



**Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia
Vocational Education and Training Reform
Programme**



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**TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SENIOR STAFF OF THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS**

***PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT AS TOOLS FOR
QUALITY POLICYMAKING IN EDUCATION***

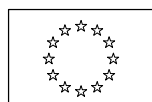
Module 1:

**Policymaking for TVET development.
Using EU programmes as policy tools**

08-10 of March, 2007

Trainer: Lucian CIOLAN

“Policy learning emphasizes not simply the involvement but rather the active engagement of national stakeholders in developing their own policy solutions, and is based on the understanding that there are no universally valid models that can simply be transferred or copied from one context to another. At the best there is a wealth of international, though context-specific, experience in dealing with similar policy issues that can be shared.”
(P.Grootings, S.Nielsen, 2005).



Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme - Phase II
An EU-funded project managed by the European Agency for Reconstruction

Introductory note

1. This training is part of a larger program, designed for senior staff in the Ministry of Education and Sports and relevant agencies, in the frame of the Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme - Phase II.
2. The overall programme is designed in five modules / four training stages, outlined in Annex , endorsed by MoES, but still subject to further adaptation, according to the needs of the beneficiary.
3. The training program is based on a needs assessment done in the perspective of some provisions of the Terms of Reference, orienting this specific activity:

Specific Objectives

- Build up the institutional capacity of the MoES, MoLESA and other national stakeholders to develop and implement a policy and strategy framework for vocational education and training based on partnership and ensuring the link between training provision and economic development.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and local actors to design and implement new vocational education and training programmes for young people and adults (HRD and curricula development)

Expected Results

General VET Policy and Strategy

- VET management manual for senior administrators produced (in both the Serbian and English languages) and disseminated.
4. The main aims of the first training module are:
 - a. to build understanding of participants of the systemic environment of educational policy in which development project functions, and
 - b. to investigate the ways to use the development projects as powerful policy tools to achieve national priorities for the development of TVET sector.
 5. The first training is designed for ~ 16 hours effective training, as presented in the following time schedule, and it employs an interactive methodology, aiming to create a collaborative environment for group work and reflection on the approached topics.
 6. This material is seen as a resource package for the first training, but also for further reference on the approached topics; this is why is build around the training schedule, but it brings also additional references and information.

Biographical note

Lucian CIOLAN is contracted under the Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme - Phase II, as short-term international expert to design and deliver, in cooperation with other specialists, the training program for senior staff in the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia.



Lucian Ciolan is a PhD in Education and he also holds a Master degree in Educational Management and Administration, both awarded by the University of Bucharest, Romania. Besides being a Senior Lecturer in Educational Policy and Educational Research in the above-mentioned university, Mr. Ciolan acted in the last years as independent consultant in the educational reform programs, especially in the Central and South-Eastern Europe.

His practical experience in educational policy includes the position of personal advisor to the Minister of Education and Research in Romania (2004-2005), but also intensive work in the Project Implementation Unit of the PHARE TVET programs in Romania, first as curriculum & educational policy specialist, then as training programs coordinator for VET teachers and managers (1999-2004; 2005-2006). Mr. Ciolan is also accredited trainer on *Policy paper writing to influence decision-making* from Local Government Initiative of the Open Society institute, Budapest.

The relevant experience in the region comes especially from the long-term cooperation with the European Training Foundation, mainly in the frame of the Teachers and Trainers Training Network in Western Balkans, established back in 2002, and for which Lucian Ciolan acted as consultant in different activities in Serbia, Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Montenegro.

Starting with the year 2003, Lucian Ciolan is a member in the European Commission *Focus Group on VET Teachers and Trainers*, in the frame of the Lisbon Agenda.

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TIMETABLE

Day 1, Thursday, 8th of March: Contextual framework for policymaking and projects development in education

TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 10.30	1. Policy process and policy development. The systemic environment for educational policy for TVET sector
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.30 – 13.00	2. The policy network. Movers and shakers in a change / development initiative
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 16.00	3. From policy cycle to projects cycle. Development projects as policy tools
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 18.00	4. Policy making and projects development in transition contexts. Lessons learned
19.00 –	Dinner

Day 2, Friday, 9th of March: TVET projects as policy tools. Introduction to project management

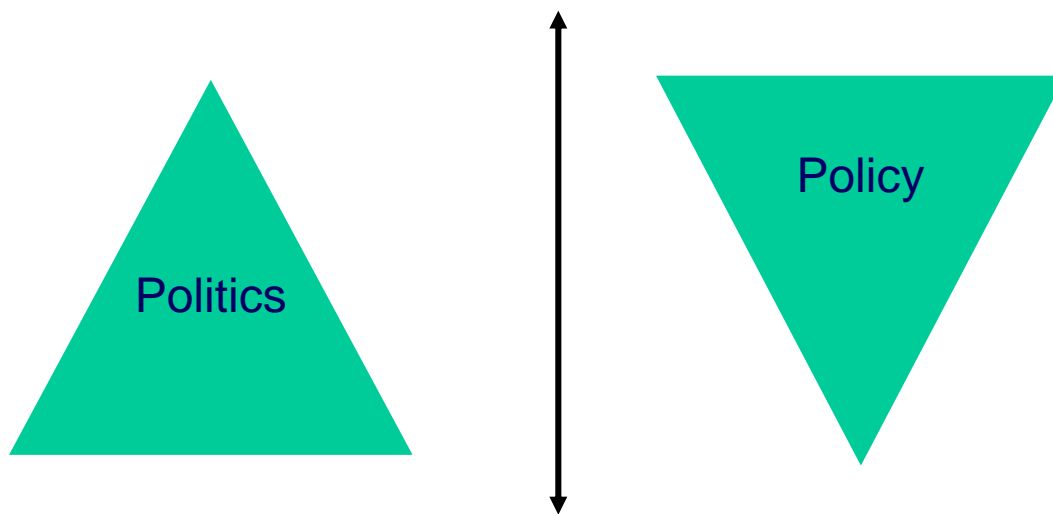
TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 10.30	5. TA projects as policy tools. How to define your requirements and how to use TAs as support for implementation of national policies
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.30 – 13.00	6. Development projects in education / TVET. Key areas for intervention and change
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 16.00	8. Project management (1). Key issues
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 18.00	9. Project cycle management (2). From general issues to EU projects specifics. The main challenges of the IPA.
19.00 –	Dinner

Day 3, Saturday, 10th of March: The policy learning approach to TVET development

TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 11.00	10. The policy learning process. Approaches to educational / TVET reforms in Central and South-Eastern Europe. How to nurture quality policymaking in education at local level
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 13.15	11. TVET development – preparing project documentation
13.15 –	Lunch
15.00	END OF THE WORKSHOP

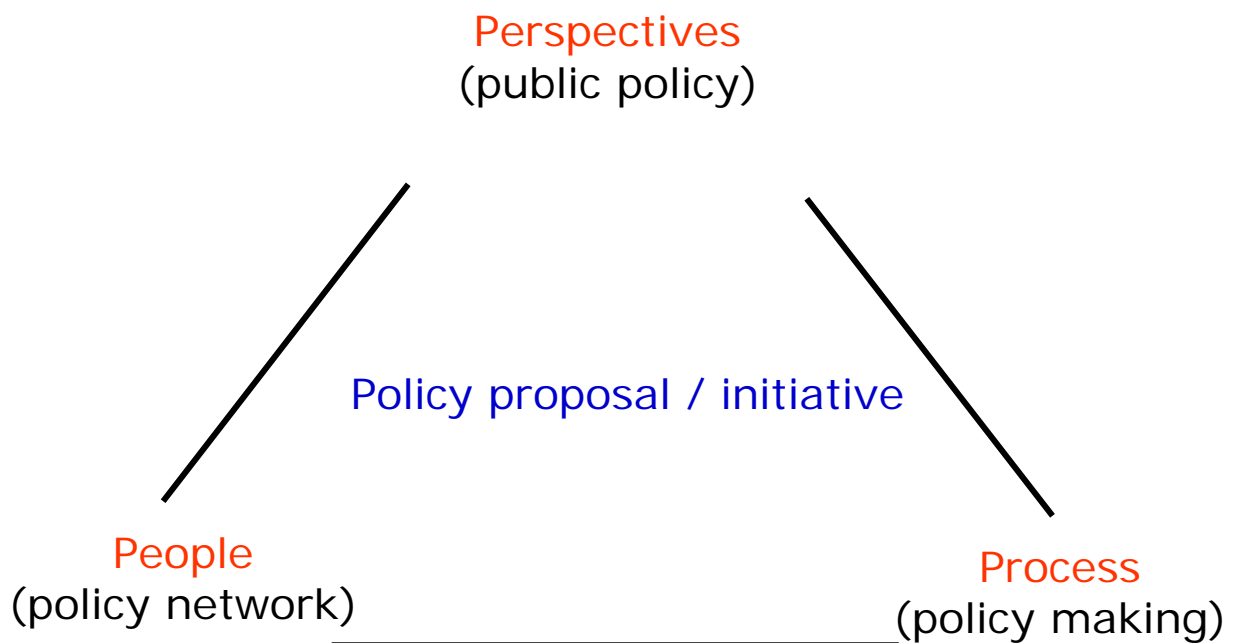
Policy process and policy development.
The systemic environment for educational policy for TVET sector

“In most of the languages spoken in the region there is no separate word for policy. This is a powerful indication of the lacking distinction between action aiming at capturing or influencing power and action aiming at changing or influencing the behavior of individuals or institutions.” (P. Rado, 2001)



POLITICS – winning, keeping and exercitation of power	POLICY (public policy): – the deliberate use of authority in order to produce changes (using existing power in public services).
Aim: to rule, to govern	Aim: to produce changes in the system / service; improve existing state of affairs in a given sector.

