



**UPU** | UNIVERSAL  
POSTAL  
UNION

# Postal Reform Plan

## Implementation Guide

Version 02.01.2026

### **Contact**

UPU International Bureau  
Paul Schoorl  
Programme Manager, Policy and Regulatory Advisory

[paul.schoorl@upu.int](mailto:paul.schoorl@upu.int)

## Table of Contents

<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. PRP GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 ROLE PRP IN POSTAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT	7
2.2 PRP GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES	8
<b>3. PRP PROJECT FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 POLICY FOCUS AREAS	13
3.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF PRP PROJECTS	15
3.3 ACTIVITY-BASED DESIGN OF PRP PROJECTS	16
3.4 RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT OF PRP PROJECTS	17
<b>4. PRP CORE METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 THEORY OF CHANGE	19
4.2 PRP RESULTS FRAMEWORK	22
4.2.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT	23
4.2.2 POLICY INTERVENTION	25
4.2.3 RESULTS	29
4.2.4 IMPACT	31
<b>5. PRP PROJECT MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 MANAGEMENT STAGE 1: INITIATION	35
5.2 MANAGEMENT STAGE 2: DEFINITION	42
5.3 MANAGEMENT STAGE 3: DELIVERY	48
5.4 MANAGEMENT STAGE 4: CONTROL	56
5.5 MANAGEMENT STAGE 5: CLOSEOUT	62

## Preface

The Postal Reform Plan (PRP) is a methodology that combines project and results-based management of projects that aim to accomplish change in the (national) postal sector.<sup>1</sup> PRP projects are aimed at moving the sector (and/or its postal operator) from one state to another state in order to achieve a specific objective. No two PRP projects are the same: a fundamental principle of the PRP methodology is that each postal reform project should be tailored for a project's particular national circumstances. The goal is to apply a level of project management through (1) **tailoring** and (2) **embedding**. Tailoring means adapting a method, process and scope (policy focus area) of the project that suits the particular national situation in which it is applied. Embedding is the act of making the PRP project an integral part of a larger whole and/or linking the PRP project with larger national (economic development) policy goals.

The PRP was originally introduced in 2005 as the Integrated Postal Reform and Development Plan (IPDP) and substantially reviewed and modernized in 2025 and renamed Postal Reform Plan (PRP). Moving away from a one-size fits all approach to postal reform, the new methodology recognizes a project's particular national circumstances and introduces accountability mechanisms that ensure that the project is conducted in a controlled and managed environment. Under the new methodology, managing PRP projects is managing for results.

The methodology is adaptable to diverse national contexts, enabling government, regulators, and postal operators to address challenges specific to their circumstances. Whether the focus is on foundational reforms – such as establishing universal postal service obligations and creating a robust regulatory framework – or advanced modernization efforts, including digital transformation and diversification, the PRP methodology ensures a systematic and coherent approach.

The PRP does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all solution, but a flexible framework that evolves with the needs of the country and the sector, ensuring lasting benefits for all stakeholders.

This implementation guide provides the guidelines for practitioners in postal sector reform, including postal reform experts selected to conduct postal reform projects within the scope of the PRP (practitioners), staff and subject matter experts of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) International Bureau (IB) and subject matter experts in general. Practitioners can use this guide to understand the UPU approach to results-based management of postal reform projects and its application to PRP projects. In general, this guide is meant to be a companion to the PRP-driven postal sector reform efforts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Activity-based management of PRP projects by applying recognized project management principles; results-based management of PRP projects by applying a results (or logical) framework to define and measure performance against strategic objectives.

# 1. Introduction

In any society, governmental entities enact laws, make policies, and allocate resources. Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives. Governments all over the world enact postal laws, adopt secondary legislations and decisions and define policies relevant to the postal sector. These instruments define postal services and rights and obligations for the provision of a universal postal service and present a vision in terms of the role of the postal service in society, government and business.

The relevancy of policies for the postal sector runs across all echelons of the public sector. Drawing on the Preamble of the UPU Constitution, which states that “the mission of the Union is to stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world”, the Convention specifically defines the universal postal service in its article 1.1.18 as “the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in a member country’s territory, for all customers, at affordable prices”.

These obligations are further reinforced by article 3.1 of the Convention, which provides that “member countries shall ensure that all users/customers enjoy the right to a universal postal service involving the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in their territory, at affordable prices”.

At the national level, governments enact a policy and regulatory framework that organizes, operationalizes and promotes the universal postal service in alignment with the above criteria.

Efficient, affordable and quality postal services are critical for the success of an effective digital economy in which all sectors of society, including the most vulnerable sectors, can participate and thrive. Meanwhile, traditional postal services, including the delivery of letters, remain an essential communication service. The postal sector is a contributor to the national economic performance, a facilitator of economic activity, and a critical connector between all natural persons (citizens) and economic and government entities with deliveries to and from even the most remote address.

The PRP recognizes that the societal, economic and technological developments, combined with market liberalization and changing consumer behavior, result in new realities in which the postal sector needs to be modernized and reformed in order to meet the changing needs and expectations for postal services. In fact, in view of declining letter volumes and the economic shift to e-commerce, require the governments to review their postal policy and regulatory frameworks for the sector to remain relevant and to find new ways in which citizens and businesses can effectively participate in the digital economy.

As these trends and developments accelerate, postal reform increasingly finds its way to the government policy agenda. Reform means improving or changing something that is not working well, out-of-date, or failing to meet desired objectives. Reform is transformational and yet durable, since it is intended to have an enduring effect. The PRP is the vehicle that provides UPU member countries with the policy and regulatory advisory support and technical assistance to conduct their reform agendas.

## **Structure of the Postal Reform Plan**

The document lays down the principles and methodology and as such forms an introduction to how the UPU applies activity-based and results-based management to its policy and regulatory advisory activities in relation to postal sector reform, especially at the project level. Collectively, these efforts are referred to as the Integrated Postal Reform Plan (PRP), which provide the concepts, principles, terminology and tools, as well as step-by-step guidance on their application. PRP projects are national projects, specifically authorized by the competent Government authority (hereinafter Government), with the central aim to define, reconstruct or redesign the provision of postal services on a financially sustainable basis within its country. In addition, they aim to ensure that the state obligation to provide a universal postal service is defined and ultimately met.

The PRP is based on four policy focal areas as a baseline for PRP-driven postal sector reform projects. These four focus areas are (1) Postal Sector Policy, (2) Regulatory Framework, (3) Universal Postal Service, and (4) Postal Operators.

By addressing the focus area(s) through a structured process, the PRP methodology allows stakeholders to transform broad strategic goals into actionable steps. The process thereby ensures that each reform component is supported by rigorous analysis, stakeholder engagement, and an evidence-based framework. Through the PRP process, the project's product, which are referred to as "deliverables", feed directly into the development of a coherent postal sector reform strategy.

Every PRP project has five (management) stages: initiation, definition, delivery, control and close-out. Each stage has its own set of activities and products that are critical to the project's success. PRP governance principles such as results-based management and practicing evidence-based reform are continually addressed throughout the PRP project lifecycle.

At the heart of the PRP methodology is the results framework which is a roadmap that depicts logical connections between the planned deliverables, outputs and outcomes. Specific and measurable objectives and indicators are derived from the postal reform goals set for postal reform. Evaluation is a critical element of the PRP, which measures the discrepancy between the planned outcomes (objectives) and the actual outcomes.

Section 2 describes the role of the PRP as a technical assistance project in relation to a national postal reform effort. The PRP is directly relevant to the phase of *policy formulation* as the output of the PRP project involves the actual drafting of a public policy document. It furthermore provides the eight governance principles of any PRP project. These principles run across every management stage of the PRP and are fundamental to successful reform and should be pursued at all times. Section 3 discusses the main approaches that underpin the PRP methodology, which are: (1) project management, (2) activity-based design, and; (3) results-based management of PRP projects. Section 4 contains the main methodology of the PRP that is based on the combination of the theoretical approaches discussed in section 3 with at the core the "results framework" as a sequenced process of groups of activities that start with the identification of a "need" for postal reform and end with the measurement of impact of the postal reform efforts. Finally, section 5 provides step-by-step guidance to the implementation of the methodology. Substantive information, including theoretical models, best practices and guidelines, relevant to the policy focus areas is included in the revised Postal Reform Guide (PRG).

This implementation guide provides the guidelines for practitioners in postal sector reform, including postal reform experts selected to conduct postal reform projects within the scope of the PRP (practitioners), staff and subject matter experts of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) International Bureau (IB) and subject matter experts in general. Practitioners can use this guide to understand the UPU approach to results-based management of postal reform projects and its application to PRP projects. In general, this guide is meant to be a companion to the PRP-driven postal sector reform efforts.

Mindful that the result of the PRP project (i.e. its deliverables) is policy advice for the postal reform undertaking Government, the actual postal reform effort by the Government (and/or legislature) is likely to cover a longer period of time, is broader in nature and is more inclusive involving all relevant postal sector stakeholders. Limited to PRP projects, the parties that own, manage and conduct the PRP project are, respectively, the PRP project competent authority; the International Bureau, and; the PRP practitioner. These three key roles are summarized below.

#### **Competent authority (project authorizing Government)**

A PRP national project reflects the political will and commitment of the Government. The Government, in particular the competent authority/ Ministry with responsibility over the postal sector, is ultimately accountable for the project's success and is the key decision maker.

This particular role is focused on achieving the project's goals and objectives and delivering a project that will achieve the planned benefits. The Government, through its appointed representative, is informed throughout the project and provides overall direction.

The Government is also responsible for linking the PRP project to an overall national, regional or international socio-economic development strategy, which could be defined in national economic plans or national or international sustainability goals, for example.

As the ultimate responsible for national postal sector reform, the Government is not only accountable for the project's success but also advocates for the implementation of the project's deliverables, provided that they are fit for purpose. For reasons of local specific conditions, the relationships with stakeholders are typically managed by a representative from the Government. The practitioner may provide guidance to the Government representative in terms of possible ways of conducting meetings, consultations, surveys, etc. involving stakeholders, but the Government is the primary contact point for stakeholder relations.

### **International Bureau**

The IB manages the project and ensures that the core PRP methodology (see section 4) is applied and controls and validates the project's output (i.e. deliverables) and evaluates the effectiveness of postal reform post-project.

The IB plays four key roles: (1) it provides technical assistance (and capacity-building) to its Member States in their postal reform efforts; (2) as part of its controlling function, the IB reviews and validates deliverables and guides the reform project towards its completion within the constraints and expectations set for the project; (3) as part of its information function, it shares best practices and provides relevant subject matter expertise and it also collects and records information on all past, current and future PRP projects, and; (4) the IB monitors and evaluate the effectiveness of postal reform through the "results framework" that is core to any PRP project.

### **PRP Practitioner**

The practitioner is the main expert focal point in the conduct of a PRP-driven postal reform project as it provides the required expert knowledge for the project. The practitioner operates in an advisory capacity and guides postal sector reform project towards the development of deliverables that meet standards of effective and quality postal sector reform. The role differs from the International Bureau as the IB ensures the overall management of the PRP project through its controlling function. In other words, the practitioner performs a thorough analysis of the postal sector and develops the policy content and recommendations, which are referred to as the project's deliverables.

The practitioner operates within the constraints set by the Government, which are set out in the project charter. The practitioner reports to the IB (which holds a controlling/ PMO function) and provides updates on the project's progress. In some PRP projects, the practitioner is part of a team which consists of governmental focal points and experts and other parties.

The deliverable(s) produced by the end of a PRP project is the proposed policy content, including recommendations for implementation and a framework for post-implementation evaluation of the measures taken.

## 2. PRP Governance Framework

The PRP governance framework defines the role and place of the PRP in the national context of policy development. It articulates where PRP projects support UPU member countries undertaking postal sector reform in the form of technical assistance. It is important to understand that postal reform provides expertise, insights and proposes informed and results-focused recommendations as well as possible content for policies for the national postal sector. The national policy process is more comprehensive and covers a more extended period than the lifecycle of a PRP project since efforts may have started prior to the project in terms of the setting of the agendas for the review or development of the policy for the sector and the product of a PRP project (the deliverables) feed into the overall reform process as described in section 2.1. It is thus important to note that the deliverables, when submitted to the competent authority, are only input in the phase of formulating national policy prior to the adoption and implementation thereof by the competent national authorities.

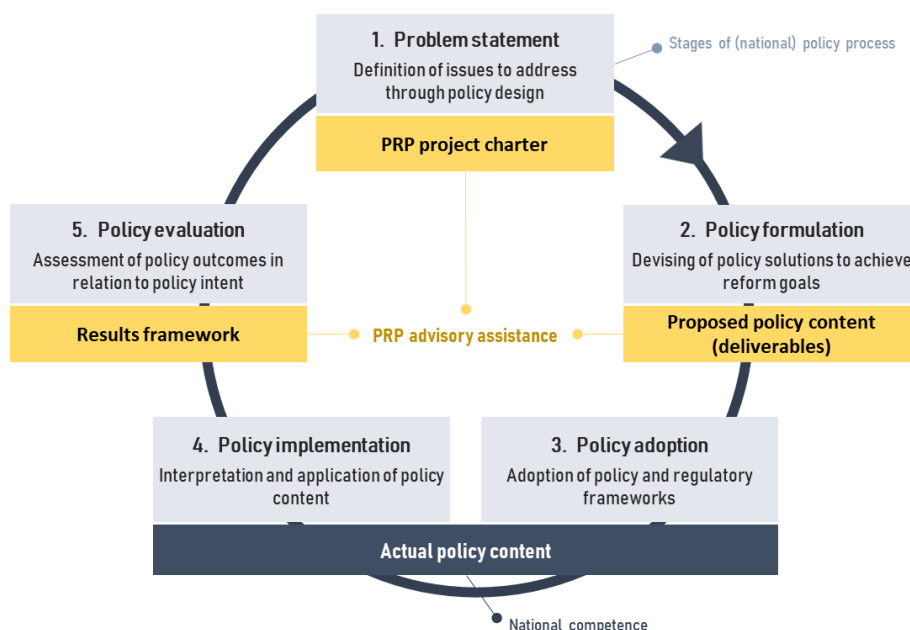
The governance framework is complemented by the PRP governance principles. These principles are continually applied throughout the PRP project to ensure the relevancy, effectiveness and legitimacy of the proposed policy content and recommendations.

### 2.1 Role PRP in Postal Policy Development

The policy cycle framework originates from the idea of organizing and ordering the complexity of policymaking in sequential stages that offer explanatory insights into a decision-making process.

For reasons of simplicity, this introduction follows the most common policy model which consists of 5 phases: (1) problem identification and agenda-setting; (2) policy formulation; (3) policy enactment; (4) policy implementation, and; (5) policy evaluation. The PRP provides the UPU framework for technical assistance in relation to three of these five stages. As explained in the PRP methodology, these three stages correspond to the PRP management stages where the PRP provides support to member countries in problem identification (or agenda-setting); policy formulation (which is the main product of the PRP, also referred to as “deliverables”) and policy evaluation. The policy-making cycle and the nexus with the PRP is illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: public policy process and nexus with PRP (UPU technical assistance)



The *problem statement* is the rationale for policy intervention. If there was no problem to solve or no particular issue that needs to be addressed or, if analysis so indicates, that there is no problem to be fixed, then the policy process stops here. As specified further in this document, the reason for postal reform needs to be identified and clearly specified at the start of a PRP-driven postal reform project. This is referred to as the “justification” of the project. In the policy model, this equates to the identification of the existence of a public policy issue that requires government intervention and action to address the issue. In the PRP methodology, high-level postal reform goals are defined to give strategic direction of the postal reform exercise and thereby establishes the boundaries for the PRP practitioner conducting the postal reform project. As indicated in figure 1 above, these results are carefully documented in the PRP Project Charter, which provides the formal mandate for the PRP project.

*Policy formulation* also referred to as policy design involves actual drafting of the public policy document to provide effective and acceptable course of action for addressing the identified problem, and is based on the policy agenda selected. The main activities undertaken at this stage are generating the policy options through policy analysis and drafting all the sections of the policy in question based on the prescribed methodology. The deliverables that are produced at the end of a PRP project is the proposed policy content, including recommendations for implementation and a framework for post-implementation evaluation of the measures taken.

The next step, *public policy approval* (or policy enactment), is the process through which the proposed policy is formally accepted and authorized by the relevant governing body/ bodies and/or authority. In many jurisdictions, the approval process concerns the enactment of a new postal law or the adoption of a secondary postal legislation. No two countries are the same and no two postal reform projects are the same and therefore the relevant policy instruments and national approval procedures will depend on the relevant circumstances.

*Policy implementation* is the process of giving effect to the adopted policy and regulatory instruments, i.e. the statements and decisions are turned into concrete actions. In the PRP methodology this process is associated with the term “immediate outcomes” and must be understood in terms of the actual practical application of the policy decisions taken. Together, policy approval and implementation are activities that fall within the prerogative of the national government. The PRP does neither prescribe nor seek to influence those stages. It is within the competence of the national bodies and authorities to deviate from the PRP deliverables and recommendations as their actions may result from further consultations and legislative processes.

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning are interlinked processes that are conducted after the fact, i.e. after the policy and instruments have been reviewed, accepted, adopted and implemented. *Policy evaluation* is therefore a critical aspect of results-based management and is applied to PRP projects; the IB provides technical assistance through the PRP in this step of the policy process. The PRP methodology prescribes the use of the results framework to monitor, evaluate and report on indicators that are set in the policy formulation process.

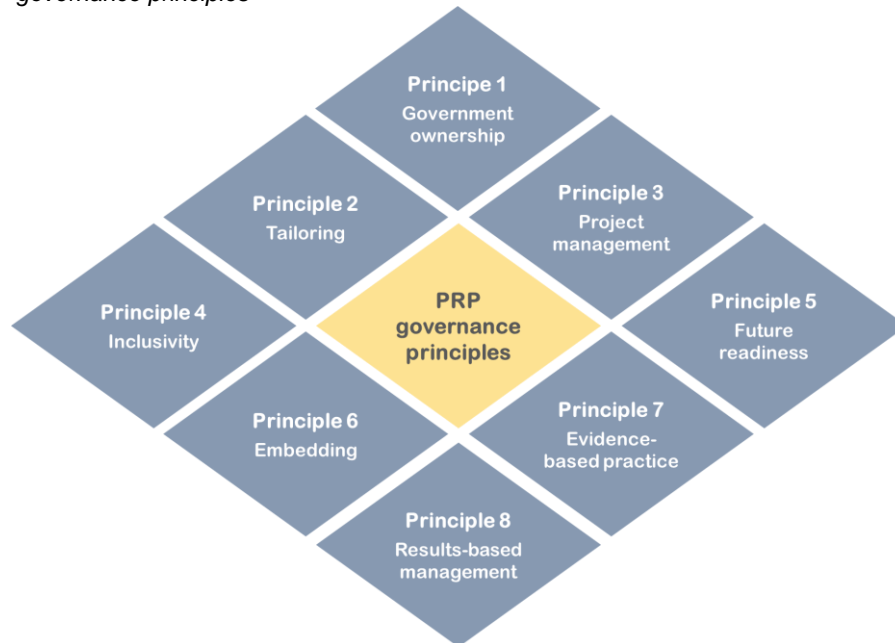
In the current challenging socio-economic and political context, governments need to strengthen their policymaking processes and ensure that expertise, evidence and science is brought to bear in the most appropriate way to inform decisions. Therefore, at each of these steps of the policy process, the PRP promotes informed decision-making through building, maintaining and exploiting an evidence-base relevant to the postal reform effort.

## 2.2 PRP governance principles

The PRP is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for postal sector reform, adaptable to each country’s unique context. Its defining principles are fundamental to its ability to facilitate effective postal reforms and the transformation of postal services across diverse national contexts. These principles ensure that the PRP Toolkit and its methodology remain relevant, actionable, and aligned with both national development goals and global postal sector trends.

The PRP principles must be consistently applied in all management stages of the PRP project (see sections 3.2 and 5) and in PRP results framework (section 4.2). By addressing these principles continually throughout the PRP lifecycle and after the implementation of the policy in the evaluation post-project, these principles ensure that postal reforms are, among other principles, forward-looking, inclusive, and evidence-based in their response to a rapidly changing socio-economic and technological environment.

Figure 2. PRP governance principles



### **Principle 1: PRP projects are Government owned**

A PRP national project reflects the political will and commitment of the Government. The Government, in particular the competent authority/ Ministry with responsibility over the postal sector, is ultimately accountable for the project's success and is the key decision maker.

This particular role is focused on achieving the project's goals and objectives and delivering a project that will achieve the planned benefits. The Government, through its appointed representative, is informed throughout the project and provides overall direction.

As the ultimate responsible for national postal sector reform, the Government is not only accountable for the project's success but also advocates for the implementation of the project's deliverables, provided that they are fit for purpose.

### **Principle 2: PRP projects are tailored**

The PRP methodology does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all solution. Rather, it provides a strategic and comprehensive framework that allows to design country-specific, and hence, tailor-made, PRPs, based on an in-depth understanding of national realities, economic and social situation, and postal sector challenges.

To be specific, individual PRPs must include:

- A detailed diagnosis of the current state of the postal sector, identifying all the issues affecting various stakeholders, and including its strengths, weaknesses, and areas of opportunity.;
- Consideration of the local market environment, competition, and regulatory requirements to ensure that reform actions are realistic and achievable;

- Customized solutions that address country- or region-specific problems.

By being country- and problem-specific, the PRP ensures that reforms are relevant and practical, and that they deliver measurable results aligned with the country's broader development goals. A postal reform project supported by the PRP is necessarily country- or region-specific as the project starts with defining the postal reform goals that are connected to national development plans and other national or regional policy agendas and are furthermore informed by a situational analysis. Throughout the PRP project, either through the results framework (see section 4) or through other activities, the development of objectives and deliverables (draft policy content) are designed to respond to the specific national and regional context.

