

Lecture 1

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of International Project Management

Content Module 1 · Design and Preparation of International Projects

Full lecture text accompanying the presentation (34 slides)

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Introduction

► SLIDE 1

This lecture opens the course "INTERNATIONAL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT". The course prepares Master's students to design, finance, implement and evaluate projects that are funded by international donors and carried out by partners from more than one country. It is organised in two content modules. Content Module 1, "Design and Preparation of International Projects", covers the work that precedes the signing of a grant agreement: the theoretical foundations of the field (this lecture), project design and intervention logic (Lecture 2), the preparation of a project proposal and grant application (Lecture 3), and grant funding, donor programmes and the building of an international consortium (Lecture 4). Content Module 2, "Implementation, Administration and Evaluation of International Projects", follows the project after it has been approved: planning implementation and managing the team (Lecture 5), financial management and administration (Lecture 6), risk, communication and quality management (Lecture 7), and monitoring, evaluation, reporting and the sustainability of results (Lecture 8).

The purpose of Lecture 1 is to establish the conceptual and methodological ground on which all later topics stand. INTERNATIONAL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT has its own professional language. Donors, evaluators and partner organisations use terms such as "programme", "target group", "associated partner" or "formulation" with precise meanings, and an applicant who uses them loosely signals inexperience before the substance of the proposal is even read. A proposal that confuses beneficiaries with target groups, or presents a set of unrelated activities as a programme, is likely to be marked down by evaluators, and a manager who does not understand the logic of the project cycle will struggle to meet the reporting obligations that follow approval. The lecture therefore defines the core concepts carefully and shows how they fit together.

► SLIDE 2

The lecture is organised in six sections, which correspond to the plan on the slide:

1. The essence, features and typology of international projects.
2. Project, programme and portfolio: the relationship between the concepts.
3. The life cycle of an international project.
4. The international project environment: donors, partners, beneficiaries, target groups and stakeholders.
5. Project management methodologies: PMBOK, PM², Project Cycle Management and the Logical Framework Approach.
6. Managing under uncertainty, intercultural interaction and limited resources.

The sequence moves from the basic concept of a project to the specific conditions under which international projects are managed. The first four sections build a conceptual vocabulary: what a project is, how it relates to larger management units, how it unfolds in time, and which actors surround it. The fifth section introduces the methodological toolkit with which practitioners

plan and control their work. The sixth explains why international projects demand managerial competencies that go beyond those needed for a domestic initiative of similar size.

By the end of this lecture, students should be able to:

1. define a project with reference to the PMBOK Guide and ISO 21500:2021, and explain the criteria and specific features that make a project international;
2. classify international projects according to five criteria and distinguish between a project, a programme and a portfolio in terms of the level of management;
3. describe the six phases of the international project life cycle, relate them to Project Cycle Management, and explain why monitoring is a cross-cutting process and management is iterative;
4. differentiate the roles of the donor, coordinator, partners and associated partners, and the categories of beneficiaries, target groups and stakeholders;
5. compare PMBOK, PM², Project Cycle Management and the Logical Framework Approach, and justify the choice of methodology for a given donor, sector and type of project;
6. analyse the factors of uncertainty, intercultural interaction, resource constraints, donor–recipient asymmetry and accountability that shape the management of international projects, including those implemented in Ukraine.

1. The Essence, Features and Typology of International Projects

► SLIDE 3

The first section fixes the object of the course: before proposals, budgets or evaluation can be discussed, it has to be established what exactly is being proposed, budgeted and evaluated. The section is organised around the three questions on the divider slide. What is a project according to international standards? What makes a project international? And how can international projects be classified, so that a manager can select suitable tools and find the applicable donor rules? The answers occupy slides 4 to 9.

What Is a Project? Two Standard Definitions

► SLIDE 4

Two documents supply the definitions most often cited in professional practice and in donor guidance. The first is *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*, published by the Project Management Institute (PMI) and known as the PMBOK Guide. The second is the international standard ISO 21500:2021, "Project, programme and portfolio management — Context and concepts", issued by the International Organization for Standardization.

PMBOK Guide (PMI): *a project is "a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result."*

ISO 21500:2021: *a project is "a unique set of processes consisting of coordinated and controlled tasks with start and finish dates, undertaken to achieve an objective that conforms to specific requirements, including constraints on time, cost and resources."*

Project Management Institute, A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide); ISO 21500:2021, Project, programme and portfolio management — Context and concepts.

The two formulations complement each other. The PMBOK definition isolates two attributes on which the discipline rests. **Temporariness** means that every project has a clearly defined beginning and end. It does not mean that a project is short: a four-year programme of institutional reform is as temporary as a three-month study. It means that the endeavour is planned to stop, because its objective has been reached or because the time or money allotted has run out. **Uniqueness** means that the product, service or result differs in some particular way from all similar ones: a university may have modernised curricula before, but not with these partners, in this context and with this budget. Together the two attributes separate a project from an operation, a continuing activity that repeats the same processes, such as running an admissions office.

The ISO definition adds two dimensions. It describes a project as a set of *processes*, that is, coordinated and controlled tasks and not a single act, and it names the constraints within which the objective must be achieved: time, cost and resources. This is the language of donors: a grant is awarded for a stated period, in a stated amount, to reach stated objectives, and the applicant must show that the tasks are coordinated and controlled well enough to deliver them. The first definition thus identifies what a project *is*, the second what a manager must *do* with it.

Temporariness has a practical consequence. Because the project ends, the question of what remains cannot wait until the final month: equipment, curricula, networks and skills must outlive the team that created them. Section 3 and Lecture 8 return to this point.

What Makes a Project International?