The last years brought significant developments in this field in Central and South-Eastern Europe, a whole culture of public policies started to develop and a new approach towards social and educational transformation emerged. Making the step from improvisation to professionalism will still require efforts and time, to consolidate institutional capacities and technical competencies for policymaking.



Development of a policy proposal or initiative is framed by a series of key contextual factors, as shown in the figure above:

- the perspective we have on public policy
- the way we understand the process of policy making
- the people involved in the process, the policy network that articulates around the policy issue

The success of a policy initiative is highly dependent on the way these contextual factors get into interaction and shape the systemic environment in which the respective policy is supposed to produce effects.

1. The perspective / the understanding of the public policy

There are many definitions of public policy... as for any controversial or widely used concept. Some examples:

"A purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern for the population...Public policies are those developed by governmental bodies and officials." (J. Anderson, 1994)

"A network of interlinked decisions concerning the choice of objectives, means and resources allocated for their fulfillment in specific situations." (A. Miroiu, 2000)

„A course of action or non-action chosen by public authorities for addressing a given issue or a set of inter-related issues" (...) (L.A. Pal, 2005)

„Intervention tools of a democratic state" (M. Radoi, 2005).

“...A series or pattern of governmental activities or decisions that are designed to remedy some public problem, either real or imagined. ...they are formulated implemented, and evaluated by authorities in a political system, for example, legislators, judges, executives, and administrators. Public policies are always subject to change on the basis of new (or better) information about their effects.” (J.P. Lester. and Joseph Stewart, Jr., 1996).

ACTIVITY:

Regardless what definition we look at, we may identify a series of key features / characteristics. Try to mention at least three of them and then discuss in your group why they are important:

1.

2.

3.

...

...

...

The public policies share a number of common characteristics, which are important to be taken into account especially due to the fact that in the region (CSEE) this approach to change and development is rather new.

- Authoritative governmental action (action implemented by the governmental body which has the corresponding legal, political and financial authority)
- Reaction to the need or problems of the real world
- Action oriented towards a specific goal, which tries to solve community problems
- Direction / course of action; a public policy doesn't regularly consist of a single decision, action or reaction, but in a comprehensive approach.
- The decision to do something or not to undertake any action in a public domain.
- Action accomplished by an actor or a set of individual or institutional actors.
- Justification of the action to be undertaken
- An already made decision, and not an intention or a promise

2. The policymaking process and the policy cycle

ACTIVITY:

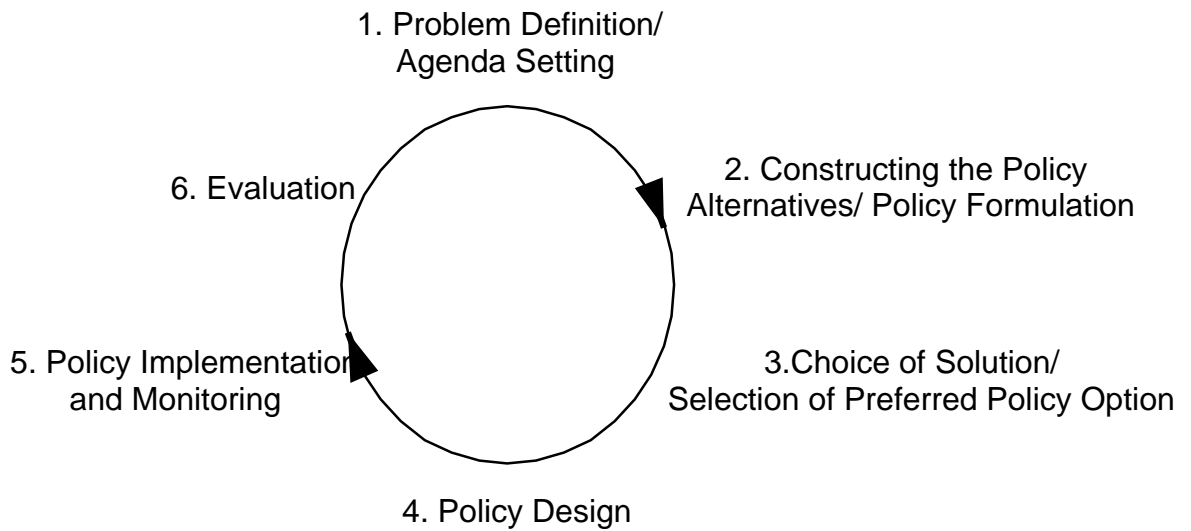
Match the following 6 steps in the policy-making process with their appropriate definition:

Policy implementation and monitoring	(i) determine a number of feasible and realistic ways of solving the problem
Policy design	(ii) decide on the most suitable policy option based on comprehensive evaluation of all the alternatives
Evaluation	(iii) the policy is put into practice and the effectiveness of policy outcomes is continuously measured
Construct policy alternatives	(iv) identify a particular policy issue and attempt to get it onto the government's political agenda as a priority
Problem definition	(v) the effectiveness in achieving the policy objectives is determined using a comprehensive assessment procedure
Choice of preferred solution	(vi) government agencies decide how to most effectively implement the accepted policy

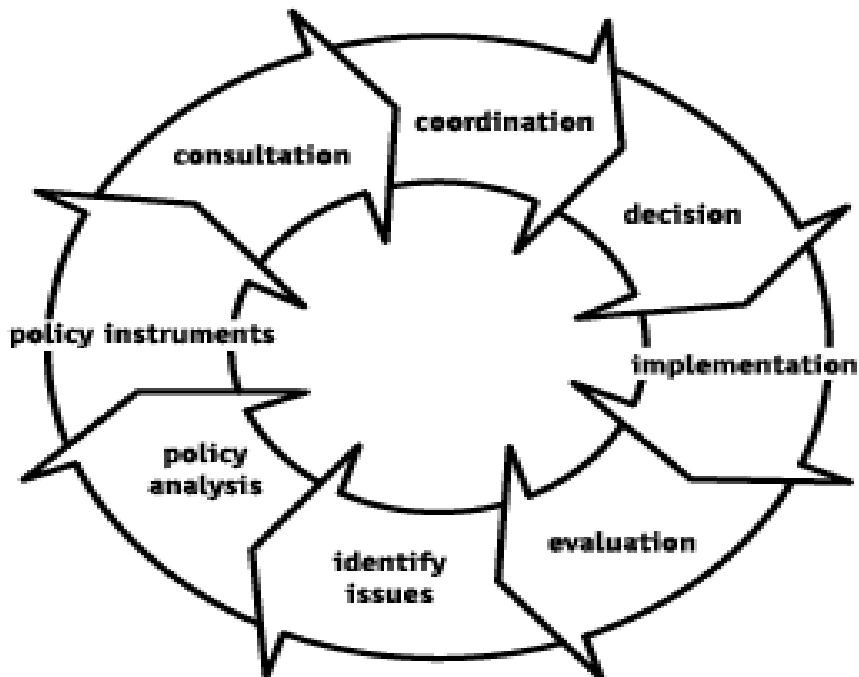


Compare your answers with your partner and then check with the policymaking cycle on next page.