### **Principle 3: PRP projects are managed**

PRP projects are managed by the application of skills, time, knowledge and methodologies. PRP reform projects are managed from their initiation, definition, delivery, acceptance through post-project evaluation. The project management of PRP ties in directly with the national policy process, which breaks down in five distinct phases (as seen in section 2.1). The PRP connects directly with three of those phases: phase 1 of agenda-setting (PRP management stage 1 (definition)); phase 2 of policy formulation (PRP management stage 3 (delivery)), and; phase 5 evaluation (PRP management stage 5 (evaluation)).

Phases 3 (adoption) and 4 (implementation) in the national policy process are outside the scope of the PRP project. These phases start with the acceptance by the competent authority of the deliverables of the PRP (i.e. the project's product) and includes any further national policy review and legislative processes and any other activities that fall within the prerogative of the national government and their public entities.

The PRP deliverables include a well-defined schedule for an organized, systematic and timely implementation of reform actions. This characteristic underscores the need for a time-bound approach, which goes beyond merely scheduling activities to emphasize commitment to specific timelines and the urgency of reform actions. The aforementioned activities are scheduled and oriented towards producing results, referred to as outcomes in the context of the PRP.

In respect of the implementation schedules, the PRP deliverables shall include: (i) a phased implementation timeline defining short-, medium- and longer-term actions; (ii) clear milestones, and (iii) prioritization. See PRP management activity 3.5 (develop framework for implementation of deliverables).

Through project management, the PRP ensures that the reform process is well-organized and accountable, especially through the role of the IB in the overall management of the project.

### **Principle 4: PRP projects are inclusive**

The PRP is inherently a collaborative effort that relies on the active participation of all relevant stakeholders at appropriate stages of the reform process. The core stakeholders include:

- **Government authorities** responsible for setting national postal policies and ensuring compliance with the country's universal service obligations.
- **Regulators** entrusted with monitoring market conditions, protecting consumers, and promoting efficient competition.
- **Postal operators**, tasked with implementing the reforms and modernizing operations

Other relevant stakeholders include:

- **Private sector partners**, including technology providers, e-commerce platforms, and financial service providers, who collaborate to provide innovative and diversified postal services.

- **Competitors** of the postal operator in markets into which it might diversify, as well as **sectoral regulators** of those markets.
- **Civil society and consumers**, whose needs and feedback are essential for shaping reform objectives that align with societal expectations and requirements.

Inclusive and coordinated collaboration pursued by the PRP should increase legitimacy and relevancy of the proposed policy content ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in its implementation.

#### **Principle 5: PRP projects are forward-looking**

The PRP places a strong emphasis on modernization of the postal sector by following a future oriented policy approach. For example, scenario planning and strategic foresight are proposed as methods by which different possible futures are explored for the purposes of formulating postal sector policy (see PRG module 1B). The PRP pursues an evidence-based approach to policy making (see principle 6) which considers trends and developments including innovation and technological change, demographic shifts, climate change, persistent inequality, and (de)globalization.

By embracing forward-looking strategies, the PRP encourages stakeholders to proactively address emerging challenges and opportunities, including (i) the adoption of advanced technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence or innovation in delivery (drone, parcel lockers, etc); (ii) the development of future-ready business models that align postal services with the demands of the digital economy, including e-commerce logistics, last-mile delivery optimizations, and cross-border services, while ensuring adequate safety and protection to postal workers, and; (iii) strategic collaboration to foster innovation through partnerships tailored to the unique needs of the postal sector.

Connecting with principle 6 (embedding), the forward-looking approach positions postal services as key enablers of the digital economy, bridging physical and digital worlds while maintaining their vital role in promoting economic and social inclusion and contributing to environmental sustainability agendas.

#### **Principle 6: PRP projects are embedded**

In line with global trends, the PRP recognizes and includes broader policy agendas and transversal policy issues. As previously mentioned, it is encouraged, where possible, to embed PRP projects and link them with wider socio-economic plans or policy agendas. At the national, regional and global level, there are a multitude of different policy frameworks and transformation agendas that provide a suitable context for a PRP project: postal reform (through the PRP) can make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the goals articulated in those visions, plans and agendas.

The benefits from embedding postal reform in these different policy frameworks include: (1) it could unlock political support from key decision-makers as they understand the relevancy of postal reform in the achievement of the wider policy goals; (2) it could mobilize resources for postal reform; (3) it could increase the legitimacy of postal reform as it highlights the important contributions it could make to society and the economy; (4) it enhances the relevancy of the postal sector, and (5) it could help prioritizing postal reform among competing policy efforts.

PRP projects could align themselves with global trends and national commitments to environmental and social sustainability and economic growth. By embedding postal sector reform in the broader sustainability agenda, the PRP could address not only immediate operational needs but also contribute to broader policy agendas and development goals. Sustainability within the PRP is approached across three interconnected dimensions:

- **Financial:** Developing cost-efficient business models and value-added services (such as logistics, financial services, and e-commerce) that balance commercial viability with public service obligations.
- **Environmental:** Aligning postal sector reforms with broader environmental goals, such as carbon neutrality and climate resilience. Encouraging the “greening” of postal operations through measures such as fleet electrification, adoption of renewable energy sources, energy-efficient

infrastructure, supporting circular economy by promoting eco-friendly packaging solutions and waste reduction practices, promoting responsible management practices, including paperless operations and digitalization.

- **Social:** Advancing inclusivity and diversity, with a particular focus on gender equality and the integration of vulnerable groups, while contributing to local community development. This involves ensuring that reforms enhance social cohesion by addressing disparities in access to digital and physical postal services.

By integrating these three dimensions of sustainability, the PRP ensures that postal sector reforms are not only environmentally responsible but also socially equitable and economically robust. The PRP's emphasis on sustainability guarantees that reforms align with global objectives such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while enhancing the sector's capacity to adapt to future challenges and opportunities.

### **Principle 7: PRP projects are evidence based**

Evidence-based postal reform involves using data and research to guide policy changes in postal sector policies. Evidence-based and data-driven planning are defining characteristics of the Integrated Postal Development Plan (PRP) and a critical enabler of a successful postal sector reform. In a market environment marked by rapid technological change, shifting user expectations, and complex policy trade-offs, reform cannot rely on assumptions, legacy practices, or path-dependent regulatory models. Instead, it must be grounded in a rigorous, up-to-date understanding of sector performance, market dynamics, user needs, and institutional capacity.

The PRP management framework explicitly emphasizes evidence-based practice across each of the five management stages to ensure that the development of the policy content (deliverables) are grounded in objective evidence. Pursuing an evidence-based and data-driven approach to postal reform enhances the quality of the policy and its effectiveness while it also increases the credibility and legitimacy for the measures that are proposed therein.

### **Principle 8: PRP projects are results focused**

The results framework is a vital component of the PRP, ensuring that the reform process is designed, monitored, and evaluated in alignment with its intended goals and objectives. Drawing on results-based management, the results framework establishes clear connections between reform goals, postal sector specific objectives, planned actions (deliverables), outcomes, and long-term impacts, creating a structured pathway for achieving reform objectives. The results framework is defined in section 4.2 and is at the heart of the PRP methodology.

The development of the results framework begins with the identification of the objectives for postal sector reform, derived from the reform goals as set out in the Project Charter. These objectives are measurable through the associated indicators, which are completed with baselines and targets. These indicators provide benchmarks for assessing progress and enable a robust performance monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of the reform process.

### 3. PRP project framework

As previously introduced, the PRP framework is a combination of thematic practices (or knowledge areas), project management stages and results-based management. The combination provides for a step-by-step approach from the first intent of initiating postal reform, formulating its objectives and outcomes, through a careful planning and deliberation phase, through the final delivery of the project's product, the PRP deliverables. The PRP project lifecycle ends with the acceptance of the deliverables by the competent authority. During the project lifecycle, objectives, targets and baselines are established that will be monitored after the implementation of postal reform efforts.

#### 3.1 Policy focus areas

As previously mentioned, responding to the principles of tailoring (PRP principle 2) and embedding (PRP principle 6) and fully recognizing that the vast differences of circumstances in which postal sector reform is conducted in the different UPU member countries, the PRP follows a modular approach where the scope of the PRP project activities and deliverables are based on a range of different configurations.

Policy focus areas are knowledge areas and are also defined as those specific policy aspects that are covered in a PRP project (i.e. scope), for example the universal postal service or the regulatory and institutional framework. The selected policy areas define the scope of the project, but they can be tailored to include or exclude more specific elements, for example accessibility to basic postal services, pricing of postal services, digital services or digital transformation, sustainability, etc.

With strategic orientation is understood the extent to which, as determined from the beginning of the PRP project, of how much the PRP project is centered on the postal operator or the larger sector.

The PRP provides four main policy focus areas. Together they account for the core part of the sector's reform and represent a coordinated strategy for reforming the postal sector while ensuring that reforms are feasible and aligned with broader national development goals. The four focus areas are the following:

**Focus Area 1: Postal Sector Policy** – a comprehensive national postal sector policy that aligns with economic and social development goals while addressing its specific obligations. The sectoral policy, thus, provides the strategic roadmap for modernizing the postal ecosystem, enabling it to evolve as a critical driver of national infrastructure and development. The sector policy extends well beyond the universal postal service and involves various stakeholders active in the sector, in particular competing postal operators as well as other (delivery) service operators – in some contexts, the sector may be (re)defined in such a way to reflect the wider scope of application, e.g. the postal and delivery sector or the (physical and electronic) communication sector. Critically, this policy defines the government's vision and objectives for the postal sector and addresses key aspects to foster a competitive and innovative market while safeguarding customer interests. Additionally, it can incorporate emerging trends by including components related to environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and economic inclusion.

**Focus Area 2: Regulatory Framework** – the activities within focus areas I (postal sector policy) and III (universal postal service) require an appropriate legal framework, which is pivotal for modernizing and developing the country's (postal) sector. This framework includes a new postal law governing the sector and, if necessary, regulations addressing technical and operational aspects. The legal framework must be flexible enough to adapt to future technological, market, and societal changes, ensuring the sector remains competitive and responsive. Additionally, it includes the establishment of a robust, independent regulatory authority equipped with the necessary capabilities and resources. Non-universal postal service aspects, such as consumer protection and data protection are other important elements of this policy area.

**Focus Area 3: Universal Postal Service** – the universal postal service is a fundamental component of postal reform and is increasingly under pressure because of structural changes in society and the economy. It is important to regularly revisit the universal postal service as a policy to ensure it continues to address important needs and benefits and remains fit for purpose and financially sustainable. Closely aligned with national socio-economic development goals, the policy will include essential elements to ensure that critical postal services are accessible to all citizens at affordable rates. These elements will encompass the definition of universal postal service, access and service standards, financing mechanisms, and supporting systems such as cost accounting. In the digital age, the universal postal service must evolve to reflect changing customer expectations and the global shift towards digital communications and e-commerce while ensuring the continued needs for the exchange of physical communication. The modernization of the universal postal service aims to position the postal sector as a key enabler of financial inclusion, e-commerce growth, and digital connectivity, making it a critical player in advancing national development goals.

**Area 4: Postal Operator** – given the critical role of the postal operator in providing postal services, particularly universal postal services, postal reform efforts must include a comprehensive strategy to modernize the operator. The strategic reform of the universal postal service provider aims to equip it to meet modern demands while ensuring the financial sustainability of universal postal services. Efforts may encompass organizational reform, operational efficiency improvements, technological upgrades, and the expansion of service portfolios to respond to the changing needs of customers and society. Moreover, it will emphasize infrastructure development, capacity building, and financial sustainability to ensure long-term viability of the operator. Digital transformation, sustainable development and diversification determine the long-term strategic orientations of the operator and are critical components of this focus area. This area strongly emphasizes the importance of upgrading the postal network, operations, and service offerings to support economic growth, digital inclusion, and societal needs and focuses on modernization efforts, in particular digital transformation and diversification to ensure the continued (financial) sustainability of the operator that meets the current and future requirements of the users of the postal service.<sup>2</sup>

The main policy focus areas provide each a different perspective and orientation for postal sector reform. While they are different, they do necessarily overlap as modernized postal services may either provide for a more diversified portfolio of services or, indeed, lead to a modification of the provision of services the operator provides in response to a revised universal postal service obligation (focus area 3). Meanwhile, all these facets fit within the larger concept of a sector policy (focus area 1) that extends well beyond the activities and obligations of the universal postal service provider.

Not all activities in the postal sector are regulated activities, in many countries, certain commercial postal activities may fall outside of regulatory oversight, whereas other activities are within their scope. The incumbent postal operator is active in all three areas and is referred to as the universal postal service provider when its activities are relevant to the universal postal service and is otherwise referred to the more neutral term of postal operator if the operational economic activity is not different from any other operator active in the postal sector.

The Postal Reform Guide provides for detailed and relevant information for each of the policy focus areas and serves as a book of knowledge on postal sector reform. Each of the focus areas break down into modules that cover different topics or knowledge areas. The individual modules are grouped according to the most relevant policy focus area. The individual modules under the four policy focus areas are presented in Table 1 below.

*Table 1. PRP focus areas and Postal Reform Guide modules*

---

<sup>2</sup> Under the PRP, this policy connects with other UPU capacity-building efforts, including, but not limited to, Operational Readiness for Ecommerce (ORE), Digital Readiness Ecommerce (DRE) and the Quality of Service Fund (QSF). The activities within scope of the operator that is designated to fulfil the obligations of the universal postal service are not limited to those activities alone but include other non-universal postal service regulated activities (such as ancillary government services) as well as commercial activities

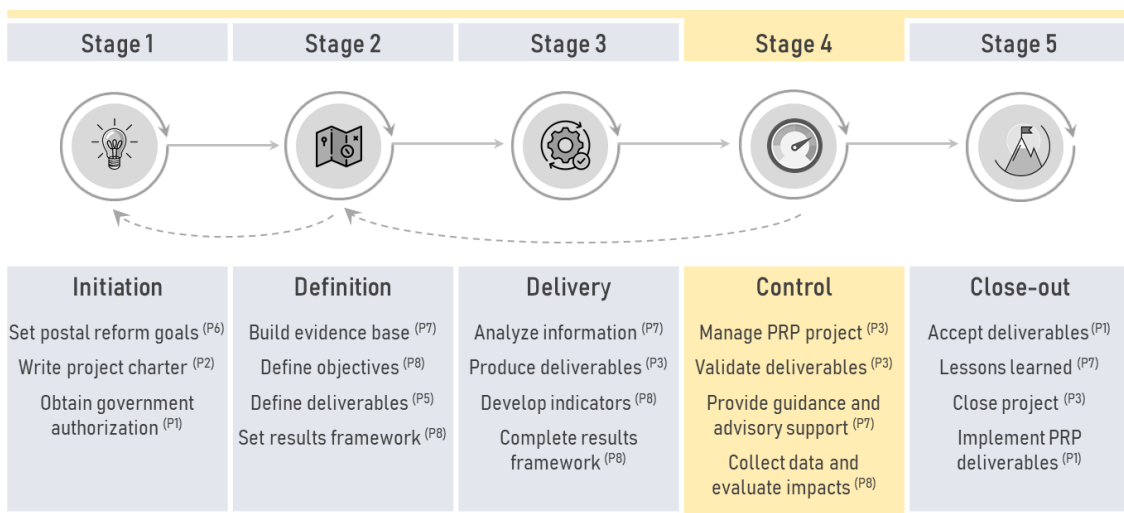
FOCUS AREA 1: POSTAL SECTOR POLICY	FOCUS AREA 2: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	FOCUS AREA 3: UNIVERSAL POSTAL SERVICE	FOCUS AREA 4: POSTAL OPERATOR
1A - Definitions	2A - Regulatory framework	3A - Definition and scope	4A – Designation of UPS provider
1B - Data-driven reform	2B - Economic regulation	3B - Service conditions	4B - Digital transformation
1C - Reform goals	2C - Regulatory authority	3C – Financing of UPS	4C - Sustainable development
1D - Resource mobilization	2D - Licensing systems		4D - Diversification
1E - Evaluation	2E - Transversal policy issues		4E - Cost accounting
	2F - Enforcement mechanisms		

Every PRP project is tailored according to the reform needs of the member country as well as the particular national circumstances. The scope of a PRP project is a combination of the selected modules under the relevant policy focus areas (scope), which can be further tailored and individualized according to the specific needs of the requesting member country.

## 3.2 Project Management of PRP Projects

In accordance with PRP principle 3, managing PRP projects in a controlled environment is critical to successful results of any PRP project. Regardless of the focus area or the primary priorities of a PRP project, every PRP project follows the five stages of initiation (stage 1), definition (stage 2), delivery (stage 3), control (stage 4) and close-out (stage 5). Each stage has its own set of activities that are critical to the project's success.

Figure 3. PRP management stages <sup>3</sup>



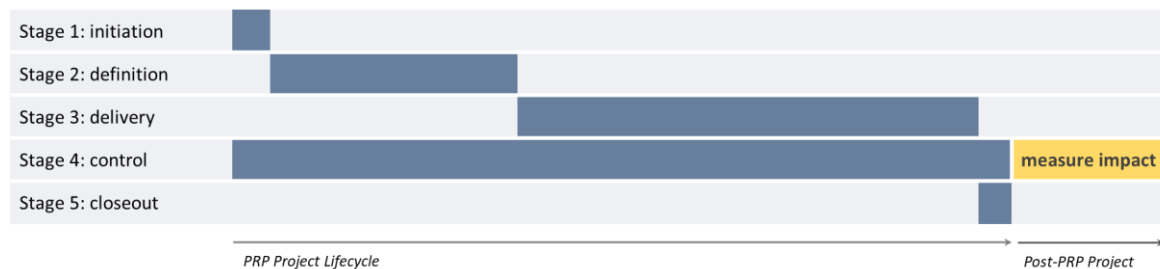
<sup>3</sup> PRP governance principles: <sup>(P1)</sup> Government ownership; <sup>(P2)</sup> Tailoring; <sup>(P3)</sup> Project management; <sup>(P4)</sup> Inclusivity; <sup>(P5)</sup> Future readiness; <sup>(P6)</sup> Embedding; <sup>(P7)</sup> Evidence-based practice; <sup>(P8)</sup> Results-based management.

Each stage is carefully designed to build on the previous one, ensuring a coherent and adaptable reform plan that addresses current needs and future challenges. Only stage 4 (control) is different as this stage consists of those processes that are required to track, review and regulate the progress and performance of the project and identifies any areas in which changes to the plan are required. Monitoring is an intrinsic part of stage 4 and requires the collection of project performance data and reporting information and thus occurs in parallel to and is relevant to each of the other stages of the PRP project.

Figure 4 below illustrates the relative duration of each of the PRP management stages and shows that each of the stages 1 through 3 and 5 follow in direct sequence upon the completion of the preceding stage. Stage 4, as previously mentioned, is the exception and starts from initiation and continues throughout the PRP project lifecycle and beyond the PRP project, when the outcomes are measured and analyzed to determine the impact of postal reform.

Figure 4 also illustrates that stage 1 (initiation) can be relatively short, whereas stages 2 (definition) and 3 (delivery) are of longer duration as these particular stages contain the major PRP activities.

Figure 4. Sequencing and (indicative) duration of PRP management stages



Consistent with the principle of tailoring the PRP project and recognizing the importance of the specific national and regional contexts, certain activities defined in management stage 2 (definition) could be transferred to stage 3 (delivery). Similarly, certain activities and output of stage 2 (definition) could be frontloaded to stage 1 (initiation), thereby giving a more precise and specific mandate to the PRP project.

### 3.3 Activity-Based Design of PRP Projects

The successful execution of the PRP methodology involves not only completing distinct management stages in a sequential order, but also producing key output that guide and validate the reform process at each stage. PRP projects follow a combination of activity-based management and results-based management approaches. In accordance with PRP governance principle 3 (project management), the former (activity-based management) puts the focus on progressing through the defined activities of the PRP project methodology with a focus on “input” and “activity”. Input refers to resources (expert knowledge, time, effort, costs) and activities are the step that are specified for each PRP management stage.

As an activity-based plan, the PRP gives guidance to a postal sector reform project by sequencing pre-defined steps as part of an overall process. These activities aim to ensure consistency between PRP projects and facilitate the efficient conduct of these projects. Recognizing that no two PRP projects are alike, these activities are recommended may be redefined as part of the PRP project – typically done in management stage 2 (definition).

**PRP as activity-based plan**

The PRP project includes the following activities (the activity numbering corresponds to the PRP management stage and the activities that are included in each stage. For example, activity 1.3 corresponds to the third activity in the sequence of all activities of stage 1 (initiation).

List of PRP project activities:

<i>Stage 1 (initiation) activities</i>		<i>Stage 2 (definition) activities</i>	
<b>1.1</b>	Initiate a PRP Project	<b>2.1</b>	Data collection and organization
<b>1.2</b>	Conduct preliminary research	<b>2.2</b>	Perform situation analysis
<b>1.3</b>	Justification (business case)	<b>2.3</b>	Define objectives
<b>1.4</b>	Define postal reform goals	<b>2.4</b>	Define project deliverables
<b>1.5</b>	Tailor the project	<b>2.5</b>	Organize the results framework
<b>1.6</b>	Approval of the Project Charter		
<i>Stage 3 (delivery) activities</i>		<i>Stage 4 (control) activities</i>	
<b>3.1</b>	Review strategic policy focus areas	<b>4.1</b>	Technical assistance
<b>3.2</b>	Conduct project work	<b>4.2</b>	Controlling the project
<b>3.3</b>	Define indicators	<b>4.3</b>	Information management
<b>3.4</b>	Complete results framework	<b>4.4</b>	Evaluation (post-project)
<b>3.5</b>	Develop framework for implementation		
<i>Stage 5 (closeout) activities</i>			
<b>5.1</b>	Acceptance of deliverables		
<b>5.2</b>	Document lessons learned		
<b>5.3</b>	Release practitioner		
<b>5.4</b>	Implement deliverables		

These activities are further detailed in section 5.