► SLIDE 5

The course defines an international project in a single, dense sentence, which the slide unpacks into four criteria.

An international project is a project implemented with the participation of actors (donors, implementers, partners, beneficiaries) belonging to different national jurisdictions, financed wholly or in part from foreign or supranational sources, and directed towards resolving problems of a cross-border, regional or global dimension, or towards developing the capacity of the recipient country in accordance with the donor's priorities.

The first criterion is the presence of **multinational actors**: the donor, the implementers, their partners and the beneficiaries belong to different national jurisdictions and are therefore subject to different legal systems, administrative rules and professional conventions. The second is **external funding**: the money comes wholly or partly from foreign or supranational sources, such as the EU budget, an international financial institution, a donor fund or a diplomatic

mission. The third is a **transnational problem**: the project addresses an issue of cross-border, regional or global dimension. The fourth is **capacity development**: the project strengthens the recipient country's capacity in line with the donor's priorities. The definition joins the last two with "or", because some projects are driven mainly by a shared problem and others mainly by the development of one country's institutions. The slide presents the four as interrelated, and the paradigm case is one in which all are present.

The example on the slide illustrates such a case. An Erasmus+ Capacity Building consortium of Ukrainian and EU universities involves actors from several countries and is financed from the EU budget, a supranational source. Its aim, the modernisation of higher education, is framed as a challenge shared by several countries and not by a single institution, and it develops the capacity of the partner universities in accordance with the priorities set by the programme.

Two boundaries should be kept in mind. A project is not international merely because a foreign consultant has been hired or equipment imported: if the donor, the implementers and the beneficiaries belong to one jurisdiction and the money comes from one national budget, the project is national in the sense used here. Conversely, a small project may be international. These boundaries answer the first self-check question: an international project differs from a domestic one in its actors, who belong to different jurisdictions, and in its sources of funding, which are foreign or supranational.

Illustrative example. Consider three hypothetical projects. A Ukrainian regional council renovates a municipal school from its own budget through a Ukrainian contractor: every actor and the source of funds are national, so the project is not international. A Ukrainian university and universities from two EU Member States receive a grant from an EU programme to develop a joint study programme: all four criteria are met. A Ukrainian non-governmental organisation receives a small embassy grant to train local officials: the donor and implementer belong to different jurisdictions, the money is external and local capacity is built, but the problem may be purely local, so the project is international in a weaker sense.

Seven Generic Features of Any Project

► SLIDE 6

Whatever its sector and whatever its funder, a project displays seven generic features. The slide ends with a "+ 4" marker that points ahead to the features added by internationality; we take the seven in a logical order and not in the order of the slide.

Two features follow from the definitions above. **Temporariness** is the existence of a defined start date and end date. **Phased implementation** is the progression of every project through the stages of a life cycle, described in Section 3: a project cannot begin with implementation, because an idea, an analysis and a plan must come first, and it cannot end without closure. A third, **uniqueness of the result**, has been discussed: even within a standard donor programme each project is an unrepeatable combination of objectives, context, team and resources.

Purposefulness means that all actions are subordinated to a predetermined goal and to a system of indicators for measuring its achievement. This is why the planning tools taught later are built

around objectives and indicators: an activity that cannot be tied to an objective has no place in the work plan, and an objective that cannot be measured cannot be reported on. **Resource constraints** mean a fixed budget, limited staff and a fixed time frame, which in grant-funded work are normally set by the terms of the award.

The remaining two features describe the difficulty of the work. **Complexity and interdisciplinarity** arise because a project needs competencies from several fields: a project on digital skills for teachers requires pedagogy, information technology, financial administration and communication expertise, and someone must combine them. **Riskiness and uncertainty** arise because some determinants of the outcome, such as the decisions of public authorities or the behaviour of target groups, are not fully controllable by the project team.

Students can test the list on a project they know: the deadline and the budget are visible from the start, whereas uncertainty tends to be recognised only when something goes wrong.

What International Projects Add to the Generic Features

► SLIDE 7

An international project adds four features to the seven generic ones. The slide expresses this as $7 + 4$, and the eleven features together define the managerial profile of an international project.

Transnationality is the involvement of actors from different countries; it gives rise to the others, because partners must work across borders, time zones and legal systems and satisfy several sets of rules at once. **Donor-orientation** is subordination to the donor's requirements and procedures. The donor decides which priorities are funded, how applications are assessed, which costs are eligible and how progress is reported, and a project that ignores these choices will not be funded or, if funded, not paid in full. Lectures 3 and 4 treat the consequences.

Accountability under international standards means financial and substantive reporting in accordance with EU or other donor rules: the project must account for what it spent and for what it achieved, in the prescribed format and at the prescribed times. Lectures 6 and 8 examine its two halves. **The intercultural character** of communication and management reflects the different managerial traditions and expectations that partners bring; Section 6 returns to it with data.

The features follow from the criteria in the definition: external funding produces donor-orientation and accountability, and multinational actors produce transnationality and the intercultural character.

Classifying International Projects: Five Criteria

► SLIDE 8

International projects are so various that some classification is needed. The purpose is practical: classification helps to select appropriate management tools and to identify the relevant donor rules. Five criteria are used.

Criterion	Types of international projects
Source of funding	EU programmes; international financial institutions; development agencies and donor funds; diplomatic missions and embassies; international NGOs
Field of implementation	Economic; educational and scientific; infrastructure; humanitarian; environmental; governance and institutional capacity-building; cross-border cooperation
Scale and territorial coverage	Local; regional; national; cross-border; transnational; global
Nature of the result	Investment (capital); research; consultancy; technical assistance; capacity-building
Number of participants	Bilateral (two-partner); multilateral (consortium-based)

The criteria are independent of one another, and a single project can be classified under all five at the same time. The Erasmus+ Capacity Building project used as an example is EU-funded (source of funding), educational (field), transnational (scale), capacity-building (nature of the result) and consortium-based (number of participants).