A simple, but good example of policy cycle can be found in *Writing Effective Public Policy Papers*, p.12 (Young and Quinn, 2002)



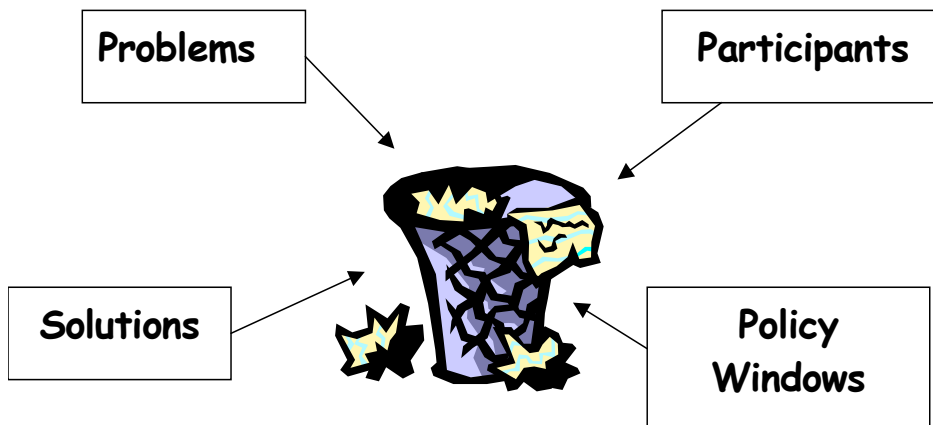
A more sophisticated one is used in public policy in Australian / Queensland



[http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/About_the_department/publications/policies/Governing_Queensland/Policy_Handbook/cycle/cycle/]

But these are rational models to approach the policy process. In the real world we aim to them, but reality is much more complicated and chaotic, so that it forces us many times to have a different approach / model: the garbage can model...

What is important here from the point of view of a successful policymaker is to identify and make use of *policy windows* – windows of opportunity which appear as a specific context through the combination of all mentioned factors and offers the possibility for action.



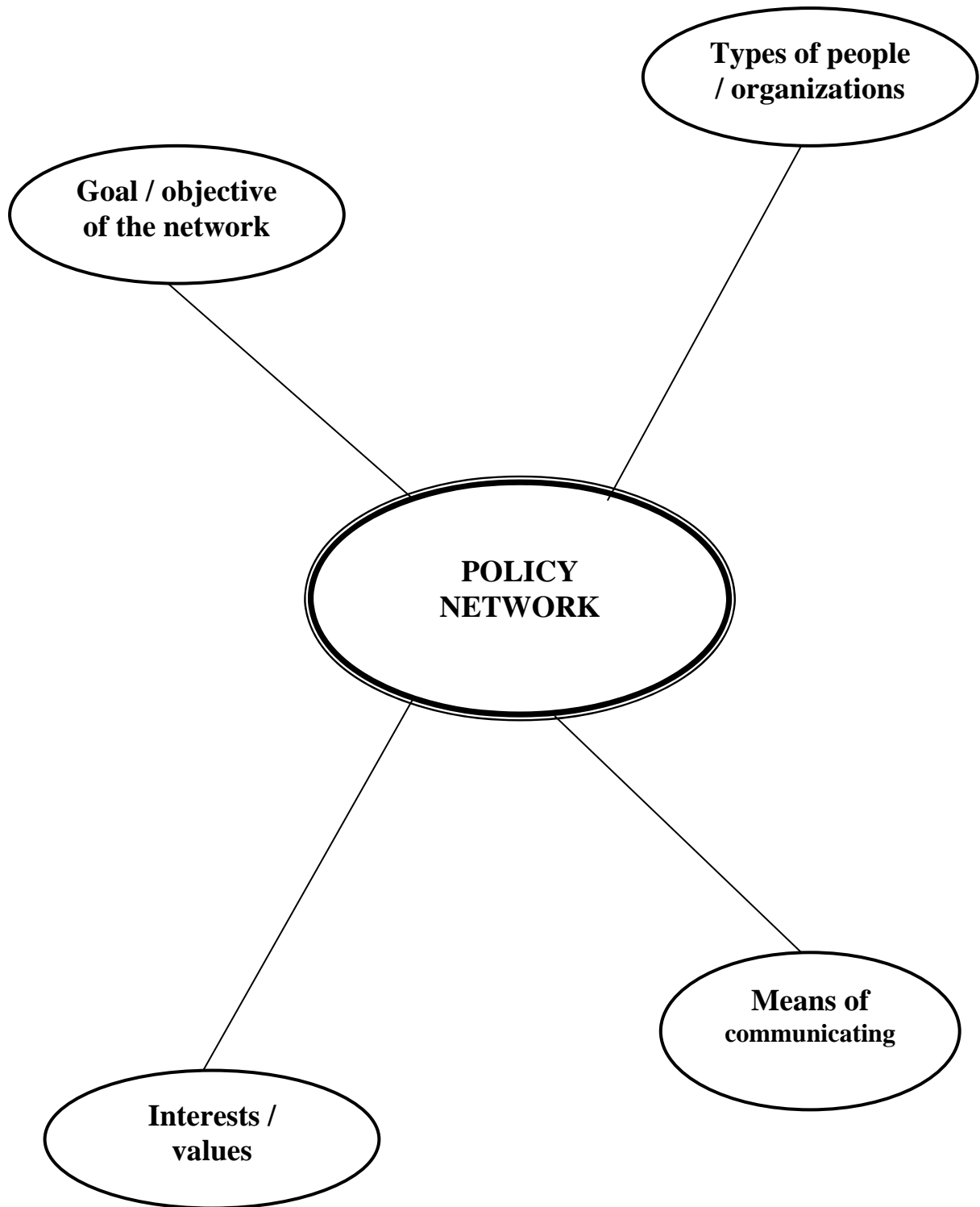
3. *The policy network*

A policy network is complex; even though most of the time it is easier to see the people and institutions, important is also to be aware of what holds a network together, what are the underlying values and interest, the common goal of that network, as well as the means of communication inside the network, and from the network to the broader public / stakeholders.

ACTIVITY:

Consider groups of people who are commonly involved in trying to influence a specific policy issue related to vocational education and training. For example, restructuring the school network ... Brainstorm ideas that you associate with the following aspects of such policy networks on the diagram below, focusing on people and organizations

The policy network



In conclusion, any policy initiative or policy proposal is framed and shaped by at least three types of contextual factors that we have to take into account if we want to achieve our goals.

From Public policy to Educational policy

There is a situation in majority of SEE countries that, because of poor capacity for policymaking, and to the underdeveloped practice of policy process in a democratic environment, the main tools used by the central governance of education are still regulations and legislation, in other words top-down, coercing tools. The reason behind this situation is the conviction, which proved unrealistic, that big system (such as education) can be exclusively steered from the top, through creating regulatory frameworks and eventually giving mandate for some action to the central agencies.

But there is a strong message coming from industry:

„Giving teaching professionals the freedom to meet [the new] demands and preferences in a flexible and dynamic setting rather than obliging them to continue working in static, uniform and often over-regulated environments would challenge and motivate them. Such a renewal requires schools to be given more autonomy to manage themselves and to be more responsive to the diversity of demands. At the same time, schools must recognize they are accountable for their results.”

Empowering the teaching profession and modernising school management (2003). The employers view.

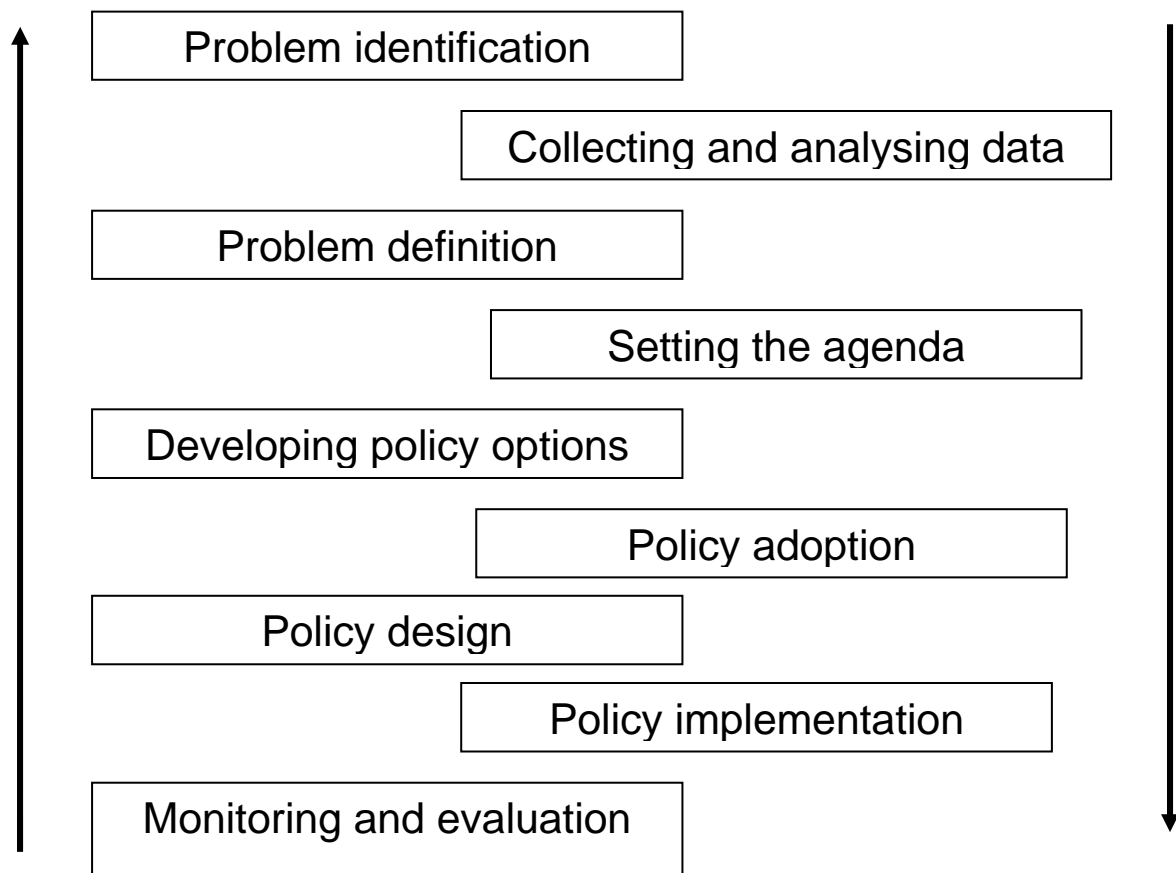
(<http://www.bda-online.de/www/bdaonline.nsf/0/0e8f3e2dbaad0c6cc1256d65002d559d?OpenDocument>)

Conceptualizing and developing educational policies is coming to a large extent from the broader field of public policy.