### 3.4 Results-Based Management of PRP Projects

The other management approach used in the PRP is Results Based Management. Responding to PRP principle 8, this approach is driven by a need to achieve the expected objectives and maximize the achievement of development results. Results-based management puts emphasis on outcomes as the real changes that occur as an effect of the development intervention. The PRP outcomes are defined in stages 2 (definition) and 3, based on a results framework. Once developed, this framework will govern the further management stages of the PRP project and will track progress towards the achievement of the outcomes during the post-PRP project implementation.

Consistent with this approach, the different management stages require tangible results to be produced, including the PRP Project Charter, the results framework, the project's output (deliverables) and the acceptance thereof. These outputs ensure accountability, sustain a structured roadmap, and align reform efforts with the overarching goals of the PRP. The table below provides an overview of the outputs for each stage of the PRP process.

Table 2. Output by management stage

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Key Output</i>	<i>Description of Output</i>
Stage 1 Initiation	Secure government commitment and define project scope	PRP Project Charter	High level document that provides the mandate for the PRP project and defines the goals and justification for the project
Stage 2 Definition	Strategic review of the postal sector Define objectives and a results framework for reform	Results framework Definition of deliverables	Results framework including: (i) a detailed situation analysis and (ii) defined (measurable) objectives Definition of the project's deliverables and a global time line

Stage 3 Delivery	Develop actionable plans to implement reforms.	Deliverable(s) and completed results framework	A comprehensive report including a) Evidence-based analysis (market, policy, sector) b) Defined objectives, performance indicators, baselines and targets; c) A ready to implement postal reform plan (proposed policy content) including diagnostic findings, reform strategies, specific implementation activities, indicators and recommendations
Stage 4 Control	Management of the PRP project (including post-project evaluation of outcomes of reform efforts.	Progress updates Validation APR: Annual Results Report	Regular and periodic updates on activities Validation: completed deliverables reviewed and validated by IB APR: formal evaluation of whether the outcomes (actual results) match the objectives (planned results) of postal reform.
Stage 5 Closeout	Close the project and release the team	Acceptance report	Formal acceptance of the deliverables by the Ministry/Government

The central aim of applying a results-based management approach to postal reform in the context of the UPU is to ensure that there is (1) a deep understanding of the context and the root problem that postal reform aims to address, (2) a clear definition of the objectives of postal reform prior to defining the policy intervention, and (3) that the effectiveness of the policy intervention is measured in terms of addressing the root problems and the accomplishment of the objectives.

## 4 PRP Core Methodology

The core PRP methodology rests on two of the most fundamental PRP governance principles, namely evidence-based practice (PRP governance principle 7) and results-based management (principle 8). It is combined with a third pillar which is the activity-based management of PRP projects. The two principles were introduced previously, but will be further developed in this section as they are a fundamental part of the core methodology. This section further develops the nexus between PRP projects and national policy-making processes that was introduced in section 2.1.

### 4.1 Theory of Change

As previously mentioned, the PRP follows a results-based management approach to postal reform efforts. The orientation towards results is applied throughout the PRP lifecycle, and continues in the post-project phase of evaluation of the effectiveness and impacts of postal reform intervention (post-project phase in stage 4 (control)).

The theory of change is a fundamental part of managing for results. Every project should be based on a “theory of change” – that connects the project’s activities with its expected or ultimate outcome. It is inherent in the project design and is based on the knowledge and experience (i.e. the evidence-base) that implies research, evaluations, best practices and lessons learned.

#### **Theory of change**

The theory of change explains how a PRP project is expected to produce its results. It typically starts out with a sequence of events related to an intervention (i.e. the implementation of the PRP deliverables) which lead to certain results (outputs, outcomes) that are expected to occur owing to the intervention. This is commonly referred to as the “program logic” or “logic model.” However, in the PRP methodology the concept goes further by combining the mechanisms of change with an evidence-based approach to managing postal reform. When properly applied, the project design is based on a thorough analysis of the issue and the context in which it exists, which informs an evidence-based solution to the issue: the theory of change.

The PRP applies an altered version of the theory of change which is based on four main elements: (1) the problem statement; (2) the intervention; (3) the result, and; (4) the impact. In the application of this theory, the PRP uses a “results framework” as a sequenced process of groups of activities that start with the identification of a “need” for postal reform and end with the measurement of impact of the postal reform efforts. The “need” is defined by the project justification and speaks to a discrepancy between the situation at the time of the initiation of the project and the desired end state of the project that is defined under the postal reform goals.

To understand the PRP results framework, it is important to start with the logical sequencing of groups of activities from start to end, this is referred to as a results chain. For PRP projects, the results chain starts with an assessment of the current state, which provides for the justification of postal reform exercise. Ultimately, following the sequence of events and activities of the results chain, the “intervention” (i.e. provided by the PRP project) should provide for such results which, in turn, should lead to the accomplishment of the goals that were set at the beginning of a PRP project.

#### **Results chain**

A visual representation of the logical and sequential relationships that link deliverables (inputs), implementation (of deliverables), outcomes and ultimate impact of a policy or project.

The results chain addresses practitioners’ need for a concept that allows them to break complex change down into manageable building blocks or steps that lead to one another, making it easier to sequence and identify the course of policy action during the PRP project and to track the effects of policy efforts after the deliverables have been implemented by the government.

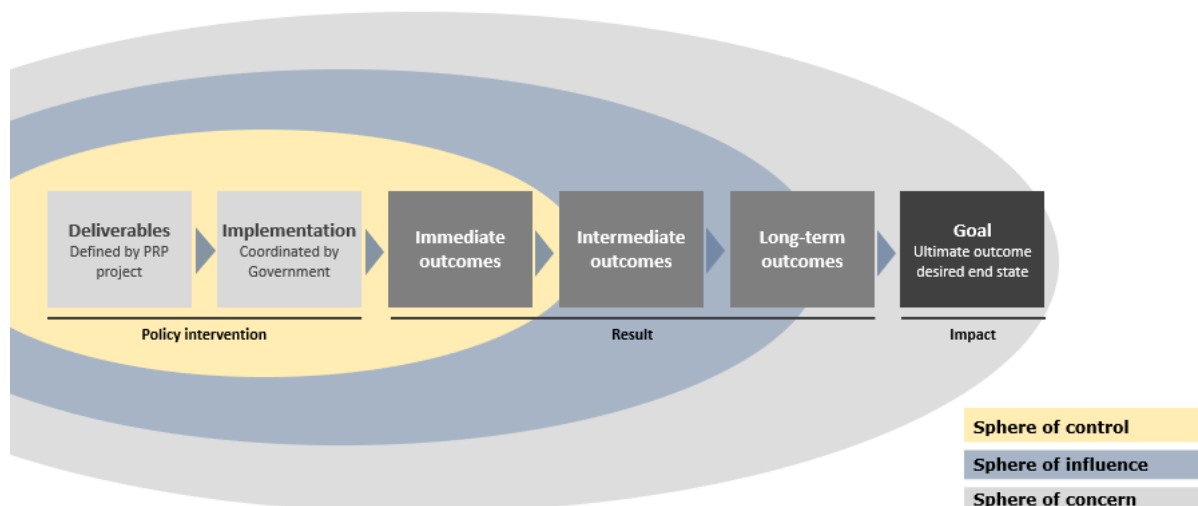
Figure 5: results chain



At this point, it is critical to be aware of the importance of assumptions: in the context of postal reform, assumptions are conscious and unconscious beliefs about how policy affects socio-economic behavior. They are shaped by experience, culture and other factors. Assumptions about (existing) conditions may affect the achievement of outcomes; in the theory of change model, the necessary conditions must exist if the relations are to behave as planned. To identify assumptions, the PRP promotes participatory exercises with a wide variety of (national) stakeholders to uncover assumptions.

It is important to keep in mind that the level of control reduces further down the chain. For any PRP project, the PRP-related implementation work activities are within the sphere of control of the Government. The output it generates are typically within hand reach, but perhaps not fully controlled by the Government entity coordinating the implementation effort. The intermediate outcomes are influenced by the different outputs that result from the implementation of the PRP deliverables, but there are other factors and dynamics that apply at the same time. If these other factors and causes are not well understood, the expected outcomes may not produce themselves as intended. For example, a new market opening policy may be adopted and implemented (implementation), which may attract new market players that are licensed to offer services (output), but this may not necessarily lead to more affordable tariffs offered for delivery services to small volume senders of postal items (such as individuals or SMEs), but only to large volume senders as that is where the competition would be concentrated (outcome). Following from there, the situation may redress itself with longer term outcomes to be realized as intended or they may again be different. In other words, policy actions envisage a goal, but the realization of that goal is subject to many different factors as the policy effort operates in a wider context. When initially set, the goal is defined in what could be referred to as a sphere of concern, whereas the policies and activities are within the control of the coordinating Government.

Figure 6. Control in the results chain



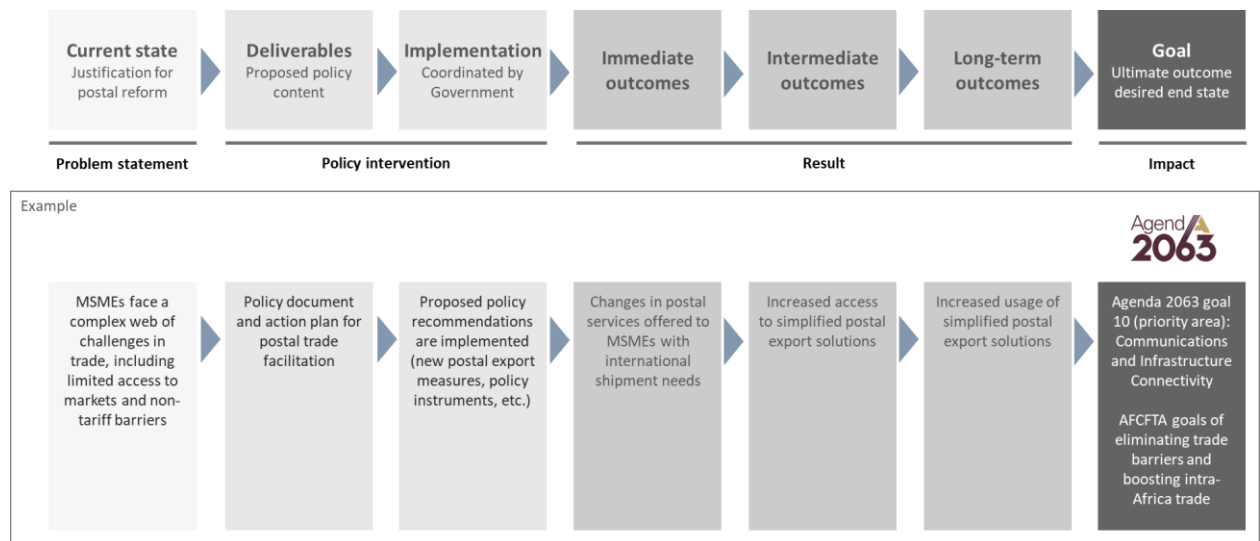
When postal reform practitioners approach a specific problem, the results chain will provide a structure to policy design, telling them what types of building blocks should be considered and how to break down complex public policy problems into manageable steps.

The results chain starts with the definition of the main problem, which concerns the current state. This step is closely interlinked with the overall policy goal of postal reform. Together, the problem definition and the goal represent the “why” of a PRP project and should describe the change in state, condition or overall public well-being that a project’s ultimate beneficiaries (such as citizens, businesses and users of the postal service) should experience.

Important: it is possible that neither the problem definition (or current state) nor the goal of the reform project speaks specifically to the postal sector, the postal operator or the universal postal service. The policy problem could be an issue that is broader than the postal sector itself. Figure 7 below builds on the results chain concept and provides an example that starts with a problem that is not necessarily restricted to the postal sector alone: the ineffectiveness of public sector communication. Policy intervention in the form of postal reform (through PRP deliverables and the implementation thereof) could make meaningful contributions in terms of the services and solutions to become available to users to communicate with the public sector. The results of the intervention is measurable with indicators and baselines and targets set in relation to these indicators could measure whether the outcomes of the policy intervention produces the desired effects and support the achievement of the goals and objectives set for the intervention.

The PRP project can be tailored, which means that there could be more than one single goal or justification for a postal reform project. In the above example, the deliverables (and implementation thereof) and output could respond to objectives other than merely addressing the ineffectiveness of public sector communication and could aim to achieve other goals such as reliable and secure e-commerce related data processing and usage, for example.

Figure 7: Example of PRP results chains (simplified)



Activity 1.3 provides guidance in terms of embedding postal reform efforts by means of linking them with national economic development plans or policy agendas.

## 4.2 PRP results framework

### PRP results framework

The results framework is a vital component of the PRP, ensuring that the reform process is designed, monitored, and evaluated in alignment with its intended goals and objectives. Drawing on results-based management, the results framework establishes clear connections between reform goals, postal sector specific objectives, proposed policy content (deliverables), outcomes (immediate, intermediate and long-term) and ultimately impacts, creating a structured pathway for achieving reform goals. The results framework is defined in section 4.2 and is at the heart of the PRP methodology.

The development of the results framework begins with the identification of the objectives for postal sector reform, derived from the reform goals as set out in the Project Charter. These objectives are measurable through the associated indicators, which are completed with baselines and targets. These indicators provide benchmarks for assessing progress and enable a robust performance monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of the reform process. An effective results framework relies on the definition of clear, measurable and realistic indicators, which are the product of activity 3.4.

The results framework also includes a detailed plan for data collection, analysis, and reporting, leveraging the data matrix created during the assessment stage. This ensures that evidence-based approaches are consistently applied to monitor progress and evaluate performance. To support accountability, the framework specifies roles and responsibilities for data collection, as well as mechanisms for regular reviews and feedback. This promotes a culture of continuous improvement by integrating lessons learned into subsequent stages of the PRP.

The results framework serves as a critical tool not only for guiding the implementation of the PRP but also for facilitating communication among stakeholders, securing their buy-in, and ensuring that the reform process remains focused on achieving its transformative goals.

Based on the above, the PRP results framework depicts the logical and sequential relationships that link the deliverables (proposed policy content or recommendations) with implementation activities, outcomes and measurement of the impacts of a postal reform project.

The framework that will guide the reform efforts from the initial problem statement (“need” or justification for postal reform) to the measured impact years after the project is called the “results framework”.<sup>4</sup> Figure 8 below provides the key building blocks of this framework and points to the groups of activities for each of these building blocks in the PRP.

Figure 8. building blocks of the PRP results framework

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
<b>Problem statement</b>	Justification PRP activity 1.4	Situation analysis PRP activity 2.3			
<b>Policy intervention</b>	Reform goals (set) PRP activity 1.5	Objectives (set) PRP activity 2.4	Deliverables (produce) PRP activity 3.6	Validation PRP activity 4.4	Implementation PRP activity 3.3
<b>Results</b>				Outcomes (measure) PRP activity 4.4	
<b>Impact</b>			Indicators (set) PRP activity 3.3	Impacts (measure) PRP activity 4.4	

In the results framework, the project starts with the project justification in stage 1. The project justification provides the rationale for postal reform and is further explicated in stage 2 through a situation analysis. The situation analysis contains activities to understand the cause-and-effect

<sup>4</sup> The PRP results framework is to be understood as the core of results-based management of postal sector reform projects in the context of the PRP

relationships around a certain problem, the problem, once defined, would prompt an examination of various alternative options that could effectively address the focal problem. The focal problem(s) are the main obstacles that stand in between the realization of the goals of postal reform; in other words, once these focal problems have been tackled the achievement, then the objectives can be realized (and thereby contributing to the achievement of the overall goal for postal reform).

The PRP core team will perform collect and manage information, perform analysis, engage with stakeholders and develop viable ways forward that would achieve the objectives after implementing a set of recommendations or actions, which are referred to as “deliverables”. At the end of the PRP lifecycle, the PRP core team (or the PRP practitioner) will submit to the IB the deliverables for validation. Once validated, these deliverables (which in most cases will come in the form of a report) will be submitted to the competent authority.

By themselves, deliverables will not accomplish postal reform, unless they (including the recommended actions contained therein) are adopted and implemented. In other words, these deliverables should contribute to and enable the Government to realize the objectives that are defined by the PRP and accomplish or, at a minimum, make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the higher-level goal(s) of postal reform.

The deliverables will include a set of indicators that relate directly to the deliverables, whether they are recommendations or actions. These indicators defined in a “results framework” which include (a) the deliverable; (b) the different indicators, and; (c) for each indicator, a baseline and targets. The indicators are critical for measuring, post-project implementation, whether the objectives have indeed been materialized and thus measure the success of the postal reform effort.

Returning to the four elements (problem statement, intervention, result, impact), the problem statement is thus followed by an “intervention”, which in the context of the PRP are the PRP project deliverables – as previously mentioned, these deliverables need to be implemented by the Government as without their implementation, there is no change and the objectives will not be accomplished.

Once the deliverables are implemented, there will be an “immediate outcome” that is a consequence of the implementation action. For example, an implementation action can be the establishment of a postal service licensing system that includes registration by postal service providers prior to operating services (this recommended action (deliverable) could respond to an objective to formalize the postal sector) – the immediate outcome is the direct effect or result of the action. In this example the direct result or immediate outcome is thus the licensing registration procedure. The immediate outcome is evident (it exists or it does not exist) and directly identifiable with the implementation action. The intermediate and longer-term outcomes are a more elusive concept as can be less controlled and are thus more difficult to relate directly back to any specific action. These outcomes are nonetheless measurable on the basis of the indicators that are defined in stage 3. The indicators provide for an objective measurement of how the postal reform effort is performing and the extent to which it will accomplish the project’s objectives (those that were defined in stage 2).

Any conclusions of whether the outcomes of the project effectively mean the achievement of the objectives that were set for postal reform, can only be drawn years after the reform effort.

#### **4.2.1 Problem statement**

A PRP project starts with a mandate as described in the PRP Project Charter, which includes (1) the justification (or business case) of postal reform and (2) the high-level reform goals. The former, i.e. the justification of a postal reform project, is a critical part of the problem statement in the results framework. The latter, i.e. the formulation of the postal reform goals, logically flows from the project justification, and is intervention-oriented, and will thus be discussed in the next section (4.2.2).

The problem statement is completed with a detailed situation analysis that is to be conducted by the PRP team and/or PRP practitioner, supported by the IB. The situation analysis is the starting point of the evidence-based management. As a PRP thematic practice, building the evidence-base is practiced in every management stage.

## Justification

No two PRP projects are alike and therefore the justification of a postal reform project can be very different from the next.

As seen previously, PRP-driven reform projects can be embedded in **national strategies or socio-economic plans**. In other words, the PRP postal reform project can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of the broader public policy agenda. In these cases, the justification of postal reform is provided in the national strategy, plan or agenda and the outcomes of postal reform should be a factor in the accomplishment of the goals of those policy agendas.

Alternatively, a postal reform project may be initiated for reasons of **identified trends or disruptions** that affect the postal sector or the broader social and economic context. As developed further in the PRP methodology, strategic foresight is an important approach to effective policy planning. A disruption illustrates an ongoing or a plausible future development that has important potential implications in postal sector policy and/or other policy areas. Recognizing that the postal sector is not operating in a vacuum, trends such as the adoption of new technology by consumers or the possible futures in terms of climate change are factors that affect the postal sector. Consequently, a PRP project can be driven by a justification for postal sector reform that responds to or is derived from a specific disruption or (mega) trend.

A project justification can be determined on the benchmark performance score of a postal operator (designated operator) in the **Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD)** ranking. The 2IPD gives an insight in terms of the postal development level of a UPU member country determined on the basis of an evaluation of their postal system across four pillars: reliability, reach, relevance and resilience. Example: based on the 2IPD assessment, despite the favourable economic conditions of country A, its postal system underperforms due to structural inefficiencies and lack of investment.

### Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD)

The UPU's Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD) is a composite index providing an overview of postal development around the world, with 180 countries covered in 2025. The basic input into this measurement consists of UPU data, including postal big data (with billions of records captured since 2013), official UPU statistics (more than 100 indicators), and key UPU surveys. The 2IPD offers a benchmark performance score (from 0 to 100) along four dimensions of postal development: reliability, reach, relevance and resilience. In addition to revealing the relative performance of postal operators around the world, the index sheds light on how to foster postal development and maximize the efficiency of postal infrastructure.

The reasons for postal reform can be complementary, for example, a national policy agenda can provide for the opportunity for postal reform, while the 2IPD assessment and disruptions and market trends further substantiate the rationale for undertaking postal reform.

The above list of elements is by no means exhaustive as there can be **other justifications** for postal reform that are not adequately covered under any of the abovementioned categories. In the end, it is critically important for the success of postal reform that the reasons for initiating the efforts are specified at the start of the project. As illustrated in the results framework, other activities and outcomes will flow from this.

## Situation analysis

The next step is to reflect on the specific situation and context in which postal reform is to be conducted by examining everything that can be learned through a careful situation analysis and through consultations. These activities are closely linked with the PRP governance principle of building the evidence-base and emphasize the importance of informed decision-making from the outset of a postal reform project. It is important to note that these activities take place in stage 2 (definition) after the authorization that is given for the PRP Practitioner to initiate the project work, but before the project defines the deliverables it will be working towards.

The team applies this evidence and knowledge to the exploration of different pathways that can bring about the desired change (note that besides the justification (rationale), the postal reform goals will also

have been defined in stage 1). The pathways identified will provide the appropriate basis for how the project will work.

Situation analysis is a fundamental step in results-based project planning and design as realistic results are based on appropriate analyses. It is a structured exercise that helps the PRP Practitioner: a) identify the issues that the project should address; and b) understand the complex context (national, regional, political, cultural, social, technological, environmental, etc.) in which those issues exist. This should be done through research, consultation, analysis and discussion. As such, a situation analysis is a fundamental part of results-based project planning and design. It provides a critical part of the evidence behind the theory of change.