Each criterion draws attention to a different managerial issue. The source of funding indicates whose rules apply, the field of implementation which sectoral expertise and technical standards are required, and scale and territorial coverage how many jurisdictions and levels of authority are involved. The nature of the result indicates what the project delivers and therefore how success is verified: a capital investment yields physical assets, research yields new knowledge, consultancy yields analysis and advice, technical assistance transfers expertise, and capacity-building strengthens the ability of institutions and people to act. The last criterion separates bilateral projects from multilateral ones, in which a consortium must coordinate partners from different countries; the second type is more demanding and is the main concern of Lecture 4.

Who Funds International Projects?

► SLIDE 9

The first criterion, the source of funding, is the one that most directly shapes what an applicant must do, and the slide therefore names the five categories of funder with examples.

The first category consists of **EU programmes**, for example Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Interreg and EU4Business. The second is **international financial institutions**, such as the World Bank, the EBRD and the EIB. The third is **development agencies and donor funds**, for example USAID, GIZ, SIDA and the European Endowment for Democracy. The fourth is **diplomatic missions**, whose embassies run small grants projects. The fifth is **international non-governmental organisations**, whose projects form a separate category.

A note on currency concerns one of these examples. USAID ceased operations on 1 July 2025, when the remaining United States foreign-assistance programmes were transferred to the US Department of State; the agency has not been formally abolished by Congress, but it no longer operates as a funder. It is kept here as an example of a bilateral development agency because

much of the project documentation students will meet was produced under its rules; for current opportunities, students should always check the official site of the relevant donor.

Sources: ABC News, "USAID programs now being run by State Department as agency ends operations" (July 2025); Donor Tracker, "US government announces official closure of USAID" (2025); "United States Agency for International Development", Wikipedia (accessed September 2026).

Each category has its own priorities, procedures and volumes of funding. An applicant who knows which category a donor belongs to can anticipate a good deal: how large the project is likely to be, whether a consortium is expected, which methodology the donor uses, and how much reporting will follow approval. An embassy's small grant and an EU framework programme are both "international" in the sense defined above, but they differ greatly in consortium size and in the complexity of application and paperwork. Lecture 4 examines the range of donors systematically; the choice of donor is the first strategic decision in INTERNATIONAL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT and precedes the use of the planning tools of the following sections.

2. Project, Programme, Portfolio: The Relationship Between the Concepts

► SLIDE 10

The words "project", "programme" and "portfolio" are used loosely in everyday speech, and donor documents may call a funding call a programme, a grant a project and a set of grants a portfolio without further explanation. In project management they name three different levels. The divider slide poses the questions that justify the distinction: why it matters for tools, decisions and reporting; how coordinated benefits differ from strategic alignment; and what it means to distinguish "doing the work right" from "doing the right work".

Three Levels of Management in INTERNATIONAL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

► SLIDE 11

The slide arranges the three concepts as a hierarchy, with the portfolio at the top and the project at the base.

Project: *a temporary endeavour undertaken to achieve a specific, measurable result within defined time frames and budget.*

Programme: *a group of related projects, sub-projects and programme activities managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually.*

Portfolio: *a collection of projects, programmes, sub-portfolios and operational activities managed as a group to achieve the strategic objectives of the organisation.*

At the level of the **project**, the manager's question is whether the work is being done correctly: are deadlines being met, is the budget holding, and is the scope, that is, the agreed content of the work, being delivered? The slide summarises this orientation as "doing the work right".

A **programme** brings related projects together so that they produce something that none could produce alone. The example used in this course is Horizon Europe, a framework programme under which a very large number of individual research and innovation projects are financed, united by the goal of strengthening Europe's scientific and innovation capacity. Programme management therefore aligns the objectives of individual projects with strategic priorities, allocates resources among them, and manages the dependencies between them, for instance where the results of one project are the input of another. The key word on the slide is *synergy*.

A **portfolio** is defined by strategy and not by functional relatedness. Its components may be projects, programmes, sub-portfolios and operational activities that have nothing in common except that they serve the strategy of one organisation: a university's portfolio of international projects may include educational, research and infrastructure projects financed by different donors. The portfolio manager asks whether the organisation is undertaking the right initiatives at all, and how scarce staff and co-financing should be distributed: "doing the right work".

The three levels depend on the point of view. The same initiative is a project for its team, a component of a programme for the donor that funds it, and an item in the portfolio of the university that hosts it. An applicant should therefore ask at which level a call speaks, and should show in the proposal how the project contributes to the goals of the programme.

Project, Programme and Portfolio Compared

► SLIDE 12

The table on the slide sets the three concepts side by side.

Dimension	Project	Programme	Portfolio
Essence	Temporary endeavour for a specific, measurable result	Group of related projects and programme activities	Collection of projects, programmes and operations
Link between components	—	Functionally interrelated	Not necessarily interrelated; united by strategy
Management focus	Deadlines, budget, scope	Coordination for a synergistic effect	Strategic selection and prioritisation
Example	A single Erasmus+ project	EU framework programme Horizon Europe	A university's portfolio of international projects

Reading the table by rows shows the logic of the classification. The *essence* row moves from a single result to a group of related endeavours and then to a mixed collection that may include continuing operations. The *link between components* row records the decisive difference between programme and portfolio: the components of a programme are functionally interrelated, and coordinating them is its purpose, whereas those of a portfolio are united only by the organisation's choice. The cell for the project is empty, because a project has no components at this level. The *management focus* row states what a manager does at each level.