Examples of definition for educational policy:

- ***Deliberate use of authority and different kinds of resources for changing or influencing the behavior of actors and institutions from educational sector. (P.Rado)***
- ***To generate an educational policy means to set up a direction for action or to decide to take no action in respect to an identified and analyzed problem specific to individual or institutional actors of education. (L.Ciolan)***

The main steps of educational policy cycle are presented in the figure below:



What are the main advantages of developing high quality educational policies?

- They promote a consolidated vision regarding educational change
- They generate focused interventions, based on identified and analyzed problems
- They organize from the logical, operational and conceptual point of view the activity of the central governance of education.
- They advance a cyclic approach to educational change, flexible and based on the principle of continuous improvement.

Contextual considerations:	Your educational policy project:
Describe in clear and simple language the policy problem you are working on. How is the current policy failing to address this problem?	
Which members of the policy network/community are interested in this policy issue?	
Which stage(s) of the policy-making process are you aiming to influence?	
What is the intended policy impact/outcome of your policy project?	
What type of policy paper(s) will you write? Who is the specific target audience who will read your policy paper(s)?	
How will you communicate the message of your policy paper to other members of the policy network/community?	
What are the tools at your disposal to influence the success and to implement your policy project?	

Making decisions about the context of your policy work: use this worksheet to brainstorm issues related to the purpose and context for a policy project you are working on

From policy cycle to projects cycle.

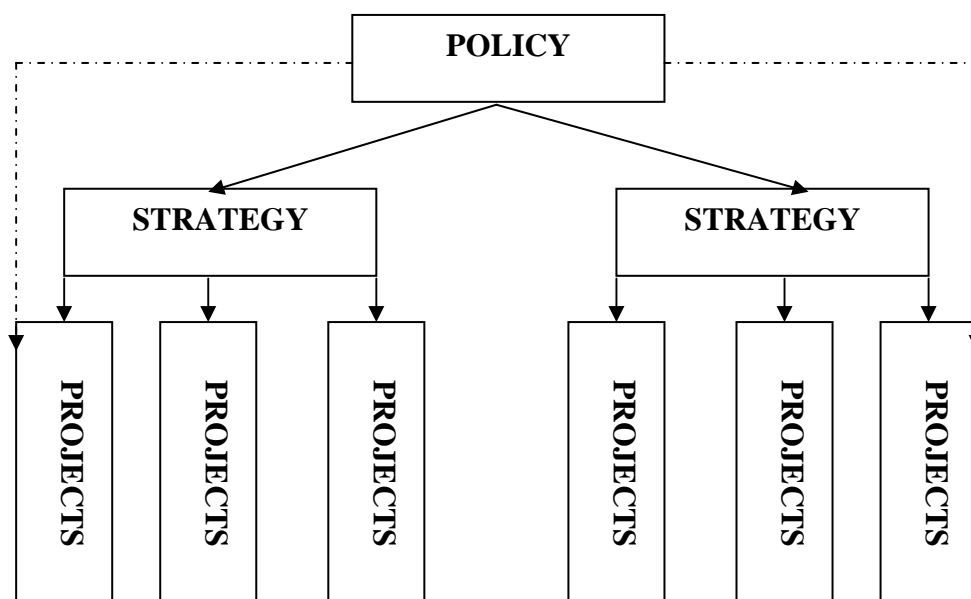
Development projects as policy tools

In making the link from *policy* to *projects*, we can say that:

- Targeted–development projects are tools at the disposal of policymakers to implement the policies
- From the range of different policy tools, targeted-development programs are belonging to the family of more sophisticated tools, making a step out from the box of regulations and legislations

As policies have a cycle, projects have themselves a life-cycle. And this life-cycle is based on the basic perspectives on what a project is:

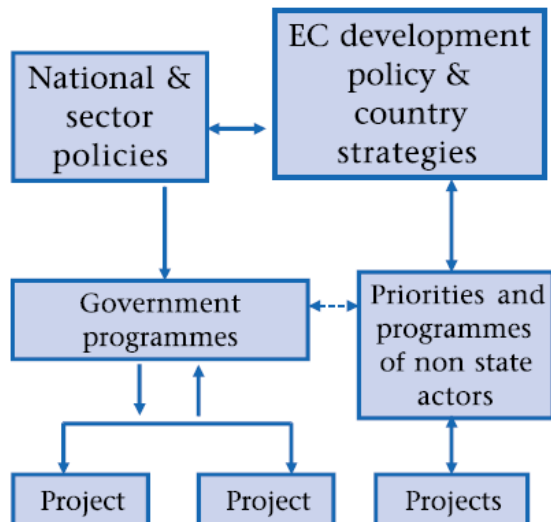
- ❖ A project is an individual or group *initiative* which aims at improvement of a given state of affairs or development of new modalities for action in a given field;
- ❖ A project is a *change action*, with improvement or development character. It consists in a coherent and structured set of activities, placed in the perspective of clearly defined aims and pre-defined outcomes;
- ❖ A project is a *capital investment* (material, financial, human, informational...) through a determined period of time, with the scope to create systems, procedures for action and organization and institutional arrangements capable to produce results after the completion of the project.
- ❖ A project is a *way of applying a strategy*.



Link between POLICY – STRATEGY – PROJECTS

Very often in the region, policies and strategies are situated at the same level....

But another component appears in this tree, both with reference to the EU and national realities, and this are the PROGRAMMES



EC projects should form part of, and be consistent with:

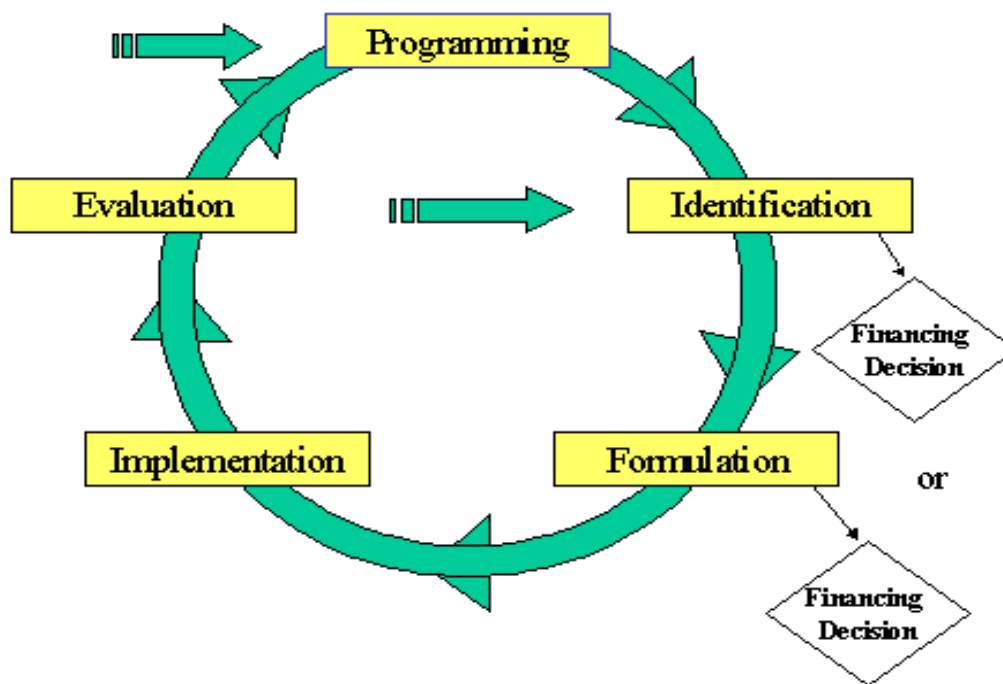
- National development policies (including Poverty Reduction Strategies);
- EC development policy and country strategy papers;
- Government programmes (e.g in health, education, criminal justice); and/or
- Development priorities and programmes of non-state actors

In this logic, the quality of projects is considered higher whenever they:

- Are more clearly consistent with the policy framework;
- Integrate with and support local planning/budgeting, management, financing and monitoring systems (rather than creating parallel systems);
- Are better coordinated with other donors;
- Build local capacity and rely less on expatriate technical assistance;
- Take a longer-term (and more realistic) perspective of the process of change; and
- Allow greater flexibility during implementation

As it was the case for policy, there are also some models available for project cycle. We will briefly review here those used by main donors.