The aim of the situation analysis is to get to the root of the problem that postal reform should mitigate and/or resolve. The situation analysis brings forward the problem statement, which may also be referred to as the “focal problem”. The problem statement should be linked to justification of the project and in particular the goals of postal reform. While the justification and the goals of postal reform can either specific to the postal sector or be broader than the sector, the problem statement should be defined in such a way that it fits within all four corners of the postal sector, i.e. remains within the area that falls within the competency of the government authority. It is often likely that the identified problem has negative externalities that affect not only the postal sector or the users of the postal service, but to a wider social economic framework of a country. The focal problem may have more than one cause, of which the most important ones should be identified as they may hold the key to identification of the relevant policy areas.

Activity 2.3 provides more detail on how a cause-and-effect analysis can be used to determine the problem statement.

Alternatively, the question could be approached in a different way. In stage 1, the goals of postal reform are defined. According to this approach the scope of the problem statement is the difference between the current situation and the goal of postal reform. The problem definition would then break down the factors and causes that could explain the reasons why the goals require policy intervention to be achieved. For example: if the postal reform goal is to achieve a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 5 or 10 years, then the problem statement should define the main reasons and causes that prevent from achievement of those goals already by today.

There is a wide variety of analytical tools and approaches to conduct a situation analysis, including the fishbone diagram, a solution-tree analysis (derived from the cause-and-effect analysis) and there may be other techniques used to define the problem statement. Whichever method applied, the situation analysis requires the collection of all relevant information that is necessary to understand the context in which postal reform is to occur and a deep knowledge of the factors, trends and dynamics that affect the postal sector.

## 4.2.2 Policy Intervention

With the problem statement defined on the basis of the justification of the project and the situation analysis, the next set of building blocks in the results framework concern designing and planning for policy intervention. Policy intervention runs across the different PRP management stages as it starts with defining the goals of postal reform, through the more concrete objectives of postal reform to the deliverables that the PRP project will bring about. Once the deliverables are handed over to the competent authority, these deliverables are expected to be implemented or, in other words, the policy intervention should occur.

### Reform Goals

Reform goals are the first expression of a more permanent state of change, where improvement in practice and conditions is sustained over a longer term. Reform means improving or changing something that is not working well, out-of-date, or failing to meet desired objectives. The changes that require reform are generally big and important. Reform is transformational and yet durable, since it is intended to have an enduring effect.

Reform goals are established in the Project Charter in stage 1 and thus complement the justification of the PRP project. As such, goals are an articulation of the reasons for conducting postal reform in the form of describing a future state that is the overall high-level objective to be achieved as a result of a policy intervention (defined by the PRP).

Reform goals can come in different forms, they can be formal and institutional or they could have a substantive focus, they can be targeted or broad and cut across sectors or they can be vertical or transversal. Figure 9 below places the depth and breadth of postal reform on a continuum ranging from incremental to transformative. The PRP does not preclude any reform on how reform may be qualified on this continuum.

Figure 9. Reform description

Postal reform can be described as:			
Incremental	Evolutionary	Structural	Transformative
A process of modernization, bringing processes, working methods, and services up to speed with current knowledge and technologies	Making gradual changes that build on existing structures – core focus on addressing longstanding problems or inefficiencies	Comprehensive changes having a wide impact both on all relevant sector stakeholders and the environment in which they operate	A systemic shift that would reinvent the concept of postal services or fundamentally alter the way the sector is defined

It is important to remember that the reform goals do not require to be specific to or exclusively address the postal sector. As we will see later, the concrete objectives and deliverables are however specific to the sector. In the aforementioned example (see section X), we saw the example of a policy goals defined in relation to public sector communication, more specifically the communication between, on the one hand, public authorities and, on the other, citizens and businesses. In the business case or justification of the postal reform project it was identified that the communication was ineffective, the goal was for public sector communication to become effective. There are several observations with the formulation of such a reform goal:

- (1) The reform goal itself does not need to be exclusive to the postal sector. This is not problematic, in fact, as a result of embedding the project in a broader policy context or a larger national policy agenda. However, the response, i.e. the policy intervention, must be specific to the sector;
- (2) The reform goal is typically high-level and often relatively vague. There are four further considerations to this:
  - (a) The formulation could be deliberately vague in order provide for a sufficiently broad mandate to explore a wide variety of different objectives and directions for policy intervention. However, some in some situations, the mandate may be more precise thereby providing a narrow direction to guide the project towards finding specific policy answers as defined desirable from the outset.
  - (b) Secondly, the reform goal may be vague since it is formulated prior to collection of information and conduct of detailed analysis that occurs in stage 2 (definition). In other words, it may be preferable not to be too specific in defining the direction of policy development, but leave room for this development to be on an informed basis (evidence-based).
  - (c) Finally, the authorization is given by senior management of the authority authorizing postal reform in a high-level document (PRP Project Charter), which is typically a one-page document (although there are no restrictions in terms of annexing any additional information relevant and specific to the goals of postal reform).
  - (d) The reform goals express an aspiration or a desired future state. The setting of high-level goals is a first step; in the following steps, the goals will be translated into concrete and measurable objectives. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) are an

example of high-level aspirations and are a call for action, defining the overall direction and principles. These high-level goals are subsequently broken down into more specific and targeted objectives that can be measured.

## Objectives

The goals set for postal reform are broken down into concrete and measurable objectives. They logically flow from the abovementioned reform goals but are also informed by the results from the situation analysis, i.e. the problem statement. The definition of objectives takes place in stage 2 (definition) and is conducted by the practitioner (PRP practitioner and/or the PRP project team).

It is furthermore important to understand that there is a critical relationship between “objectives” and “outcomes”. Whereas the former are defined prior to the policy intervention, the latter are measured after the intervention. In other words, “objectives” are the envisaged ultimate outcomes of postal reform. In a results-based approach to postal reform, the results from postal reform policy intervention are measured as outcomes. The outcomes are compared against the objectives to understand whether the intervention had the desired effects (it is important to be mindful that a particular outcome can be produced for other reasons and causes than the policy intervention).

Ideally, the objectives are defined with the support and inputs from the relevant stakeholders, as possible. The PRP recommends stakeholder participation in the postal reform projects as they increase legitimacy of postal reform and assist in the definition of realistic and demand-driven postal reform objectives. However, as guidelines the process of stakeholder engagement recognizes the national specific circumstances as well as other project constraints. The PRP practitioner needs to carefully balance these different factors.

A PRP project may provide for one or more reform goals. Each goal needs to be broken down into objectives, which are the building blocks for postal reform. These objectives should be specific to the postal sector. In other words, if the reform goal speaks to a broader policy agenda, then the objectives need to link those reform goals to specific outcomes that are relevant to the postal sector.

In first instance, the practitioner needs to review the broader policy agendas that are used for the justification of the PRP project. They not only provide for important context, they may also provide guidance in terms of defining objectives that connect with the goals of the policy agenda.

Information collected and analysed in stage 2 will provide the knowledge base for establish the objectives for postal reform. This comes clearly forward in the situation analysis and the problem statement. The objectives are directly linked with the problem statement, which means that the objectives are targeted at eliminating or mitigating the problem(s) identified as part of this analysis. The problem may be an obstacle that stands in the way of achieving a specific outcome, the policy intervention is to clear the obstacle to unlock the potential, which is defined by means of objectives. As mentioned above, there is a critical relationship with the outcomes of the policy intervention, the practitioner therefore aims to translate the desired future state into very specific objectives that are such that they can be measured. The measurable aspect is the key of the results-based management approach. As we will see later, the indicators will be defined at a subsequent stage after the objectives are defined.

*Figure 10. Deriving objectives on the basis of the problem statement (simplified)*

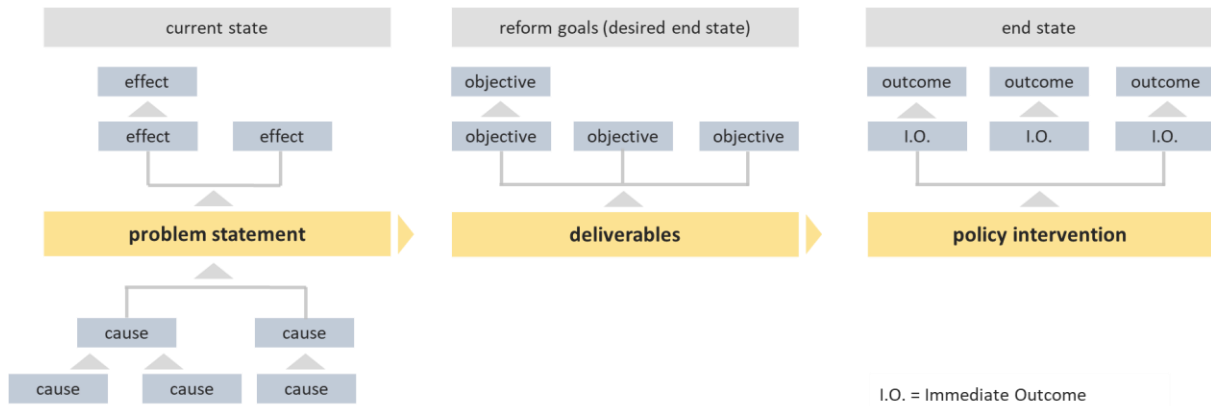


Figure 10 above aims to illustrate, in a simplified way, the sequencing of activities by which the objectives are derived from the problem statement. The problem statement should be addressed by establishing objectives that specify measurable (envisaged) outcomes that are distinct from the problematic current state (as defined under “justification”) and contribute to the achievement of the reform goals.

At the moment of defining the objectives, the policy intervention, which will be identified by the project deliverables, is not yet known. Ultimately, at the end of the PRP project lifecycle, when the practitioner submits the deliverables, the policy intervention will be known, as indicated on the right-hand side. Once the intervention occurs (by implementing the deliverables), the intervention will produce output (results) and, ultimately, outcomes. After the completion of the PRP project and the implementation of the deliverables (i.e. the policy intervention), the outcomes resulting from the intervention will be measured against the objectives that were originally established. It is important to keep in mind that this model is a simplified version of reality as the relationships are not always clear and policy reform does not occur in a static context, other external factors (trends, events, developments, etc.) take place that have an influencing effect on the outcomes.

Activity 2.3.2 of the PRP Implementation Guide gives further detail in terms of how the objectives can be defined.

## Deliverables

Deliverables are the product of the PRP project; they result from the work of the practitioner (PRP practitioner and/or PRP team) in terms of fact-finding (collecting, reviewing and analysing all information relevant to postal reform and the context in which it should occur), coordinating and collaborating (with relevant stakeholders) and drafting (preliminary and final drafts of instruments or policy analytical reports, including recommendations, action points, estimated resource requirements, implementation guidelines, etc.). From the practitioner point of view, the work in identifying and defining the deliverables, performing the analytical work and subsequently developing (drafting) the deliverables is the most significant time and effort in the PRP lifecycle.

### Deliverable

Deliverables by themselves are not the policy intervention as implementation of the actionable elements of the deliverables, including their recommendations, are required to achieve postal reform. The deliverables are evidence-based directions, actions and guidelines that the practitioner delivers after the conducting the work. In figure 1 (on the public policy process and nexus with PRP), the deliverables are described as the “proposed policy content”.

The deliverables should carefully respond to the needs expressed by the competent authority in the Project Charter and respect the boundaries and expectations set therein.

Deliverables are the last station in policy planning and are a critical element in policy development. Essentially, the deliverables respond to the needs of policy-makers (i.e. the competent authority) by

contributing the ready-to-use elements that they need to design, plan and develop the policies that they subsequently will pursue. The deliverables support the member country's postal reform efforts and are thus a critical form of technical assistance, subject matter expertise and capacity-building that should enable the member country to be more effective in achieving its reform goals.

Ultimately, the deliverables are submitted to the competent authority for their review and acceptance. The acceptance of the deliverables means that the PRP project has been completed and the practitioner(s) can be released from their engagement. The project deliverables include a set of indicators on which basis information will be collected by the IB on a continuing basis. This means that although the project is formally closed, there are two follow-up activities that will continue post-project: (a) implementation and (b) evaluation. These two are building blocks of the results framework that will be discussed next.

## **Implementation**

Deliverables are the product of the PRP project; they result from the work of the practitioner. As previously mentioned, these deliverables contain the proposed policy content and a set of actionable guidelines and recommendations to implement postal reform. The government may opt for direct implementation of a policy through ministerial orders, administrative measures, economic instruments, voluntary agreements, information disclosure or persuasion. However, certain policy matters may require to be executed through legislative measures. Best practice requires that laws and regulations should be underpinned by policy. In the context of the PRP, implementation knows three main distinct phases: (i) review of the policy (deliverables); (2) formal adoption of the policy, and; (3) application of the policy.

In the PRP framework, the first phase corresponds to PRP management stage 5 (closeout) with the formal acceptance by the competent authority of the final project deliverables. The government will review these deliverables and integrate those into their own internal processes alongside other information, analysis and consultation processes it may further conduct. This is referred to as the review process in the implementation stage. Note that, at this point, the government authority may still be in the policy formulation phase of its own policy-making process and may thus consider the PRP deliverables as relevant input in the development and formulation of its postal sector policy.

The second phase is the formal act of approving the policy. There are two types of public policies that require approval. The first type of policies are those that are self-executing (or can be implemented without the need of developing a law to implement the policy) while the second type are those which require legislative action. The formal approval is an internal matter.

The third phase is the implementation. Once a policy has been adopted or legislation enacted, the next step in the process is to translate the policy into action. It involves organizing and directing resources so as to achieve the objectives of the policy. This means actualizing the policy through development of actual work plans, budgets and implementation of policy actions. Communication is carried out to disseminate the policy contents to the relevant stakeholders.

### **4.2.3 Results**

Policy intervention gives policy results. In the context of the PRP, this is referred to as "output". Output is the result of the efforts that were put into the implementation action. So it means that 'outputs' are definitions, guidelines, policy instruments, products and services that are delivered as a result of these actions. It is expected that the output subsequently stimulates changes that create 'outcomes', which are measurable against the objectives that were originally set.

#### **Immediate outcome**

<b>Immediate outcome</b>
--------------------------

Immediate outcomes are the direct products or services stemming from the activities of an organization, policy, program or project.

To produce the immediate outcome, actions taken or work performed is necessary to produce the outcome. If deliverables are the planned and formulated policy content, the immediate outcome is the result of the application of the actual policy that is adopted. It may thus be useful for the practitioner to formulate a statement describing the action, measure or service to be put in action. Such statements should be specific and detailed enough so that it is clear what action, measure or service will be provided for, yet they should not attempt to cover every activity required to deliver the immediate outcome.

Immediate outcomes specifically refers to what the implementing authority will produce or provide, as opposed to intermediate and long-term outcomes which describes the changes intermediaries or beneficiaries experience. It should therefore not begin by describing a change and its direction, and should avoid words such as “increased” or “improved” – simply because the effects will occur after the passing of a certain period of time. It is furthermore important to describe intermediate outcomes in a succinct, factual and objective way and not to qualify the immediate outcomes in terms of significance or potential impact. It is recommended to break output further down into more specific actions or activities. This will provide for sufficient level of detail and clear understanding as well as facilitate planning and budgeting by the postal reform implementing authorities.

Table 3 below provides an example of how the various building blocks of the results framework interact thus far. The output here is the decisions

Table 3: Example (simplified) of Country A's results framework

<b>Reform Goals</b>	[Note: Derived from national strategic plans of Country A, including Vision 2035 and National E-commerce Strategy]  Building an economy that is competitive measured by increased productivity and underpinned by public institutions that are more capable, professional and proactive in engaging all Country A's citizens and businesses in the digital economy, in particular MSMEs, young entrepreneurs, women-run businesses		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Objective 1</b> Enhanced postal regulatory framework that promotes competition, innovation, and ensures universal service provision	<b>Objective 2</b> Growth of the postal and delivery sector processing more e-commerce generated items through its network.	<b>Objective 3</b> Enhanced service delivery, cost efficiency, and innovation across the postal sector
<b>Deliverables</b>	Policy content as proposed by the PRP project, including the below mentioned immediate outcomes [in this example, the planned and actual results are the same]		
<b>Immediate outcomes (IO)</b>	<b>IO 1.1</b> Establishment of an independent national regulatory authority.  <b>IO 1.2</b> Capacity-building activities for the regulatory authority, including on-site training, operational guidelines and information systems.  <b>IO 1.3</b> Establishment of licensing requirements for economic	<b>IO 2.1</b> New service portfolio of the postal operator with enhanced digital features, including online services, tracking and acceptance of electronic signature.  <b>IO 2.2</b> Platform to find information on access points and delivery tariffs of all licensed postal and delivery agents	<b>IO 3.1</b> Establishment of quality of service standards, including delivery times and reporting on operators' performance.  <b>IO 3.2</b> Measures to scale innovative concepts for cost efficient delivery operations (e.g. drone deliveries or parcel lockers)

	entities to provide delivery services in Country A.		
--	---	--	--

#### 4.2.4 Impact

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning are interconnected processes used to assess the progress, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of public policies. The PRP results framework considers four groups of activities in this area: (1) establishing indicators; (2) measuring outcomes; (3) determining impact, and; (4) learning lessons for future postal reform activities.

The abovementioned processes are critical to determine the extent to which the goals and objectives of postal reform have been accomplished as a result of the policy intervention by comparing the “planned results” with the “actual results”. Planned results are all results of the policy cycle prior to implementation whereas the actual results are the results that are determined by the policy intervention. It should however be noted that the methodology requires the measurement of the actual results, it is possible that the results cannot be fully traced back to the policy intervention as other factors and influences may have contributed to the outcomes measured.

<i>Planned results</i>		<i>Actual results</i>
Postal reform goals	→	Impact
Objectives	→	Outcomes
Deliverables (proposed policy content)	→	Immediate Outcomes (actual policy)

#### Indicators

Indicators are the core component of the results framework as it systematically organizes the collection of relevant indicator data in the post-implementation stages of the policy process to assess and demonstrate progress made in achieving expected results. From the results framework is derived a results matrix, which is the “skeleton” of the monitoring plan: it documents the major elements of the monitoring system in order to ensure regular collection of actual data on the performance measurement framework indicators. The performance measurement framework contains all of the indicators used to measure progress on the achievement of the project’s outcomes and outputs. It provides information on the frequency of collecting data on the indicator, from what source and with what method. It also includes the baseline data and target for each indicator.

##### **Indicator**

Means of measuring actual outcomes and outputs. It can be qualitative or quantitative, and is composed of a unit of measure, a unit of analysis and a context. Indicators are neutral; they neither indicate a direction of change, nor embed a target.

*Quantitative indicators* are used to measure the effects of policy intervention in numerical terms, i.e. the baseline and effects of the policy intervention are quantifiable. Examples include the size of the overall sector or market measured in volumes, such as weight or number of items; the ratio of e-commerce generated items to all postal items; percentage of generation Z using the postal service to receive, send or return e-commerce purchased items in the past 3 months.

*Qualitative indicators* capture experiential information, such as the quality of something, or beneficiaries’ perception of their situation. They can help measure the presence or absence of specific conditions, or an individual or group’s perception of how the postal service compares with established standards.

There is no explicit preference of quantitative over qualitative indicators. If the latter more comprehensively captures the essence of the policy intervention and allows for tracking and monitoring over time, then it may be a more relevant type of indicator. It is recommended to have a good balance between quantitative and qualitative indicators. Because it is difficult to organize qualitative data for comparison or analysis, qualitative indicators should be quantified wherever possible. This can be done by using a scale, for example, “level of satisfaction (1-5 scale) of SMEs in the quality of service provided on the delivery of their e-commerce items in the past month”.

The PRP sets criteria for the use of the selection of these indicators, they include:

- (a) *Accessibility of information* - the information needs to be accessible for collection and continued measurement. In other words, an indicator that would measure user satisfaction with the postal service requires that the same information needs to be collected on an ongoing basis. So if the baseline satisfaction numbers are obtained from a survey conducted in year x, then the survey will need to be repeated annually in the following years. If there are limitations to the collection of the information in future years (e.g. repeating the user survey would be too expensive), then the indicator is not appropriate for the PRP.
- (b) *Relevancy of the information* – the indicator needs to have continued relevancy. In other words, it should be established in such a way that they are consistent with the proposed concept of the public policy, i.e. the PRP deliverables, and be relevant to the proposed intervention. Indicators that measure elements unrelated to the proposed policy intervention do not provide relevant insights in terms of the effectiveness and outcomes of the policy intervention. For example, the ratio of women-to-men in the postal service’s management positions is not a relevant indicator if the objectives and deliverables of postal reform concern the digitalization of the portfolio of services.
- (c) *Meaningfulness of the information* – meaningful information should be collected on indicators. To give an example, volume may be measured in terms of the weight instead of the actual number of items processed by the postal service, resulting from which incorrect conclusions may be drawn. In this example, an incorrect inference may be drawn from the reduced weight of postal traffic, especially if the number of items may have increased, reflecting a possible improvement of the postal service in the competitive light-weight e-commerce delivery market.
- (d) *Complexity of the information* – this is particularly relevant to quantitative indicators: it should be avoided to select indicators that demand long texts to describe the situation containing multiple facets. Similarly for quantitative indicators, the numerical values should be easy to determine without complex calculations or other manipulations to arrive at the values.

Activity 3.3 provides further guidance in terms of defining clear, measurable and realistic indicators for PRP projects.

