

# Adult Learning & Education – System Building Approach (ALESBA)

Toolkit for Implementation

## Phase Four – Implement and Test



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## **Adult Learning & Education – System Building Approach (ALESBA)**

### **Toolkit for Implementation**

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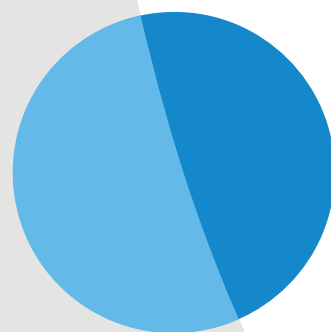
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- The team that conducted an assessment on the supply side of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) service delivery in 2018. Not only did this peer review produced substantial baseline information on the system in Ethiopia, but it also tested the tools of Phase Two in the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA).

- The team that conducted the demand assessment on the needs and interests of ALE learners in 2019/2020. The findings provided a basis for further analysis in Phase Two and informed Phase Three.

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Sonja Belete



**W**hen the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, it was a moment of celebration for the education sector. For the first time, the global community accepted that learning is lifelong and that enough opportunities to learn should be provided to people of all ages, sexes, social and ethnic groups. This development nurtured the hope that decision-makers and key stakeholders would broaden education policies, and place greater value on Adult Learning and Education (ALE). However, while it is obvious that several improvements have been made, ALE remains the most neglected sub-sector in many national education systems.

A key challenge many government and non-government adult education institutions face is the lack of a system to develop, fund, monitor, and support ALE at a national, regional and local level. While many countries have more or less sophisticated systems in place for primary and secondary schooling, higher education, and sometimes vocational education, the same cannot be said for ALE.

DWV International has more than 50 years' experience in supporting the establishment and improvement of ALE systems. One lesson learnt from these efforts is that isolated interventions bear a high risk of failure. The same is true for processes that are mainly based on foreign expertise and copy-paste schemes.

With this background in mind, DWV International's team in East/Horn of Africa, under the leadership of Sonja Belete, started a process of developing a holistic model

for sustainably improving ALE systems. These booklets present the methods and experiences that have been developed over time. We called it the "Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach" (ALESBA), and it is based on several simple truths:

- Sustainable system building is a time-consuming, long-term process, that demands a great deal of patience and flexibility.
- Ownership is the key. Local actors should shape the process and create the system. External expertise can be useful, but should not lead the process or impose (quick) solutions.
- System building demands consensus building between the key partners. This factor is essential for success and should be established from the beginning and maintained throughout the process.

Sonja Belete and her team developed the ALESBA in a bottom-up manner, mainly based on experience from Ethiopia and Uganda. Meanwhile, the approach has been taken up by ten other countries in Africa. The process was shaped by the principles of action learning to ensure that formats and tools were developed and further updated during the journey. Learning-by-doing is a key success factor of the approach and should be used throughout the implementation of the process. ALESBA is a tool, which can guide stakeholders in the complex task of system building, at the same time the approach is open to improvement, adaptation, and modification!

We wish you great success in building and reforming ALE systems, and hope our experience can contribute to your work!

Uwe Gartenschlaeger

# Abbreviations

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<b>ALE</b>	.....	Adult Learning and Education
<b>ALESBA</b>	.....	Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach
<b>CSOs</b>	.....	Civil Society Organisation(s)
<b>CLCs</b>	.....	Community Learning Center(s)
<b>ESDP</b>	.....	Education Sector Development Plan
<b>FAL</b>	.....	Functional Adult Literacy
<b>GRALE</b>	.....	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
<b>LAMP</b>	.....	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
<b>M&amp;E</b>	.....	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MIS</b>	.....	Management Information System
<b>MGLSD</b>	.....	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (Uganda)
<b>MoE</b>	.....	Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
<b>NGO</b>	.....	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>PM&amp;E</b>	.....	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>PRA</b>	.....	Participatory Rural Appraisal
<b>REFLECT</b>	.....	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
<b>SBA</b>	.....	System Building Approach
<b>SDGs</b>	.....	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>ToT</b>	.....	Training of Trainers
<b>ToF</b>	.....	Training of Facilitators
<b>TVET</b>	.....	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

# PHASE FOUR – IMPLEMENT AND TEST

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Phase Four of the ALESBA is where real action occurs. It is the phase where all the assessments, diagnosis, analysing, thinking, planning and designing from the previous phases is tested in the real world of delivering services to youth and adults as described in the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) vision. For the most sustainable long-term results, implementation should ultimately be managed through national systems and processes. This can strengthen essential capacities such as project/programme management, coordination, participatory planning and budgeting, etc., and ensure access to services for a wider target group. Stakeholders can feel a strong sense of ownership of initiatives when their own efforts, projects and programmes feed into national systems and procedures used for implementing ALE services (Wignaraja Kanni, 2009).

Phase Four provides the opportunity to test run and implement the newly designed ALE system (Phase Three) in selected areas and with specific target groups on a smaller scale before reviewing, adjusting and scaling up to a national system in Phase Five of the ALESBA. Depending on the status of the existing ALE system and the extent to which it has been redesigned during Phase Three, the implementation and testing phase can take three to six years to provide sufficient time for testing the functioning of the redesigned system building blocks and the flow of process in the system to deliver ALE services.

Phase Three concluded with documentation of an ALE system design response framework as a key document that describes how the new system will look and function with its redesigned elements, building blocks and processes. To start implementation, the system design response framework should be translated into an





operational plan with different roles assigned to stakeholders who are part of the ALESBA partnership. Therefore, Phase Four starts with a reference to the system design response framework and provides guidance on the development of the operational plan to implement the newly designed system.

The ALE system design response framework elaborates the technical details of each redesigned system building block and contains substantial information on policies, strategies, implementation structures, and capacity building modalities, etc. The formulation of an operational plan that captures the activities and responsibilities with timelines to start implementation does not necessarily guarantee a successful testing phase of the new system. Phase Four will also test to what extent the different stakeholders who became partners in the ALESBA continue to maintain a consensus and promote the core principles and values towards achieving the ALE vision. Partnership provides a new opportunity for doing development and service delivery better, by recognising the qualities and competencies of each sector and stakeholder and finding new ways of harnessing these to achieve the ALE vision as well as putting a sustainable system in place that can deliver quality ALE services at a national level.

Therefore, Phase Four concerns itself with managing the implementation and testing phase from both the supply and demand sides of ALE service delivery. Managing from

the supply side involves the technical implementation of system elements and building blocks as well as giving attention to how the partnership is governed, the institutional capacity of the ALESBA partners to play their roles, how the implementation and testing will be monitored, including the assessment of risks, and how best practices and learning insights can be harnessed through mechanisms such as quality study circles for advocacy and evidence-based influencing.

The ultimate test for a successful system is whether it continues to serve the needs and interest of the users of its services. Therefore, the new system has to be tested from the demand side and Phase Four elaborates community scorecards as a potential tool to test the response of the users of the services to what the newly designed system offers.

Implementation and testing of a newly designed ALE system is a huge undertaking and the scope and contents of all the processes, activities and considerations that have to be taken on board cannot be covered in one ALESBA booklet. Therefore, Phase Four aims to highlight selected key topics and activities that should be taken into account. The users of the toolkit and this booklet in particular are expected to use the contents as a starting point for further reading, exploration, experimentation and action. As usual, the booklet on Phase Four should be read together with other ALESBA booklets in the toolkit to understand the flow of contents between the phases.



## 2. TRANSITION FROM PHASE THREE TO PHASE FOUR OF THE ALESBA

The transition from Phase Three to Phase Four rests upon completing the designing and planning steps and starting to take action by implementing and testing the newly designed system on a smaller scale. Some countries may have completed both the ALE system design response framework as well as an operational plan to implement the new system during Phase Three, while others may have completed only the system design response framework. Therefore, it is useful to have a brief reminder of the contents of the system design response framework and to

elaborate the process to formulate an operational plan. The plan will be developed and implemented by the ALESBA stakeholders who have worked in partnership since Phase One. Based on their mandates and competencies each partner will take up different roles and responsibilities in the plan. What remains important is their interest and commitment to participate and this section of the booklet will touch on the different forms of participation before unpacking how implementation will be managed from the supply side in the next section.



## 2.1 The ALE system design response framework

The ALE system design response framework is a document that captures all the processes and decisions made during Phase Three of the ALESBA. It also refers to Phases One and Two of the ALESBA and captures the journey of ALE system building in the country in summarised form. It is the

foundation and description of the new ALE system design and is called a 'response framework' because it is also the document that will guide Phase Four on how to implement and test the new system design. Ideally, the document should contain the following information:

### ALE system design response framework

Topic	Details
Executive Summary	A brief overview of what follows in the document.
Introduction	Purpose of the document, and overview of ALESBA, etc.
Background	Overview of previous ALESBA phases and major outcomes with references to annexes, acknowledgement of ALESBA stakeholders and partnership, etc.
Vision and underlying/driving principles	Agreed upon revisited vision, driving principles agreed on between ALESBA stakeholders during Phase One.
Summary of ALE system challenges as identified during Phase Two	E.g., ALESBA scoring table results from the diagnostic study, and demand assessment, etc. Short summarised contents to show the challenges/situation the new system design responds to.
Entry points for ALE system improvement	Description of selected and prioritised building blocks with a brief reference to the process of selection and reference to workshop reports in the annexes. (Outcomes of Step One – Phase Three).
Redesigned system elements	Description of each redesigned system element – for both prioritised system building blocks from Step One and other affected building blocks from Step Three (as elaborated during Phase Three). A detailed description of how the building block will function, which modalities, methodologies, structures, and policies, etc., will be in place, etc.
Stakeholder roles and responsibilities	As agreed between ALESBA partners.
Operational plan for implementation	The plan describes how the response framework will be operationalised and implemented during Phase Four. It shows which redesigned building blocks will be addressed first and how others will phase in over time, etc. The first draft of the plan can be formulated during Phase Three, but the details will be elaborated during Phase Four.
Conclusion	Concluding statements and next steps.
Annexes	Workshop reports from previous phases and other supporting documents.