The EU has developed a project cycle model for its specific activities:



For all EC operations the cycle highlights three common principles:

- i. Decision making criteria and procedures are defined at each phase (including key information requirements and quality assessment criteria);
- ii. The phases in the cycle are progressive - each phase should be completed for the next to be tackled with success; and
- iii. New programming and project identification draws on the results of monitoring and evaluation as part of a structured process of feedback and institutional learning.

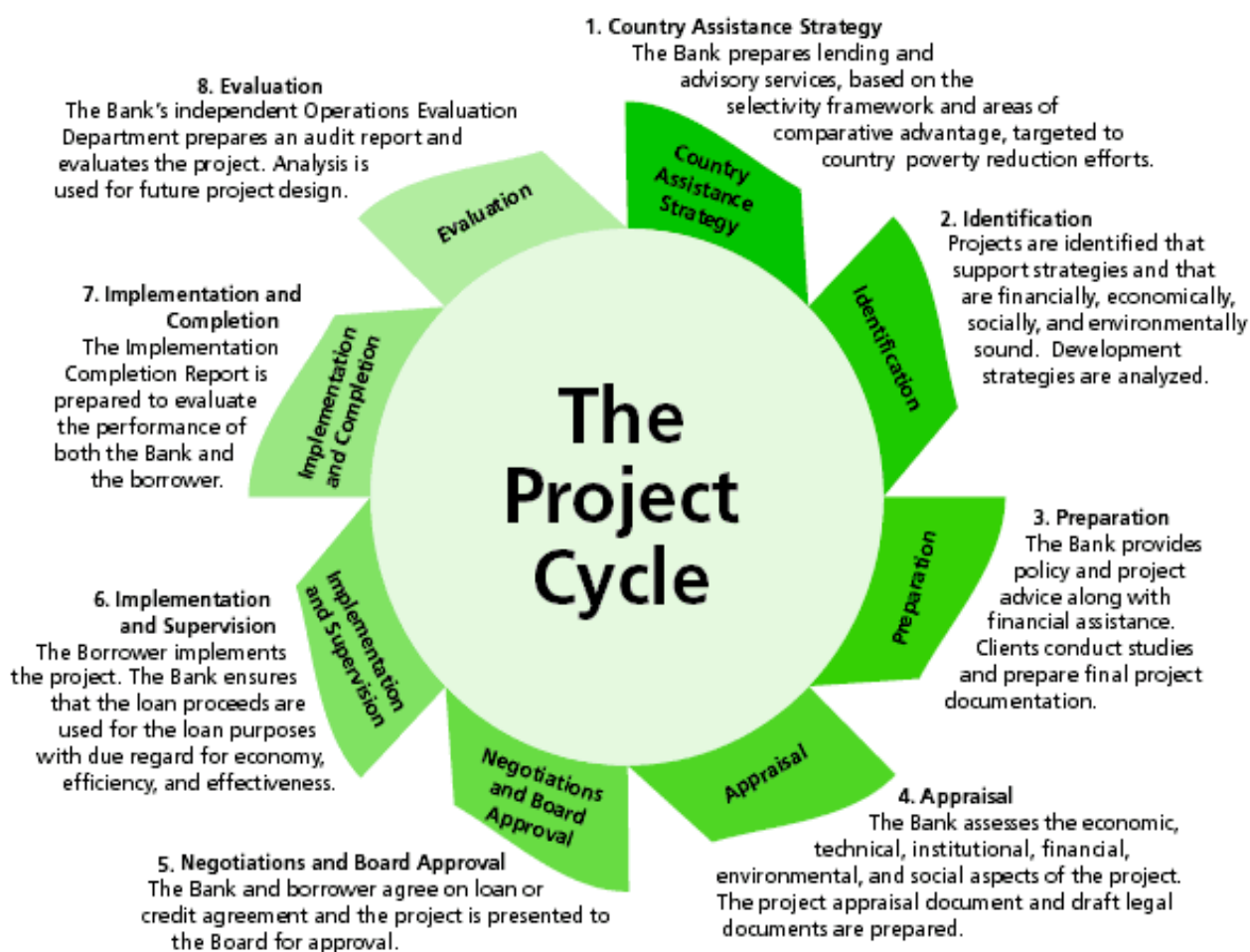
Project Cycle Management is a term used to describe the management activities and decision-making procedures used during the life-cycle of a project (including key tasks, roles and responsibilities, key documents and decision options).

PCM helps to ensure that:

- Projects are supportive of *overarching policy objectives of the EC and of development partners*;
- projects are *relevant* to an *agreed strategy* and to the real problems of target groups/beneficiaries;
- projects are *feasible*, meaning that *objectives* can be realistically achieved within the constraints of the operating environment and capabilities of the implementing agencies; and
- *benefits* generated by projects are likely to be *sustainable*.

See also: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/qsm/project_en.htm

World Bank uses the model below:



The projects the Bank finances are conceived and supervised according to a well-documented project cycle. Documents produced as part of the project cycle can be valuable sources of information for interested stakeholders wanting to keep abreast of the work the Bank is financing and for businesses wishing to participate in Bank-financed projects.

The Bank recognizes that many past assistance efforts, including some of its own, failed because the agenda was driven by donors rather than by the governments it was trying to assist. Under its current development policy, the Bank helps governments take the lead in preparing and implementing development strategies in the belief that programs that are owned by the country, with widespread stakeholder support, have a greater chance of success.

The Bank's blueprint for its work with a country is based on a Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) which, in the case of low income countries, is derived from the priorities contained in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The CAS is produced in co-operation with the government and interested stakeholders. The preparation of the CAS may draw on analytical work conducted by the Bank or other parties on a wide range of economic and social sectors, such as health, education, agriculture, public expenditure and budgeting, fiscal management, or procurement, among others.

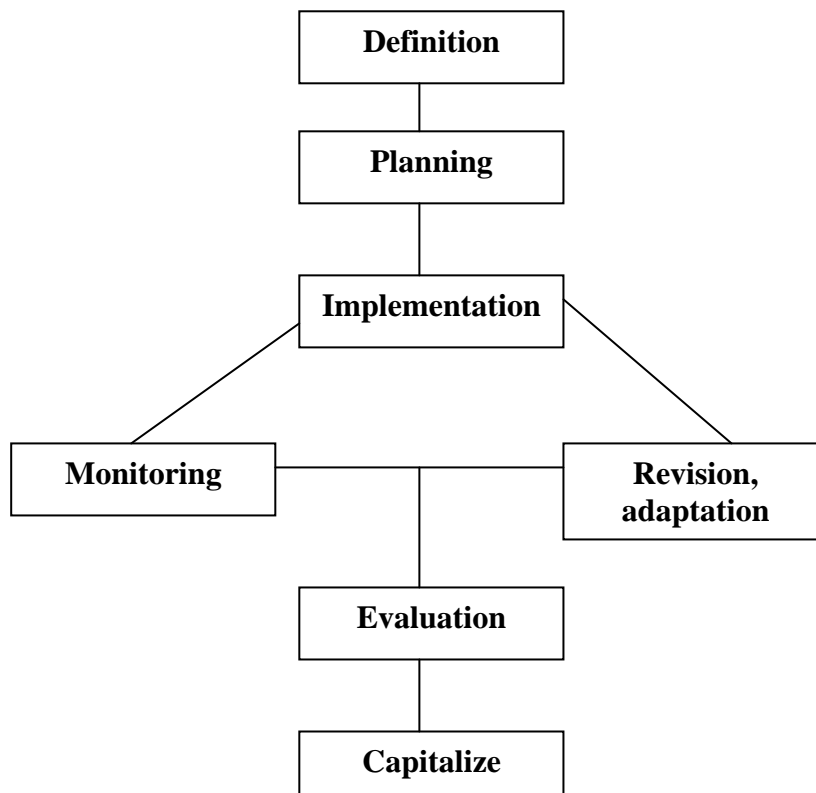
See: <http://web.worldbank.org/> - Projects and Operations – Project Cycle

Majority of models, regardless the differences among them are based on the same fundamental notions and they emphasize the following important steps:

- ❖ *Identification*
- ❖ *Formulation*
- ❖ *Implementation*
- ❖ *Assessment*

The main defining characteristic of a project is its novelty. A project is a step into the unknown, full of risks and uncertainty. There are not two projects perfectly identical and even a project which is repeating will not be the same every time... (D.Lock, 2000).