The distinction is methodologically fundamental because it determines the choice of management tools, the level at which decisions are taken, and the reporting system. A project

team uses a work plan, a budget and a risk register; a programme needs instruments for tracking benefits and dependencies across projects; a portfolio needs criteria for selection and prioritisation. Decisions about scope belong to the project, about the balance between projects to the programme, and about which initiatives to undertake to the portfolio. Reporting follows the same pattern, from results against indicators to aggregated results and strategic fit. The PMI *Standard for Program Management* in the reading list is the reference for the programme level.

A simple test checks understanding: the Horizon Europe framework programme belongs in the programme column, a single Horizon Europe research project in the project column, and a university's full set of international projects in the portfolio column. The same examples answer the second self-check question; Erasmus+ works equally well, as programme, funded consortium and institutional collection.

3. The Life Cycle of an International Project

► SLIDE 13

Projects are temporary, and they unfold in time. Section 3 describes that unfolding. The divider slide poses three questions: what are the six phases from initiation to closure; how do they correspond to Project Cycle Management, used by the European Commission and most donors; and why is the cycle iterative and not linear? The section also maps the rest of the course, since each later lecture treats one or more phases.

Six Phases of the International Project Life Cycle

► SLIDE 14

The project life cycle is the sequence of phases through which a project passes from its inception to its completion.

In INTERNATIONAL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT the most widespread model is consistent with the logic of Project Cycle Management (PCM), which the European Commission and most donor organisations use. The slide names six phases: initiation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and closure. It is useful to follow each phase by asking what work is done, what document is produced and what decision ends it.

In **initiation** the context is analysed, the problems and needs of target groups are identified, the project idea is formulated, and its preliminary fit with the donor's strategic priorities is assessed. The phase ends with a decision on whether it is advisable to develop a project proposal at all, the so-called go / no-go decision. In **planning** the idea becomes a design: objectives and results are formulated, the logical framework matrix is constructed, indicators are defined, and the budget, timetable and risk management plan are drawn up. The phase produces the funding application, and it ends with the decision to submit it.

Implementation is the practical execution of the planned activities: resources are used, partners are coordinated, and the team and the flow of documents are managed. **Monitoring** is the systematic tracking of progress against the planned indicators, which provides management

with up-to-date information for decisions. **Evaluation** is the assessment of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. **Closure** consists of final reports, the handover of results to beneficiaries, the archiving of documents and the consolidation of lessons learned.

The next slide makes the correspondence with PCM explicit.

Phases, PCM Equivalents and Key Outputs

► SLIDE 15

Phase	PCM equivalent	Key content and outputs
1. Initiation	Identification / Programming	Context analysis; problems and needs of target groups; project idea; preliminary fit with donor priorities; go / no-go decision
2. Planning	Formulation / Design	Objectives and results; logical framework matrix; indicators; budget, timetable and risk plan; funding application
3. Implementation	Implementation	Execution of planned activities; use of resources; coordination of partners; management of the team and document flow
4. Monitoring	Cross-cutting process	Systematic tracking of progress against indicators; up-to-date information for management decisions
5. Evaluation	Mid-term, final, ex-post	Systematic, objective assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability
6. Closure	Closure	Final reporting; handover of results to beneficiaries; archiving; consolidation of lessons learned

The middle column shows that the six-phase model consolidates the PCM cycle. Initiation covers both programming, which in PCM sets the strategic framework and priorities and is chiefly the donor's concern, and identification, in which the applicant must take those priorities into account when choosing a project idea. Planning corresponds to formulation, the stage at which PCM requires the Logical Framework Approach. Monitoring is listed as a cross-cutting process, and evaluation appears in its three forms.

The three forms of evaluation differ in timing. A **mid-term** evaluation is carried out while the project is running and can still change its course. A **final** evaluation takes place at or near completion and judges what was achieved. An **ex-post** evaluation is conducted some time after the project has ended and asks whether the results have lasted, which is the sustainability question in its purest form. The five criteria named in the table are developed in Lecture 8, together with monitoring and reporting.

The table also serves as a map of the course. Lectures 2 to 4 concern initiation and planning: project design, the application, and the donor and partnership. Lectures 5 to 7 concern the management of implementation, and Lecture 8 covers monitoring, evaluation and closure.

The Life Cycle Is Not Strictly Linear

► SLIDE 16

A list of six phases suggests a straight line from left to right, and the slide corrects this impression. Two features make the cycle non-linear.

The first is that **monitoring runs in parallel**. Slides 14 and 15 show monitoring as a phase for reasons of clarity, but it accompanies implementation throughout the project instead of following it. This answers the third self-check question. Monitoring is a cross-cutting process and not a separate stage because its purpose is to give managers information in time to act on it: a check made only when the work is finished can establish what went wrong but can no longer influence the outcome, and has become an audit or an evaluation. Monitoring must therefore begin with the first activity, use the indicators defined during planning, and inform each management decision. It must also be designed in advance, since indicators and sources of verification are set at the planning stage.

The second feature is that **evaluation feeds back**. Its findings may prompt the revision of plans, budgets and activities, and its lessons pass into the next project's initiation. Management is therefore *iterative*: information from later phases returns to earlier ones, so that the cycle is a loop and not a line. The slide calls this the PCM logic, since the iterative cycle is built into the approach of the European Commission and most donors. The freedom to revise is limited: as Section 6 shows, donors restrict changes to budgets, and revision usually needs their consent, which is one reason why planning must be careful.

Illustrative example. Suppose that monitoring of a hypothetical training project shows low attendance, and the mid-term evaluation explains it: sessions are held during working hours. The plan is revised, the sessions are moved to the evening, the costs are adjusted with the donor's approval and the lesson is recorded for later projects.

