

# A SHORT GUIDE

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## Impact Management and Measurement Concepts

# A Short Guide:

## The Basics of Impact Management and Measurement Concepts

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### The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance measurement is made up of three distinct activities: Monitoring, evaluation and **impact assessment**.

The value of these is that:

- They provide a consolidated source of information indicating project progress
- They allow stakeholders to learn from each other's experiences, building on expertise and knowledge
- They often generate reports that contribute to transparency and accountability, and allow for lessons to be shared more easily
- They reveal mistakes and offers paths for learning and improvements
- They provide a basis for questioning and testing assumptions
- They provide a means for all stakeholders seeking to learn from their experiences and incorporate these insights into strategy and practice
- They add to the retention and development of institutional memory

Within performance measurement practice there are fundamental principles of good practice and key **impact measurement frameworks** that should be noted.





# Logic Model Framework

## What It Is

The logic model framework is a picture or diagram of a process that illustrates **how an intervention will achieve its stated objectives and outcomes**. It also indicates the theory and assumptions underlying the programme, portfolio or even strategy.

The purpose of a logic model is to illustrate how a programme will work by: linking outcomes to resources invested, connecting programme outcomes with programme activities and processes, as well as identifying the theoretical assumptions & principles of development underlying the programme theory.

It is important to note that **the forced simplicity of logic model frameworks often mislead funders to overlook the complex dynamics and interpersonal relationships among numerous stakeholders**.

### Core ingredients of a logic model framework:



## Why It Is Important

The framework of a logic model facilitates effective programme planning, implementation, and evaluation through the identification of an organisation's planned work and intended results. Using a logic model framework is an effective way to ensure programme, portfolio or strategy success as it helps organise and systematise programme planning, management, and performance measurement functions.

The various functions are explained below:

In **Programme Design and Planning**, a logic model framework serves as a planning tool to develop a programme strategy. It's also used to clearly explain and illustrate programme concepts & approaches for key stakeholders, including funders. Logic model frameworks link programme structure and outcomes to programme design, ensuring a shared understanding of what is to take place. During the planning phase, developing a logic model framework requires all stakeholders to consider other best practice development approaches and combines practitioner experience with industry knowledge to ensure specific outcomes are guaranteed.

In **Programme Implementation**, a logic model framework forms the core for a focused project management plan that helps to identify and collect the data needed to monitor and improve programme or project management tasks. Using the logic model framework during a programme implementation and management process ensures that focus is set on achieving and documenting results. It also prioritises the programme aspects most critical for

gathering, tracking and reporting on specific deliverables, and assists in adjusting programme activities as necessary during the intervention to affect the desired outcomes.

For **Programme Evaluation and Strategic Reporting**, a logic model framework provides detailed programme information that indicates progress toward strategic goals in ways that inform programme approaches.

Using frameworks is a way to develop a clearer understanding of the goals and objectives of a project, with an emphasis on identifying measurable objectives and outcomes both for the short/medium-term & long-term.



'Logical model Framework', or 'log-frame', describes a general approach to project or programme planning, monitoring and evaluation. Logframe matrices are developed during project/programme design & appraisal stages and are subsequently updated throughout implementation while remaining an essential resource for ex-post evaluation.