It is useful to start the documentation process of the ALE system design response framework during Step One of Phase Three so that the document can be ready by the end of Phase Three. Each ALESBA partner/stakeholder should have a copy and a workshop or meeting should be conducted to share the design with senior managers for validation and approval. The document should be officially

approved by all ALESBA partners to become the official response framework that informs the operational plan and guides the testing and implementation phase of a new system design. The highlighted sections in the table are the key sections/information that inform the formulation of the operational plan to start implementation and testing of the new system.

## 2.2 Operational plan for implementation

The planning process should start with a brief reminder of the importance of **systems thinking and using a systems approach** to plan for the implementation and testing of the new ALE system design. Using a systems approach refers to a set of processes, methods and practices that aim to effect system change. This will require ALESBA partners to move away from former traditional linear thinking, planning and implementation. It calls for consideration during the planning process and constant adjustment during the implementation and testing phase with implications for how institutions, processes, skills and ALESBA partners are organised. Because the focus is on system outcomes, it requires multiple actors/partners to work together across the levels of governance and all sectors involved in ALE. The jointly formulated vision for the desired future and the underlying principles agreed upon with the descriptions of how the new system will look and function in the ALE system design response framework bind the partners and process together. Therefore, the planning process is about planning for a set of interventions that will start to change the existing system into a future system (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017).

Changing an entire system is a difficult exercise, in part because a system cannot be turned off, redesigned and restarted. ALE services must be continuously available. Using a systems approach can help to navigate this

situation by allowing new practices (newly redesigned system building blocks) to be rolled out, while core processes are still running. Changing the system will also require building the internal skills in organisations to help face and adapt to new circumstances as explained in section 3.3. of this booklet.

Bear in mind that not all system building blocks will need a redesign, only the building blocks identified as having challenges or creating blockages in the system to deliver services (as identified during Phases Two and Three of the ALESBA). Phase Three also made provision for assessing the impact of the redesigned building blocks on existing functioning building blocks and accommodating changes to the existing building blocks if need be (see Phase Three, Step Three). The non-affected, existing building blocks will continue to function as usual, but ALESBA partners will have to monitor the impact of the newly designed building blocks on the non-affected, existing building blocks during the implementation and testing phase (see section 3.4 on participatory monitoring and evaluation below). The redesigned building blocks would have been captured in the ALE system design response framework. The operational plan for the implementation of the new ALE system design has to consider the following questions for each redesigned system element with its prioritised redesigned building blocks.



## Planning considerations

### What needs to be implemented?

The implementation plan will focus on the redesigned system building blocks contributing to the four system elements, as well as considering the sequence for starting implementation (based on criteria such as urgency to address ALE users' needs, affordability, the ability of a building block to act as a catalyst for implementing other building blocks, logical flow between activities and processes, etc.). The sequence already would have been elaborated during Phase Three and captured in the ALE system design response framework. ALESBA partners may revisit their decisions and confirm whether they still hold true.

### How will it be implemented?

Which detailed activities are needed to implement each redesigned system building block? This requires substantial technical capacity from different stakeholders to ensure each building block will be implemented according to the design in the ALE system design response framework. The description of each redesigned system building block in the response framework can be formulated as a system output, e.g., 'An ALE policy that responds to the needs and interests of ALE users with an implementation strategy and financing mechanism'. This provides the starting point for unpacking and brainstorming the activities required to put an ALE policy in place. Similarly, each system element that has been redesigned should have its own outcomes statement, such as 'An enabling environment that facilitates the delivery of quality ALE services through well-arranged institutional arrangements, sound management and technical processes'. All existing and redesigned building blocks under this element will contribute to this outcome. See section 3.1 for more information on managing the technical implementation of the redesigned ALE system.

*It is important to note that the implementation and testing of the new system design ideally should not take place as a separate project, but that implementation of the newly designed building blocks should be incorporated into the existing work, projects and programmes of partner organisations as per their mandate, roles and responsibilities.*

### Where will it be implemented?

This refers to both the level of implementation (vertical arrangements as per the governance structure of the country, see section six in Phase Three), e.g., district level, provincial/regional and or national levels, as well as the selected geographical areas for testing the new ALE system design. Phase Four allows for testing the implementation of the new ALE system design on a smaller scale. Therefore, ALESBA partners may select a sample of geographical areas in the country to test the system. The sample may be selected based on criteria such as representative livelihoods patterns in the country or a range of ALESBA partners present in a particular area. During Phase One, ALESBA partners completed a mapping exercise that elaborated the range and extent of ALE interventions in the country. This exercise may assist in deciding on the pilot testing areas for the new system or can be repeated to make a decision (see Phase One, section four).

The ALE system elements and building blocks play out across all spheres of governance, but some building blocks emanate from or have a bigger role to play at the national or local level. For example, all building blocks related to the enabling environment system element have to be formulated and implemented by the national-level government with the involvement of other stakeholders, as well as taking responsibility for ensuring roll-out of national policies and strategies to the local government level. Therefore, the responsibility for these building blocks within the element will be allocated to national-level stakeholders in the operational plan.



### When will it be implemented?

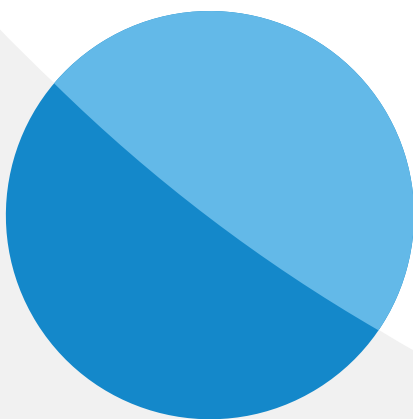
It was already mentioned that certain building blocks will have priority when it comes to implementation and testing, while others will be phased in over time. This relates to the fact that the implementation and testing of a new ALE system is a huge undertaking and ALESBA partners may be new to this exercise, have insufficient experience and capacity, and limited funding availability, etc. The activities to implement each system building block also have to relate to and be coordinated with activities related to other system building blocks. Different groups or clusters of ALESBA partners will take responsibility for selected building blocks based on their mandate, expertise, previous or newly suggested roles, etc. This also relates to exploring possibilities to have joint events and undertakings to save time, costs and promote integration. For example, ALESBA partners responsible for designing and testing new learner assessments may plan a workshop with different stakeholders. It may be useful for the other stakeholders/partners, who are busy designing and implementing a national qualifications framework, to join this event and align their work with the local level initiative. Therefore, the operational plan

will consider timelines for the achievement of milestones across system elements and building blocks, while each stakeholder/partner cluster additionally will have its own timelines for implementing more detailed activities to meet the milestones in the operational plan. The overall timeline for the implementation and testing phase is estimated at three to six years.

### Who takes responsibility for implementation and testing?

All stakeholders who started the journey to build an improved ALE system ideally would have formed an ALESBA partnership during Phase One with a memorandum of understanding and a common vision for ALE, and they would have participated in Phases Two and Three of the ALESBA. These stakeholders, coming from the government, civil society, or universities etc., will each have different competencies, experiences, mandates, and access to resources, etc. Harnessing the best that each stakeholder has to offer can deliver a better ALE system. Therefore, we prefer to refer to these stakeholders as ALESBA partners who can contribute jointly towards putting an improved ALE system in place. During the planning and implementation regarding testing the new system, the partners will seldom work in isolation but will form smaller groups or clusters of partners to take up specific tasks and responsibilities. This will facilitate and enhance:

- Mobilising each partner's skills, expertise, resources and commitment and applying it where they have interest and can make a difference.
- Vertical integration across the spheres of governance from local to national level.
- Horizontal integration across multiple sectors as per the scope and definition of ALE in the country.



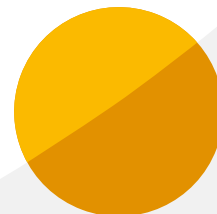
### The operational planning process and formats

Planning for the implementation and testing of an ALE system that ultimately has to function at a national level is a huge undertaking. It requires an understanding of the concepts of programme and project management and making the necessary institutional arrangements to undertake the process with relevant planning steps and formats.

### Understanding projects and programmes

Programme and project management are related but distinctly different disciplines. The most important distinctions between project and programme management can be described as follows: (Martinelli & Waddell, 2003)

- Programme management is strategic in nature, while project management is tactical in nature. Programme management focuses on the achievement of the intended strategic results (e.g., putting a sustainable ALE system in place that can deliver services), through the coordination of multiple projects. Project management focuses on the tactics of planning and execution of the work outputs, in other words, the activities to implement redesigned system building blocks.
- Programme management is cross-functional, while project management focuses on a single function or a limited cross-functional alignment. Therefore, the overall management of the ALESBA can be understood within the principles of programme management, also taking into consideration that the implementation and testing ultimately focus on creating a national ALE system.
- Programme management integrates the individual elements of all the projects in order to achieve a common objective. The programme management function is responsible for delivering the 'whole product' for the achievement of the goal and vision. Therefore, **programme management can be defined as the coordinated management of interdependent projects over a period of time to achieve a set of goals and ultimately the vision.** This implies that the activities for each project are synchronised through the framework of a common lifecycle executed at the programme level. This would imply the coordination and synchronisation of the milestones of all the projects.
- **The project management function is responsible for delivering a single or selected few interdependent elements of the 'whole product' and for ensuring the delivered element(s) are integrated with other elements.** The keyword in the context of the ALESBA comes from the interdependence of the projects. This implies that projects have a mutual dependence on the outputs of other projects in order to achieve success. The successful completion of deliverables and achieving milestones of one project is needed for the successful completion of other projects.