4. The International Project Environment

► SLIDE 17

A project does not operate in isolation, and the success of an international project depends to a considerable extent on an understanding of who surrounds it. The divider slide asks who shapes, funds, implements and benefits from the project, and announces that the section will distinguish three terms that are often confused: beneficiaries, target groups and stakeholders. It also prepares the ground for the stakeholder analysis of Lecture 2.

Mapping the Environment of an International Project

► SLIDE 18

The environment of a project is the totality of actors whose interests and resources influence the project or are affected by it.

The slide represents the environment as four layers, moving outwards from the core. At the centre is the **consortium**: the coordinator and the partners who implement the work plan. Around it stand the **donor and the associated partners**, who provide funding and support. The third layer holds those on whom the project has a direct effect, the **target groups and beneficiaries**. The outermost layer contains the **wider stakeholders**: public authorities, the academic community, the media, competing initiatives and the general public.

The definition is two-directional. Actors belong to the environment if their interests and resources *influence* the project, as a donor does, and also if they are *affected* by it, as a community is by a new service. The same actor can occupy several positions: a ministry may be an associated partner, an audience for the results and a source of regulations that limit the project. The map is a device for asking questions: who is missing from the picture, whose support the project needs, and whose opposition it must expect.

Donor, Coordinator, Partners and Associated Partners

► SLIDE 19

The four roles in the inner layers of the map are defined by their relation to the money, to the contract and to the work.

The **donor** is the funding body: an organisation that provides financial or other resources. It may be the European Commission, an EU executive agency, the government of a donor country, an international financial institution or a private foundation. What distinguishes the donor from every other actor is the power to set the rules: it determines the funding priorities and the procedural requirements, and it defines the criteria against which applications and reports are evaluated.

The **coordinator**, or lead applicant, leads the consortium, bears the principal contractual responsibility to the donor and coordinates the activities of the partners. The **partners**, or co-applicants, implement the project together with the coordinator, each responsible for a defined part of the work plan. **Associated partners** join without direct funding from the donor and provide expert, advisory or organisational support. Terms vary between donors, and a call may use "beneficiary" or "co-applicant" for what is here called a partner, so the applicant must read the definitions in each call. Lecture 4 examines how the roles are documented in mandate letters, letters of intent and the consortium agreement.

The line between partners and associated partners needs care. A partner carries a share of the work plan and of the responsibility for it; an associated partner contributes without such a share. An organisation that is valuable for its expertise or network but will not perform defined tasks under the work plan is a candidate for the second category.

Illustrative example. In a hypothetical consortium, a university in an EU Member State is coordinator; two Ukrainian universities and one further EU university are partners, each leading a work package; and a ministerial department and an employers' association are associated partners who advise on priorities. The donor is an EU programme.

Beneficiaries, Target Groups and Stakeholders

► SLIDE 20

The slide describes this trio as a frequent source of confusion. The three terms denote nested but different categories.

Beneficiaries are persons, groups or organisations that receive direct benefits from the project. Two kinds are distinguished: *direct beneficiaries*, who are the immediate recipients of the project's services or products, and *final beneficiaries*, broader groups on whom the project has an indirect effect. **Target groups** are the specific groups on whom the project has a direct, positive effect at the level of the project purpose; the project interacts with them directly during implementation. **Stakeholders** form the broadest category: all persons, groups or institutions that have an interest in the project, influence it or are affected by it. The slide lists public authorities, academia, the media, competing initiatives and the general public.

This answers the fourth self-check question. A target group is a design concept: the group the project is built for and works with during implementation, and whose change the project purpose describes. A beneficiary is defined by the receipt of benefit, and the adjectives "direct" and "final" describe the distance from the project. The categories can overlap, since the same group can be both a target group and a direct beneficiary, but they do not coincide: a group that benefits only indirectly or in the long term is a final beneficiary and not a target group. Stakeholders include all of them and many more. The applicant should check how the guidance of a particular donor uses these terms.

Illustrative example. A hypothetical project trains vocational-school teachers in digital teaching methods. The teachers who attend the training are the target group and direct beneficiaries: they take part in the activities, and the purpose concerns their competence. The pupils in their classes are final beneficiaries, since they are affected only indirectly. Stakeholders include the ministry responsible for education, teacher-training institutions, local employers, other donors running similar initiatives and the media.

The distinction has practical weight. A target group defined too broadly, such as "the population of Ukraine", cannot be reached directly, and no indicator can measure a change in it; "teachers of vocational schools in named regions" can be reached and measured. Distinguishing the roles is essential for a correct stakeholder analysis and for the logical framework matrix, to which Section 5 leads.

5. Project Management Methodologies: PMBOK, PM², PCM and LFA

► SLIDE 21

Several methodological systems coexist in INTERNATIONAL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT. The divider slide states the two facts that govern their use: the choice depends on the donor, the sector and the type of project, and the logical framework is a common language between applicant and donor. The four systems are not alternatives of the same kind:

PMBOK and PM² are management methodologies, PCM is a cycle of decisions used by donors, and the Logical Framework Approach is an analytical planning method that lies inside that cycle.

PMBOK: Ten Knowledge Areas and Five Process Groups

► SLIDE 22

PMBOK is the methodology of the Project Management Institute in the United States. In the classic structure of the PMBOK Guide up to its 6th edition (2017), project management is organised along two axes. The first is **ten knowledge areas**: integration, scope, schedule, cost, quality, resource, communications, risk, procurement and stakeholder management. The second is **five process groups**: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. The knowledge areas describe *what* has to be managed, the process groups *when* in the project the work of management is done.

