



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COPING WITH COMPLEXITY

DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS FORUM

4 – 8 MAY 2026
TURIN, ITALY

Information Note



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

The course addresses the limitations of traditional project cycle management (PCM) in dealing with the complexities of social systems, particularly in capacity building and advocacy projects. Traditional PCM assumes linear cause-effect relationships, which often fail to account for the dynamic, feedback-driven, and unpredictable nature of social interactions.

Furthermore, the reliance on upfront micro-planning and rigid controlling instruments limits flexibility and responsiveness to real-world developments. The workshop aims to help practitioners understand the non-linear dynamics of complex social systems and incorporate systemic thinking into project design, implementation and evaluation.

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS COURSE?

The objective of this course is to equip development practitioners with the concepts, tools, and skills to navigate, manage, and thrive in **complex and uncertain project environments**.

Through a blend of theory, practical tools, and peer exchange, participants will learn how to apply **systems thinking**, use **data and knowledge management strategies**, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and adapt traditional project management models to better respond to today's evolving development challenges.

WHAT TOPICS DOES THIS COURSE COVER?

- The nature of complexity in development work
- Historical roots and limitations of traditional development management tools
- Systems thinking and how to apply it to project cycle management
- AI and digital tools for knowledge work and project management support
- Techniques for mapping complex social systems and identifying key interconnections
- Adaptive and emergent Theories of Change using methods like backcasting and developmental evaluation
- Evaluation strategies for complex interventions, including quantitative and qualitative methods
- The role of leadership, collaboration, and soft skills in complex contexts

WHAT WILL I BE ABLE TO DO?

After completing the course, you will be able to:

- Design, manage and evaluate development projects that are better aligned with complex realities
- Facilitate adaptive project cycles and revise interventions as contexts evolve
- Apply AI tools and knowledge systems to support the project knowledge base, monitoring, reporting and decision-making
- Use complexity-aware tools in your Theory of Change
- Measure outcomes and impact in settings where change is unpredictable or emergent
- Build and use your own complexity toolkit tailored to your project and organization

HOW WILL I LEARN?

This course uses a highly participatory and experiential approach. You will learn through:

- Interactive expert sessions combining conceptual input and case-based discussion
- Live demonstrations of tools and methods (e.g., AI, backcasting)
- Hands-on group exercises to apply systems thinking and network mapping
- Peer-to-peer learning and reflection on real-world complexity challenges
- A final session to build your personal complexity toolkit, drawing from the week's insights

WHO ATTENDS THIS COURSE?

The course is aimed at development practitioners involved in international cooperation, especially those managing institutional capacity building and advocacy projects. It targets project managers, programme officers, and consultants responsible for designing and implementing complex development processes. While experience in standard project cycle management (PCM) is expected, prior knowledge of social systems theory is not required. Participants should ideally have practical project experience and computer literacy, as the course includes digital tools.

The course is suited for those seeking innovative, flexible approaches to manage non-linear, dynamic social systems, enhancing development impact through adaptive complex and holistic project strategies. Participants come from diverse sectors, including NGOs, UN agencies, and private organizations, promoting valuable cross-sector knowledge sharing.

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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COURSE CODE: A9019188