In general, the types of changes that can be measured by indicators are:

- *Output indicators*: to measure the actions stemming from the policy intervention and delivered by the implementer to the beneficiaries.
- *Immediate outcome indicators*: to measure the changes in capacity, such as skills, knowledge, abilities, or awareness, and sometimes access, of the stakeholders and beneficiaries as a consequence of the output.
- *Intermediate outcome indicators*: to measure the changes in behaviour, practice or performance of stakeholders and beneficiaries as a consequence of the immediate outcomes.
- *Ultimate outcome indicators*: to measure the sustainable changes in the economic activity (e.g. SMEs) and lives (e.g. citizens), i.e. the beneficiaries, as a consequence of the intermediate outcomes.

The PRP does not prescribe distinguishing between immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes. It recognizes that the desired outcomes may not be accomplished immediately after the policy intervention occurs. It sets a general time frame by which the outcomes should respond to the objectives. The results matrix could provide either for an overall target performance (e.g. 50% reduction in energy consumption at the sorting and processing facilities in 10 years, or may establish intermediate

targets – for example 25% reduction in energy consumption in 5 years, and 5% further decrease compared to the base year for each subsequent year (arriving at 50% in 10 years).

The results matrix is used to document the indicators and the performance measured against these indicators in a structured and standardized way. It is important to recognize that the indicators are directly linked to the proposed policy intervention, i.e. the deliverables, and is used in the post-project phase of evaluation in stage 4 (control) to monitor, over time, the extent to which outcomes and impacts have been realized. Table 4 below provides a template for the results framework, which can be modified (tailored) to meet the specific needs and circumstances of the PRP project.

Baseline data provides a specific value for an indicator at the outset, when the deliverables are handed over for acceptance to the project competent authority. Baseline data is collected at one point in time, and is used as a point of reference against which progress on the achievement of outcomes will be measured or assessed. Baseline data should be collected before implementation. Ideally, this would be undertaken when submitting the deliverables. However, if this is not possible, baseline data must be collected as soon as possible after the policy intervention in order to ensure that the data collected corresponds as closely as possible to the situation at the start of the implementation of postal reform, not later.

A target specifies a particular value, or range of values, that are desired in relation to one performance indicator by a specific date in the future. Together, the targets established for the various indicators of a specific expected outcome will help determine the level of achievement of that outcome. The target should correspond to the reform goals and the objective. Targets should be set in light of baseline data to ensure that they, in fact, are a good measure of achievement. Without this information, there is a risk of setting unrealistic targets or even of setting targets that are too easily, or already, achieved.

Table 4. Results Matrix Template (illustrative)

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Deliverable/ output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>
<b>Objective 1.2</b> Growth of the postal and delivery sector processing with more e-commerce generated items through its network	<b>Deliverable X</b> Measure X to increase number of access points and closer proximity of postal services to zones of economic activity	<b>Indicator 1.2.1</b> Total number of e-commerce generated delivery items reported by all licensed operators	100 (indexed at 100 in year 2025)	150 by 2030
		<b>Indicator 1.2.2</b> Total number of e-commerce items handed to the postal service for returns	100 (indexed at 100 in year 2025)	120 by 2030
	<b>Deliverable Y</b> Measure Y to provide SMEs with account manager and collection services	<b>Indicator 1.2.3</b> Number of SMEs with an active post office account (collection of more than 25 items in the past 30 days)	100 (indexed at 100 in year 2025)	120 by 2030

In the framework above, there can be multiple indicators set in relation to one specified deliverable. It is also possible to set different targets, for example to distinguish a most likely scenario from a best-case scenario.

## Outcomes

Outcomes are modified behavior, conditions and situations of individuals, communities, businesses, or organisations that results from our project outputs. Depending on the nature of the intervention, outcomes can be short term, medium term or long term. The outcomes are the measured actual results and use the indicators for that purpose. So if the male/female ratio in the workforce is 60%-40% prior to the policy intervention and 55%-45% five years after the implementation of the measures, then the outcome is that the gender gap was halved, i.e. from 20 points difference to 10 points in 5 years.

### Outcome

An outcome is a describable or measurable change that is derived from an initiative's outputs or lower-level outcomes. Outcomes are qualified as immediate, intermediate or ultimate; outputs contribute to immediate outcomes; immediate outcomes contribute to intermediate outcomes; and intermediate outcomes contribute to ultimate outcomes. Outcomes are not entirely within the control of a single organization, policy, or postal reform project. As depicted in figure 6, they are in the area of influence where there are competing forces and dynamics at play.

Objectives are the desired or planned outcomes. Outcomes are the actual measurable results of the policy intervention. Table 5 below provides an example of County A's measured performance on the indicators that were established.

Table 5: indicators and performance (country A)

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Outcomes			Target
			Actual 2026	Actual 2027	Actual ...	
Objective 1.2 Growth of the postal and delivery sector processing with more e-commerce generated items through its network	Indicator 1.2.1 Total number of e-commerce generated delivery items reported by all licensed operators	100 (indexed at 100 in year 2025)	110	125		150 by 2030
	Indicator 1.2.2 Total number of e-commerce items handed to the postal service for returns	100 (indexed at 100 in year 2025)	105	98		120 by 2030
	Indicator 1.2.3 Number of SMEs with an active post office account (e.g. collection of more than 20 items in the past 30 days)	100 (indexed at 100 in year 2025)	100	100		120 by 2030

### Impact

The previous steps in the results framework involved the regular and systematic collection of data and information to track the implementation of the policy actions, activities and outputs and report the actual results, i.e. the outcomes.

The next and final step in the sequence, describe the systematic and objective assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and impact of a policy action implementation. On the basis of the collected data and evidence, it can be determined whether the objectives of postal reform have been achieved and to inform the review or relevance of continual implementation of the policy. Collectively,

the assessment of the performance on all indicators should lead to a conclusion in terms of the degree to which the reform project can be considered successful.

Information is collected on postal reform projects and postal reform policies, their impacts and all other relevant information. Interesting reform projects may constitute case study material for the benefit of future PRP projects.

Finally, the activities involve not only the collection of information but also a reporting of the findings, results, and lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation processes.

## 5. PRP Project Management

The PRP methodology breaks the PRP project lifecycle down into five management stages: initiation (stage 1), definition (stage 2), delivery 3 (stage 3), control (stage 4) and closeout (stage 5). Note that stage 4 (control) includes a phase that extends beyond the PRP project (after the closure of the project) as it concerns the evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the postal reform efforts.

### 5.1 Management Stage 1: Initiation

The initiation stage is essential to setting a solid foundation for the PRP and ensuring government approval and securing resources for the PRP development before the fieldwork begins. During this stage, preliminary analyses are conducted, a justification (high-level business case) is developed and a clear mandate detailing the scope boundaries and general direction of postal reform are detailed in the PRP Project Charter, which is formally approved and submitted by the relevant national authorities (hereinafter referred to as the (PRP project authorizing) Government. Once the government authorization is granted, the PRP (core) team is formed, and funding for the fieldwork required for the PRP development is secured.

Stage 1 (Initiation) lays down the foundations for a successful project. The main goal of this stage is a common understanding of the expectations and output that the PRP project should deliver. This common understanding can be achieved by clearly defining and/or obtaining, from the onset, the following:

- Mandate: formal sign off by the Government (Ministry with responsibility over the postal sector)
- Justification: high-level situation analysis with a description of the main problems or issues that should be addressed by postal sector reform
- Goals: high-level statements about what postal sector reform, subject to the implementation of the deliverables, is trying to accomplish. PRP project may contribute to the achievement of a broader socio-economic agenda, i.e. postal sector reform efforts would connect with the wider national and regional context, including the relevant socio-economic development plans.
- Scope: policy focus areas selected for the project, including the boundaries of the PRP project in terms policy areas and directions that are within scope as well as a definition of the specific areas that are *a priori* excluded;
- Roles and responsibilities: identification of Government focal points for day-to-day interface as well as those representatives that are authorized to approve the PRP project deliverables as well as any modifications to the Project Charter

The product of management stage 1 is the PRP Project Charter which reflects all points above and provides for a clear and specific mandate from the competent authority giving the green light for the PRP project.

Table 6. Activities in Stage 1: Initiation

<b>Stage 1 (initiation) activities</b>	
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	Initiate a PRP Project
<b>Activity 1.2</b>	Conduct preliminary research
<b>Activity 1.3</b>	Justification (business case)
<b>Activity 1.4</b>	Define postal reform goals
<b>Activity 1.5</b>	Tailor the project
<b>Activity 1.6</b>	Approval of the PRP Project Charter

PRP management stage 1, through the project charter, including the justification and reform goals of postal reform, matches one-for-one the technical assistance that the UPU provides in relation to the first step of the policy-process (see section 2.1 above), i.e. the *problem statement* (or *policy agenda-setting*).

As part of its project management function, the IB may support a Member State in drafting the PRP Project Charter. **Official government authorization**, typically expressed through the ministry responsible for the sector, **is necessary for the PRP process to begin**. It does not suffice to obtain the agreement of only one (or some) of the independent internal players.

#### **Activity 1.1: Initiate a PRP Project**

Member countries that intend to initiate or are already at a more advanced stage in the process of reforming their postal sector may request UPU technical assistance facilitated through the PRP.

PRP projects are initiated upon the express request of the Government of a UPU member country. Upon the request made, the preliminary activities will start to formalize the mandate, goals and the relevant policy focus area (overall scope) of the PRP project. To initiate the process, a notification of intent needs to be made to the UPU International Bureau. Upon receipt of such notification, the IB will collaborate with the requesting member country, the establishment of a Project Charter that will contain the elements previously outlined.

#### **Activity 1.2: Conduct preliminary research**

PRP as an evidence-based plan provides a framework for the formulation of clear and realistic postal sector reform objectives based on evidence and market and other relevant data. A PRP project should draw on a variety of sources, methods and instruments that provide the guidelines for national projects to include up-to-date and comprehensive information within each country on the national regulatory framework and market situation in respect of the postal reform process.

Evidence has a critical role to play in improving the quality, responsiveness and accessibility of public services. It can play a role throughout the key stages of the policy cycle and is increasingly recognised as a critical part of good governance. Evidence-informed policy-making can be defined as a process whereby multiple sources of information, including statistics, data and including the best available research evidence and evaluations, are consulted before making a decision to plan and ultimately implement postal sector reform.

The initiation stage includes the conduct of a preliminary analysis of the current status and situation of a country's postal sector. Drawing on available data and references to national socio-economic development plans and other broader agendas (see activity 1.4), the analysis provides a general overview of the prevailing conditions and identifies key issues to be addressed by the prospective PRP

project. This process results in the development of a **high-level justification** that defines the scope of the reform envisioned by the PRP, its goals, and the anticipated benefits of the initiative.

Various techniques and tools that are detailed in the Postal Reform Guide may be used to conduct this process. For example, a PESTLE analysis may help to situate the postal reform process to a wider economic or sustainability agenda or reflect on social-economic and technological developments that are relevant for driving a postal modernization project.

A critical step is the review of the country's 2IPD benchmark score that are determined on the basis of an annual assessment along four dimensions of postal development: reliability, reach, relevance and resilience. The latest 2PRP score should be indicated in the Project Charter and, where possible, it should be indicated how postal reform will contribute to an improvement of postal development including the relevant dimensions.

### **Activity 1.3: Justification (business case)**

Further to the global, regional and national policy agendas (see also activities 1.2 and 1.4) there may other methods to determine the reasons or justification for postal sector reform. The following does not aim to prescribe or limit the array of possible methods that could be pursued to develop the business case for postal sector reform. The methods and references below merely suggest possible avenues for identifying and defining the reasons for reform.

The initial review primary research can be performed to identify relevant trends and directions of postal reform. For example, the justification for a postal reform project may be inspired by UPU policy documents. These documents can provide guidance in terms of identify specific pain points (for example, the 2IPD) or provide strategic directions for postal reform as well as best practices.

#### **UPU reference Documents**

In addition to the abovementioned sources for the development of the business case for the justification of a PRP project, consideration may be given to UPU reference documents that provide policy analysis and strategic directions for postal reform.

#### **Postal Reform Guide (UPU, 2025 edition)**

This comprehensive Guide serves as the primary reference for developing postal reform policy. It consists of four focus areas, each of which breaks down into several modules that outline key areas of postal sector reform. The guide provides conceptual and practical guidance to ensure that reform efforts are aligned with international best practices while adapting to national circumstances.

#### **Abidjan Postal Strategy (2021-2025)**

This strategic document outlines the UPU vision and the global priorities for the postal sector for the 2021-2025 period, placing a particular emphasis on sustainability, digital transformation, and financial inclusion. It serves as an important reference point for aligning reform efforts with broader international goals, particularly for countries seeking to modernize their postal sector in line with the UPU strategic objectives.

#### **UPU Strategy (2025-2029)**

The UPU Strategy focuses on the future direction of the postal sector, particularly the integration of e-commerce, digital financial services, and public-private partnerships (PPPs). This document is intended to countries prepare for the evolving challenges and opportunities in the global postal market, ensuring that reforms are future-oriented and aligned with international developments.

#### **UPU Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD)**

This composite index provides an overview of postal development around the world. First introduced in 2017, the 2022 edition of the 2IPD covers 172 countries, offering valuable insights based on extensive UPU data. It provides a benchmark score (from 0 to 100) across four critical dimensions of postal service development: reliability, reach, relevance, and resilience. This index assists policymakers, regulators, and postal operators to assess their current postal infrastructure and identify areas for improvement.

#### **UPU E-Commerce Guide (2020)**

This Guide offers practical insights and strategies for postal operators to succeed in the rapidly growing e-commerce sector. It covers e-commerce trends, value chains, digital and physical infrastructure, business models, and the role of postal services in facilitating cross-border e-commerce. By aligning postal reforms with the strategies

in the UPU E-commerce Guide, countries can better position their postal services as key players in the digital economy, supporting both domestic and international e-commerce growth.

#### **Building Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Management for the Postal Sector**

In line with global efforts to enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure, the PRP incorporates principles from the UPU's Building Resilience Guide. This Guide outlines disaster risk management strategies to ensure that the postal sector is equipped to handle disruption caused by natural disaster, pandemics, and other crises. Key areas include conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, developing business continuity plans (BCP), and preparing effective disaster response frameworks. Furthermore, the Guide mentions recovery and mitigation strategies, supported by the UPU's Emergency and Solidarity Fund. Integrating DRM into postal sector reform strengthens the sector's ability to maintain service continuity and recover swiftly from adverse events.

Further to the above, the following is a complimentary, non-exhaustive, list of relevant factors that could provide for a viable business case for postal reform:

- National policy (e.g. national socio-economic plan establishing a framework for medium to long-term economic planning providing an opportunity or a need for the postal service to contribute to delivering on these higher level objectives)
- Market demand (e.g. need for reliable distribution network enabling SMEs and individuals to participate in the digital economy)
- Organizational need (e.g. financial sustainable operation of the postal operator is required to ensure long-term postal services – for example through diversification of services)
- Customer/ citizen needs: (e.g. citizens are dependent on essential postal services, postal channel for SME export,...)
- Technological advance (e.g. postal sector and postal service need to be redefined in the modern age of electronic communication and commerce)
- Legal requirements (e.g. emerging data protection and security requirements or environmental compliance requirements warrant a review of the postal sector and/or its postal operator (universal postal service provider))

#### **Definition:**

The element of **justification** ensures there is a documented justification (reasons or rationale) for postal sector reform and thus a rationale for conducting a PRP project. The justification should be a short but clear statement that is included in the Project Charter. As mentioned in activity 1.3, it should align with the governments overall socio-economic plans and policies. The purpose of defining the justification or rationale is to assess, prior to conducting postal sector reform, whether the reform is desirable and viable. Therefore, the case needs to be strong and supported by the Government before investment (time, effort or financial) is made in work activities relevant to postal sector reform.

Justification is an important step in the initiation stage as it is at the centre of the mandate for the PRP project; (2) from it are derived the goals (activity 1.5). It also provides for relevant context and understanding for the PRP practitioner before the project work starts.

#### **Activity 1.4: define postal reform goals**

The formulation of the postal reform goals is critical and must be done before the PRP project work effectively starts. The PRP practitioner needs to understand *what* goals they are expected to work towards and then conduct the project's work to produce deliverables that, subject to their implementation, are envisaged to ultimately achieve or significantly contribute towards achieving those goals.

Every project has an aspiration or a desired end state and postal reform projects are no different. Accordingly, during the initiation stage, it is critical to define the goal (overall and high-level objective) of the project. The goal or goals (as there can be more than one) are defined in the PRP Project Charter, which provides a clear mandate for the delivery of the project's product. The definition of reform goals

avoids misunderstandings and facilitates efficient decision-making throughout the project. The main goal(s) of a PRP project are derived from the business case of the project (see activity 1.3 above). It is furthermore recommended that these goals are consistent or identical to the goals that broader national policy agendas seek to achieve (see “embedding postal reform” further below).

Postal reform goals speak to a desired future state that can realistically be achieved within a defined timeframe. At this stage, the definition of the goals is typically high-level and may thus not be specific. However, it is recommended that the goals find the right balance between being detailed (to ensure that the project responds to the postal reform needs as best as possible) and open (in other words, not to restrict the project too much which could result in closing potentially viable and relevant postal reform avenues from the start of the project).

Postal reform goals are high-level statements about what the PRP project is trying to accomplish. They are broad, general intentions and are typically intangible and abstract.

The postal reform goals are drawn from the project justification (business case) that was developed previously. Postal reform objectives are:

- (i) High-level and speak to aspirations for change to the postal sector – typically, they are difficult to measure and therefore need concrete, specific and measurable objectives (stage 2) and associated indicators and targets (stage 3) that are defined at a later stage on the basis of further analysis;
- (ii) Are linked to broader and larger socio-economic development plans or policy agendas (embedding) and their formulation connects with those objectives defined in these broader national policies;
- (iii) They require activities, resources and time to be accomplished (the PRP deliverables will provide the roadmap and recommendations by which these objectives are to be accomplished)
- (iv) They require activities, resources and time to be accomplished (the PRP deliverables will provide the roadmap and recommendations by which these objectives are to be accomplished)

The United Nations Sustainability Goals (SDGs) are examples of global goals that provide for a desired direction and end state. These goals by themselves are not specific, but targets associated with these goals are. Similarly, for a PRP project, the postal reform objectives outline the desired destination, the PRP project develops the roadmap for getting there.

Goals can speak directly to the postal sector or can address wider policy objectives:

- Goals can be high level and not specify directly the role of the postal sector in the achievement of these goals. To give two examples of such high-level goals: (1) enhanced economic prosperity in rural and non-metropolitan regions or (2) increased empowerment of businesses and people in a human-centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future. Both examples seem to speak to an agenda and policy objectives and agendas that are larger than the postal sector alone. It is however imperative that the objectives in stage 2 clearly and specifically target the postal sector and how the reform objectives would contribute to these high-level goals.
- Goals can also be more specific to the role of the postal sector, which is preferred. To give such two such examples: (1) the national legislative body at the beginning of its mandate adopts a legislative measure to conduct a review of the national postal service with the strategic aim of operational excellence and building a service that truly responds to the needs of citizens, consumers and businesses for an efficient, affordable and high-quality delivery service or (2) a strengthened public service mission that embraces the postal service role as a critical part of the national infrastructure. Note that while these goals address the role of the postal sector more specifically, they are still difficult to be quantify and need to be further detailed by the PRP core team into specific more specific objectives in the next stage of the PRP project.

**Important:** together with the project justification, the formulation of the postal reform goals are critical and the first station in the results framework.

## Embedding postal reform

**National (or regional) (Socio-)Economic Development Plans** are particularly important to be considered in a national PRP project as postal reform could contribute to the achievement of the national economic development goals and unlock political and financial support for meeting these goals of the national economic development agenda. Similarly, the sustainability agenda and sustainable development goals (SDGs) could provide for relevant expectations and directions for sector reform, linking these efforts with wider development goals.

Embedding in the context of public policy refers to integrating the specific postal sector reform and the associated policy activities (such as postal sector regulation), methods, or principles (such as the universal service) into the larger goals, operations and decision-making processes of government agencies or broader policy areas. The benefits of embedding are as follows:

- (1) Increased legitimacy and relevancy of the postal sector – beyond principles such as access to basic postal services, the postal sector could be contributing to further policy objectives, such as furthering access to various public and governmental services, achievement of environmental sustainability goals, trade facilitation, digital transformation and social cohesion;
- (2) Strengthening policy effectiveness: postal sector reform that is responsive to a higher-level policy agenda will create policies that are more effective, relevant, and responsive to the needs of citizens;
- (3) Improving governance: embedding postal sector reform can enhance the overall quality of public governance by promoting transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making by applying well established and understood success factors that respond to universally applied standards;
- (4) Synergetic effects: integration of postal sector reform facilitates the use of norms and practices that are applied to (adjacent or connected) policies thereby reducing the risks of conflict or inconsistencies between public policies.

See further section 2.2 **PRP Projects and Broader Policy Agendas** as well as PRG module 1C.

This activity requires (1) a review of all relevant global, regional and national policy agendas, plans, roadmaps and other key documents and (2) the identification of the policy problems, goals and particular statements that share common ground with the general directions or expectations of postal sector reform as defined in the Project Charter. It is possible to conduct these activities in stage 2 (definition) when (1) a broad mandate for postal reform assistance is provided through the Project Charter and the review of these broader agendas was not performed or (2) where the review was initiated but not completed.

#### **Activity 1.5: tailor the project (define scope)**

Responding to PRP principle 2, every PRP project will be tailored according to the reform needs of the member country as well as the particular national circumstances. The PRP project is a combination of the selected modules under the relevant policy focus areas (scope) and the level of reform, for which there can be different levels:

- *Foundational Reforms*: These are designed for countries at the early stages of postal reform, where the focus is on fundamental improvements such as ensuring universal postal service, improving operational efficiency, and establishing regulatory frameworks. Countries in this category typically have underdeveloped infrastructure and often require substantial investment in basic postal services, infrastructure, capacity building, and policy reform.
- *Advanced Reforms*: For countries with more established postal infrastructures or complex postal environments, the reform efforts shift towards modernization and digital transformation. This includes adopting digital postal services, integrating digital financial services, enhancing cybersecurity, and supporting e-commerce. The aim is to facilitate the transformation of the postal sector into a key player in the digital economy.