PMBOK is universal and sector-neutral, widely applied in the private sector and increasingly in international technical-assistance projects. Its strength is completeness: it gives the manager a systematic checklist from schedule and cost to risk and procurement. The limitation of a universal methodology is that it is silent on matters specific to donor-funded work, such as the design of the intervention logic, the relationship with the donor and the formats of donor reporting, so it is often combined with donor-specific approaches.

The Evolution of the PMBOK Guide

► SLIDE 23

Students should be aware which edition of the PMBOK Guide a donor or an employer has in mind, because the structure has changed substantially. The slide compares three editions.

Edition	Year	Orientation	Structure
6th	2017	Process-based	10 knowledge areas, 5 process groups, 49 processes
7th	2021	Principle-based	12 principles, 8 performance domains
8th	2025	Integrated: principles and processes	6 principles, 7 performance domains, 40 processes, 5 focus areas

The 6th edition is process-based and is the source of the ten-by-five structure described above. The 7th edition moved to a principle-based approach and formulated twelve principles and eight performance domains. The 8th edition integrates the two lines. Its six principles are a holistic view, a focus on value, quality in processes and deliverables, accountable leadership, sustainability and an empowered culture; its seven performance domains are governance, scope, schedule, finance, stakeholders, resources and risk. Forty processes are embedded in the domains, and five focus areas correspond to the former process groups.

Project Management Institute, A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 6th (2017), 7th (2021) and 8th (2025) editions.

PM²: The European Commission's Project Management Methodology

► SLIDE 24

PM² was developed by the European Commission's Centre of Excellence in Project Management (CoEPM²) for projects within EU institutions, and it was subsequently adapted for grant projects under Union programmes. It combines elements of PMBOK and PRINCE2 and adds a phase structure of four phases (initiating, planning, executing and closing) and standardised artefacts, of which the slide names three: the project charter, the project management plan and the issue and decision log. The methodology is designed for public and supranational governance.

Standardised artefacts mean that every project is documented in the same way, so that it can be understood, reviewed and handed over by people who did not create it. PM² matters here because it is the Commission's own approach and has been adapted for the grant projects with which the course is concerned.

PCM: Six Phases of the European Commission's Project Cycle

► SLIDE 25

Project Cycle Management was introduced by the European Commission for managing external assistance projects, that is, development and cooperation projects. The slide shows six phases: *programming* (the strategic framework and priorities), *identification* (problems, needs and project ideas), *formulation* (detailed design using the LFA), *implementation* (delivery of activities and results), *monitoring* (tracking progress against indicators) and *evaluation* (assessment of results and lessons).

The highlighted element is the rule that the Logical Framework Approach is obligatory at the formulation stage, linking problem analysis to a structured, measurable design. The correspondence with the life cycle of Section 3 is close, as slide 15 showed. The difference of emphasis is that PCM is a framework for *decisions* by a donor and its partners, from strategic priorities to the assessment of results, whereas PMBOK is a framework for the *delivery work* of a project team. Monitoring appears as a phase here, but, as Section 3 explained, it runs alongside implementation.

LFA: From Analysis to the Logical Framework Matrix

► SLIDE 26

The Logical Framework Approach is an analytical planning method in five steps: stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, objectives analysis, strategy analysis, and construction of the logframe matrix. Each step uses the product of the one before it: problems are analysed with reference to the stakeholders identified, objectives are derived from the problems, the strategy chooses among the ways of reaching the objectives, and the matrix records the outcome. Lecture 2 shows how each step is carried out.

Hierarchy of objectives	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective	Impact indicators	Statistics, studies	—
Specific objective(s)	Outcome indicators	Surveys, reports	Conditions for contributing to the overall objective
Results	Output indicators	Project records	Conditions for achieving the specific objective
Activities	Means / resources	Costs / budget	Conditions for delivering results

The rows form a *hierarchy of objectives*. The overall objective is the long-term change to which the project contributes; the specific objective is the change the project itself is expected to bring about; the results are the products and services it delivers; the activities are what the team does to produce them. Each level has its own indicators: impact, outcome and output indicators for the top three, and means and resources for activities. The third column says where evidence will be found, from national statistics and studies at the top to project records and the budget at the bottom. The fourth lists the assumptions, the conditions outside the project's control that must hold for the step to the next level. The cell for the overall objective is empty because there is no level above it.

The matrix is read from the bottom upwards as a chain of conditional statements: if the activities are carried out and the conditions for delivery hold, the results will be achieved; if the results are achieved and the next assumption holds, the specific objective will be reached; and if that is achieved and the third assumption holds, the project will contribute to the overall objective. Evaluators examine this chain, which is why the LFA, mandatory in most EU grant calls, is a common language between applicant and donor.

Four Methodologies at a Glance

► SLIDE 27

	Developer	Core structure	Typical use in international projects
PMBOK	Project Management Institute (USA)	Knowledge areas and process groups (principles and performance domains in recent editions)	Universal, sector-neutral; private sector and technical-assistance projects
PM²	European Commission, CoEPM ²	Phases: initiating, planning, executing, closing; standard artefacts	EU institutions; grant projects under EU programmes
PCM	European Commission (external assistance)	Six-phase project cycle from programming to evaluation	Development and cooperation projects of the EU and most donors
LFA	Analytical planning method	Analyses of stakeholders, problems, objectives, strategies; logframe matrix	Mandatory in most EU grant calls; common language with donors

The overview supports the independent work on Lecture 1, a comparative analysis of PMBOK, PM² and PCM. It shows that the methodologies differ in origin and purpose and are more often complementary than competing: a single grant project may use the LFA to justify its design, follow the cycle logic of PCM in reporting to the donor, and draw on PMBOK-style tools for schedule, cost and risk.

