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| **TOOL SUMMARY: PROBLEM TREE**  |
| Purpose | The Problem Tree is a method for conducting a problem analysis. The purpose of a problem analysis is to study of one or more problems (identified during the assessment stage), to identify the causes and decide whether and how to address them. * The Problem Tree method is used to structure, summarize and organize the initial findings of the needs assessment. It takes the form of a tree which helps visualize the overall situation with the causes being the roots of the tree, the problem as the trunk, and the effects as the branches.
	+ Merely listing and ranking problems does not provide for a sufficiently deep analysis of the situation.
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| Information Sources | 1. IFRC Project Planning Guidance Manual: 4.1.4: Problem analysis using the “problem tree” tool (P. 21-22)
2. IFRC Project Planning Guidance Manual: Annex 1: How to create a problem tree (P. 51-53)
3. Initial situation/needs assessment
4. Other needs assessment data
5. Project team experience
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| Who | The problem analysis using the Problem Tree method should be coordinated/facilitated by one person who leads the entire process. For **UNRESTRICTED projects** this will often be the LWR Program Manager, but can be a representative from the partner or even the LWR Country Director. * The factors to consider when determining the lead for this process is his/her familiarity with target population, familiarity with the results from the needs assessment, and experience in using the Problem Tree method.
* Doing the Problem Tree with participation of representatives of the target population is ideal. The target population is most familiar with the problems and the context.

For **RESTRICTED projects** the person responsible for the completion of the Problem Tree as well as the remaining aspects of the project design is the Technical Design Coordinator, who is selected during the Proposal Kickoff Meeting. The Technical Design Coordinator:* Leads the technical design workshop with participation from LWR, partners and technical experts. The technical design workshop covers the problem analysis (Problem Tree), development of possible solutions to the problem by creating expected results (Objectives Tree) and confirming the logic of the selected results (Results Framework and Logical Framework)
* Writes sections including: Project Design Workbook, which may include Problems to Objectives, Results Framework, Logframe, Implementation Plan and/or M&E Plan Matrix depending on donor guidance.

For proposals under the threshold ($500,000), the Decision Maker will identify the Technical Design Facilitator. For proposals over the threshold, the Decision Maker and the Deputy Director for NBD will select the Technical Design Facilitator.\* For further guidance on the grants acquisition process please refer to the LWR Grants Acquisition Manual. |
| When | The Problem Tree method is used after the needs assessment and before starting work on the Objectives Tree.  |
| Recommendations | * The Problem Tree method is not required, but some form of problem analysis should be completed for all projects.
	+ The Problem Tree method is a very effective tool and LWR recommends that it be used as the primary problem analysis method. LWR’s past Problem Analysis box can also be used to document the results, but it is recommended that the concept behind the Problem Tree method form the foundation for analysis.
* **For some RESTRICTED proposals the donor may specify the problem statement or the causes, or both.**
	+ In cases where the problem statement is provided, then the problem analysis should focus on determining only the causes to that problem. The analysis of the causes should still be based on what is known about the target area/population as a result of the needs assessment.
	+ If both the problem statement and the causes are specified by the donor, the problem analysis is NOT required. The design team can move directly to conducting the Objectives Tree analysis and completing the Problem to Objectives tab.
* It is recommended that the problem statement and each cause identified be linked to data that verifies its existence in the target population and the degree to which it affects the target population.
	+ For example, if the project goal is "improved agricultural productivity", the corresponding description of the cause would be "poor agricultural productivity in the target area." The degree to which the cause affects the target population would be represented by specific data would verify the “how poor” the agricultural productivity is in the area (i.e. 50% reduction from average in the past year).
	+ The documented source may be a LWR needs assessment, peer agency needs assessment, government report, agency report, or other published document
	+ **This source is documented in the Project Design Workbook in the Problem to Objectives tab.**
* The process is as important as the product. The exercise should be treated as a learning experience and an opportunity for different views and interests to be expressed.
* If necessary, the different aspects of a problem area can be further elaborated through focus groups or interviews.
* The Word template provided is a typical graphical presentation of a Problem Tree. The graphic can be manipulated (size and number of boxes) to reflect the results of the Problem Tree analysis, which is often completed with sticky notes and flip chart.
	+ If the Word template is used it must be transferred to the Project Design Workbook once completed. To do so, copy the whole graphic and paste it into the Project Design Workbook using the “Paste Special” function and paste it as a “Picture (PNG)”
	+ An alternative option is to take a photo of the results and paste it into the Project Design Workbook.