- See further: section 4.2.2.2 on the description of postal reform, providing a continuum from incremental to transformational reform.

As previously introduced, in the future, a PRP project may draw from case examples of PRP projects that have been categorized according to the four different focus areas: Focus Area 1: Postal Sector Policy; Focus Area 2: Regulatory Framework; Focus Area 3: Universal Postal Service and Focus Area 4: Postal Operator. See further section 3.1 on policy focus areas.

The selection may include any single focus area or a combination of more than 1 focus areas and/or associated modules. Tailoring means also means that focus areas, individual modules (of the Postal Reform Guide) as well as other different aspects may be combined or adapted (by adding, modifying or removing activities).

The example of Country A provided in table 7 illustrates how a particular postal reform project may concern three different focus areas, but not cover all modules within each of the selected focus areas. In this example, the postal reform goals concern a modernization of the sector focused on the twin transition of sustainable development and digital transformation. This entails revisiting the key definitions and boundaries of the postal sector to mainstream these two components in the policy and key definitions applied (focus area 1). The project may concern focus area 3 (universal postal service) as the electronic services or sustainability may affect the definitions of the essential or basic universal postal services or how the existing universal postal service is to be provided. Logically, the universal postal service provider would need to adapt its operations and activities in such a way to give effect to the new requirements, for example through furthering its own digital transformation or by adapting best practices in environmental sustainability (focus area 4). The adoption of these trends may also provide a context for exploring diversification of the postal operator.

Table 7. tailoring the project – example of postal reform in Country A

FOCUS AREA 1: POSTAL SECTOR POLICY	FOCUS AREA 2: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	FOCUS AREA 3: UNIVERSAL POSTAL SERVICE	FOCUS AREA 4: POSTAL OPERATOR
1A - Definitions	2A - Regulatory framework	3A - Definition and scope	4A – Designation of UPS provider
1B - Data-driven reform	2B - Economic regulation	3B - Service conditions	4B - Digital transformation
1C - Reform goals	2C - Regulatory authority	3C – Financing of UPS	4C - Sustainable development
1D - Resource mobilization	2D - Licensing systems		4D - Diversification
1E - Evaluation	2E - Transversal policy issues		4E - Cost accounting
	2F - Enforcement mechanisms		

Effective tailoring requires experience and judgement. There is no single ‘right’ tailoring solution to a PRP project. Tailoring recognizes the particular national and regional context and circumstances as well as the wider political and economic context.

#### **Activity 1.6: approval of the PRP Project Charter**

In accordance with PRP principles 1, the PRP Project Charter formally authorizes the existence of the project and provides the PRP practitioner with the mandate and scope to conduct the PRP driven project activities. It combines the elements obtained from the activities and includes the following:

- **Nexus with other policy initiatives:** the Project Charter provides a direct link with the national policy objectives established by the Government, i.e. the PRP project outcomes contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives of the country (i.e. embedding);
- **Postal reform goals:** high-level goals that postal sector reform should accomplish or contribute to their accomplishment – these goals may be derived from strategic policies or regional or international policy goals and may or may not be specific to the postal sector;
- **Expected benefits:** the charter describes the main reasons for conducting postal sector reform. This is also referred to as the business case or justification of the project. The 2IPD score is provided in the charter.
- **Scope:** the charter should identify the relevant policy focus area as well as the relevant modules of the Postal Reform Guide and any further scope definition (including boundaries) that should be included in the PRP project and, where necessary, prioritized – alternatively, it may be left open as the outcome of the PRP project would inform possible directions for postal sector reform;
- **Formal mandate:** by means of signature, the Government gives formal approval of the conduct of the PRP driven activities within the defined boundaries.
- **Organization** – appointment of the representative from the Government as the focal point for PRP related activities.

#### PRP Project Charter

A brief official record of a planned project. It outlines the expected benefits of postal sector reform, the postal reform goals and the selected policy focus areas (scope) of the PRP project. It is used to obtain the Government's formal authorization to begin a project. The Government must sign off on the Project Charter, signifying that the scope meets the needs and expectations of the Government.

## 5.2 Management Stage 2: Definition

A critical component of this stage is developing a robust understanding of the postal sector's current state, identifying gaps, and defining clear reform objectives. This requires gathering comprehensive data, identifying relevant stakeholders, and analysing the sector's states and surrounding environment through market analyses, regulatory reviews, operational assessments, and stakeholder consultations. These activities and processes are key to stage 2 (definition).

Stage 2 starts as soon as the Project Charter is approved by the Government, giving green light to the PRP practitioner to start the work.

The work activities are strongly geared towards the collection and analysis of all project relevant information and to translate the broader reform goals into specific objectives and to structure and organize its work in such a way that the resulting product of stage 3, i.e. policy formulation, will effectively contribute to the achievement of those objectives. The emphasis is on data collection and analysis and to review all relevant literature and information so as to build a strong foundation for informed decision-making in relation to postal reform.

Table 8. Activities in Stage 2: Definition

<b>Stage 2 (definition) activities</b>	
<b>Activity 2.1</b>	Data collection and organization
<b>Activity 2.2</b>	Perform situation analysis
<b>Activity 2.3</b>	Define objectives
<b>Activity 2.4</b>	Define project deliverables

**Activity 2.5**

organize the results framework

**Activity 2.1: Data collection and organization**

In accordance with PRP principle 7 (evidence-based practice applied to PRP projects), gathering and compiling basic (local) data is essential to a comprehensive understanding of the country's postal sector, including aspects of the sector where markets and other policies fail to meet important economic and social goals. Using various techniques and sources, the practitioner collects data necessary to formulate valid conclusions and accurate diagnoses and to build a detailed case for reform.

**Data-driven PRP project:**

PRP emphasizes a data-driven approach to the management of the project using data analysis and data interpretation to guide project decisions and actions. By leveraging historical data, metrics, and analytics, the PRP practitioner can make informed decisions based on objective evidence rather than intuition.

The Practitioner needs to count with challenges in obtaining comprehensive, consistent, and reliable data. For example, in some countries, there are difficulties with obtaining data from private operators, in particular in an informal economy or where these actors are not formally registered. Similarly, similar issues may result from lacking a clear definition of the "sector". Also, relevant data may quickly become out of date, for example due to the rapid accession of new entrants to the market, and/or the rapid evolution of the sector.

Other data quality issues include operators' willingness to provide data: commercially sensitive data (such as commercially negotiated service agreements for large customers, etc.) or the regulators' legal authority to collect data.

Insufficient data leads to a reliance on assumptions and models, which can compromise the objectivity of project decision-making.

It is important to recognize the difference between **qualitative information** and **quantitative information**. With qualitative data, it will track behavior and practices. Qualitative data may be obtained from surveys, workshops or public hearings. For example, discussions in a focus group on intentional approaches to inter-generational communication or the attitudes towards the modernization of postal services and the use of technology self-service kiosks and digital means of paying for postage may generate a wealth of information, which is not easily quantifiable.

The analysis of qualitative data is more somatic, whereas analysis of quantitative data is more statistical. Various methods are designed to obtain quantitative data, such as surveys and questionnaires, financial audits, benchmarking or consulting UPU and national statistical databases, review of electronic data interchange (EDI) messages, etc. In cases where direct data collection is not possible, use proxy data. For example, the UNCTAD B2C E-commerce Index uses proxy data to estimate the readiness of different countries to engage in and benefit from e-commerce

Another important distinction is between **primary data sources** and **secondary data sources**. Primary data includes direct observations, whereas secondary data includes previously conducted research studies. Secondary data can be gathered from sources such as reports produced by the government, international organizations or other non-governmental organizations; official statistics; etc.

By analyzing and comparing practices, processes, and performance of the postal sector or postal operators worldwide, valuable insights can be gained and the project team could learn from successful strategies. The benefits of international benchmarking helps with the identification of best practices and the setting of realistic objectives.

Increasing the number of sources and methods, will aid the development of a clear understanding of the subject matter. For example, by using all combinations of data collection processes, i.e. both primary

and secondary sources, both qualitative and quantitative data, may provide the best basis for informed policy development.

It is important to understand that the collection of data is one of the most complex aspects of the PRP process, as many countries may not have comprehensive postal market data or traffic volume statistics, etc. To address these challenges, Practitioner must demonstrate a strong commitment to the data collection process and to ensuring that collected data is accurate, complete, and representative of the sector's true condition.

In relation to PRP principle 4 (PRP projects are inclusive), stakeholder engagement, whilst under purview and control of the authorizing Government, is recommended for improving the quality of the policy content and the legitimacy thereof.

### **Activity 2.2: Perform situation analysis**

After defining the target and parameters of the data collection and agreeing on the methods to collect the information, as outlined in the preceding activity, the Practitioner will use those directions and determined data sources to record and utilize the information.

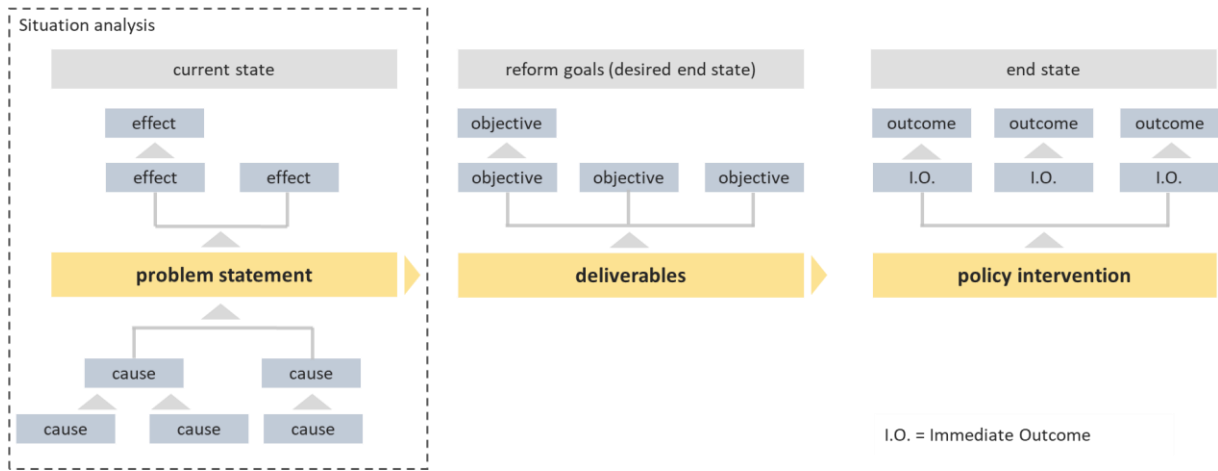
The review should include an analysis of available in-depth analyses and research studies of a reflecting the current challenges within the postal sector and justifying the need for reforms. These studies must be objective, precise, and reliable, providing a robust foundation for reform advocacy. The initial review should also include existing information materials that provide an essential understanding of the postal sector and its challenges as well as key statistics.

The starting point for the situation analysis is the PRP Project Charter which provides postal reform goals, the rationale for reform and specifies a strategic direction for the PRP project. The rationale (or justification) in particular points to a discrepancy between the current state and a desired future state. These elements are relevant to the development of both baselines and a targeted end state that is achieved as a result of project's outcomes. The outcomes can only be achieved through specific policy intervention (see section 4.2.2.2). These draft policy content for the policy intervention are the deliverables which need to respond to a problem definition, i.e. the discrepancy of the current state versus a desired state. Often, however, the problem that explains the gap between the current state and the desired state is not easily identifiable. In fact, there can be multiple factors at play that interact.

In other words, it is critical to perform a situation analysis to get to the root of the problem that the PRP should mitigate and/or resolve. The situation analysis brings forward a "focal problem" that has negative externalities that affect not only the postal sector or the users of the postal service, but could have negative effects on the wider social economic framework of a country. The focal problem may have more than one cause, of which the most important ones should be identified as they may hold the key to identification of the relevant policy areas.

Understanding the causes and effects of the focal problem, enables the Practitioner to identify the possible directions for corrective measures and recommendations. These measures and recommendations will be documented in the project's deliverables, which can be a policy analysis, a draft legal instrument, a strategic review or any particular output that is requested in the Project Charter. The PRP project's product, once implemented, is expected to produce outcomes (note that outcomes could have benefits and disbenefits). Those outcomes can either positively or negatively impact on people's lives.

*Figure 11. Situation analysis*

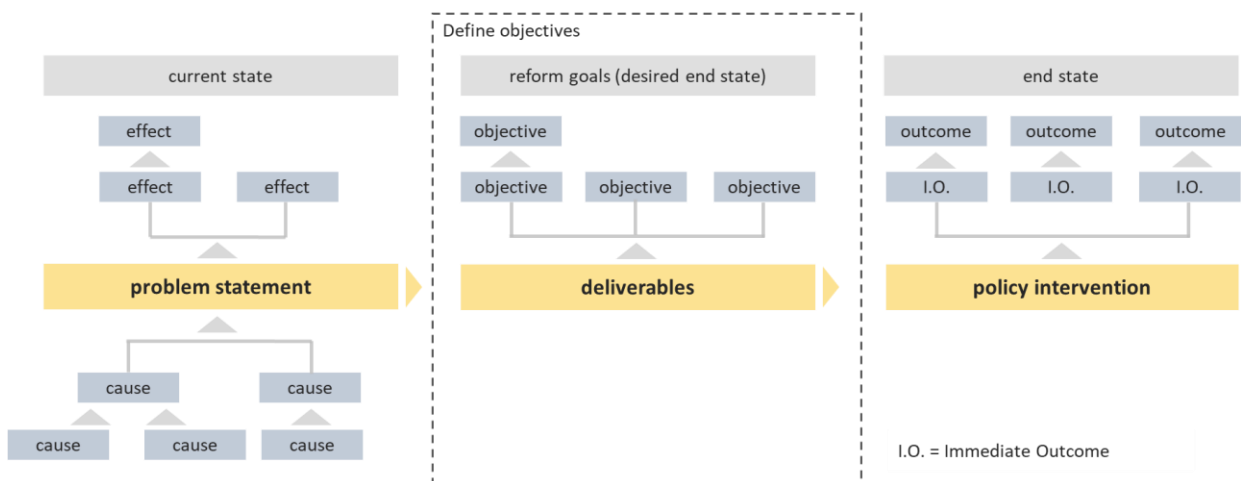


Problem analysis can be directly linked with objective analysis. For example, the overall goal may relate to the development of the digital economy. The achievement of that goal is currently prevented or negatively affected by the effects of a various focal problems. The project's deliverables (i.e. the draft policy content) aim to address the focal problem, thereby unlocking the potential positive effects from the policy intervention. The causes give specific directions of how to address the focal problem and can be formulated in terms of objectives which allows them to be linked directly to specific activities that the PRP project recommends.

### Activity 2.3: define objectives

PRP projects result in deliverables, which is the draft policy content or actionable recommendations, oriented towards accomplishing a desired end state (postal reform goals in activity 1.5). They intend to solve specific problems or to improve unsatisfactory situations. When the Practitioner, together with stakeholders, has identified which problems the project should specifically eliminate or mitigate, it is time to formulate the objectives. If the problem analysis is sufficient and if the project groups has listened to and involved relevant stakeholders, formulating objectives may come easier. As illustrated in figure 12 below, the Practitioner will define objectives based on the results of the situation or problem analysis.

Figure 12. Define objectives



The objectives, when fully accomplished, should contribute to the goals that were set in the PRP Project Charter or at least make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the reform goals over time. As previously mentioned, the reform goals may be of a broader nature and not limited to or even referring to the postal sector.

Collectively, the objectives are the very reason for why postal reform and PRP projects are conducted. There is no limitation in number of objectives or relationships between different objectives. Concerning the latter, there can be intermediary objectives that fall within a larger or longer-term objective. It is however important to specify how the objective(s) relate to or contribute to the higher-level postal reform goal(s).

An objective reflects an improved situation that is expected to prevail after the deliverables (draft policy content) has been adopted and implemented. At a later point in the project (stage 3), the deliverables will be derived from the objective as these deliverables (policy content or actionable recommendations) intend to find a solution to the main problem.

#### **Reform goals vs objectives**

A goal is a broad, long-term desired outcome or purpose, often aspirational and not immediately measurable. In the context of the PRP, reform goals do not need to be specific to the postal sector. They can be of a broader or more general nature or a transversal policy issue that cuts across the public and/or economic sectors. The reform goals become relevant to postal reform if the aim of postal sector reform is to make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the goal. For example, the goal could be SDG goal 13 to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Note that this goal is not specific to the postal sector.

An objective, on the other hand, is a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) step towards achieving that overall goal. Objectives are the concrete milestones that help track progress and determine if the implemented recommendations and policy content lead the sector the right path towards the postal reform goal(s). When the project objective is achieved, the most important causes to the main problem in the problem analysis will have been eliminated and thus the main problem itself will be resolved. In the example above, the objective could be for the carbon neutral in in-house operations from year X and to achieve net zero throughout its entire value chain from year Y.

When defining objectives, it is important to consider possible future scenarios that are relevant to the postal sector. These objectives should consider ongoing and anticipated economic, technological and other policy trends and developments. Reviewing developments of the past may provide some relevant information for forward projections, but it is important to understand those developments that will significantly impact the postal service in the future. E-substitution and e-commerce are still relevant trends today, but rapid innovative developments such as drone delivery, automation and artificial intelligence will impact the competitive postal and delivery landscape tomorrow and may thus need to be considered when defining the objectives.

Foresight is the discipline of exploring and anticipating future possible developments to shape the preferable future. To do so, it taps into collective intelligence in a structured and systemic way. *Strategic foresight*, seeks to embed future insights into postal sector reform efforts, strategic planning, and preparedness. It helps the member country conducting postal reform to prepare for and anticipate future shocks and opportunities, and shape the future it envisages.

Foresight is an important tool for letter policy-making and regulation, see for example the European Union's "Better regulation toolbox".<sup>5</sup>

Strategic foresight is an analytical process of exploring and anticipating the future and how to best prepare for it. It is not about predicting the future.

#### **Example – Prospective study on the future of the postal sector**

A 2024 study<sup>6</sup> commissioned by the European Commission examines five future scenarios for the EU postal sector with a time horizon of 2040 to identify key challenges and market failures. The 'baseline' scenario focuses on the most 'probable' evolution of key indicators describing the postal sector based on the evidence available today. Three 'possible' scenarios are characterized by projections of key indicators with higher levels of uncertainty relative to the baseline scenario and a final 'wild-card' scenario accounts for potential effects of major crises leading

<sup>5</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox/better-regulation-toolbox\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox/better-regulation-toolbox_en)

<sup>6</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Vencovsky, D., Njoroge, W., Turdaliev, S., Dunkerley, F. et al., Prospective study on the future of the postal sector – Final report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/0431952>

to dramatic changes in the postal sector. The study identifies several major trends expected to occur across the scenarios, for example, letter volumes are expected to keep on declining steeply while the overall increase in parcel volumes is expected to continue.

#### **Activity 2.4: define project deliverables**

A deliverable is a tangible or intangible output that is produced as a result of a PRP project. For most PRP projects, the deliverables are the draft policy content (policy document). However, as specified in the Project Charter, the deliverables could also consist of strategic or analytical reviews, policy guidelines, recommendations, draft legal instruments or any other outcomes that contribute to the reform goals. There is no relationship between the number of reform goals, objectives and deliverables: multiple deliverables could match a single objective or multiple objectives can share a single deliverable. For example, a PRP project could deliver multiple products, such as a strategic review of customer needs for modern postal services could be combined with an assessment of the technology readiness of the postal operator on which basis recommendations are drawn up.

At this phase of the project work, the PRP Practitioner should have clear on the deliverables the project should complete in order to meet the expectations. The definition of the deliverables will help the project team to stay focused on achieving the desired outcomes as set out in the PRP Project Charter.

#### **Deliverables**

Deliverables are the final, concrete and tangible results of the PRP project work that the Practitioner submits for validation and acceptance. Deliverables typically concern the contents for a new postal sector policy and actionable recommendations.

The Practitioner may set project milestones to mark significant points in a project such as the completion of comprehensive market research or an important event (such as the conclusion of a public consultation), which may serve as checkpoints to assess progress and ensure that the project is on track.

However, the deliverables are not final until they have been produced and presented at the end of the PRP project when they are submitted to the competent authority, which are accepted by the Government as meeting the requirements and expectations that were set at the start of the project.

#### **Activity 2.5: organize the results framework**

This activity, together with activities 2.4 and 2.5, are critical for the success of any PRP project and respond to a fundamental principle of the PRP, which is principle 6 of results-based management. Informed by the postal reform goals and the situation analysis, the structure of the results framework can now be organized. The results framework uses a standard table format, which can be modified according to the needs that are specific to the reform project as well as other national circumstances.

At this point, the results framework will only include the reform goals and the objectives that are connected with the reform goals. The results framework should demonstrate a clear linkage between the reform goals and the objectives. As illustrated in table 10 below, there can be more than one reform goal and these goals can refer to more than one specific agreement, agenda or policy. Multiple goals can share one objective or a goal can have multiple objectives.

*Table 10. Results Framework (Example)*

<i>Reform goal</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>
Goal 1: World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa	1.1 Interconnected e-commerce delivery postal delivery network	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3
		Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3
		Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3

(Agenda 2063 – goal 10)	1.2 Growth of the postal and delivery sector processing with more e-commerce generated items through its network	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3
		Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3
Goal 2: A single market for goods and services in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent (Art. 3 of Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area)	2.1 Improve the infrastructure for efficient and timely movement of goods across borders, incl. the express delivery services that are crucial for intra-African trade	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3
		Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3	Defined in stage 3

Once the deliverable(s) have been defined and the results framework completed with the reform goals and objectives, stage 2 has come to a completion. Information in relation to the deliverables and the results framework are to be submitted to the IB for validation (see stage 4). Once validated, the Practitioner can start the work in stage 3.