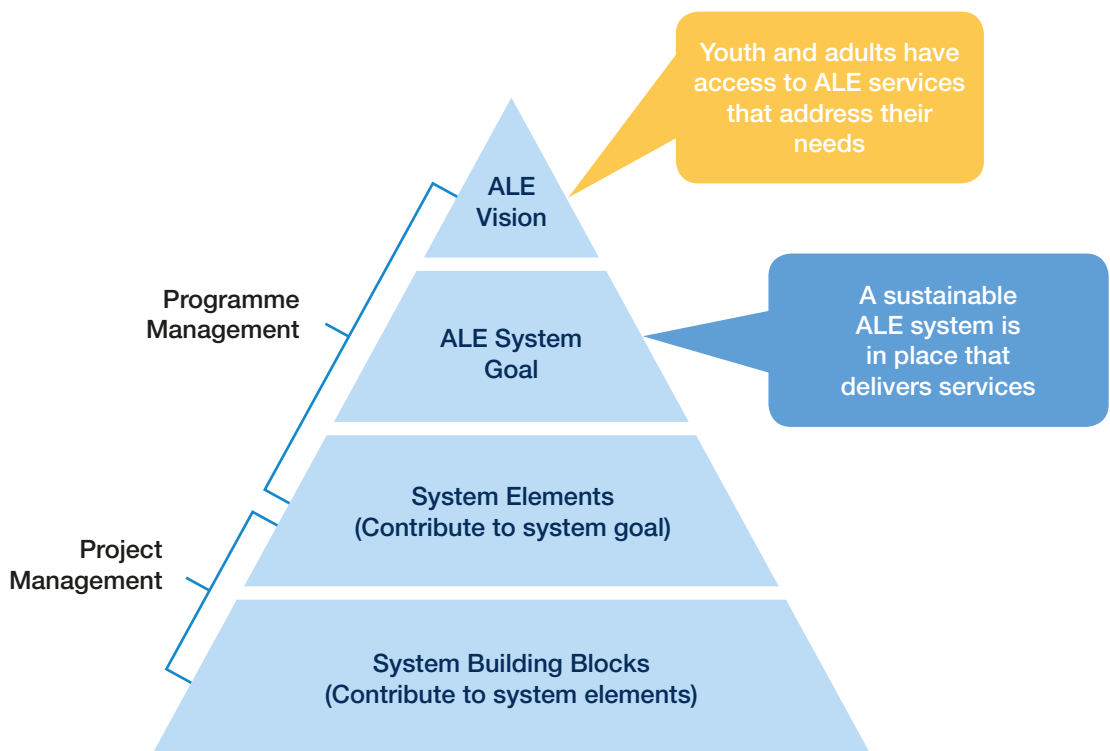
What relevance does this have for the formulation of an operational plan to implement and test the new ALE system design? It implies that we have to conduct the planning process at two levels, namely:

- At the programme management level, considering that the ALE system consists of four elements and 20 building blocks that are interdependent and that this system will ultimately operate at the national level. The activities needed to put each redesigned system building block and element in place will have to be synchronised and managed from a wider programme perspective, having a programme management lifecycle and framework as a guiding tool. The programme management function will have to be taken up by the champion or driver who started the process, ideally with a representative group of ALESBA partners forming a national steering committee or partner programme management team. Section 3.2 of this booklet will unpack key considerations for the governance of such a partnership.
- At the project management level, where ALESBA partners will take responsibility for different system

building blocks contributing to system elements, based on their mandates, expertise and responsibilities. ALESBA partners will work in smaller partner clusters/ groups to carry out activities towards achieving the project output defined for each redesigned building block while keeping in mind the interdependence of system building blocks, elements, and activities. The achievement of each redesigned building block will contribute towards the achievement of system elements and ultimately the ALE system as the 'whole product'.

In the context of ALESBA, the cluster of partners that cooperate towards the implementation and testing of system building blocks or system elements can be understood to implement a project. The implementation and testing of all the prioritised building blocks across the four system elements, towards the goal of establishing a well-functioning ALE system that can deliver services to its target group, can be understood under the definition of programme management

It can be depicted as follows:





**Arranging for the planning (and implementation) process**

The operational planning process will take place at the programme and project level and has to be undertaken by a representative group of ALESBA partners. If not already formed, a national partner steering committee or programme management team should be selected to take responsibility for managing the ALE system building process as a whole, as described above with reference to programme management (delivering the ‘whole product’, namely an ALE system).

For the planning and implementation of redesigned system building blocks and elements, ALESBA partners will work in smaller groups or partner clusters as per their mandate and expertise areas. It is most likely that the clusters of partner organisations assigned for implementation will take responsibility for several related system building blocks

under a particular system element. ALESBA partners may agree on four partner clusters arranged as per the ALESBA system elements that will take care of the planning and implementation of all the redesigned system building block projects under a particular system element as described below.

Note that partner organisations are required to assign several of their staff members, depending on the expertise required and role of that partner in the ALESBA, across the partner clusters. The idea is not that an organisation only participates in one cluster, although they may be the responsible partner for a specific cluster that will coordinate the staff members of other clusters. The Ministry of Education may have, for example, staff members from different levels of governance and different departments across all four cluster elements. This promotes integration and adheres to the principles of a systems approach.

**The arrangements of partners for programme and project level planning and implementation can be depicted as follows:**



At crucial points during the planning process, senior managers from all stakeholders should join the process or be presented with the plans and decisions for validation and commitment of resources needed (whether financial, human, or time, etc.). As much as possible, the plans and activities should be integrated into the existing work programmes

and job descriptions of partner organisations. Bear in mind that it is about implementing and testing how the new system could function and be scaled up in the future and it should be rather a case of partners following new approaches and modalities within their own organisations, than viewing the ALESBA as a separate project of ALE system building.

### Planning steps and formats

The planning processes outlined below may take place over the course of a minimum of two workshops, one for programme level planning and one for project-level planning. The latter can take place during one workshop with different partner clusters working simultaneously and cross-checking the synchronisation and coordination of the detailed activities with each other. The process will dictate whether more workshops or meetings are needed to ensure clear and practical plans are in place for project and programme levels. It is recommended that stakeholders work from the bottom-up, therefore starting with a workshop from the project level. This will enable the cross-checking of activities, responsibilities, deliverables and timelines at the programme management level.

### Project management level

At project management level the following planning steps are recommended for each of the suggested partner clusters/groups:

- Each partner cluster should refer back to the ALE system design response framework as a reference for the system building blocks under the system element, they are responsible for.
- Keep in mind the detailed descriptions of methodologies, approaches, and modalities, etc., (how implementation should take place). This will inform the activities to be planned and carried out.

- If not already done, formulate an output for each system building block and an outcome statement for the system element. Note this is only for the redesigned system building blocks that will be implemented alongside the existing system building blocks.
- Follow the guiding questions mentioned under 'planning considerations' on the previous pages and answer all the questions for each system building block and element.
- Note that responsibility refers to the main ALESBA partner who is ultimately responsible for delivering the outputs/deliverables, e.g., the redesigned system building blocks/element. This partner also has the responsibility to bring other partners in the cluster or project management team on board. Responsible partners will be selected by all stakeholders during the planning process.
- Agree on how the activities/projects will be embedded in each partner organisation's existing projects or work schedules. Be reminded that partners have to formulate their own internal organisational work plans to contribute to the cluster/project work plans. E.g., one partner organisation may be responsible for implementing and testing a new digital MIS as a building block under the system element of management processes. This partner will integrate all activities related to the new MIS into their own existing work tasks and test a new way of planning for and using an MIS within the organisation, while also coordinating and working with other partners in the cluster who may contribute different technical expertise related to this building block.
- Formulate the activities required for each system building block to ultimately reach the output formulated for that building block. The achievement of all the system building block outputs will contribute to the achievement of the system element outcome.
- Complete the suggested format below to have a project implementation plan for each redesigned system building block. Note that users of the ALESBA toolkit should adjust/change the format as per their own needs and context.



**Example of a Project Planning Format  
(For each redesigned system building block)**

**Redesigned system building block:**

e.g., ‘ALE Material Development’ with detailed description as captured in the system design response framework.

**System Building Block Output:**

e.g., ‘Training materials and guidelines for all ALE components incorporating livelihoods skills training and business skills training are developed in local languages, validated by all stakeholders and disseminated to ALESBA partners.

**Relates to System Element:**

Technical Processes.

**ALESBA Partner Cluster:**

Technical Processes Cluster (Local government education, agriculture and TVET Offices, NGO X, NGO Y and University Z).

**Responsible Partner:**

Local Government Education Office.

**Geographical pilot testing area:**

Districts A, B.

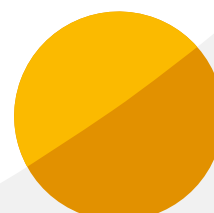
**Project Planning Format Example:**

System Building Block: ALE Material Development						
Activities	Responsible partner	Other cluster partners	Deliverables/ Milestones	Timeline	Costs/Budget	Budget Source

**Programme management level**

Once the project plans for all system building blocks within the system elements are completed by groups/clusters of ALESBA partners, these project plans have to be cross-checked and synchronised at the programme management level and within a systems framework to ensure the flow of all activities, linkages between building blocks, realistic and coordinated timelines and deliverables, etc. ALESBA partners can implement some activities concurrently, e.g., activities to produce outputs in the Enabling Environment can continue in parallel with activities to test a new ALE approach under Technical Processes. However, ALESBA partners have to incorporate opportunities to coordinate, review and cross-check whether they are still working towards a well-functioning ALE system where building blocks and elements are linked with processes to deliver ALE services.

Some system building blocks also rely on other building blocks to complete their deliverables before activities can proceed, e.g., ALE materials have to be developed and training conducted before a new ALE methodology can be pilot tested with ALE learners. The development of programme implementation guidelines at the national level has to be done in constant communication with the processes at the district level to ensure lessons learned while implementing a new methodology and changes required are incorporated into the guidelines for all partners at the national level. This implies that building blocks under the Enabling Environment have to consider the linkages with building blocks under Technical Processes and so forth.