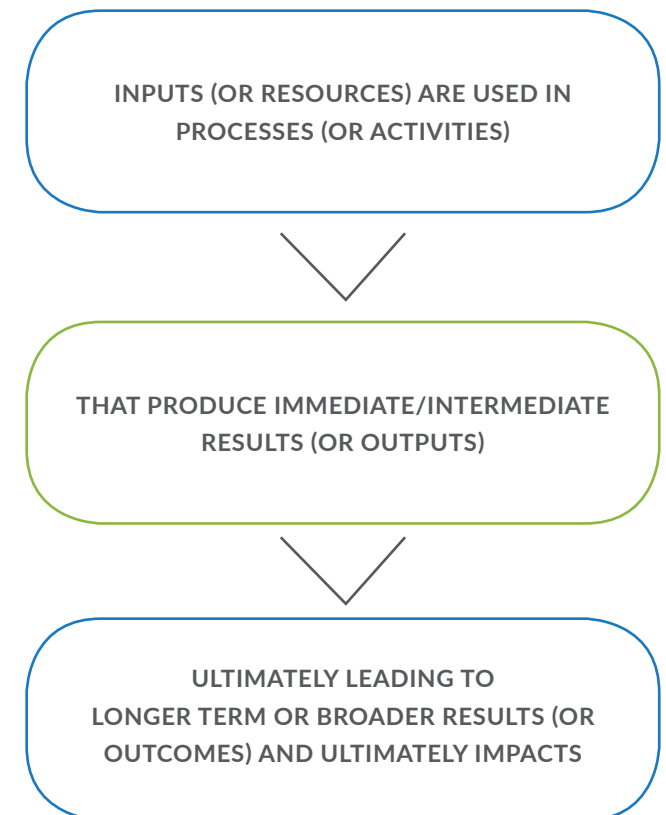
"A Logframe is another name for Logical Model Frameworks, a planning tool consisting of a matrix that provides an overview of a project's goal, activities and anticipated results. It provides a structure to help specify the components of a project and its activities and for relating them to one another. It also identifies the measures by which the project's anticipated results will be monitored.

## How It Works

A logframe is a table that lists programme activities, short term outputs, medium term outcomes, and long-term goals.

It's supposed to show the logic of how the activities will lead to the outputs, which in turn lead to the outcomes, and ultimately the stated goal or objective that is the impact. A logframe is different from a Theory of Change.

A logic model framework can be described as follows:



## 5 Essential Components of a Logic Model

### INPUTS

The resources invested in a programme — for example: technical assistance, products, services, cash, infrastructure, or training, skills or time

### ACTIVITIES

The activities carried out by the programme to achieve the program's objectives i.e. classes in science and maths, tutoring, providing wheelchairs, meals, books, etc.

### OUTPUTS

The immediate results achieved at the programme level through the execution of activities i.e. number of classes held, number of meals served, number of children vaccinated, etc.

### OUTCOMES

The set of short-term or intermediate results achieved by the programme through the execution of activities i.e. improved skills, behaviour changes, number of jobs created, etc.

### IMPACTS

The long-term effects, or end results, of the programme - for example: changes in health status, employment status, economic growth, etc.



**Communication Tip:** The application of the logic model as a planning tool allows precise communication about the purposes of a project, the components of a project, and the sequence of activities and accomplishments.

Further, a project originally designed with assessment in mind is much more likely to yield beneficial data, should evaluation be desired.

Communication for planning, buy-in and for outcomes measurement is key.



# Theory of Change

## What It Is

A Theory of Change (ToC) shows an organisational or programme path from beginning to end. It outlines the thought process behind an initiative or intervention. Essentially, it documents how change is anticipated to happen. It describes the change envisaged and the steps involved in making that change happen.

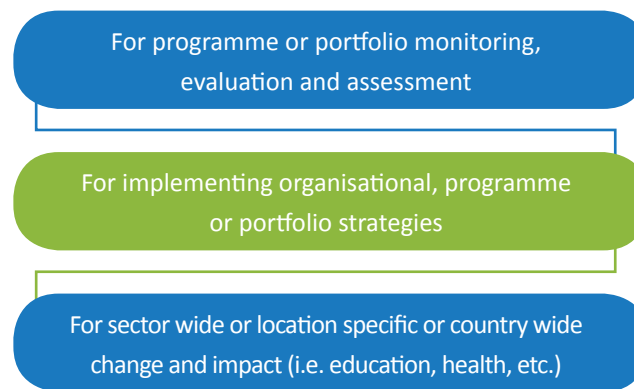
A good Theory of Change can reveal:

- Whether programme activities make sense, given the objectives and goals of an intervention
- Whether there are situations or issues that may prevent the anticipated change from happening or influence the outcomes of an intervention
- How activities are inter-related or interdependent and how it will affect the outcome of an intervention

Theories of Change are often shown in a diagram, indicating the causal links between all the steps of the programme execution and implementation.