The fifth self-check question asks which of PMBOK and PCM is more oriented towards international technical-assistance projects. PCM was created for external assistance and is complemented by the LFA that donors require; PMBOK is sector-neutral and increasingly applied in technical assistance, but prescribes no donor-specific steps. PCM is therefore the more specific to the field, and PMBOK the more general toolkit.

Three cases are worth discussing in class. For a technical-assistance project financed by a bilateral development agency (for example GIZ, or USAID before its operations ceased in 2025), the guidance in the call is decisive, and a donor's planning logic combined with PMBOK-type management tools is plausible. For an Erasmus+ consortium the LFA and PCM logic apply, since it is an EU grant, and PM² is a relevant reference. For a private-sector investment project, where no donor prescribes a planning format, the sector-neutral PMBOK is the natural choice.

6. Managing Under Uncertainty, Intercultural Interaction and Limited Resources

► SLIDE 28

The final section explains why an international project demands managerial competencies beyond those needed for a domestic initiative of similar size. The divider slide names five distinguishing factors, the cultural dimensions that matter in a consortium, and the context of projects implemented in Ukraine.

Five Factors That Shape International Project Management

► SLIDE 29

Uncertainty and risk. International projects are implemented under heightened uncertainty, arising from political instability, exchange-rate fluctuations, changes in legislation and logistical constraints. Each partner brings its own national environment, so the exposure of a consortium is the sum of the exposures of its members. For projects implemented in Ukraine under current conditions there are additional security risks, which may affect the availability of staff, travel, procurement and the schedule of activities. This answers the sixth self-check question: the factors specific to Ukraine are the security risks, added to the uncertainties that all international projects face. The risk plan belongs to the planning phase, so risk management must begin at the design stage; Lecture 7 treats it in detail.

Intercultural interaction. Partners bring different managerial traditions, communication styles, time orientations and levels of power distance. The next slide examines the point with data.

Resource constraints and rigid donor procedures. Unlike an intra-organisational project, a grant project has a fixed and, as a rule, non-negotiable budget, strict eligibility rules for expenditure, mandatory co-financing and tight reporting deadlines. Resources can be reallocated between budget lines only to a limited extent, and only with the donor's prior consent. The consequence is that estimates made at the planning stage carry great weight, since errors are difficult to correct later.

Donor–recipient asymmetry. The positions of the participants are unequal. The donor sets the rules of the game (priorities, procedures, evaluation criteria), and the applicant and its partners must demonstrate that their initiative conforms to predetermined requirements. This creates a need for thorough prior analysis of the donor's strategic priorities before the project idea is developed, which is why fit with donor priorities appears already in the initiation phase.

Transparency and accountability. Public money, whether from the EU budget or from taxpayers in donor countries, entails heightened requirements: financial transparency, anti-corruption safeguards, prevention of conflicts of interest and of double funding, and good governance within the consortium. Lecture 4 returns to ethics and good governance, and Lectures 6 and 8 to financial and substantive reporting.

The factors reinforce one another: rigid rules turn uncertainty into a financial problem, since the project cannot easily adjust, and the asymmetry between donor and recipient is what makes accountability so demanding.

Power Distance in a Multinational Consortium

► SLIDE 30

Of the five factors, intercultural interaction is the one for which the course offers a measurable illustration. G. Hofstede defined **power distance** as the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations accept that power is distributed unequally. The Power Distance Index (PDI) is scored from 0 to 100, and the slide charts the values for eleven countries.

Country	PDI
Ukraine	92
Poland	68
France	68
Italy	50
USA	40
Netherlands	38
Germany	35
United Kingdom	35
Sweden	31
Denmark	18
Austria	11

Hofstede Insights, Country Comparison Tool; G. Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede and M. Minkov, Cultures and Organizations (3rd ed., 2010).

Ukraine scores 92, the highest value on the chart and 24 points above Poland and France, which share second place at 68. The gap to Germany and the United Kingdom (both 35) is 57 points, and to Austria (11), the lowest score, 81 points. In high-PDI cultures hierarchy and top-down decisions are expected; in low-PDI cultures, consultation and delegation. The implications concern decision-making, feedback and delegation in consortia: a partner from a low-PDI environment may send a draft and invite criticism, and a colleague from a high-PDI environment may read this as a lack of leadership or hesitate to criticise a superior; conversely, a coordinator may take silence for agreement when it is deference.

These scores describe national averages and do not predict the behaviour of a given person or organisation. They are useful as a source of hypotheses: they suggest questions that a manager should ask and check in conversation with partners.

A second dimension is E. Hall's distinction between **monochronic** and **polychronic** cultures. Monochronic cultures follow linear schedules and strict deadlines; polychronic cultures handle several tasks in parallel and treat time flexibly. Partners with different time orientations may read the same deadline differently, which matters where donors impose tight reporting dates. Explicit milestones, agreed communication rules and regular meetings reduce the risk.

For the manager, the conclusion is that effective management of a consortium requires intercultural competence, the ability to mediate conflict and the capacity to build trust in distributed teams.

Conclusion

► SLIDE 31

The six sections of the lecture form a single argument. A project is a temporary endeavour that creates a unique result; an international project adds multinational actors, external funding and a transnational or capacity-building dimension, and four specific features join the seven generic ones. The distinction between project, programme and portfolio (doing the work right, creating synergy, doing the right work) decides which tools, decisions and reports belong at which level. The life cycle supplies the order of the work, and its iterative character explains why monitoring and evaluation feed back into planning. The environment map and the definitions of roles give the vocabulary of donors and partners, and the four methodologies are the toolkit, chosen according to donor, sector and project type. The final section explains why all this is harder in an international setting.