Planning at the programme management level therefore rather deals with formulating a framework or an ALE system building lifecycle that will synchronise the project plans and provide opportunities for communication, review, cross-checking and alignment towards a comprehensive and inclusive ALE system. This applies to the whole Phase Four of the ALESBA.

It is suggested that ALESBA partners conduct a workshop where all the project implementation plans for the system building blocks and elements are presented by each responsible partner cluster/group. The ALESBA programme management team or steering committee have to facilitate a process to ensure all these plans are coordinated and synchronised. Section 3.2 will elaborate on accountability measures and partnership governance in this context. The formulation of a programme management framework should consider:

- Timelines and logical flow of activities in project plans to ensure it is synchronised.
- Interdependence of activities and the impact some activities/building blocks may have on others.
- The involvement of relevant ALESBA partners and the commitment of senior management.
- Planning for the complete implementation and testing period (e.g., three to six years) with regular updates of the plan based on regular reviews at different intervals.
- Ensuring the plan is broken down into manageable time periods and corresponds with project plans.
- Opportunities for partners to meet, review, adjust and discuss while documenting lessons learned, challenges and best practices.
- The overall governance of the partnership, how the programme will be monitored and partners kept accountable for the delivery of the outputs.
- The funding commitments of different partners towards each system building block project.

The framework on the next page is a suggested example for formulating a programme management framework.



**Example: ALESBA Programme Management Framework**

The programme management framework is a key instrument for the national steering committee/programme management team to guide and govern the overall implementation and testing of the new ALE system during Phase Four and to ensure partner clusters complete project implementation

of building blocks and elements according to the deliverables and timelines. Note that the output defined for a system building block may have several deliverables, e.g., for material development several different manuals/guidelines can be a deliverable, each with their own timeline. Rows will be added to the table as needed.

System element & objective	System building blocks outputs	Level of implementation (e.g., national, etc.) and testing site	Responsible partner	Cooperating Partners	Deliverables/ Milestones	Timeline for achievement	Funding commitments: Source and amount
Enabling Environment							
Institutional Arrangements							
Management Processes							
Technical Processes	Material development ...	Local/provincial Districts X, Y Province Z	Local government	NGOs A and B	TOT Manual	March 2022	Local govt. Donor C 30,000 Euro
					Business Manual	April 2022	



## 2.3 Stakeholder participation

Participatory management of the implementation and testing of the new ALE system will not happen spontaneously. It is a conscious and informed activity that should be implemented at every level and stage of implementation. The ALESBA requires multi-sector stakeholder involvement in the form of a partnership across levels of governance, different sectors of government and different types of stakeholders such as government, NGOs, and universities, etc. Each partner has a specific mandate, expertise and plays a role in the existing system. Phases One, Two and Three of the ALESBA may have reflected on that role, starting with the stakeholders' analysis during the consensus building phase, including the system assessment and diagnosis during Phase Two, and leading to a new system design in Phase Three. Even though all partners may have agreed on new or elaborated roles and responsibilities during Phase Three and incorporated these into the ALE system design response framework and operational plan, it does not imply that all partners are comfortable with these roles yet, or have the experience to fulfil these roles. This may require some partners to stand back from roles they have played until now as 'gap fillers', where the designated responsible partner did not fulfil their mandates and duties, or for them to assume a new role. It also may require other partners to stand up and take a more active role.

The ALESBA aims to shift partner roles in the direction of a sustainable ALE system that can be implemented at the national level. It may be a gradual and difficult process, but it is worth going through the process of ensuring continued and active stakeholder involvement to achieve the following benefits:

- Sustainability and impact: More people are committed to carrying on the activity after outside support has stopped.
- Active participation: Helps develop skills and confidence.
- Greater sense of ownership: An agreement of the processes to achieve the objective.
- Transparency and accountability: This accrues as more stakeholders are given information and decision-making power in the process.

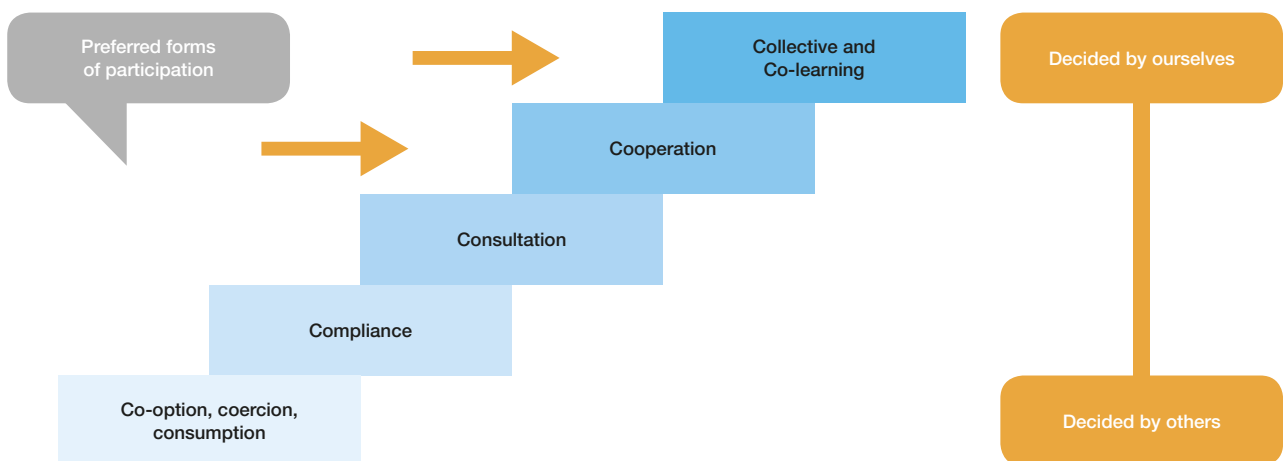
Development partners such as donors and international NGOs that provide both financial and technical support/expertise can promote partnership and create an enabling environment for different stakeholders to engage with each other. The governance structures and partner organisations themselves may need capacity development to fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the ALESBA partnership (see sections 3.2 and 3.3). Development partners can also play a role in this regard, but should in no case lead the process.

Stakeholder participation in a partnership is easier said than done and the principles and values adopted during Phase One (Consensus Building) have to be carried through all phases. Practicality also suggests that not all stakeholders can participate equally and in the same capacity in all activities. The nature of the system building blocks and the mandates to implement these often dictate the roles and responsibilities partners will take up. Therefore, it is useful to differentiate between different forms of participation. The table below represents a typology of participation (DFID, 2002). Stakeholder participation in different activities may fall across the full range of participation models, although it is preferred to mobilise stronger forms of participation in all ALESBA activities, e.g., functional, interactive and self-mobilisation forms of participation.

**Typology of participation table**

<b>Passive participation</b>	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement without listening to people’s responses.
<b>Participation in information giving</b>	People participate by answering questions posed by programme managers or extractive researchers and do not have the opportunity to influence the proceedings.
<b>Participation by consultation</b>	People participate by being consulted. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making and professionals do not necessarily take people’s views on board.
<b>Participation for material incentives</b>	People participate by providing resources, yet have no stake in the outcome.
<b>Functional participation</b>	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the programme.
<b>Interactive participation</b>	People participate in joint analysis which leads to action plans and the formulation of new groups/partnerships or strengthening existing ones. It tends to make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over decisions so that people have a stake in maintaining structures and practices.
<b>Self-mobilisation</b>	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems.

The different forms of participation can also be presented as a ladder of participation as depicted below:



### 3. MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION AND TESTING FROM THE SUPPLY SIDE

Once the operational plans from both a project and programme management perspective are completed, managing Phase Four of the ALESBA relies on:

- The technical implementation of activities contributing to the outputs defined for each building block and ultimately to the outcomes of the system elements.
- How well the ALESBA partnership can be managed through the necessary governance structures and mechanisms, e.g., smaller cluster groups or task forces for project implementation and a national steering committee or ALESBA partner programme management team to coordinate the overall system building implementation and testing phase at the national level.
- The institutional capacity of ALESBA partners to carry out their responsibilities.
- Reliability of funding commitments.
- The monitoring and evaluation system and process to ensure the implementation and testing phase reach its objectives, including the monitoring and analysis of risks.
- The documentation of learning insights and best practices that can be used for advocacy and evidence-based influencing through the use of instruments such as quality study circles, regular review meetings, etc.

The next section will provide selected highlights on the above-mentioned topics to give users of the toolkit an introduction to further reading, study, experimentation and exploration.

#### 3.1 Technical implementation of the redesigned ALE system

The activities for the technical implementation of the redesigned system building blocks have been captured in the project plans for each system building block, contributing to the four system elements. The details of these

activities and outputs will emanate from the system assessment and diagnosis during Phase Two and the alternatives analysis and design of Phase Three. It is therefore assumed that the activities in the project plans and the implementation modalities rest on a sound base. The question may be raised whether the ALESBA partner has sufficient capacity to take on new methodologies, tasks and approaches and to what extent capacity building may be needed. This will be dealt with under section 3.3.



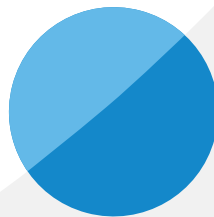


To move from planning to action, the groups or clusters of partners, that have been assigned to the implementation of specific building block projects, will have to arrange start-up workshops to discuss their project plans in detail, refine the contents, and clarify any outstanding matters, including the financing arrangements which has been included in the programme management framework and the details reflected in the project plans. The start-up workshops of partner clusters should aim to achieve the following:

- Translate the timelines indicated in the project plans into short-, medium- and longer-term work plans, e.g., quarterly or annual work plans. Keep in mind that project plans could cover a three-to-six-year period and that it is essential to break the process down into more manageable timelines using the milestones in the ALESBA Programme Management Framework.
- Set dates for regular review and reflection meetings, etc., to monitor the progress of the partners on the quarterly or annual work plans, reflect on the technical details and modalities of project implementation, and document lessons, etc.
- Agree on the governance structure for the cluster of partners. See section 3.2 for more details.
- Consider institutional capacity gaps that may exist or will cause risks for project implementation, and develop means to address the gaps.
- Agree on finance and administrative procedures during the implementation process, etc.
- Enable each partner in the cluster to have clarity on their role and formulate their own internal organisational work plans to contribute to the work and timelines of the partner cluster.