 **KEY:** Any method or program can be used to document the results of the Problem Tree in the Project Design Workbook. What is important is that the results are documented. |
| Tips | * Completing the problem analysis (Problem Tree) can be complex, therefore experience in facilitating the use of the Problem Tree method and familiarity with the local context is of utmost importance when selecting a lead coordinator/facilitator.
* Does each cause-effect link (illustrated by arrows) make sense? Is each link plausible? Why or why not?
* How well have the causes gone down to the roots? Are there any unidentified root causes?
* What appears to be the relative contribution of each causal stream (causes linked by arrows leading to the core problem statement) to the problem? Do some causes appear more than once? Why is this? Which causes show significant influence?
* Depending on the depth of analysis, the lowest cause identified in the Problem Tree can relate directly to chosen activities.
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**Problem**

**Effects**

**Cause: Level 1**

**Cause: Level 2**

**Effect 2:**

**Effect 3:**

**Problem Statement:**

**Cause 1.b:**

**Effect 1:**

**Effect 4:**

**Cause 1:**

**Cause 3:**

**Cause 2.a:**

**Cause 2:**

**Cause 1.a:**

**Cause 3.a:**

**Cause 3.c:**

**Cause 3.b:**

**LWR PROBLEM TREE TEMPLATE**

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| **TOOL SUMMARY: OBJECTIVES TREE** |
| Purpose | The purpose of the Objective Tree is to represent ALL possible objectives/results that the project has identified to solve the problem identified in the Problem Tree analysis. It is a tool to aid analysis and the presentation of solutions. Its main strength is that it keeps the analysis of potential project objectives/results firmly rooted in addressing a range of clearly identified priority problems. Whereas problems analysis seek to identify current negative conditions, objectives analysis aims to display all possible solutions and will form the foundation for the project’s specific strategies.* The Objectives Tree is the intermediate step between the Problem Tree and the Results Framework. The difference between the Objective Tree and the Results Framework is that The Results Framework shows the final results that the project has selected, leaving out those objectives that are not relevant or are too resource intensive.
* Demonstrate and describe the situation in the future if all the identified problems were remedied
* It identifies possible objectives (intended results) and verifies the hierarchy between them
* It illustrate and verifies the causal (means-ends) relationships through a diagram
* It establishes priorities by:
	+ assessing how realistic the achievement of some objectives may be and
	+ identifying additional means that may be required to achieve the intended results[[1]](#footnote-1)
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| Information Sources | 1. IFRC Project Planning Manual: 4.2 Development of objectives (P. 22-24)
2. IFRC Project Planning Manual: Annex 2: How to create and use an objectives tree (P. 54-56)
3. Problem Tree results
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| Who | The completion of the Objective Tree should be coordinated/facilitated by one person who leads the entire project design process. For **UNRESTRICTED projects** this will often be the LWR Program Manager, but can be a representative from the partner or even the LWR Country Director. The factors to consider when determining the lead for this process is his/her familiarity with target population, familiarity with the results from the needs assessment, and experience in using the Objective Tree method.For **RESTRICTED projects** the person responsible for the completion of the Problem Tree as well as the remaining aspects of the project design is the Technical Design Coordinator, who is selected during the Proposal Kickoff Meeting. The Technical Design Coordinator:* Leads the technical design workshop with participation from LWR, partners and technical experts. The technical design workshop covers the problem analysis (Problem Tree), development of possible solutions to the problem by creating expected results (Problem to Objectives) and confirming the logic of the selected results ( Results Framework and Logical Framework)
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| When | The Objective Tree tool is used after the Problem Tree is completed and is documented in the Problem to Objectives tab of the Project Design Workbook. The objective analysis using the Objective Tree is the intermediate step between the creation of the Problem Tree and the creation of the Results Framework. |
| Recommendations | * There may be some causes near the bottom of the tree that are very general. They cannot be turned into objectives that can easily be addressed by an intervention. Instead, they act as external factors that need to be considered and assessed to verify the feasibility of the intervention
* Use the Problem to Objectives tab of the Project Design Workbook to document all the possible solutions (Goal, Outcomes, Outputs) to the problem and causes identified during the Problem Tree analysis. Use the Objective Tree Method to determine the final solution identified by the project. The Results Framework tab will document the final solution that is chosen.
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| Tips | * Are the positive statements and objectives clear?
* Have they been put into a logical and reasonable order that shows means-to-ends logic?
* Is there a need to add other objectives?
* How do these objectives differ from the initial assessment of how the intervention should be designed?
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**GOAL**

**IMPACTS**

**OUTCOME**

**OUTPUT**

**Impact 2:**

**Impact 3:**

**Goal:**

**Output 1.b:**

**Impact 1:**

**Impact 4:**

**Outcome 1:**

**Outcome 3:**

**Output 2.a:**

**Outcome 2:**

**Output 1.a:**

**Output 3.a:**

**Output 3.c:**

**Output 3.b:**

**LWR OBJECTIVES TREE TEMPLATE**

1. Borrowed directly from: IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies). 2010. *Project/ Program Planning Guidance Manual*. Geneva. P. 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)