Key takeaways:

- A project is a temporary endeavour creating a unique result; an international project adds multinational actors, external funding and a transnational dimension.
- Seven generic and four specific features define the managerial profile of an international project.
- Project, programme and portfolio differ in management level: doing the work right, creating synergy and doing the right work.
- The life cycle runs from initiation to closure; monitoring is cross-cutting and management is iterative.
- PMBOK, PM², PCM and the LFA coexist; the choice depends on the donor, the sector and the project type.
- Uncertainty, cultural diversity, rigid donor rules, asymmetry and accountability demand specific managerial competencies.

The concepts of this lecture will be used in every lecture that follows. The next lecture, "Project Design: Conceptualisation, Intervention Logic and Project Justification", takes up the planning phase and the Logical Framework Approach introduced here, and shows how a problem analysis becomes a justified and measurable project design.

Questions for Self-Assessment

► SLIDE 32

1. How does an international project differ from a national (domestic) project in terms of its actors and sources of funding?
2. Give an example of the relationship between a project, a programme and a portfolio of projects, using an EU programme known to you.
3. Why is monitoring considered a cross-cutting process rather than a separate stage of the project life cycle?

4. What is the difference between a beneficiary and a target group of a project?
5. Compare the methodological emphases of PMBOK and PCM: which methodology is more oriented towards international technical-assistance projects, and why?
6. Which factors of uncertainty are specific to international projects implemented in Ukraine?

Recommended Reading

► SLIDE 33

1. *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*. 7th edition. Project Management Institute, 2021.
2. *PM² Project Management Methodology Guide*. European Commission, Centre of Excellence in Project Management (CoEPM²).
3. *Aid Delivery Methods. Volume 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines*. European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office.
4. ISO 21500:2021 *Project, programme and portfolio management — Context and concepts*.
5. *The Standard for Program Management*. 5th edition. Project Management Institute, 2024.

► SLIDE 34

This concludes Lecture 1. Questions and discussion are welcome; the next lecture is Lecture 2, "Project Design: Conceptualisation, Intervention Logic and Project Justification".

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Project	A temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result (PMBOK Guide); a unique set of coordinated and controlled tasks with start and finish dates, subject to constraints on time, cost and resources (ISO 21500:2021).
International project	A project in which actors from different national jurisdictions take part, financed wholly or partly from foreign or supranational sources and directed at a cross-border, regional or global problem or at developing the recipient country's capacity.
Programme	A group of related projects, sub-projects and programme activities managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits that management of the projects individually would not provide; Horizon Europe is an example.
Portfolio	A collection of projects, programmes, sub-portfolios and operational activities managed as a group to achieve organisational strategy; its components need not be functionally related.
Project life cycle	The sequence of phases through which a project passes from inception to completion: initiation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and closure.

Term	Definition
Monitoring	The systematic tracking of progress against planned indicators throughout implementation, providing up-to-date information for management decisions; a cross-cutting process.
Project Cycle Management (PCM)	The methodology introduced by the European Commission for external assistance projects, with six phases from programming to evaluation and the mandatory use of the LFA at the formulation stage.
Logical Framework Approach (LFA)	An analytical planning method that proceeds from stakeholder, problem, objectives and strategy analysis to the construction of the logframe matrix.
Logframe matrix	A table that sets out the hierarchy of objectives (overall objective, specific objective, results, activities) with indicators, sources of verification and assumptions.
PMBOK Guide	The guide of the Project Management Institute (USA); a universal methodology organised, in its classic form, around ten knowledge areas and five process groups.
PM ²	The project management methodology of the European Commission (CoEPM ²), combining elements of PMBOK and PRINCE2 and providing standardised artefacts and four phases.
Donor	The organisation that provides financial or other resources for a project and sets funding priorities, procedural requirements and the criteria for evaluating applications and reports.
Coordinator	The lead applicant, which leads the consortium, bears the principal contractual responsibility to the donor and coordinates the partners.
Associated partner	An actor that joins a project without direct funding from the donor, providing expert, advisory or organisational support.
Beneficiaries	Persons, groups or organisations that receive direct benefits from a project: direct beneficiaries are the immediate recipients, final beneficiaries are broader groups affected indirectly.
Target group	The specific group on which the project has a direct, positive effect at the level of the project purpose and with which it interacts during implementation.
Stakeholders	All persons, groups or institutions that have an interest in a project, influence it or are affected by it.
Power distance	Hofstede's measure of the extent to which less powerful members of organisations accept that power is distributed unequally; Ukraine scores 92 on the Power Distance Index.

Sources for Current Data

The following sources underlie the externally sourced facts used in this text. Lecturers should consult the current version of each before the lecture.

1. Project Management Institute, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*, 6th edition (2017), 7th edition (2021) and 8th edition (2025): the structures of the three editions (slide 23) and the definition of a project (slide 4).

2. International Organization for Standardization, ISO 21500:2021, *Project, programme and portfolio management — Context and concepts*: the definition of a project (slide 4).
3. Hofstede Insights, *Country Comparison Tool*: the Power Distance Index scores for eleven countries (slide 30).
4. G. Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede and M. Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations* (3rd edition, 2010): the concept of power distance (slide 30).
5. European Commission, Centre of Excellence in Project Management (CoEPM²), *PM² Project Management Methodology Guide*; European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, *Aid Delivery Methods, Volume 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines*: the descriptions of PM² and PCM (slides 24 and 25).
6. ABC News, “USAID programs now being run by State Department as agency ends operations” (July 2025); Donor Tracker, “US government announces official closure of USAID” (2025); “United States Agency for International Development”, Wikipedia (accessed September 2026): the note that USAID ceased operations on 1 July 2025 and its programmes were transferred to the US Department of State (slide 9).