**Note that:**

The newly designed ALE system building blocks and elements are implemented as projects in order to test their functionality and contribution to the newly designed ALE system, but these should not be considered as separate projects. The redesign of the system building blocks during Phase Three and the planning process during Phase Four should integrate the implementation and testing of the new designs of building blocks as much as possible within the existing ALE system activities in the country. For example, adult literacy programmes and services may already be on offer. The redesigned building blocks may look at new learning methodologies that will require new materials and capacity building and therefore may affect the institutional arrangements and management processes needed to implement these building blocks. Partners such as local government offices and local NGOs may be part of this cluster. They will implement the projects in their day-to-day work (usually with existing funding, but using new approaches, etc.). The partner cluster will coordinate the project implementation among themselves, conduct monitoring, document lessons and communicate/coordinate with other clusters towards building and testing the new ALE system during Phase Four.



Each partner cluster has several technical considerations during implementation as illustrated with the examples below:

### Enabling Environment

The building blocks under the Enabling Environment system element fall within the mandate of the national government offices responsible for ALE services in the country. This may be ministries of education or social development, etc. Most countries have assigned a specific line ministry to deal with ALE as a sector. Keep in mind that ALE has a cross-sectoral nature and this may now include other sector ministries or agencies as well, e.g., from agriculture, gender, TVET, or health, etc. These ministries may work in a partner cluster to formulate new or align existing policies in relation to ALE services and find entry points to deliver integrated ALE services in their strategies and programme implementation guidelines. The establishment of a national qualifications framework or revising an existing framework will require the cooperation and technical expertise of all partners in the cluster. Other stakeholders such as donors and international NGOs may also participate in this cluster to provide technical expertise and funding. For example, the formulation of an ALE policy consists of many steps and requires the consultation of other ALESBA partners working in other clusters and levels of governance.

### Technical Processes

The system building blocks related to the Technical Processes system element have a strong interdependence and logical flow between activities and outputs e.g., materials need to be developed before training can take place, etc. Therefore, it makes sense to have one partner cluster to take care of all the project plans for the redesigned system building blocks under this element. These partners will also focus more on the local government level of project implementation with a strong intersectoral focus and feedback loops to the other clusters. The partners working on the technical processes provide a laboratory to test all ALESBA projects (i.e., implementation and testing of redesigned system building blocks) and the new ALE system design at the interface with the ALE users.



### Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements cut across sectors and spheres of governance and the partner cluster assigned to implement and test a new ALE implementation structure has to work closely with other clusters who will test the new structures while implementing their projects, e.g., the Technical Processes cluster. This cluster will work strongly in the sphere of organisational development (OD) and will implement projects related to leadership, human resource allocation and development, and testing new accountability mechanisms, etc. DVV International's Curriculum institutional ALE as a tool for the management of organisational change can be useful in this regard. The cluster requires partner organisations or staff/experts from within ALESBA partner organisations that may not necessarily come from an ALE background but from disciplines such as organisational development or public administration, etc. If needed, outside expertise in the form of OD and human resource consultants may have to be contracted. The partner clusters can also align their work with existing public reform initiatives, or civil society capacity building initiatives, etc.



### Management Processes

As is the case with Institutional Arrangements, the partners that are assigned to this cluster will need different types of technical expertise related to participatory planning processes, budgeting and resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation, and management information systems, etc. ALESBA partners may second experts from their own planning and finance departments, M&E experts, or IT experts for MIS, etc., to implement the different projects under this cluster. Each system building block under Management Processes requires its own project to ultimately strengthen this system element. Projects under Management Processes cut across the work of all ALESBA partners and levels of governance and will require the scheduling of regular review and consultation meetings or workshops.



### 3.2 Partnership governance

***“... if we want to make partnerships work, we have to make their accountability and governance work first”***

(Rochlin, Zadek, & Forstater, 2008).

Only with widespread cross-sector collaboration and partnerships can we ensure that sustainable development initiatives are imaginative, coherent and integrated enough to tackle the challenges our societies face. Partnership provides an opportunity for each partner to bring their unique contribution according to their competencies, functions and mandates to the table (Tennyson Ros, 2003).

Being in a partnership requires a new way of thinking, working and putting a governance system in place that will govern the collaboration and guide the way partners work to achieve their objectives. In the context of the ALESBA partnership, especially during Phase Four, two forms of partnership governance are needed, namely, i) an ALESBA national steering committee or programme management team that will take responsibility for the overall programme management and implementation of all system building projects across the system elements

towards putting a sustainable ALE system in place and ii) a task force or smaller cluster committee for each cluster of partners implementing projects on different system building blocks under a particular system element.

The characteristics of a partnership are different to those of a single organisation. Decisions are not taken in one location, but rather spread according to functions, responsibility and needs. Partnerships are frequently not as structured as organisations and ownership is spread across the participating organisations. All of these factors have implications for the performance of the partnerships and therefore requires some form of governance structure and guidelines (Charles, Adrien M, Anderson G, Carden F, & Montalvan G, 2002). Users of the ALESBA toolkit should also refer to the Phase One booklet that elaborates partnership and teamwork principles and the importance of consensus building throughout the process.





Unfortunately for many partnerships, governance systems do not work effectively and leaders find it difficult to deliver on their ambitious goals. We can reduce the risks associated with partnerships by giving attention to the way we govern them. Defining a partnership's accountabilities and structuring the governance system is often low on the agenda

**i) Understand the governance requirements.**

Partnerships require many of the same elements of effective governance as organisations do, such as:

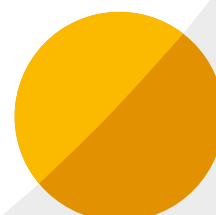
- Approval and oversight of the strategy and plans to be implemented.
- Agreed measures and targets within the partner clusters and national steering committee.
- Clarity of authority, e.g., which partner(s) are ultimately accountable and therefore have to direct the work of the clusters and national steering committee.
- Sharing knowledge between individual organisations and partner clusters.
- Performance measurement of individual organisations, partner clusters and the national steering committee.
- Competency development to ensure each partner organisation can fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- Financial controls and asset management within individual organisations, the partner clusters and the national steering committee.
- Securing resources for the ALESBA process and putting a sustainable ALE system in place.

of partners who want to get on with the job. To escape a failed partnership and therefore failure to transform the ALE system, it is important to consider four steps that will enable partnership and accountability to drive improved performance: (Rochlin, Zadek, & Forstater, 2008)

**ii) Design the governance system with performance in mind.**

The design of the governance system should start with how the partnership as a whole will define and hold itself accountable for achieving criteria for performance excellence. The partnership exists with a set of objectives and goal towards a vision. The implementation plans outline what needs to be done, when and how to achieve these objectives and can be measured. In addition, the partnership structures should consider performance elements such as:

- Quality, improvement and innovation.
- Satisfaction and positive feedback from the beneficiaries (ALE users, see section four of this booklet)
- System-wide learning.
- Evaluation against strategic objectives and key stakeholders expectations.
- Skills and competency development for partnership staff and partner organisations themselves.



**iii) Build accountability among partners.**

A partnership's governance system needs to be accountable for:

- Driving the partnership to achieve strategic goals and objectives based on agreed measures.
- Enable the partnership to resolve disputes and concerns within the system.
- Limiting/removing competition between partners.
- Solving resource challenges.
- Ensuring continuous learning, improvement and system innovation.
- Embedding systems of downward accountability and voice.

**iv) Design and support structures that will deliver both on the partnership's objectives and its governance system's accountabilities.**

Encouraging governance is meaningless unless the core stakeholders/partners trust the quality, performance and legitimacy of the partnership's governance system. Programme management teams/steering committees and partner cluster task forces /committees have to be carefully selected and the structure, roles and responsibilities agreed upon by all partners. Partnerships do not enjoy formal standing as distinct legal entities and therefore also have less power to enforce accountability. The core expectations and enforcements of the partnership's governance and accountability can only be agreed upon by themselves with a mutual accountability compact which outlines what and how partners will be held accountable for, and the measures that will be taken for non-compliance.

**3.3 Institutional capacity development**

The question can be asked what kinds of capacity development are necessary for the different partners to carry out their part of the system building process effectively? It is understood that the ALESBA partnership comprises different categories of organisational/institutional partners such as government sector offices at different levels, universities, local and international NGOs, and donors, etc. Although some literature makes a distinction between the definitions of institution and organisation, the ALESBA and this booklet will use either term interchangeably. It is understood to encompass the designations, hierarchies, relations, responsibilities and modes of interaction that make up a structured grouping of individuals as well as the rules, values and behaviour within the given structure (Bhagavan & Virgin, 2004).

However, a differentiation should be made between institutional/organisational capacity development which is wider than individual capacity development. It can be understood as the competence and ability institutions have to perform the tasks and functions they have been assigned, as well as the resources (human, technical, or financial, etc.) and structures they need to do so. Competence (ability) refers to the knowledge and skills embodied in the individuals or human resources within the organisation/institution.

Institutional capacity development, therefore, aligns well with the Institutional Arrangements system element in the ALESBA which includes building blocks such as

implementation structures, human resources, leadership and management and accountability mechanisms to facilitate the functions of the organisation. It also refers to the wider institutional arrangements related to partnerships between ALE stakeholders, both state and non-state actors. Institutional capacity development which encompasses individual capacity development has relevance for each ALE partner organisation, but also for the partnership structures and arrangements with its own governance system as discussed in section 3.2.