### 5.3 Management Stage 3: Delivery

Stage 3 concerns the substantive work of the PRP practitioner, resulting in tangible results that can be submitted to the competent authority. These results are referred to as “deliverables” and are essentially the “proposed policy content”. Effective postal reform process requires a comprehensive and adaptive approach that aligns with national development goals and leverages modern technologies. It involves the synchronization of many different elements. Accordingly, it is important that such an effort be well coordinated from all standpoints to ensure its short-, medium-, and long-term sustainability.

The deliverables produced at the end of a PRP project (i.e. the proposed policy content, including recommendations for implementation and a framework for post-implementation evaluation of the measures taken) it matches the UPU technical support given to the process of *policy formulation* (see section 2.1). In this context, stage 3 (delivery) should be understood as policy design involving the actual drafting of the public policy document to provide effective and acceptable course of action for addressing the identified problem, and is based on the policy agenda selected. The main activities undertaken at this stage are generating the policy options through policy analysis and drafting all the sections of the policy in question based on the prescribed methodology.

Table 11. Activities in Stage 3: Delivery

<b>Stage 3 (delivery) activities</b>	
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Review policy focus areas
<b>Activity 3.2</b>	Conduct project work
<b>Activity 3.3</b>	Define indicators
<b>Activity 3.4</b>	Complete results framework
<b>Activity 3.5</b>	Develop framework for implementation of deliverables
<b>Activity 3.6</b>	Prepare deliverable report

#### **Activity 3.1: Review policy focus areas**

Practicing evidence-based postal reform is an important and recurring principle (PRP governance principle 7) throughout the PRP project lifecycle and therefore, in stage 3, it builds further on the four policy focus areas for achieving effective, sustainable, and transformative postal sector reform. Each of these focus areas provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the structural, operational, and strategic needs of the sector. Together they account for all critical elements of the postal sector and may be combined for a coordinated strategy for reforming the postal sector while ensuring that reforms are feasible and aligned with broader national development goals.

A review of the Postal Reform Guide is therefore an obvious starting point for the work in stage 3. The PRG encompasses many aspects of the postal sector and therefore not all of the modules of a selected policy focus area need to be considered for the purpose of the PRP project.

See section 3.1 for an overview of the policy focus areas as well as a breakdown of each policy focus area and their associated modules.

Additionally, the Practitioner should review and analyse all relevant studies, analysis, policy documents, statistical information and any other documentation relevant to the policy focus area and related subject matters. The reviewed material should be referenced in the project's deliverable(s) as complementary to the information in the relevant sections of the Postal Reform Guide.

### **Activity 3.2: Conduct project work**

This activity consists of performing the work in order to satisfy the project requirements. These activities include coordinating resources, managing stakeholder engagement and performing any necessary activities. This activity requires a high level of collaboration, communication and responsibility from all the parties involved in the delivering the output.

The work to produce the final deliverables should be carried out in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including the focal point and other representatives from the member country concerned and supported by the IB subject matter experts.

In this activity, the PRP practitioner must ensure that the planned deliverables are completed to expectations and schedule and keep the IB informed of any deviations from the plan.

Should any issues occur in which the project is expected to deviate from the agreed scope (policy focus area) and/or schedule, then the PRP practitioner should inform the IB immediately. The consequences of the deviations need to be understood, which may require the competent authority to be informed through an exceptions report.

#### **Change requests**

It is possible that due to progressive knowledge, consultations and work activities, that the project work cannot be completed as originally planned. For example, due to rapid changes in the market or on the basis of new information resulting from research, the original baseline provided in the mandate may no longer adequately respond to the mandate and expectations set out in the Project Charter. The PRP practitioner informs the IB accordingly of any necessary changes to the Charter or the mandate given to the practitioner.

As further specified in stage 4, the IB will review and validate project changes as long as they remain within the tolerances and expectations as established in the Project Charter. Should, as a result of the change request, the revised activities and deliverables exceed these tolerances, then the IB will notify the competent authority. The project work needs to respect the latest authorizations and mandate given by the Government authority.

In the change request, the practitioner identifies the requirements for change to any aspect of the project (e.g. scope, deliverables, timescales and organization) and summarizes the change by providing the required information, which include: (a) a description, (b) the reasons, (c) the benefits of the change, (d) any other possible impacts that would result from the change. Any supporting documentation, references and other information should be provided, if relevant to the change request.

Finally, to facilitate effective collaboration, the project's internal stakeholders should use efficient communication tools, including email and other rapid communications platforms (i.e. video conferencing tools) and collaborative platforms for document sharing and editing.

### **Activity 3.3: define indicators**

The results framework was created in activity 2.6 and at that point only the reform goals and objectives were specified in the framework. At this time, further work, including analysis and drafting of the policy content, was performed and consequently, the evidence base will be progressively fine-tuned, as a result of an iterative process. Likewise, the design of a results framework is an iterative process, which includes the engagement of relevant stakeholders and the consideration of available and reliable data sources.

The key result of this activity is to develop the logic of the policy intervention and design a results framework that will lead to the achievement of the desired results, including underlying assumptions about the causality and interaction between the intervention (which includes deliverables, outcomes and impacts), in the context of the policy intervention. **Objectives** play a critical role linking input (situation analysis) to the expected impact; the assumptions from the analytical review of the specific context (evidence base); and the indicators, allowing measurement of intervention progress. The next logical step is to develop **indicators** that connect with and appropriately represent the substantive directions articulated in the objectives.

Figure 13 summarizes the overall design of the framework, illustrating the logical relationships from deliverables -> (immediate and longer-term) outcomes -> impact and the associated type of indicators and evidence base.

Figure 13. Results framework (simplified)

<i>Logical relationship</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Evidence base</i>
impact	impact indicators	source and method
outcomes	outcome indicators	source and method
immediate outcomes	immediate outcome indicators	evidence for controls
PRP deliverables	--	--

In the results framework, the logical relationship (column 1) is the basis for results-based management of the PRP project (see more in sections 4.1 and 4.2). Once again, it is useful to break the effects down into direct results (called outcomes) and lasting changes in society, economy, etc. (called impact). Ultimately, the real outcomes will be the measure to assess whether objectives were achieved (and similarly, impact indicators could measure whether the higher-level reform goals were achieved).

Once the strategic direction of the policy intervention has been identified, the next task is to identify the indicators that might be used to measure the progress and achievement of objectives (column 2), and the source of that information (column 3). In considering how the achievement of objectives might be measured/verified, one is required to reflect on the clarity of objective statements, how feasible they will be to achieve, and how they might be more specifically defined. This is part of the iterative nature of the analysis.

The type of indicators as well as the type of evidence base for immediate outcomes is different as they do not measure changes in behavior over time. These are typically short-term indicators with equally short term objectives that simply report the observation whether a PRP recommendation was put in place or not. These sources are the observation (yes or no; or degree of application) pointing to specific measures, events, actions, etc.

Monitoring is an ongoing observation function that uses the systematic collection of relevant, selected data to provide indicators about the progress being made and the objectives being reached. In

methodological terms, this means shifting the focus of monitoring and evaluation from the level of simply delivering PRP project results to the level of effects (outcomes, impact).

Whereas the logical framework provides for an ex-ante planning of deliverables, the monitoring function provides for ex-post (continuous and yearly) monitoring of outcomes and impacts. As mentioned above, the immediate outcomes are measured at the end of the PRP project lifecycle. Outcomes and impacts are measured post-project.

It is critical that the results framework completed with indicators, baselines and targets are available at the time of the submission of the deliverables as these are intended to measure the effectiveness of postal reform after the implementation of the new policy.

Result of this activity should be the definition of indicators and the creation of a monitoring table as illustrated below. The figures below are for illustrative purposes.

Table 12. Preparing the Results Framework (Example)

	Baseline (n)	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4
<b>Impact:</b> average cost to send postal item expressed in working hours (base year = 100)	100	100	95	95	90
<b>Outcome:</b> number of entrants in the postal and delivery sector (according to defined criteria)	2	2	4	5	10
<b>Deliverables:</b> proposed policy instruments for market entry and licensing systems	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Indicators specify how the achievement of objectives will be measured and verified. They register changes with regard to specific or partial aspects of the situation or condition to be checked and provide concrete and objectively verifiable data on facts that indicate changes.

Indicators specify how the achievement of project objectives will be measured and verified. They register changes with regard to specific or partial aspects of the situation or condition to be checked and provide concrete and objectively verifiable data on facts that indicate changes.

Table 13 below contains the information needed to establish an efficient monitoring system with indicators at all levels of the hierarchy of objectives of the logical framework matrix under activity 3 above.

Table 13. Developing a monitoring framework

Indicators	Targets	Baselines	Source of information	Resources and responsibilities
What is the measure to verify whether progress in outputs, outcomes and impacts have been realized?	What are the indicator targets to measure whether the planned results are achieved?	What is the baseline, i.e. what is the starting point against which progress is measured?	What methods are used for data collection and at what frequency?	Which resources are necessary? Who is responsible for collecting and analysing the data?

Whereas most monitoring systems contain a set of indicators (column 1) and targets (column 2), columns 3 to 5 are most often ignored in the activity of defining indicators, but are equally important.

A baseline is necessary to identify if any progress has been made at the level of outcomes and impact. For outputs (PRP project's deliverables) a baseline is not necessary as the deliverables completed and submitted to the competent authority still need to be acted upon after the acceptance by the Government of the PRP project's deliverables. In other words, if the main deliverable of the PRP project is a strategic plan to modernize the postal operator, then no results can be linked to this output until after a time that the plan has been implemented.

Collecting data and creating indicators is a time and money investment with a determinant influence on the whole success of the evaluation process. In this regard, it is important to recall the possibility to conduct pilot projects on a small scale to explore the quality of poorly known data. Different methodologies can be adopted, ranging from qualitative and less structured methods to quantitative and more structured ones.

Indicators that measure the transformation of input into outputs on a regular basis represent the core of the monitoring phase and are useful for making adjustments and gaining experience at a single-level project. When building outcome indicators, it is necessary to translate outcome goals into measurable key performance indicators (KPI). To do so it is essential that indicators for postal reform are "SMART" (specific, measurable, attributable, realistic, and targeted), as represented in the table below.

Table 14. SMART Objectives

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>	Objectives should clearly define what is to be accomplished, who will be involved, where it will take place, and the expected outcomes.
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	Each objective should have associated criteria for measuring progress and success, allowing for ongoing evaluation and adjustment.
<b>A</b>	<b>Attainable</b>	While ambitious, the goals must be realistically achievable within the current political, economic, and technological landscape.
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant</b>	Objectives should align with broader postal sector needs and contribute to national and international development goals.
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-bound</b>	Clear timelines should be set for achieving objectives, providing a schedule against which progress can be measured.

In addition, visually linking raw data, monitoring indicators, and outcome indicators is not a straightforward process and requires careful design and precision. The table below represents a general (and simplified) example of such a template.

Table 15. Template for data collection

<i>Reform goals</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data Source(s)</i>	<i>Data Collection method</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Goal 1	Objective 1.1	1.1.1 ...			
		1.1.2 ...			
	Objective 1.2	1.2.1 ...			
		1.2.2 ...			
Goal 2	Objective 2.1	2.1.2 ...			
		2.1.2 ...			
	Objective 2.2	2.2.1 ..			

Also, the reporting of data is a key activity. Evaluation over an extended period of time should be preferred as it tracks the longer term outcomes in addition to just the immediate and intermediate outcomes. Selection of established demographic, organisational and geographic units may also favour a clear strategy of data dissemination.

The following checklist may help the stakeholder in charge of data collection and building of indicators with practical tips.

### Guidelines for developing indicators

**Validity:** the indicator actually measures the expected (desired or planned) outcomes

**Reliability:** the indicator a consistent measure over time

**Simplicity:** data collection for the indicator is straightforward without any complications

**Utility:** the information is useful to assess effectiveness of postal reform and to inform any future (corrective) measures

**Affordability:** the collection of data must be affordable (both during the project (to establish the baseline) and the annual assessment post-project)

**Meaningful and relevant:** indicators relate directly to expected accomplishments they measure

**Credibility:** they are based on accurate and reliable data

It must be stressed that it is crucial that KPIs are explicitly defined in relation to the postal reform goals and objectives (see stage 2) so that each indicator directly reflects the intended outcomes of the reform. Such an alignment ensures that all monitoring and evaluation activities are relevant and focused on driving the postal sector toward its strategic objectives.

Table 16. Sample KPIs and their alignment with strategic objectives of postal sector reform

Postal reform goal 1: A world class national collection and delivery network connecting all citizens and businesses					
Objective 1: Expand universal access to postal service					
Benchmark	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	.....	Year n
Percentage of the population served by a post office					
Percentage of the population with home delivery service					

This evaluation method converts descriptive objectives into clear, measurable performance benchmarks giving postal reform managers a pretty clear picture of the extent to which their original objectives are being met.

Finally, to build purposeful indicators in the postal sector, three aspects are particularly relevant:

**Integrating international standards and best practices:** Considering the global nature of postal services, aligning reform objectives with international standards is critical. This integration ensures that reforms are not only locally effective but also globally competitive and compliant. Engaging with international bodies such as the UPU helps incorporate global best practices and benchmarks into national reform strategies.

**Building Support for Objectives:** Transparent communication of reform objectives and the reasons behind them helps to build support among stakeholders.

In developing new indicators, it should be considered that their utility will be determined by the extent to which they meet the following requirements:

- **simplicity:** clear understanding of their import;
- **objectivity:** can be evaluated in a non-subjective manner;
- **credibility:** reliable sources and means of verification;
- **execution:** feasible sources and means of verification;
- **timeliness:** can be verified in a timely fashion for decision-making purposes;
- **comparison:** good basis for comparative benchmarking.

### Activity 3.4: complete results framework

Drawing up the results framework is an important activity of stage 3, consolidating strategic insights from the PRP project's work to date (input, such as the evidence base), and connects directly with the PRP deliverables. Based on **the diagnosis of the country's postal sector**, the objective of the results framework is to identify the key actions and activities to be implemented to address the sector's main challenges previously identified.

The results framework is directly linked to the project's output, i.e. the deliverables, and is used in the post-project phase of stage 4 (control) to monitor, over time, the extent to which outcomes and impacts have been realized. Table 17 below revisits the example of the results framework to the extent it was developed in stage 2 (activity 2.6: develop the results framework) and at this point the indicators, baselines and targets can be specified in the results framework. The structure of the results framework can still be modified (tailored) at this stage to meet the specific needs and circumstances of the PRP project.

Table 17. Results Framework (Example)

Reform goal	Objective	Indicator	Baseline (n) <sup>7</sup>	Target (n+5)	Actual (n+1)	Actual (etc.)
Goal 1: World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa (Agenda 2063 – goal 10)	1.1 Inter-connected e-commerce delivery postal delivery network	1.1.1 % of items delivered in 5 days	50% (actual)	95%		
		1.1.2 Active licensed postal operators offering intra-African cross-border delivery services	100 (index)	200		
		...	...	...		
	1.2 Growth of the postal and delivery sector processing with more e-commerce generated items through its network	1.2.1 E-commerce generated cross-border parcel volumes	100 (index)	200		
		1.2.2 Revenue generated by intra-African cross-border delivery services	100 (index)	250		
Goal 2: A single market for goods and services in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent (Art. 3 of Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area)	2.1 Improve the infrastructure for efficient and timely movement of goods across borders, incl. the express delivery services that are crucial for intra-African trade	2.1.1 Countries with operational and service level compliant express delivery service	100 (index)	200		
		2.1.2 Number of post offices offering trade facilitation services (easy export solutions)	0 (actual)	2000		

### Activity 3.5: develop framework for implementation of deliverables

The deliverables, in particular the financial estimates should take into consideration a **reasonable degree of financial flexibility** that would allow postal reform implementation to adapt to budgetary constraints, economic fluctuations, and evolving needs. By integrating financial flexibility into the PRP, postal operators and governments can respond swiftly to unforeseen financial challenges while ensuring continuous reform progress.

<sup>7</sup> Year *n* is current year.

For example, the PRP could incorporate **scenario-based budgeting** that prepares the PRP recipient country for various financial outcomes, i.e. surpluses or deficits, ensuring that reforms remain viable under different financial conditions.

Also, prioritizing cost-effective investments, such as technological upgrades, will enable postal operators and the regulator to stretch available resources and achieve more impact with limited funding.

The PRP stresses the importance of a well-defined schedule to ensure a systematic and timely implementation of reform actions. This characteristic underscores the need for a time-bound approach, which goes beyond merely scheduling activities to emphasize commitment to specific timelines and the urgency of reform actions. A time-bound PRP includes:

**a) A phased implementation timeline:**

- **Short-term actions (0-2 years):** These are immediate priorities that address urgent needs or lay the groundwork for more complex reforms. Examples might include initial regulatory updates or quick operational improvements.
- **Medium-term actions (2-5 years):** These actions typically involve more substantial changes, such as implementing new technologies or restructuring operations.
- **Long-term actions (>5 years):** These are strategic initiatives that may require significant investment or cultural shift within the postal sector.

**b) Clear milestones:** These are specific, measurable targets that help track progress in the reform process and ensure timely decision-making. Regular review points, such as quarterly or bi-annual assessments, are established to evaluate progress and make necessary adjustments. Key decisions points are identified where stakeholders must approve next steps or allocate resources for subsequent phases.

**c) Prioritization Structure:** The PRP should include a structure for prioritizing actions based on urgency and impact. This ensures that critical reforms are implemented first, while less urgent solutions are scheduled for later phases. This prioritization is informed by critical path analysis, impact assessments, and resource allocation planning.

By adopting this comprehensive, time-bound approach, the PRP ensures that the reform process is not only well-organized but also accountable, dynamic, and responsive. It keeps all stakeholders aligned and focused on key objectives, while also allowing for necessary adjustments as the reform progresses. This approach helps maintain momentum, ensures accountability, and increases the likelihood of successful, timely implementation of postal sector reforms.

### **Activity 3.6: Finalize deliverables**

Activities 3.2 and 3.3 should lead to a document that contains the deliverables, such as the policy content and recommendations, and include visual elements such as **charts, tables, graphs**, and **implementation timelines** to render the proposed recommendations clear and actionable.

The deliverable report should serve as a strategic and operational blueprint for postal sector reform, reflecting both the current realities and the future ambitions of the sector. The document should contain at least the following integral parts:

- 1) **Executive Summary:** brief summary with the main conclusions from the postal sector review, the policy directions and recommendations. a concise overview of the PRP's key findings, objectives, and recommendations. Designed for senior-decision makers, it shall highlight the strategic importance of postal sector reform, summarizing the evidence, proposed actions, and expected outcomes. The executive summary serves as a high-level briefing document to facilitate political buy-in and stakeholder support.
- 2) **Introduction:** Outline the goals, objectives and rationale postal sector reform, emphasizing its alignment with global trends and global, regional and national development goals and/or other

broader policy agendas. The report should reflect the 2IPD ranking and assessment according to the four dimensions: reliability, reach, relevance and resilience.

- 3) **Context:** A brief description of the global postal sector, highlighting the transformative impacts of digitalization, e-commerce growth, and diversification of postal operators. Furthermore, this section should situate the postal sector reform within the national context by providing first an analysis of a country's socio-economic, demographic, and governance framework, explaining how these factors influence the national postal sector.
- 4) **Situation analysis:** This Chapter shall provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the postal sector in a country, including an assessment of market dynamics, trends in demand and supply, competition, and digital readiness. It is expected to explore key enablers, such as IT infrastructure, data analytics, and automation, emphasizing their importance in optimizing and improving customer experience. Drawing on the UPU's vision for a modern, inclusive, and sustainable postal ecosystem, this chapter should also explain how the intended national reform efforts align with international benchmarks.
- 5) **Main body of the report:** should analysis and interpretation of the findings in the preceding sections as well as a direction for the future development of the postal sector and a reflection on the different policy options that were considered. The policy content should be specific, detailed and practical and provide a comprehensive national postal sector policy that aligns the postal sector aligns with economic and social development goals while addressing its specific obligations. It links the conclusions with existing capacity-building and technical solutions (such as OSCAR, digital readiness (DRE), etc.). Relevant to the substantive content of the draft policy content (deliverables), it includes the completed results framework and indicates the relevant data sources for post-reform impact assessment.
- 6) **Results framework:** closely connected to the substantive content of section 5 above, is the results framework which provides for the goals, objectives, indicators and targets that directly connect with the proposed policy content, recommendations and directions of postal reform as developed in activity 3.4. Additionally, it may specify how the findings would contribute to improvement according to the four dimensions of the 2IPD.
- 7) **Recommendations:** This Chapter describes the key findings from the diagnostic phase and the main elements of the policy content (deliverables) as well as a set of actionable recommendations and guidelines for their implementation.

## 5.4 Management Stage 4: Control

Any PRP-driven postal reform project should be monitored and controlled. It ensures that the project effectively delivers on the mandate and expectations that were set at the beginning. Stage 4 describes the controlling function of the IB in reviewing and validating project milestones and deliverables against the Project Charter and guides the project towards its completion within the constraints and expectations set for the project. In this process, the IB ensures that the PRP project standards, processes are maintained.

Stage 4 consists of processes required to track, review and regulate the progress and performance of the project and identify any areas where changes to the deliverables are required. Monitoring is collecting information about the project performance, validating its output (deliverables) and reporting any information to the project competent authority about the status and performance of the project.

Meanwhile, controlling is an essential feature of a results-based management of PRP projects and marks a shift from a focus on inputs to outputs, centralizing its focus on the expected objectives and maximize the achievement of development results. This approach links the activities and outputs of the PRP project lifecycle in directly with the outcomes as the real changes that occur as an effect of the policy intervention.