What is important to notice is also the fact that the two models presented here (World Bank and EU), even though important for preparing projects for being financed and then managed according to existing rules and procedures, are very specific for this kind of aim / scope. But the project management knowledge goes well beyond this, setting a rational framework in which modern and flexible institutions and organizations undertake their daily activity and achieve their goals. A last model / cycle / stages in the life of a project is presented below; even more linear in nature, it adds a very important feature for policymakers and their institutions: the capitalization phase, which emphasizes the need to make the most advantage of the experience gained in a project in (to “stock” the learning we got in a specific project).



Why do projects succeed?

- ❖ *The organizational structure is adequate to the project*
- ❖ *The project team participate to the planning*
- ❖ *The project team is engaged in setting up and respecting deadlines*
- ❖ *The project management team make a realistic and balanced distribution of the budget*
- ❖ *The project team reaches an agreement for clear and realistic objectives of the project*
- ❖ *The beneficiary is involved from the very beginning in the formulation of the project*
- ❖ *The project uses effectively the communication, planning and reporting networks*
- ❖ *The project team know how to work with bureaucracy, with procedures and with the political environment specific to the project*

Policy making and projects development in transition contexts

The context of transition is complex and it can be looked form various perspectives:

- a. **The historical meaning:** puts the emphasis on *time* perspective, on the passage from one historical époque to another. After the breakthrough from communism the transition time started, a period situated at crossroads of two social aims: demise of the past and plotting a path toward future.
- b. **The political meaning:** abolition of the communist regime and construction of democracy. A whole new range of political values started to structure the public arena: freedom, democracy, well-being, competition, property, market economy, dignity, human rights etc.
- c. **Economic meaning:** movement from a centralized, state planned and owned, command driven economy towards a market, custom-oriented and demand driven economy.
- d. **Social meaning:** the emergence of democratic citizenship, accompanied by all rights and responsibilities; development of associative life and transformation of institutional landscape.
- e. **Cultural meaning:** the emergence of cultural diversity, acceptance and encouragement of cultural identities (different social-cultural groups); demise of ideology in cultural life.
- f. **Educational meaning:** giving up the ideological ballast, modernization, separation between politics and policy, change of educational message according to the values mentioned above. Development of new educational ideal and reconstruction of schooling based on new principles: democracy, diversity of learning styles and needs, quality, accountability, autonomy and competence.

Even though sometimes *transition* is assimilated with a time of confusion and slow progress, we can argue that is also a period of extremely dynamic and profound transformations, including educational reforms...

ACTIVITY

1. Identify three key transformations that the vocational education system “suffered” in the last 10 years and assess them in the table below, marking the actual state of affairs in the respective field and bringing some arguments...:

Change / transformation	Stage			Arguments
	Just started...	Half-way there...	Accomplished to a large extent...	
1.				
2.				
3.				

2. Identify now three key initiatives or changes related to vocational education and training that didn't reach the level of POLICIES, meaning *already taken decisions*, even though you think they are necessary and they should be priorities... And try to look to the factors that prevented them for becoming decisions. Finally, what can YOU do, with your positions and responsibilities, about it....

Desired changes / transformations	Factors preventing decision		What can WE do about it....
	Internal... (low quality of proposal, ineffective communication...)	External... (lack of political will, deficit of funds...)	
1.			
2.			
3.			

These should be key areas for intervention and change in the future. An one of the ways to move it forward is to support them with appropriate projects, such as those financed by the EU (or other donors...).

Development projects for TVET. Key area for intervention in the context of IPA

What is broadly available in terms of resources can be seen in the table blow and is derived form IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance).

Table 1: Serbia: Multi-Annual Indicative Financial Framework in million € (current prices)

Component	2007	2008	2009	2007-2009
<i>I. Transition assistance and Institution Building</i>	178.5	179.4	182.6	540.5
<i>II. Cross-Border Cooperation</i>	8.2	11.5	12.2	31.9
Total	186.7	190.9	194.8	572.4

* These figures are indicative and subject to modification

The structure of IPA is based on five basic components:

For all beneficiary countries:

- *"support for transition and institution-building"*
- *"cross-border cooperation" component*

Candidate countries only:

- *"regional development"*
- *"human resources development"*
- *"rural development"*

IPA I: The **Transition Assistance and Institution Building** component translates the priorities set out in the European Partnership in three sub-components:

Political requirements: EC assistance will be used to support a stable, modern, democratic, multi-ethnic and open society based on the rule of law. Special attention will be given to Public Administration and Judiciary Reform;

European standards: EC assistance will support and accompany Serbia in its European integration plan (legal and policy approximation, administration needs and requirements for DIS).

Socio-economic requirements: EC assistance will be used in support of the development of the socio-economic environment;

Under this last direction, the draft Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2007-2009 provides some directions:

Promoting and implementing the Reform of the Education System to support the development of economy and to meet the demands of the Lisbon agenda. Fostering a better match between education and labour market needs (school to work and university to work principle¹⁰) by adapting education and training systems to new competencies' requirement and by enhancing the involvement of relevant stakeholders.

Improving the quality of the education (including civic education and history teaching) and training systems in line with European standards and Serbia's social, economic and population needs, including mobility. Provide soft and hard support for education, higher education, and vocational education and training. Including marginalized groups (predominantly Roma) and children/ people with special needs into the regular education system. Support to pre-school and basic education, with a special focus on poor and excluded children, should be specifically addressed as a pre-condition of other expected results such as employment, social inclusion and poverty reduction.

Developing adult education and a lifelong learning strategy. Promote effective partnership among major actors-including business, social partners and education institutions at all levels.

In the annual programmes 2007-2009 assistance may be provided in the areas listed below (selection).

It will be the responsibility of the beneficiary to establish its exact scope during the elaboration of the project proposals for the annual programme:

- School to Work and University to Work measures including conversion courses, internships and placements with EU companies and institutions.
- Support to VET and development of the Functional education for adults and life-long learning concept.
- Actions on employment, economic development and social inclusion with particular focus on the unemployed and disadvantaged groups.

ACTIVITY:

Looking to the three direction for intervention in TVET that you identified in the previous activity, where do you think they can fit in the MIP draft proposal priorities, shown above?

As for the type of assistance that can be offered the main directions are mentioned in the selection below from **IPA implementation rules**:

Article 65 Forms of assistance

- (1) Assistance under this component may, in particular, be provided through:
- (a) *administrative co-operation measures for the purpose of training and information exchange involving public-sector experts dispatched from Member States or international organisations, in particular through **twinning**, twinning light and TAIEX;*
 - (b) **technical assistance;**
 - (c) investments in the regulatory infrastructure, including independent external multilateral institutions, in particular to support alignment with European Union norms and standards. This shall be aimed at key regulatory institutions and made on the basis of a clear strategy for public administrative reform and alignment with the *acquis*;
 - (d) *grant schemes;*
 - (e) project preparation facilities;
 - (f) implementation of finance facilities in co-operation with international financial institutions;
 - (g) budgetary support.

Project management under EU / IPA regulatory framework. A brief introduction

The basic idea of management of the EU project relies in the project cycle management (PCM), introduced in previous section.

According to EC PCM guidelines, the cycle of operations for managing the EC's external assistance projects has five phases, and this cycle highlights three main principles:

1. Decision making criteria and procedures are defined at each phase (including key information requirements and quality assessment criteria);
2. The phases in the cycle are progressive – each phase should be completed for the next to be tackled with success
3. New programming and project identification draws on the results of monitoring and evaluation as part of a structured process of feedback and institutional learning.

An important resource already used by **Ministry of International Economic Relations** in preparing line ministries in Serbia for accessing IPA funds is:

**-PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT-
TRAINING GUIDELINES
IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AND PROJECTS
IN IPA FRAMEWORK**

BY Pierre-Yves Bellot

December 2006

... But also the **Project Cycle Management Guidelines** of the EC, available online at the address mentioned before, next to the PCM image (p. 17)

PCM is a term used to describe the management activities and decision-making procedures used during the life-cycle of a project (including key tasks, roles and responsibilities, key documents and decision options).

PCM helps to ensure that:

- projects are supportive of *overarching policy objectives of the EC and of development partners*;
- projects are *relevant* to an *agreed strategy* and to the real problems of target groups/beneficiaries;
- projects are *feasible*, meaning that *objectives* can be realistically achieved within the constraints of the operating environment and capabilities of the implementing agencies;
- *benefits* generated by projects are likely to be *sustainable*.

