

Summary: Problem tree analysis (also called situational analysis or problem analysis) is a method to identify and understand the main issues around a specific local situation and to visualise cause-effect relationships in a problem tree. This tool presents a step-by-step procedure for problem tree analysis and illustrates it with an example.

Application Within the Planning Process:

Step 2: Launch of the Planning Process

Related Tools:

T2 Interview Methods and Questionnaire Examples

T3 Participatory Assessment Methods

Purpose Prior to identifying sustainable actions to improve the existing environmental sanitation situation it is important to determine and understand the core problem. Problem tree analysis helps to find solutions by mapping out the causes and effects around an issue in a similar way to a mind map, but with more structure. It is a tool to

- Analyse and understand an existing situation around a problem area
- define the core problem of the situation
- visualise cause-effect relationships in a diagram (problem hierarchy).
- identify important factors and prioritise objectives by breaking down the problem into manageable units

How to use this tool? Problem tree analysis is best carried out by a focus group of key stakeholders in a workshop setting (see **Tool T2** for more information on this). Follow the step-by-step procedure provided in **Document D8.1** and create a problem hierarchy for the local context. A practical example illustrates the method and its application.

Tool T3 explains further participatory techniques (mapping and transect walk).

Resources



Document D8.1:

*Problem Tree Analysis
Procedure and Example*

[D8.1.pdf](#)