Of course, the development sector is in fact complex, messy and impossible to reflect comprehensively in a diagram. But that's where the Theory of Change has real value.

A Theory of Change can be useful in three important ways:



## Why It Is Important

A clearly articulated Theory of Change is a prerequisite to effectively measure social outcomes, change and impact.

A Theory of Change should assist with:

- Articulating how goals, both internally and externally, will be achieved
- Developing a better understanding of the programme or intervention. This includes breaking down parts and interactions between these parts and certain outputs & outcomes.
- Guiding programme planning, design, management and execution of performance measurement
- Formulating and prioritising meaningful measurement questions and the scope of what should or can be measured
- Identifying intended and unintended side effects and potential risks
- Determining programme effectiveness and assisting in explaining cause and effect association

## How It Works

Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of **how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a development context.**

It's focused on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a programme does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.

It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur.



**Communication Tip:** A Theory of Change is a great tool for ensuring that there's a logical link between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.

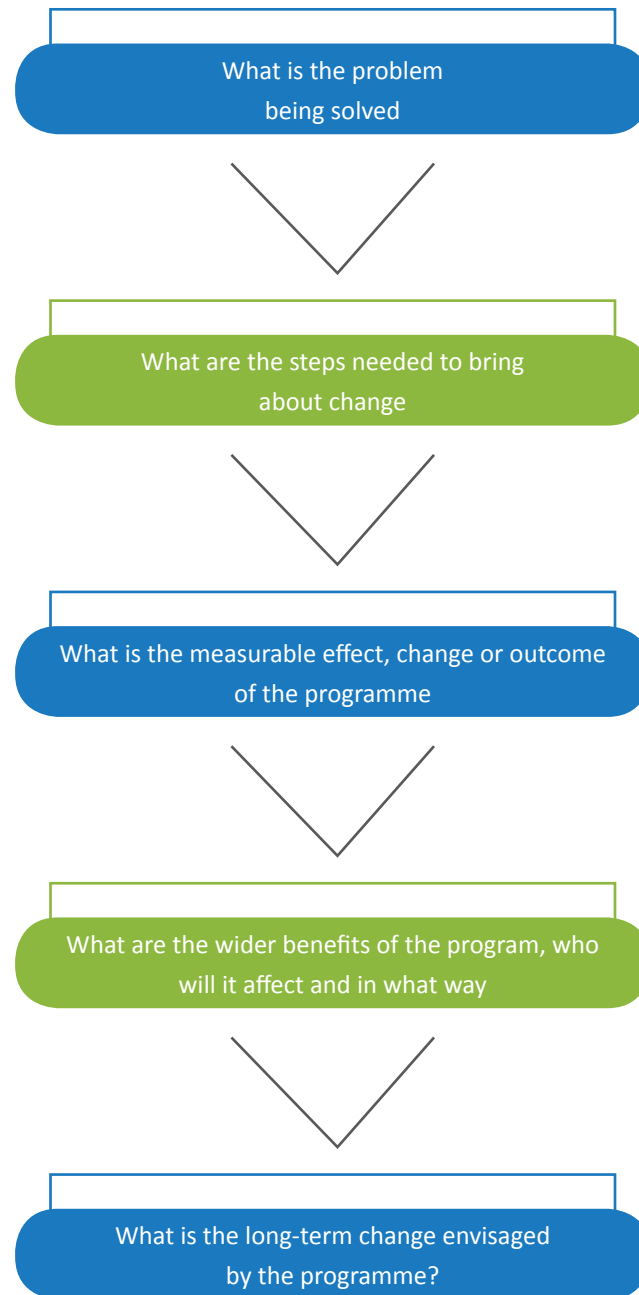
The logic of these relationships can sometimes be lost when using narrative-only approaches to strategy writing. For communications that can sometimes be viewed as an area of work that is 'difficult to measure', showing how communication activities relate to the wider outputs can be very helpful.