To support the achievement of these aims, PCM:

- requires the active participation of *key stakeholders* and aims to promote *local ownership*;
- uses the *Logical Framework Approach* (as well as other tools) to support a number of key assessments/analyses (including stakeholders, problems, objectives and strategies);
- incorporates *key quality assessment* criteria into each stage of the project cycle;
- requires the production of *good-quality key document(s)* in each phase (with commonly understood concepts and definitions), to support well-informed decision-making.

A key concept and tool linked with the PCM is the logical framework approach (LFA). According to the **Project Cycle Management Guidelines** of the EC, the **Logical Framework Approach** is an analytical and management tool which is now used (in one form or another) by most multi-lateral

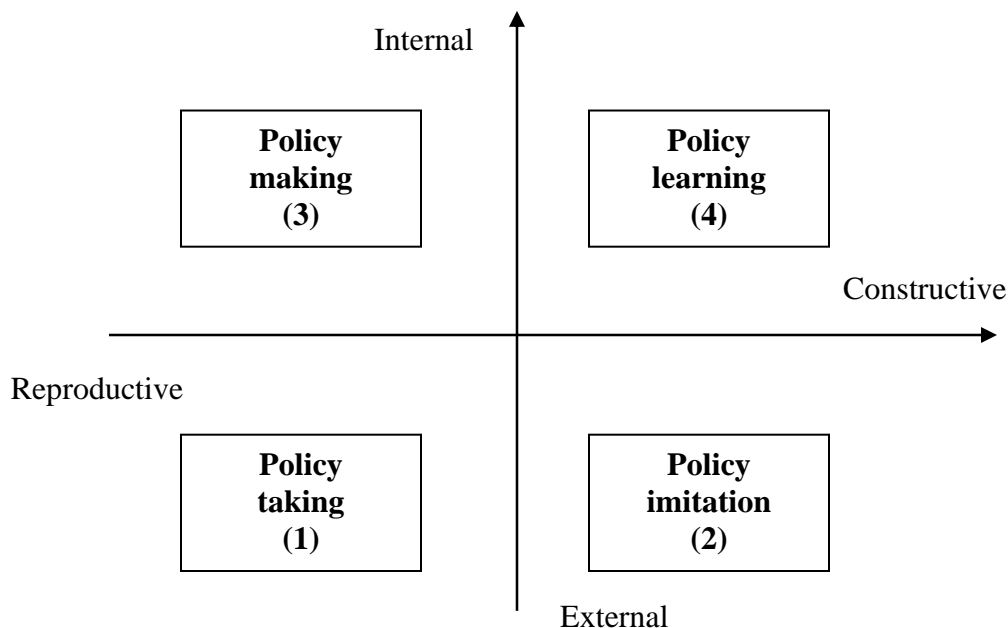
and bi-lateral aid agencies, international NGOs and by many partner governments. Indeed, the EC generally requires the development of a Logframe Matrix as part of its project formulation procedures for external assistance. This Guideline therefore gives emphasis to the application of the Logical Framework Approach at the various stages of the project management cycle.

The LFA is a very effective analytical and management tool when understood and intelligently applied. However, it is not a substitute for experience and professional judgment and must also be complemented by the application of other specific tools (such as Economic and Financial Analysis and Environmental Impact Assessment) and through the application of working techniques which promote the effective participation of stakeholders.

Deeper approach to PCM steps and development of LFAs will be subject for the next training modules.

Policy learning approach¹

If we look in the short and recent history of policymaking in education in transition countries, a common pattern can be identified, which makes the move from *policy taking* to *policy learning* in education and probably in the larger public services domain. This process can be described as four waves, conceptualized on two axes: ownership axe, going from *external* to *internal*, and learning axe, going from *reproduction* to *active construction*. (see figure below)



Policy process waves in transition contexts

¹ This section broadly builds on a report called “Towards a quality policymaking culture in transition contexts. The case of education” (L.Ciolan, 2006).

The internal – external relation with regard to ownership refers to the source of the policy itself (determined by donors or external factors / institutions versus determined by local actors and their needs). The reproductive – constructive continuum bring into attention level of participation of policy community in the whole policy process, going from very poor involvement to active construction and reflection.

1. ***Policy taking*** as first wave, both historically and in terms of the logic of the model, is routed in donor-driven projects developed in transition countries and is largely based on policy transfer from western / more experienced systems. Educational policies under this stage are taken from granted by local actors, since they reflect broad intervention needs valid “anytime, anywhere”. This *one size fits all* perspective of donors was accepted because of the very low capacity and poor policy competence of local actors. **Educational policies at this stage are focused on content reform and eventually on structure of education system.**
2. ***Policy imitation*** or copying is still externally determined, but involves a higher degree of learning / construction from local actors. Imitation is a voluntary process and the models are carefully selected, sometimes even slowly adapted to the local context. This is the phase of **outcomes-driven reforms**, where process themselves are neglected for the sake of results and these last ones are largely borrowed from what is generally called *the global orthodoxy of education*. This is, in a way, the “age” of curriculum and standards driven reforms, of *pilot school* approaches...
3. ***Policy making*** brings local ownership, and eventually a certain degree of institutionalization of the educational policy making. Elaboration of educational policies and the following process are conceived in a determined policy cycle, managed by the central governance of education. The whole process is subject to procedures and strict rules. Making a policy is a professional activity and only recognized / certified experts should have access to it. Management driven reforms are characteristics for this stage, with very technical, sometime mechanistic approach of a “functional system” composed by “functional sub-systems or components”. We faced recently apparition and development of professional agencies, focused on VET, curriculum assessment etc., and more recently qualification authorities...
4. ***Policy learning*** is a new approach, largely conceptualized and supported lately by institutions such as European Training Foundation², in relation to their leading role in vocational education and training reforms in transition countries. This stage brings into attention the *practice-driven*, continuous improvement approach to educational reforms. After long efforts of change centered on structure, on the heavy architecture of the system (curriculum, evaluation and exams, certifications and qualification, management structures, power relations, inspection and control etc.), policy learning vision shifts the focus towards the intimate functioning of the educational processes at micro-level, brings back into attention the student and the school as ultimate beneficiaries, but also stakeholders of educational policies.

² Especially Peter Grootings and Soren Nielsen, as results of the ETF Advisory Forum plenary meeting in 2003, when this approach was formally endorsed.

ANNEX 1: Draft outline of the training modules

STAGE 1

Module I

Policymaking for TVET development. Using EU programmes as policy tools

Time: ~16 h (March 2007)

Aim: Build understanding of the systemic environment of educational policy in which development project functions.

Competences:

- Understand the instrumental role of the development projects in the frame of the policy process;
- Compare and contrast policy cycle with project management life cycle;
- Use the characteristics of the policy process in transition contexts in order to maximize the use of Technical Assistances in development projects.
- Identify key area for intervention through EU projects in the field of education / TVET.

Content outline:

- The educational policy cycle. From policy to project cycle.
- Tools at the disposal of educational policymakers. EU projects as policy tools
- Development projects: characteristics, stages, implications for coordination / policy level
- How EU projects work: main players, procedures and “mechanics” of project delivery.
- Policy learning for development of policy capacity: ownership of the policy process and issues
- Strategic steering and quality policymaking in transition countexts. How to make best use of the TAs.
- TVET development: key areas for intervention

STAGE 2

Module II

Needs assessment and project definition

Time: 12 h (tentative date: April 2007)

Aim: Understand the role of the needs assessment in defining good project ideas and consider conditionalities involved in project formulation

Competences:

- Define, analyze and prioritize the development needs in a specific sector
- Use basic needs assessment tools and techniques

- Define intervention projects to address the needs of the beneficiaries

Content outline:

- Defining and understanding the needs
- Needs assessment tools and techniques
- Setting up priorities
- Consultation and validation processes
- Defining intervention projects to meet the needs
- Conditionalities in project formulation

Module III

**Writing successful project proposals
(including project planning and application design)**

Time: 12 h

Aim: Create capacity for successful project application writing in order to obtain funding

Competences:

- Define clear objectives and activities for development projects in education
- Planning implementation and identify key actors
- Define potential risks and identify prevention measures
- Assemble application elements in a coherent manner
- Advocate for developed project proposals

Content outline:

- Structural and textual elements of a project application.
- ToRs / project fiches for development projects
- Define the focus of the project according to priorities and needs
- Criteria for successful project application; tools for quality check

STAGE 3:

Module IV

EU Project Cycle Management Guidelines

Time: 18 h (tentative date: end May 2007)

Aim: Operate with the main concepts and tools specific to EU Project Cycle Management Guidelines

Competences:

- Identify and understand the implications of different stages of the PCM
- Design and develop a LFA
- Undertake institutional capacity assessment
- Use quality criteria for a successful step in the PCM framework

Content outline:

- Basic steps of the project cycle management
 - Identification
 - Formulation
 - Implementation (including monitoring and reporting)
 - Evaluation
 - Audit
- The logical framework approach
 - Analysis
 - Planning
 - Activity, resource and cost schedule
 - Use of the LFA
- Institutional capacity assessment
- Monitoring, review and reporting
- Participation and ownership

STAGE 4**Module V****Monitoring and evaluation of project performance**

Time: 15 h (tentative date: September 2007)

Aim: Assemble elements of a coherent monitoring and evaluation system for development projects.