Why is a focus on both forms of capacity development important, especially during the implementation and testing phase of the newly designed ALE system? Organisations without the capacity to fulfil their roles and functions within the ALESBA partnership risks the potential failure of the whole system. Capacity development is the process through which organisations, individuals and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time (Wignaraja Kanni, 2009). It is embodied in the ALESBA's conceptual framework, elements and building blocks across all five phases.

Most institutional capacity development processes start with an assessment of the existing capacity within an organisation. This has to some extent been carried out during the system assessment in Phase Two, especially regarding Institutional Arrangements and Management Processes, but has not been conducted in-depth for all ALESBA partners. The ALESBA steering committee or task forces within partner clusters have to monitor the

reasons why some partners cannot fulfil their obligations. This may be a matter of institutional capacity and can be a sensitive matter to address within the partnership.

However, it is possible to build the capacity of partners within the partnership, either to lead by example, coaching, and/or integrate public sector reform programmes or civil society strengthening programmes within the ALESBA partnership. Ideally, capacity development should be systematically integrated into all efforts starting from Phase One to the implementation and testing phase and continue to evolve as the system grows and responds to new needs from its users. It should be part of systematic support to national capacities for reaching objectives and the goal of a functioning ALE system (Wignaraja Kanni, 2009). The discipline of institutional capacity development is vast and cannot be covered within the scope of this booklet, but users of the toolkit should be aware of its importance to promote performance in the partnership and also the risks associated if it is not addressed when needed. Refer to DVV International's Curriculum institutionalALE as a tool for further institutional capacity building.



### 3.4 Participatory monitoring and evaluation

#### ***“Meaningful measurement and feedback mechanisms are the cornerstones of successful system change”***

(OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017).

The importance of ownership of the ALESBA process by all partners has been emphasised in all the phases. This also applies to monitoring and evaluating whether the system building process is still on track and reaching its objectives and immediate outcomes from both the supply and demand side perspective. Considering the principles of the ALESBA and following a systems and partnership approach, it is recommended to plan for and implement a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) system as a broad set of practical, participatory approaches, methodologies and techniques for monitoring and evaluating the ALESBA projects and programme.

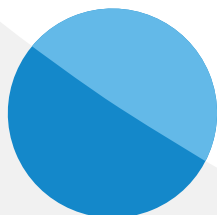
The PME system for the ALESBA should have been considered during Phase One, and designed during Phase Two when the baseline status of the ALE system was assessed. The ALESBA conceptual framework, system elements and building blocks inform the PME system and contain indicators for building blocks in the scoring table

of the assessment phase. It was recommended that the assessment and diagnosis process be conducted through a peer review mechanism to enhance ownership and understanding of the system and the processes ahead. This lays the ground for a successful participatory M&E system to be carried forward throughout the remaining phases. PME is focused on increasing learning and requires a commitment to participatory management approaches and a positive attitude towards partnership (DFID, 2002).

The scope of this booklet does not allow for a complete elaboration of possible ALESBA PME systems but will present a snapshot of what is involved and considerations partners have to take on board when designing a PME system across the five phases.

#### **Considerations for monitoring the system building process in the ALESBA**

Monitoring is the collection and management of data in order to keep track of the various aspects of the project/ programme performance and progress. Monitoring takes place during the implementation stage of a project. We monitor to allow control and effective decision-making for timely interventions when problems arise. Monitoring means continuous observation, reflection and correction.





What do we monitor in the ALESBA and why?

- **Activities:** To know the status of the activities towards reaching the project objectives (related to system building blocks).
- **Resources:** To determine the correct use of materials and inputs as per the project plan.
- **Finances:** To know the status of the budget, how much has been spent and how much is left over.
- **The achievement of project objectives in the form of outputs related to the redesigned system building blocks:** To assess the progress made by the different projects in the delivery of its interventions (to put redesigned ALE system building blocks in place). E.g., does a policy exist and is it rolled out to all partners and levels of governance? Note that the indicators for every system building block in the ALESBA scoring table (Phase Two) can be used as indicators to measure the project objectives for system building blocks.
- **The immediate reaction from ALE users about the services provided through different projects by the redesigned ALE system building blocks, e.g., do they attend classes, and what are their opinions about the services, etc.?** Do they use the services to make changes in their lives? The monitoring process for Technical Processes should include this feedback mechanism and community scorecards discussed in section four can be a useful tool.
- **Risks:** What risks, unexpected problems/issues can affect the project/programme and/or ALESBA partnership?
- **The functioning of the ALESBA partnership and its governance structures, the capacity of partners to deliver services, etc.**

### Considerations for evaluating the establishment of an ALE system in the ALESBA

Evaluation is a periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency and impact of the programme in the context of its stated objectives. Evaluations are usually carried out at fixed points in time, e.g., at the beginning (baseline study), midterm review, end evaluation and post evaluation and they require comparisons in time, area, population, etc. The different evaluation activities or events concerning the ALESBA can be described as:

#### Ongoing evaluations

Periodic reviews by the management of organisations and/or partnership governance structures can also be a form of evaluation – although less formal. These are referred to as internal ongoing evaluations that use the information provided by the programme’s MIS and direct observations by partners themselves. Regular internal periodic reviews by ALESBA cluster partners and the national steering committee/programme management team is highly encouraged for M&E purposes, but also to document lessons and best practices for evidence-based influencing, and advocacy, etc. Quality study circles can play an important role in this (see section 3.7).



#### Baseline study

Baseline study (differs from situation analysis which is a wider assessment not necessarily focusing on specific indicators): this is the information you have about the situation before you start interventions. The baseline study will collect data on each system building block and element during the system assessment of Phase Two. It can be complemented with information from a situation analysis, but note that a baseline study is very specific for each system building block with its indicators contributing towards system elements. In the context of the ALESBA, it will collect data on how the ALE system performed at the time the programme starts. The assessment methodology and tools in Phase Two will present ALESBA partners with both qualitative information on the system building blocks across the four system elements, as well as scores of the performance of each building block, element and the system as a whole (quantitative data). Note the ALESBA system assessment can be done as a baseline study at any stage when a country considers establishing an improved ALE system, even with an existing system in place.

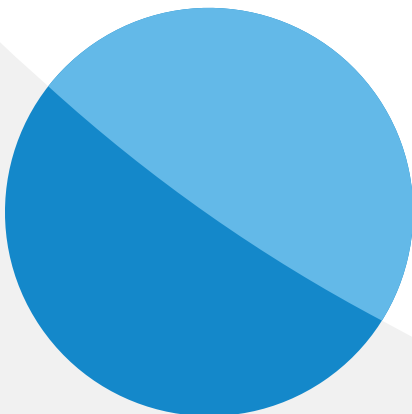
#### Midterm review

A midterm review is usually carried out mid-way through project/programme implementation and focuses on performance and whether or not the programme is on track to meet its objectives. In the context of the ALESBA, it is recommended that the system assessment methodology and tools of Phase Two be repeated during Phase Four

to determine the progress towards establishing the ALE system. It can establish the progress towards the outcomes of the system elements and if the delivery of all the system building blocks (through the various projects) contribute to the functioning of a system element within the ALE system, e.g., does the ALE system have institutional arrangements that facilitate the delivery of ALE services through sound technical processes, etc.? Does this contribute to an improved system for service delivery? Did the ALESBA scores change compared to scores of the baseline study? Are the systemic linkages between the system building blocks effective and flow towards service delivery without causing blockages in the system? The perspectives of the ALE users should also be included and the indicators in the community scorecards described in section four may be useful in this regard.

#### Terminal/end evaluation

A terminal/end evaluation can be an external or internal assessment of whether the project/programme reached its objectives and the immediate impact that can be observed among the target group. It is usually carried out at the end of programme implementation. The ALESBA partners can choose to have an external end evaluation as described at the end of Phase Four and/or repeat the system assessment methodology of Phase Two again to compare the scores in the scoring table and refer to the qualitative data collected during the assessment for a deeper analysis (repeating Part Two of Phase Two) to understand the root causes for any remaining gaps in the system before starting Phase Five. A review/evaluation of the testing phase is needed to make the necessary adjustments before up-scaling the new system design to a national level in Phase Five. The opinions of the ALE users are one of the major determining factors of whether the ALE system exists and functions to achieve its vision.



**Ex or post evaluation**

Ex or post evaluation is usually carried out sometime after the programme has concluded (could be five or more years) and focuses on the lasting impact on beneficiaries' lives and the environment, etc. For ALESBA, it is recommended to conduct periodic evaluations or system assessments (as per Phase Two) during Phase Five. The environment and ALE users' needs and interests are dynamic and the system should be assessed from time to time to determine if it remains relevant, keeps the quality of services and whether the systemic linkages between all system elements and building blocks still manage to deliver services as per the ALE vision.

**Considerations for linking M&E in the ALESBA**

M&E are separated by their objectives, reference periods, requirements for comparative analysis and primary users. They are linked through the flow of information in the MIS and the use of this information for different evaluation activities as mentioned above. The most important link is the ongoing evaluation – as described above. Ongoing evaluation bases itself on questions such as:

- What are the effects beginning to emerge from the use and repeated use of programme interventions?
- Is the programme having consequences that were not intended in its design?
- Does the programme's intervention model (implementation modality) remain valid in the changing environment?
- Does the ALESBA partnership function well and are its governance structures performing well?

Two other types of studies can also link monitoring and evaluation, namely Diagnostic and Case Studies. For example, when analysing information about target group reaction and use of interventions, many questions may be asked about why they responded the way they did. In such cases, diagnostic and case studies can be useful to find out why and make timely decisions to adjust or improve the system during the implementation and testing phase.