The key benefit of the controlling process is that it brings objectivity to the process as well as a clear management of the project throughout its lifecycle and that continuity is given to the project once the deliverables have been finalized. Because of this controlling function, in particular the validation of PRP project output by the IB, acceptance by the project competent authority of the project deliverables is more likely because of (1) the IB acting in a neutral capacity and (2) for the IB's expertise provided in the review of the deliverables. The validation process can be performed periodically or on the basis of completed deliverables. In case of the former, draft version of the deliverable or intermediary versions of the output could be reviewed by the IB with directions and advice given for incorporation in the next and/or final iteration.

The IB performs the following roles in PRP projects:

(1) *Technical assistance (and capacity-building) function*: the IB facilitates and supports Member States in their postal reform efforts. These efforts are linked with the objectives of the regional development plans and the wider technical assistance support that the UPU provides to its member countries;

(2) *Controlling function (also project management office (PMO) function)*: IB reviews and validates deliverables (project output) and guides the reform project towards its completion within the constraints and expectations set for the project. In this process, the IB ensures that the PRP project standards, processes are maintained and keeps documentation on projects and offers direction and key metrics in the development of PRP projects under its governance;

(3) *Information function*: the IB maintains databases and is a provider of all relevant information for a project, it shares best practices and makes available to the PRP core team all relevant subject matter expertise and information. In the other direction, the IB collects and records information in relation to KPIs and project's outcomes that are defined for the project;

(4) *Evaluation function*: the IB collects information in relation to the indicators in the post-project and post implementation phase and establishes on that basis whether the objectives that were defined in the course of the project work have materialized over time.

Table 18. Activities in Stage 4: Control

<b>Stage 4 (control) activities</b>	
<b>Activity 4.1</b>	Technical assistance
<b>Activity 4.2</b>	Controlling the project
<b>Activity 4.3</b>	Information management
<b>Activity 4.4</b>	Evaluation (post-project)

#### **Activity 4.1: technical assistance**

Development cooperation is included in the UPU mission statement enshrined in the Union's Constitution. As key element of the UPU's mission, it supports countries in their efforts to develop the postal sector and ensure the strengthening of universal postal service as well as the modernization of the offer of value-added postal services to meet customers' and citizens' expectations.

Through projects and methodological approaches, policy advisory and other kinds of technical assistance is a fundamental tool, which aims at adapting the postal sector to new expectations and reduce the postal divide between industrialized and developing countries within a coherent policy framework based on sustained coordination with bilateral and multilateral partners.

The various technical assistance and capacity-building frameworks offered by the UPU can be linked with the PRP, either at the initiation phase as part of PRP project justification (for example the desired project outcome to improve on the 2IPD ranking) or in the later stages of the project lifecycle or post-PRP when implementing the recommendations (for example use of Quality of Service Fund (QSF) for the modernization of the DO, such as purchase of handheld scanners).

The PRP itself can be initiated on the basis of the priorities and strategic directions set out in the regional development plans. The request for a PRP reform project can be submitted on the basis of a Project Charter directly with the relevant programme within the UPU IB or through contacts with the UPU's Development and Cooperation Directorate.

#### **Activity 4.2: controlling the project**

The activity of controlling PRP stage boundaries concerns first and foremost the process of managing each stage of the PRP Project, a role that is conducted by the IB. The IB is the only party that is involved in all management stages of a PRP project. The IB will ensure that for each stage, all formal requirements have been completed and that the product of each stage is provided before the start of the next stage. For each of these stages, the IB performs the role of managing stage boundaries and gives green light to the start of the next stage of the project. Following the results-based management approach, for each stage, a tangible result is produced as shown in the table below.

Table 19. PRP Stage Products and IB controlling functions

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
<i>Stage Product</i>	Project Charter	Definition of: (1) objectives (2) deliverables	Completion of: (1) deliverables and deliverables report (2) results framework	Validation report Post-project use of results report	Acceptance report
<i>IB controlling function</i>	Ensure that the overall scope (i.e. policy focus area), reform goals and formal mandate are provided before PRP project work starts	Validate against mandate in Project Charter: (1) deliverables (2) objectives	PMO guidance to (1) results framework (2) technical assistance and subject matter expertise in delivery of project	Receive, review and validate deliverables IB collects data on indicators and monitors the performance on outcomes in the post-project environment	IB submits deliverables to the competent authority seeking its validation

The project controlling functions of the IB include: (1) drafting of the Project Charter and obtaining the formal Government mandate for the postal reform project; (2) reviewing and confirming that the definition of the deliverables and project objectives are conform the mandate; (3) review, validation and acceptance of the deliverables and (4) a

#### **(1) Establish Project Charter**

As mentioned in activity 1.7, the IB will ensure that any PRP project starts with a brief official record of the planned postal reform project, i.e. the Project Charter. This document outlines the rationale for postal sector reform, the postal reform goals and the policy focus area(s) of the PRP project. It is used to obtain the Government's formal authorization to begin a project. The Government must sign off on the Project Charter, signifying that the scope meets the needs and expectations of the Government. Directly relevant to the practitioner are the postal reform goals as these goals inform the development of the objectives of postal reform.

#### **(2) Definition of deliverables and objectivess**

Following the activities outlined in stage 2, the practitioner initiates the work and produces by the end of stage 2: (1) a definition of the deliverables, i.e. an outline of the form and overall content of the ultimate "product" which are typically the draft policy content and actionable recommendations and (2) a first version of the results framework containing the (i) postal reform goals as defined in the Project Charter and (ii) the objectives as per activity 2.4. The IB will review the output against the Project Charter and confirms they are in agreement with the goals and directions set out therein.

### **(3) Review, validation and acceptance of deliverables**

The three steps are: review, validation and acceptance of the deliverables. The purpose of the review is to provide feedback and seek possible adjustments to the substantive contents of the deliverables before the IB formally validates the results. Validation is the communication by the IB that the deliverables were developed in accordance with the mandate and scope of the Project Charter and can thus be submitted to the competent authority.

*Review of deliverables:* the review of the deliverables is the first of three steps towards the closing the project after the practitioner submits these deliverables as the result of their efforts. The IB will review whether the substantive elements of the PRP project have been delivered as per the Project Charter. Secondly, the IB will review whether the directions, detail and quality of the deliverables sufficiently meet the expectations that were set from the outset of the project. It is for this reason that it is beneficial to include in the key project documentation (such as the Project Charter) any relevant acceptance criteria. Such criteria could help avoid any issues with the review, validation and acceptance of the PRP project deliverables.

The review process may result in any of the following three outcomes: (1) IB returns the deliverable to the PRP practitioner for further work and improvement; (2) the deliverable is not in line with the Project Charter and the authorizing Government needs to authorize a deviation from the mandate it provided, or; (3) the IB finds the deliverables in accordance with the project documents and proceeds to validation.

This activity includes the review by the IB of the indicators, targets and data sources that the practitioner proposes in activity 3.4.

*Validation of deliverables:* the validation process follows from the review of the deliverables and any further revisions or iterations of the substantive elements of the deliverables (draft policy content, analysis, recommendations, etc.). Validation differs from acceptance as the latter can only be provided by the responsible authority for which the (postal) sector falls within its competency. This is the authority that has full ownership of the subject matter and has provided the mandate to start the project.

The result of the validation process is that the deliverables are confirmed to have responded to the mandate, goals and expectations laid down in the Project Charter and meeting the acceptance criteria, should such criteria have been defined in stage 1. Following the validation by the IB, the material will be prepared for their submission to the competent authority to proceed with the next stage of the PRP, which concerns the closing of the project.

The validation step includes, besides the deliverables, the complete results framework as set out in activity 3.6.

*Acceptance of deliverables:* the formal transmission of the project's deliverable(s) is managed by the International Bureau, marking the formal conclusion of the PRP project. At this point, the responsibility and management pass to the national government and stakeholders of the country to implement the deliverables, including the PRP's recommendations. See also stage 5 (closeout).

### **(4) Monitor and report outcomes (impact evaluation)**

After the formal conclusion of a project (stage 5), the IB continues to monitor the outcomes of postal reform through data collection and reporting against the objectives and indicators set out in the results framework. Monitoring outcomes and updating the results framework is done annually. See activity 4.4.

#### **Activity 4.3: information management**

The IB plays a central role in supporting the conduct of a PRP project. It offers in-house support and information relevant to any project. It keeps documentation on projects and offers direction and key metrics in the execution of the projects under its governance. Through guidance and subject matter expertise, the IB adds value to project and the stakeholders.

Sharing of best practices: the UPU has conducted multiple PRP projects over the years, which are organizational assets of which the learnings should be made available to future PRP projects. All PRP projects may further contribute to standardizing, streamlining and improving procedures and establishing best practices for the benefit of any country undertaking postal sector reform. The UPU IB role in facilitator of project relevant information contributes to better governance, visibility, and transparency through improved information management. Therefore, the documentation of lessons from any PRP or postal reform project for the benefit of future postal reform projects is an important aspect of PRP project information management. For this purpose, the IB will establish a knowledge and information base.

Additionally, the IB can provide subject matter expertise, for example on digital transformation, trade facilitation, environmental or social sustainability, gender equality, financial inclusions, financial postal services, operational readiness and various other subject matters. Subject matter expertise may be provided at any stage of postal reform and/or PRP project.

#### **Activity 4.4: evaluation (post-project)**

The PRP is a data-driven plan that involves the collection of data on the postal sector, the postal operator as well as any other relevant information to continuously measure the performance on the indicators. Evaluation plays an important role in determining whether a PRP project was successful.

After acceptance of the deliverables (stage 5) and after the further passing of some time, it becomes essential to monitor whether the outcomes (actual results) match the objectives of postal reform (planned results), i.e. whether the reform goals will materialize. This includes a comprehensive review of the reform's alignment with the objectives outlined in the PRP, including an assessment of tangible improvements in postal services. Such a review provides clarity on what has been achieved and identifies any areas that require further action.

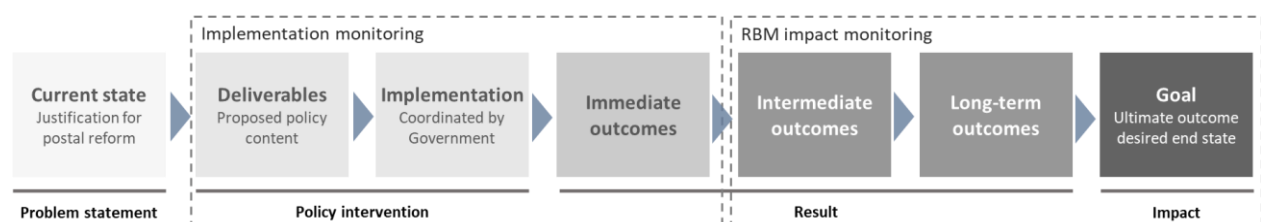
See section 2.1: evaluation and learning are interlinked processes that are conducted after the policy and other related instruments have been adopted and implemented. *Policy evaluation* is a critical aspect of the results-based management approach that is applied to PRP projects and the IB provides technical assistance in this step of the policy process.

Following the results-based management approach to postal reform, evaluation will use the monitoring indicators (results framework and indicators) defined earlier on in the PRP project lifecycle. Based on the collection and processing of information for the purpose of continued monitoring and impact evaluation, an annual results report will be prepared.

As depicted in the results chain below (see also section 4.1), there are two ways of monitoring or evaluating a PRP project:

- (1) **Implementation monitoring** is an evidence-based control to verify whether the policy, recommendations and measures have effectively been put in place, in other words the purpose of monitoring is to verify (yes/no or the degree thereof) whether the proposed measures have indeed been adopted, implemented and applied;
- (2) **Results-based monitoring (policy evaluation)** which focuses on evaluating whether the planned outcomes (objectives) have indeed been materialized.

Figure 14. Evaluation of postal sector reform

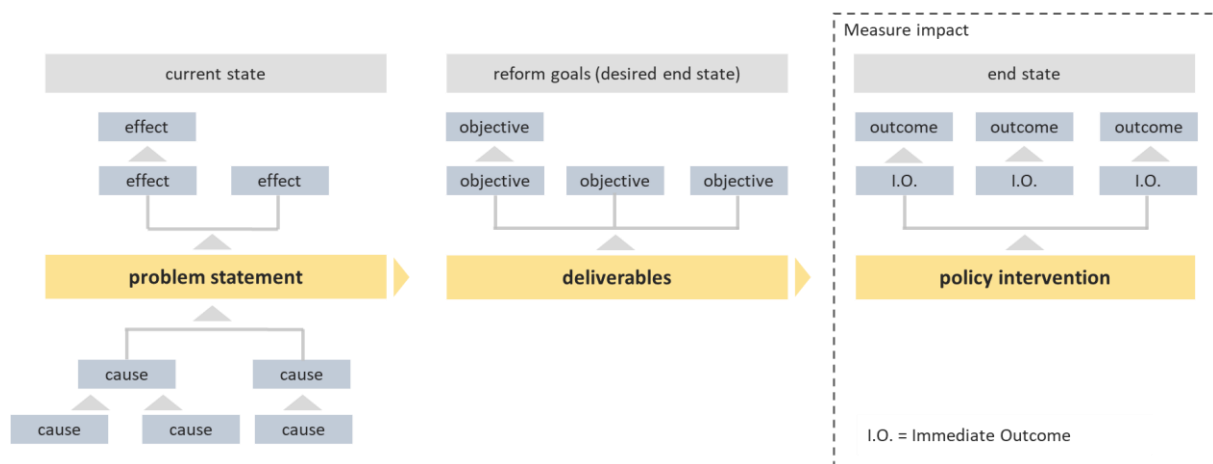


RBM or policy evaluation is critical to understand why some (complex) policies work and why others do not. As one important source of policy relevant knowledge, policy evaluation supports policy choices rooted in an evidence-informed policy-making process. Solid policy evaluation and its strategic use throughout the policy cycle can foster a range of objectives such as policies' effectiveness, value for money, accountability and overall transparency of a policy-making process

Postal reform embodies a strategic and multi-stage process aimed at revitalizing and modernizing the postal industry to satisfy current needs and anticipate future challenges. Implementation of planned activities and specific projects is followed by an evaluation of the effects on postal stakeholders and their overall ecosystem. Policies, projects, or reforms are typically designed to transform potential productive inputs into outputs and outcomes, aiming to improve the existing status of things. In modern society, understanding if an impact has occurred and to what extent has become an urgent need to better destinate budget allocation and rationally justify expenses.

Figure 15 below shows where IB technical assistance occurs through RBM policy evaluation in relation to the overall policy development process (see section 2.1 for the overall policy process).

Figure 15. Measure impact



## Data collection

An effective data collection and monitoring system is essential for the success of postal reforms, providing the mechanisms through which ongoing performance can be assessed and communicated. This framework not only ensures transparency and accountability but also facilitates informed decision-making by continuously supplying data on the effectiveness of implemented changes. The processes described below enable stakeholders to track progress against set objectives, identify areas in need of improvement, and adjust strategies dynamically to meet the evolving needs of the postal sector.

All parts of the results framework should be subject to regular review and update. The IB collects from the relevant sources the data elements described in the results framework and maintains the database with data for further analysis, such as review whether outcomes have been realized, targets on indicators met and trend analysis.

By regularly updating the results framework with actual data, the IB will analyse the extent to which the results and outcomes of the PRP project can be confirmed. For this purpose, the results framework (see table below) revisits the latest version of the framework in stage 3 (activity 3.4: complete the results framework) and at this point the collected information can be included as actuals in the table.

Table 20. Results Framework (Example)

<i>Reform goal</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Baseline (n)<sup>8</sup></i>	<i>Target (n+5)</i>	<i>Actual (n+1)</i>	<i>Actual (n+2)</i>
World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa (Agenda 2063 – goal 10)	Interconnected e-commerce delivery postal delivery network	% of items with end-to-end delivery of less than 5 days	50% (actual)	95%	55%	60%
		Active licensed postal operators offering intra-African cross-border delivery services	100 (index)	200	110	115
		...	...	...	...	...
	Growth of the postal and delivery sector processing with more e-commerce generated items through its network	E-commerce generated cross-border parcel volumes	100 (index)	200	125	130
		Revenue generated by intra-African cross-border delivery services	100 (index)	250	150	170
A single market for goods and services in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent (Art. 3 of Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area)	Improve the infrastructure for efficient and timely movement of goods across borders, incl. the express delivery services that are crucial for intra-African trade	Countries with operational and service level compliant express delivery service	100 (index)	200	100	100
		Number of post offices offering trade facilitation services (easy export solutions)	0 (actual)	2000	150	200

## 5.5 Management Stage 5: Closeout

One of the defining features of a PRP project is that it is finite: it has a start and it has an end. A clear end to a project is critical as it is a recognition by all parties of the following:

- (1) the expectations for the project have been met and the PRP project has run its course;
- (2) all unachieved results and deliverables (or parts thereof) are now identified so that they can be addressed in the future;
- (3) there is a transfer of ownership of the proposed policy content to the project competent authority;
- (4) the Government (i.e. relevant Ministry officials) must now take over the project's deliverables or the PRP deliverables become a part of a larger effort reviewing the sector (in which case the PRP contributed one or more elements as part of such a larger reform effort), and;
- (5) the practitioner can be released.

Stage 5 close-out is the process of finalizing all activities of the project and submitting the deliverables (proposed policy content) to the competent authority for acceptance. This stage of the project consists of the processes and activities to close a project and formally establish that the project is complete and this marks the final stage of the PRP project lifecycle (noting that the evaluation phase of stage 4 (control) is post-PRP project).

<sup>8</sup> Year *n* is current year.

The close-out stage operationalizes the PRP by transitioning from planning (*policy formulation*) to action (*policy approval and implementation*) – see section 2.1. It ensures that the proposed reforms are accepted and adjusted as needed to facilitate their implementation. A critical activity of this stage is the acceptance of the PRP project’s deliverables by the project authorizing Ministry or Government representative.

Table 21. Activities in Stage 5: Closeout

<b>Stage 5 (closeout) activities</b>	
<b>Activity 5.1</b>	Acceptance of deliverables
<b>Activity 5.2</b>	Document lessons learned
<b>Activity 5.3</b>	Release practitioner
<b>Activity 5.4</b>	Implement deliverables

#### **Activity 5.1: acceptance of deliverables**

The project deliverable(s) must be passed to the recipient Government officials prior to the PRP Project being closed. This may happen as a single release at the end of the PRP project, or the project approach may include a phased delivery if the Project Charter so specifies, in which case the deliverables (plural) are handed over in a number of releases. In the case of a premature closure, there may be some results that have not been transferred, and depending on IB guidance, the ownership of some or all of those deliverables may need to be transferred.

With the submission of the project’s deliverable, additional material and formats may be provided that are designed to provide a clear and concise overview of the PRP’s key findings, the sector’s current situation, proposed reforms, and the expected benefits of postal sector reform. The complete set of deliverables are critical for ensuring the government’s continuous engagement beyond the initial implementation phase.

The official transmission of the project’s deliverable(s) is managed by the UPU International Bureau, marking the formal conclusion of the PRP project. At this point, the responsibility and management pass to the national government and stakeholders of the country to implement the deliverables, including the PRP’s recommendations.

This transition underscores the importance of the preceding stages, which have provided a solid foundation for the practical steps of reform. The formal presentation not only consolidates the efforts of the formulation phase but also ensures a seamless transition to implementation.

Sector policy, the national universal postal service, the legal framework and the designation of the postal operator are a national prerogative. The PRP project produces deliverables, such as a (draft) sector policy, an outline of a regulatory framework or a strategic transformation plan. The intellectual output of the PRP project, including the project’s deliverables, are owned by the UPU and made available to the PRP project competent authority as part of the activity of acceptance, which formally closes the project. From that point onwards, the Government is the sole party responsible of the implementation of the project’s deliverable(s) as this falls within the exclusive competency and sovereignty of the Member State Government over its postal sector.

#### **Activity 5.2: document lessons learned**

Capturing lessons learned is a critical effort for any PRP Project. This mindset should be strongly encouraged by the PRP core team from day one. Lessons learned can be used to identify any improvements to the activities and methodology of the PRP or could be useful to future PRP projects, learning from project failures as well as project successes. By not learning from project failures future

PRP Projects may be doomed to repeat similar situations. By not maximizing on project successes, future postal sector reform projects may miss opportunities to implement good processes and practices to successfully complete existing and future work.

Therefore, after the closure of a PRP Project, any relevant learnings, materials and documentation should be made available for knowledge sharing to the benefit of future postal sector reform projects. The lessons learned, including the challenges, issues and success factors, need to be reported to the IB which will consolidate and maintain records of this information.

#### ***Activity 5.3: release practitioner***

Ultimately, after the acceptance of the deliverables by the project competent authority, the practitioner must be released from its engagement in the project. Should the project deliverables not be accepted by the Government, then the team will continue its work on its deliverables and follow the process of validation (see stage 4 (control)) after which the deliverables will be resubmitted to the Government for acceptance.

#### ***Activity 5.4: implement deliverables***

The Government is expected to accept the PRP project deliverables, provided that they meet the expectations and mandate set out in the PRP Project Charter. However, acceptance does not obligate the Government to any commitment towards the implementation of the deliverables.

The IB will remain in contact with the Government to be informed about any activities and efforts in relation to the implementation of the project's deliverables, recommendations and policy actions.

The IB will collect and update any information, both quantitative and qualitative information, that the results framework may require, independent of the status of the implementation of the project's deliverables. The collection of the information is to establish a baseline (in case the baseline was not established in the project deliverable) and to monitor the performance against those indicators. Should the recommendations be part of further discussions and actions of the national legislative and subsequently take more time for the recommendations or policy actions to take any legal effect, then it still remains important to collect information on the indicators to continuously update the baseline so that the outcomes of the project can be measured against the relevant and most up-to-date baseline.