Competences:

- Design monitoring and evaluation tools for development projects
- Define criteria for project performance and formulate indicators of success
- Identify most appropriate mechanisms to use monitoring and evaluation as learning tools for continuous improvement
- Use evaluation data to formulate policy and influence decision-making

Content outline:

- Monitoring system and tools. Role of monitoring and reporting procedures on project activities.
- Project performance evaluation
- Continuous improvement of project development and implementation
- Capitalization and sustainability
- Feeding in the policy process: how to use assessment reports to inform policymaking and influence decisions

Annex 2: Logframe

Logframe planning matrix for projects	Programme name and number	
	Contracting period expires	Disbursement period expires
	Total budget:	IPA budget:

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
	•		
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
•		•	•
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
•			
Activities	Means		Assumptions
		Preconditions	

ANNEX 3:

KEY WORDS
in European Union pre-accession assistance

KEY WORD	DEFINITION
Absorption Capacity	A concept requiring that beneficiary institutions are endowed with necessary complementary infrastructure, including office space, qualified staff and budgetary comments, to be in place within the beneficiary institutions. Lack of absorption capacity delays the period for investment programmes and specific projects to reach the stage where the EC will be able to make decisions on their financing.
Accreditation	A condition for obtaining EU assistance requiring that the country has the administrative capacities and structures to take responsibility for the management of assistance.
Acquis communautaire	The body of EU legislation that candidate countries must adopt to become EU members.
Audit Authority	Body designated by the beneficiary country, functionally independent from all actors in the management and control system and with the necessary expertise. It shall be responsible for verifying the effective and sound functioning of the management and control systems.
Beneficiary	Body, whether public or private, carrying out an individual project and receiving public aid.
Candidate countries	Croatia, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - countries that will receive assistance through all five IPA components.
Central Contracting and Financing Unit (CFCU)	A Central Contracting and Financing Unit established in the beneficiary country responsible for the overall tendering, contracting, payments, accounting and financial reporting aspects of all procurement in the context of the EU funded programmes.
Co-financing	A principle guiding IPA assistance that requires complementary financial contribution from national public funds/beneficiaries in the implementation of projects.
Competent accrediting officer (CAO)	The CAO is a high-ranking official appointed by the government of the beneficiary country. The CAO is responsible for issuing, monitoring and suspending or withdrawing the accreditation of the national authorising officer.
Concentration	A concept guiding programming cycle aiming to have a limited number of consistent priorities and measures/projects in order to ensure impact.
Decentralisation	The process of transfer of competencies and responsibilities from central to local level launched in July 2005, which has been promoted with the Ohrid Framework Agreement.
Decentralized management	Process of transfer of responsibility for financial management of EU funds to beneficiary institutions.

Enlargement Package	Set of documents presented each year to the Council and the European Parliament by the Commission, the strategic and political part of which consists of: the revisions, where appropriate, of the accession partnerships and the European Partnerships, the regular reports established by country, the Commission's strategy paper and a multi-annual indicative financial framework.
European Partnership (EP)	A list of short and medium term priorities which serves as a check-list against which the Commission measures progress of the preparations of the country for further integration with the European Union.
Financial correction	Decision by the Commission or by the beneficiary country to reduce Community support, for example by excluding from financing expenditure which it finds not in accordance with the applicable rules.
Financing Agreement	Annual or multi-annual agreement concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary country, following a Commission financing decision approving the Community contribution to a program or an operation.
Framework Agreement	An agreement concluded between the Commission and the beneficiary country, which has the power of an international treaty and therefore has supremacy over national (beneficiary country) legislation. In IPA, it forms the basis of the relationship between the Community and the beneficiary country.
Framework Regulation	It lays down the objectives and main principles for pre-accession assistance and presenting the articulation of the five components which compose the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance.
Implementing Regulation	Common provisions aimed to ensure maximum coherence, coordination and harmonisation of the management and implementation methods used by each IPA component, which have different objectives and operating modalities under the same global goal of pre-accession.
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)	A single instrument for pre-accession assistance for the period 2007–2013 which supersedes the five previously existing pre-accession instruments, Phare, ISPA, SAPARD, Turkey pre-accession instrument, and CARDS.
Joint Assessment Paper (JAP)	An Assessment Paper signed between the Commission and candidate countries prior to their accession to the EU, identifying the key challenges and employment policy priorities.
Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM)	A Memorandum signed between the Commission and candidate countries prior to their accession to the EU, outlining the principal challenges in relation to tackling poverty and social exclusion.
Maturity	Readiness of project activities to be financed. The assessment of <i>Project readiness</i> will become a “hard” condition and a key criterion in deciding whether a project should be included or not in a financing decision.
Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework (MIFF)	An indicative multi-annual financial framework, which allocates funds by country and by component on a three years rolling basis.

Multi-annual Indicative Planning Documents (MIPD)	An indicative multi-annual planning document established for each beneficiary country on a three years rolling basis which translates orientations set out in European Partnerships and Regular Reports into specific priorities and indicative financial allocations.
Multi-annual Operational Programmes	Multi-annual Operational programmes are three year programmes which develop in more detail the main priority axes of the MIPD under the Regional Development Component, the Human Resources Development Component, and the Rural Development Component.
National Authorising Officer (NAO)	The National Authorising Officer is a senior official in the national administration. He/she has overall responsibility for the financial management of the EU pre-accession funds, including the observance of the Financing Memorandum and the Practical Guide and supervision of the National Fund. The NAO functions as the contact point for financial information sent between the Commission and beneficiary country.
National Fund	The National Fund is the only channel through which Community pre-accession funds flow.
National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC)	The National IPA Coordinator is a high-ranking official appointed by the government of the beneficiary country as its principal representative for IPA. As principal representative, he/ she is the main contact point for the Commission in any IPA-related matter. He/she is responsible for ensuring co-ordination both at the level of programming and at the level of monitoring and assessment of the programmes.
Operational programmes	Operational programmes are annual programmes established for each beneficiary country which develop in more detail the main priority axes of the MIPD under each component of IPA.
Operating Structure	For each IPA component or program, entity or collection of entities, within the administration of the beneficiary country that deals with the management and implementation of assistance under the IPA, to the exclusion of the tasks undertaken by the national IPA co-ordinator, the sectoral coordinator, the national authorising officer and the national fund.
Potential candidate countries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia including Kosovo acc. to UNSCR 1244 - countries that will receive assistance through Components I and II of IPA.
Programming Guide	This document is designed to give guidance to ELARG Country Co-ordinators, and to those involved in planning and project preparation in the Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries on how to programme under IPA components.
Project fiche	The project fiches set out clearly the priority axes, the envisaged operations and their chosen implementing methods. Financing proposals are prepared by the Commission in view of the project fiches.

Sectoral agreement	This agreement relates to a specific IPA component drawn up, where appropriate, between the Commission and the beneficiary country, and setting out the relevant provisions to be respected which are not contained in the country specific framework agreement or financing agreements.
Sectoral coordinator	Entity in the administration of the beneficiary country placed under the responsibility of the national IPA co-ordinator, and ensuring the co-ordination either at component level in the case of the regional development component and human resources development component, or within a component as is the case for the cross-border co-operation component, where the sectoral co-ordinator ensures the coordination of the beneficiary country's participation in the relevant cross-border programmes.
Senior Programme Officers (SPO)	The Senior Programme Officer is a person, usually working with the final beneficiary – line ministry, who is responsible for the technical aspects of the IPA project. The SPO ensures the good and timely implementation of projects at technical level.
Strategic Coherence Framework	The strategic coherence framework constitutes a reference document for the programming of the regional development component and the human resources development component.
Strategy Paper	The strategy paper presents the Commission's overall enlargement policy for the candidate countries and the potential candidate countries in a single, annually published document.
Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX)	TAIEX provides short-term support (seminars, workshops, expert mobilisations and study visits) to the approximation of national legislation to EU law, and its implementation and enforcement. Monitoring progress and assessment of administrative capacity are covered as well as the preparation of strategies to deal with remaining needs vis à vis the entire <i>acquis</i> .
Twinning and Twinning Light	Twinning and Twinning Light are the main instruments of Institution Building. They are based on co-operation between public administrations in Member States and Candidate Countries and are focused on achieving a mandatory result in terms of the capacity to implement part of the <i>Acquis</i> .