**Diagnostic study:**

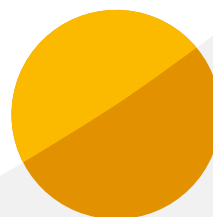
This is a specific study to understand and generate reasons why a particular intervention has not been accepted and used to the level planned and expected. The study may focus on a specific constraint within the programme. Occasionally we need a more detailed investigation and then a diagnostic study may be useful to provide additional information. Part Two of Phase Two shares tools to conduct diagnostic studies on ALE-Systems.

**Case study:**

Can represent a modest inquiry into the immediate effects of the use or adoption of programme interventions or functioning of a system building block/element. It describes a situation and can be written up, discussed and used for taking action.

**Considerations for the Management Information System (MIS)**

Having a PM&E system linked to a Management Information System (MIS), that can capture the data from the M&E system for further analysis and use to improve the system and services for users, are two important system building blocks under the system element of Management Processes. ALESBA partners should not only monitor and evaluate their own process of ALE system building but ensure a PM&E system with a linked MIS are in place that can continuously collect data and reports about the functioning of the system and the delivery of ALE services in the country from both the supply and demand side. A mechanism should be in place to use the M&E results for improving the ALE projects and overall programme in the country.



### 3.5 Risk analysis

Risks are factors that could adversely affect the outcome of an activity or intervention. Risks can be internal or external, which can make risk assessment complicated. Internal risks may arise from circumstances within the organisation or partnership, e.g., when partners are not held accountable for not completing certain tasks. There is a high likelihood of the ability to exert control and limit the risk being realised. External risks may arise because of events outside the organisation and the ability to control them may be limited. The change of political leadership in a country may for example impact the support ALE may receive from the national government. Risks may often have an avalanche effect; one source of risk may give rise to several effects (DFID, 2002).

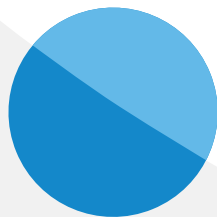
Risk analysis can be described as the process of identifying risks, assessing their individual and collective potential for causing damage and defining countermeasures. Risk assessments have to be regularly revisited, reconsidered to ensure they remain valid. It should be included in the ALESBA's PM&E system and the partnership governance structures should take responsibility for risk assessment and management. Risks in the ALE system building process can emanate from any of the system elements and building blocks, from the external political environment, or from the partnership itself.

Each partner needs to assess the risks and rewards that may arise from being involved in a cross-sector initiative and partnership. Some of the risks for partners may be:

- Reputation – will their reputation be damaged or enhanced by being in the partnership, or if the partnership should fail in the future.
- Loss of autonomy - working in collaboration means less independence for each organisation in the areas of joint work.
- Conflict of interest - partnership commitments can give rise to split loyalties or uncomfortable compromises.
- Implementation challenges – once a partnership is established there will be a fresh set of commitments and other challenges for each partner organisation as the partnership moves into project and programme implementation (Tennyson Ros, 2003).

Other partnership risks may occur when individual partner organisations leave the partnership, or when the whole partnership disbands. The consensus building phase of the ALESBA (Phase One) provides opportunities to conduct a risk assessment about the partnership itself and to create an environment where partners are aware that the rewards are bigger than the risks, e.g.:

- Professional development of their personnel.
- Better access to information and networks.
- Greater reach to the target group (ALE users).
- More appropriate and effective services.
- Increased access to resources, etc.



### 3.6 Advocacy and evidence-based influencing

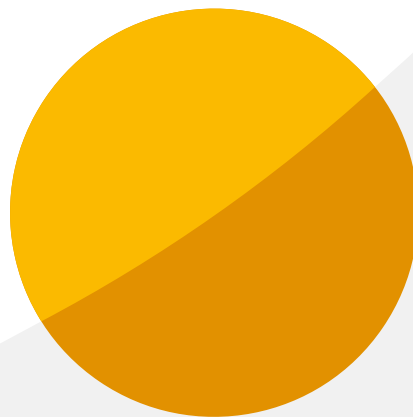
Many ALE system building blocks will not be realised without an advocacy process. This does not only refer to policies and strategies within the Enabling Environment but also to building blocks such as budgets for ALE under Management Processes. Whenever a change is needed, advocacy has a role to play. Advocacy can be described in simple terms as support for an argument or an issue, cause or policy. It is about putting the problem on the agenda and providing/suggesting a solution to that problem and building support for that solution and for the action necessary to implement that solution.

Considering the limited exposure and support ALE receives as a sector in many countries and as this is reflected by limited budget and staff allocations, and immature implementation structures, etc., it is clear that ALE and ALE system building needs an advocacy strategy of its own. Implementing the ALESBA and becoming a partner to improve the ALE system in a country will require advocacy within organisations (so-called internal advocacy) to convince leadership and other factions in the organisations of its importance. It will also require advocacy from the ALESBA partnership for several ALE system building blocks, such as having an independent ALE policy, sufficient budget allocations, and a national qualifications framework, etc.

Advocacy and evidence-based influencing (having the ability to show-case with practical implementation examples and impact studies for convincing arguments), therefore, will play a major role during Phase Four when the newly designed ALE system is implemented and tested. Advocacy has often received a negative connotation and a perception of agitation and demand from some stakeholders by others. However, there are different forms of advocacy and ALESBA partners should formulate a joint advocacy strategy that will engage all partners as per their roles and competencies to advocate for an ALE system that can deliver services – building block – by building block.

DVW International's experiences in Ethiopia and Uganda have shown that joint implementation of and learning about project and programmes with government partners at different levels and across sectors, can contribute to best practices, joint ownership and lessons that can mobilise government partners to advocate for resources within their own structures. Community learning centres (CLCs), as places where ALE services can be provided, are currently co-funded with government funds and decisions have been made at higher levels to include them in strategies and national development plans. In selected regions and districts, the government in both countries already has started to scale up the establishment of CLCs with their own funds during the testing phase. Evidence-based influencing which should be based on joint implementation and ownership remains a powerful convincing tool for advocacy in the ALESBA.

A stronger and more organised form of advocacy namely lobbying may be needed to apply pressure for building blocks such as ALE legislation which will enforce the right to ALE services by ALE users. Whether or not using advocacy, lobbying or evidence-based influencing, strategies should be decided by all ALESBA partners for putting an ALE system in place. Ideally, ALESBA partners should consider an advocacy and evidence-based influencing strategy related to different system building blocks during the operational planning stage and it should be included in the ALE system design response framework.



### 3.7 Learning insights and best practices: The role of quality study circles

To initiate and sustain system change over time, the leadership of partner organisations needs to be involved, especially when trying to change long-established and complex systems. But leadership alone is not enough. A critical mass of ALE stakeholders in different roles and positions who understand the need for change and are willing to act on it, is crucial for achieving results (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017). People need to live through and experience change rather than be told by a third party to believe in it and commit to the process. Their involvement and participation should be planned for and take place in different ways.

The implementation and testing of the new ALE system design during Phase Four plays out at different levels:

- Within individual partner organisations, which have each been assigned certain project implementation tasks as per their mandates and responsibilities. The leadership and employees of individual partner organisations must be fully committed to the role they have been assigned

and integrate the tasks into existing work plans, and job descriptions, etc., with the necessary resource allocations to ensure the new system design is embedded into existing, ongoing activities and processes.

- Across partner organisations, namely within the partner clusters that take responsibility for the building blocks within different system elements. It was recommended that each partner cluster/group form a governance structure such as a task force or technical team which will take responsibility for coordination, and accountability measures, etc., to ensure the joint and cross-sectoral implementation across levels of governance stays on track and reaches the objectives of each system building block and ultimately the outcomes of the system elements.
- At the programme management level, where a national steering committee or programme management team takes responsibility for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the ALE system building process.

To make this happen, organisations and partner clusters should have mechanisms and tools that can foster creativity, problem-solving, communication and teamwork. Quality study circles can play an important role in facilitating participation and capturing new insights, lessons and documenting best practices for evidence-based influencing. Such circles of employees within an organisation or a partner cluster can discuss the performance of processes, services and form part of the PME system of the ALE system building process.

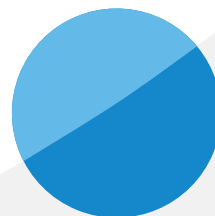


Quality study circles consist of a small group of 5 to 10 employees within one organisation and/or the partner cluster (therefore coming from different organisations), who meet at regular intervals to identify, analyse and resolve problems within the projects/programmes and implementation of activities. The outcomes of these meetings should be fed back into the implementation process and shared with management to ensure commitment, e.g., during M&E events, or partner cluster meetings, etc. (Jayakumar & Krishnaraj, 2015 March). Quality study circles from individual partner organisations can also feed their insights and lessons into the quality circles of partner clusters, that eventually can share with the national steering committee. In this way lessons, system changes while implementing, and best practices can be documented and shared. This will assist in updating the ALE system design in the system design response framework. This documentation should also form part of the documentation in the programme's MIS (Management Information System) and can be especially useful during the review of the implementation and testing phase before scaling up to a national level.

Quality study circles have the following basic principles in the way they function: (Carina, 2000)

- Equality and democracy: The work of the circle is based on the concept of equality among the participants, irrespective of their positions within the organisation or partnership. It should be based on a spirit of informality and the study circle leader's work is to inspire dialogue and exchange of views and information in a relaxed manner.
- Experience and cooperation: The work in a circle starts with the participants' experiences and knowledge about the work done in the projects/programmes. The circle is characterised by cooperation and companionship, of working together towards mutually shared and resolved problems and objectives.
- Continuity, planning and active participation: The circle meetings and objectives/agenda of each meeting have to be planned and organised. It implies that the circles follow a plan and the participants must be actively involved. Meetings should be scheduled at regular intervals.
- Change and action: Learning and sharing for change and action within the ALE system can be meaningful and motivating. Quality study circles should be acknowledged for their contributions and should be an integral part of the system building process.

