executive Coordinating Officer review if the conditions are met, after which the funding is formally declared effective. Normally, the legal documents allow 90 days for the grant agreement to become effective.

17. Project Implementation

The beneficiary country or NGO, CBO implements the development project with funds from the WFWO’s Resource Mobilizations Team (RMT) and its financial partners. With technical assistance and support from the WFWO’s OT, the implementing beneficiary country or CBO, NGO or the executive agency prepares the specifications for the project and carries out all procurement of goods, works and services needed, as well as any environmental and social impact mitigation set out in agreed upon plans. The RMT and procurement specialists of the WFWO’s OT team ensure that adequate fiduciary controls on the use of project funds are in place. All components at this phase are ready, but project delays and unexpected events can sometimes prompt the restructuring of project objectives.

Once underway, the implementing the beneficiary country or NGO, CBO, the executive agency reports regularly on project activities.
The beneficiary country NGO, CBO, and WFWO also join forces and prepare a mid-term review of project progress. In addition, the WFWO’s Annual Report on the Status of Projects in Execution, a brief summary of all WFWO-funded projects active at the end of each fiscal year, is available to the public and donors partners. As projects close during the fiscal year, they are removed from this report, since their individual Implementation Completion and Results Reports are publicly disclosed at that time.

The project's progress, outcomes and impact on beneficiaries are monitored by the beneficiary country or LA, LC, NGO, CBO, and the WFWO OT throughout the implementation phase to obtain data to evaluate and measure the ultimate effectiveness of the operation and the project in terms of results.

18. Project Completion

When a project is completed and closed at the end of the grant or co-financing disbursement period, a process that can take anywhere from 1-5 years, the WFWO and the beneficiary country or CBO, NGO document the results achieved; the problems encountered; the lessons learned; and the knowledge gained from carrying out the project.

The WFWO operations team compiles this information and data in an Implementation Completion and Results Report, using input from the implementing the beneficiary country or LA, LC, NGO, CBO the executive agency, co-financiers, and other partners/stakeholders. The report describes and evaluates final project outcomes. The final outcomes are then compared to expected results. The information gained during this exercise is also often used to determine what additional measures and capacity improvements are needed to sustain the benefits derived from the beneficiary country or CBO, NGO project. In addition, the WFWO External Evaluation Team assesses how well the entire operation complied with the WFWO's operations policies and accounts for the use of WFWO resources. The knowledge gained from this results measurement process is intended to benefit similar projects in the future.

19. External Evaluation Team (EET)

The WFWO’s External Evaluation Team assesses the performance of roughly one project, measuring outcomes against the original objectives, sustainability of results and institutional development impact. From time to time, EET also produces Impact Evaluation Reports to assess the economic worth of projects and the long-term effects on people and the environment against an explicit counter-factual.

Periodically, WFWO's External Evaluation Team (EET/OT) evaluates WFWO’s country strategy and assistance program for a country with a view to determining its relevance and the level of development effectiveness achieved in case of post evaluation of projects. The WFWO and its development partners has developed an enviable performance evaluation indicators and methodology under which the WFWOs, the country's and the executing expert group partner's performance are assessed and scored. The experience learned in the past on project cycle design, these country assistance program evaluations assess the development impact of WFWO assistance.

20. Project concept

The project concept will initially be elaborated as part of the COSOP formulation. This will establish the initial framework for project processing. For countries without a COSOP, the project concept will be derived from consultation with the BC, LA, LC, NGO, CBO, and relevant stakeholders, followed by the project design. A project life file will be initiated at the concept stage.
**Project cycle design and quality enhancement**

The detailed project cycle design will be reflected in a project design report (PCDR). The PCDR is conceived as a "main official and initial document". It will remain the main project document throughout the entire design process, retaining the same format throughout the process, although the content of relevant sections may be updated as the project design evolves through consultations with the BC, LA, LC, BGO, CBO and concerned partners.

The PCDR will cover:
- strategic context and rationale for WFWO's involvement, commitment and partnership
- poverty, social capital and targeting
- project description
- implementation and institutional arrangements
- project benefits, costs and financing
- project risks and sustainability
- innovative features, learning and knowledge management.

The improvements to the project quality, in the light of WFWO's policy and procedures guidelines based on a set of key success factors of the project cycle design and procedures.

**Design completion and quality assurance**

Once the PCDR has reached its design completion point, the final step in the process will following a satisfactory review of the final PCDR, the Executive President's Report and the draft agreement are finalized.

**Negotiation and approval**

Negotiations are undertaken between WFWO and the BC, LA, LC, NGO, CBO, using the design completion report as the basis for the financing agreement. WFWO EB then reviews and - if it so deems - approves the WFWO grant for the project.

Subsequent to Board approval, the financing agreement is signed between WFWO and the BC.