Quality study circles can be considered as part of the governance structure of the ALESBA partnership and are crucial not only for monitoring and evaluation, but for creative solutions, new ideas and the documentation of best practices, case studies and using these for evidence-based influencing. The set-up of quality study circles requires orientating of participants, selecting a leader/facilitator, agreeing on the objectives, work plan and meeting schedule, etc.



## 4. MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION AND TESTING FROM THE DEMAND SIDE: COMMUNITY SCORECARDS

Using a systems approach is closely linked to the understanding that citizens are an integral part of service delivery and therefore the system. Not only do they have a role in demanding the services they need, but they hold important information about

the performance of the system and therefore provide a feedback loop for improving the supply side of the system (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017)



ALESBA partners would have conducted a demand assessment to understand the interests and needs of ALE learners/users of the services during Phase Two (Assessment and Diagnosis) and the results of this assessment would have been aligned with the system assessment results from the supply side during Phase Three (Alternatives Analysis and Design). The new ALE system design therefore will be based on the interests and needs of the ALE service users. Unfortunately, most programmes and service providers often do not follow up to find out whether the services are still relevant, accessible and delivered with the necessary quality.

The first signs may be increased drop-out rates of learners, irregular attendance and low enrollment rates, etc. ALE service providers should not wait for these signs, but have to purposefully plan and implement feedback mechanisms to include the ALE learners in the system's functioning and make it part of its PME system. This section of the booklet provides a brief overview and the steps to implement community scorecards in the context of ALE service delivery, keeping in mind that ALE services are diverse and range from adult literacy to business skills, non-formal skills training, and popular education, etc.



### What is community scorecards?

Community Scorecards bring together the demand side (service user) and the supply side (service provider) of a particular service or programme to jointly analyse issues that block efficient service delivery and to find a shared way of addressing the blockages and challenges. Therefore, it increases participation, transparency and accountability between service providers and users. It helps to identify how services are experienced by the users and providers and ensures informed decision making, tracking whether services and programmes are progressing well, reporting on the quality of services to responsible bodies and share responsibilities for monitoring and improving services. It is not about finger-pointing or blaming, settling scores or creating conflict (CARE Malawi, 2013).

### Who can use it?

- Government institutions at different levels (national to local) and different sectors as part of their monitoring system.
- NGOs in different sectors to track project progress – and as a monitoring tool.
- Community-based structures such as health centre committees, Village Development Committees, and CLC committees, etc.

In the context of the ALESBA, all the categories of the above-mentioned organisations that are working in partner clusters can use community scorecards to track the use of the ALE services delivered by the newly designed system.

### How to implement community scorecards?

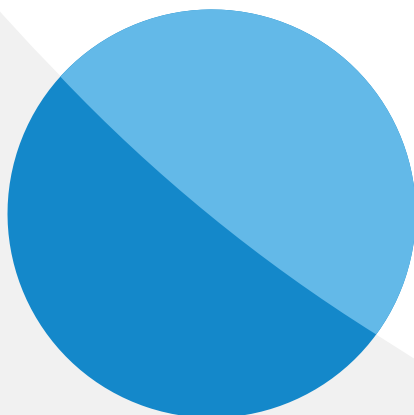
The implementation of Community Scorecards involves five different steps, starting with proper planning and preparation to use the scorecard methodology. It is conducted in turn with each of the demand (community) and supply (government, NGOs, etc.) side before culminating in an interface meeting where both parties come together in order to implement and monitor joint action plans (Step Five). The explanation on the next pages is a brief overview of what is involved during each of the steps.



##### Step One: Planning and preparation

During the first step, community scorecards have to be introduced to ALESBA partners and decisions have to be made about how to design and adapt the scorecard methodology to the services provided by the new ALE system. The partners have to consider the following:

- Why do they want to use the scorecard methodology and what do they hope to achieve? How will this information feed into the system's performance on the supply side and be part of the PME system?
- What will be the sectoral scope for the scorecard methodology, or in other words which ALE services will be included?
- Where will the scorecard be implemented? It may be good to start with a few pilot sites to test the methodology before using it in all areas where ALE services are delivered.
- Who will be involved, e.g., the ALESBA partners that directly provide the range of ALE services to the communities? This could be local government sector offices, or NGOs, etc. Decisions also have to be made about who will be the facilitators of the process with the communities and which ALE groups or target communities will participate in the exercise to have a representative view?
- How will the experts and staff from the service providers (ALESBA partners) be trained?
- How will the community or ALE service users be oriented in the methodology?
- How often will the scorecard exercises be repeated, e.g., once or twice per year, etc.?
- What are the service criteria that will be used to score the ALE services, e.g. quality, access, or relevance, etc.?



**Step Two: Conducting the scorecard with the community**

Based on the preparation, the responsible ALESBA partners will orient the selected ALE groups/users on the scorecard methodology. The facilitator of the process should be a trusted, neutral person who has to ensure that consensus is reached about the objectives of the exercise and how it will be conducted. The main aim of improving service delivery and engaging in mutual dialogue with service providers should be emphasised and an overview of

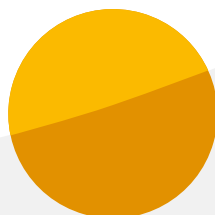
the process should be provided. The ALE users should understand that the service providers will also score themselves and that the results of each group’s scores will be shared and discussed during an interface meeting. An agreement should be reached on both the services and the criteria for scoring before the exercise starts. The scoring will take place in the form of a simple matrix ranking exercise as illustrated in the example below where one means a low score and five a high score:

**Community scorecard example**

ALE Service → Criteria ↓	Non-formal skills training	Business skills training	Adult literacy	Financial literacy
Quality of service	3	3	2	3
Access to service	2	1	4	2
Service regularity	4	1	3	3
Available inputs	3	2	2	3
Relevance	5	5	4	5
<b>Total score</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>

The ALE users will debate each score to reach a consensus before placing it in the matrix. These debates should be recorded because they provide information on the perspectives about service provision.

Once the matrix is completed, the facilitator should use probing questions and encourage dialogue to uncover more reasons for the scores and suggestions for improving the services.



**Step Three: Conducting the scorecard with the service providers**

Conducting the scorecard with the service providers imply the involvement of all the ALESBA partners in the mentioned services by selecting a group of key experts that deliver the services from each partner to conduct the exercise among themselves. This could also be done during the meetings of quality study circles. The experts should have a safe space to voice their views, and challenges from an organisational perspective that may hinder service delivery, etc. The completed matrix should be analysed and discussed to find root causes for poor service delivery and can be complemented with other participatory tools such as force field analysis, etc. The results should be shared with the management of each organisation and the ALESBA cluster members of the relevant system elements, e.g., the Technical Processes cluster.

**Step Four: Interface meeting between service providers and users and action planning**

The next step would be to bring the service providers and service users groups that have completed the former exercises together for an interface meeting, where each group can share their matrix and scores and explain the reasons for these scores as well as the suggestions for improvement of services. The interface meeting needs skilled facilitation to avoid conflict with an emphasis on dialogue, joint solutions and shared responsibilities. The meeting should end with an action planning exercise where each group is assigned tasks for service improvement.

**Step Five: Implementation of agreed action points and PME**

The last step is the actual implementation of the action points and plans agreed upon during the interface meeting. These action points should be integrated into the plans and tasks of the responsible partner clusters and feed into the PM&E system and agendas of quality study circles.

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## 5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

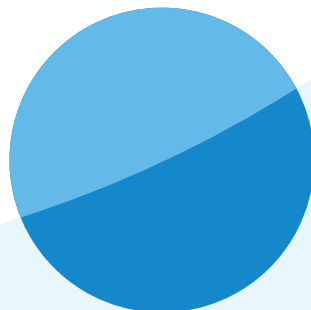
**The ALESBA booklet on Phase Four attempts to give the users of the toolkit an orientation on how to move from Phase Three to Phase Four and therefore from planning to action.**

Considering that Phase Four can take three to six years to complete and the scope of the plans and activities are too big to cover in the contents of one booklet, users of the toolkit are encouraged to use this booklet as a reference

or starting point for further study, exploration and learning. The ultimate objective is that the design, planning and implementation of projects and programmes will provide the opportunity to test different modalities and approaches to provide better and more relevant services for the ALE learners and service users. The booklet on Phase Five will focus on refining the tested ALE system of Phase Four for delivering ALE services at a national scale.

**The ALESBA toolkit acknowledges and refers to ALE terminology in the following publications:**

- Towards an operational definition of Lifelong Learning:  
UIL Working Papers No.1 (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015)
- European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2:  
Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector  
(National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy, 2008)
- Terminology of European education and training policy:  
A selection of 130 key terms (second edition)  
(European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2014)



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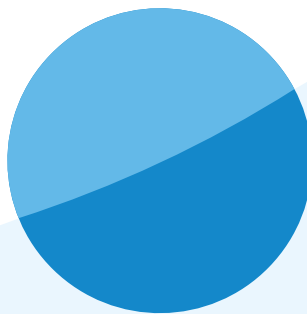
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### **DVW International**

DVW International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. DVV represents the interests of the approximately 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest further education providers in Germany. As the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and development cooperation, DVW International has committed itself to support lifelong learning for more than 50 years. DVW International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable adult education structures and systems for youth and adult learning and education. To achieve this, DVW International co-operates with civil society, government and academic partners in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. DVW International finances its work through funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union as well as other donors.

The Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA) is a product of DVW International that can assist countries in building sustainable Adult Learning and Education (ALE) systems that can deliver a variety of ALE services to youth and adults. The ALESBA toolkit covers the conceptual framework of the approach with guidelines and practical tools to implement the approach across five phases.

#### **The toolkit consists of the following books:**

1. Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit
2. Phase One – Consensus Building
3. Phase Two – Assessment and Diagnosis
4. Phase Three – Alternatives Analysis and Design
5. Phase Four – Implement and Test
6. Phase Five – Review, Adjust and Up-scale

#### **For further information visit:**

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