Many communications teams are extremely busy, but lack a clear idea about the purpose of the communications. A Theory of Change aligns the communications activities with the intended outputs and changes.



## Developing a Theory of Change

- The process of developing a Theory of Change starts at the goal or vision, mission and objectives of the organisation. Thereafter it works backwards through the steps that are needed to achieve this goal or vision.
- By developing a Theory of Change, organisations can understand how different aspects of their work fit together to achieve their final goal.
- A Theory of Change provides a coherent framework in which different strategies can be looked at and the evidence for & against each can be weighed. This allows management and practitioners to think about how important each of the activities is, and what resources should be invested therein. Working through a Theory of Change can reveal assumptions in an organisation's strategic plans that might go otherwise unnoticed.
- A Theory of Change is only as good as the views of the people who build it. This is why we usually develop Theories of Change in participatory workshops that involve lots of people. This allows people with diverse experiences to think through whether the outcomes and causal links are correct.



## Using a Theory of Change

Many organisations are keen to measure their impact but struggle to understand where to start.

A Theory of Change is a crucial basis for performance measurement because it provides a theoretical framework that can be used to assess whether an intervention is working as planned and how it can be improved.



An organisation's Theory of Change should therefore evolve from being based mainly on assumptions about what works (for example assumptions made when the organisation was founded), to being based more on evidence about what works.

### Understanding Outcomes

- For a measurement framework to be successful, it must measure the right things. Typically, a Theory of Change shows what an organisation is trying to achieve (i.e. improve science and maths pass rates) and how it's planning to get there (i.e. through teacher interventions). By using a Theory of Change, organisations can work out whether they are or will achieve their intended outcomes. If performance measurement isn't based on, or integrated with, a Theory of Change, it risks not measuring the most important things and therefore wasting money.
- A Theory of Change can identify key outcomes that absolutely must be measured. These might be intermediate outcomes that lead to lots of other outcomes, or they might be outcomes that make this intervention different from the usual practice.

### Making Sure That Outcomes Are Realistic

- Many organisations have grand aims, such as 'the alleviation of poverty'. But aims like these are too large for any organisation to achieve on its own, so it's not sensible to think about how to measure this.
- A Theory of Change helps organisations focus on concrete, defined aims and outcomes, which are potentially measurable.

### Understanding How Outcomes Are Connected

- Organisations that integrate their performance measurement on a Theory of Change get to understand how change is happening, if it's happening at all.
- This means that the outcome of performance measurement can feed into the organisation's strategy, making sure that resources are allocated well.
- It also means that organisations can adapt their programs according to what works and predict what will happen because of their activities.

### Understanding Progress Towards the Final Goal

- For some organisations final outcomes and goals cannot be measured easily. This is because of the nature of the change. For instance, it may take years to alleviate poverty or it may be difficult to link the change to a particular aspect of the intervention. Because Theories of Change show all the intermediate steps that lead to the end goal, they can help organisations work out whether they're making a difference towards that end goal by also measuring the intermediate steps.
- The Theory of Change provides evidence of why intermediate outcomes are a good way to achieve the long-term goal. This is particularly useful for organisations that are involved in policy or advocacy.



# The Differences Between Theory of Change and Logic Model Framework

There is no official definition of a Theory of Change or how it differs from a Logical Framework. Both have the same general purpose: to describe how a specific programme will lead to results.

## Theory of Change

Results chain:



A Theory of Change defines all the building blocks required to bring about long-term change and impact.

In practice, a Theory of Change typically:

- Provides the big picture, including issues related to the development environment or context
- Shows all the different pathways that might lead to change, even if those pathways aren't directly related to the programme
- Describes how and why change happens

- Could be used to complete the sentence "if we do X then Y will change because..."
- Is presented as a diagram with narrative text
- Is flexible, without a particular format – it could include cyclical processes, feedback loops, one box could lead to multiple other boxes, different shapes etc.
- Describes why one box will lead to another box (e.g. if increased knowledge will lead to behaviour change, is that an assumption or is there evidence to show it is the case?)
- Is mainly used as a tool for programme design and evaluation

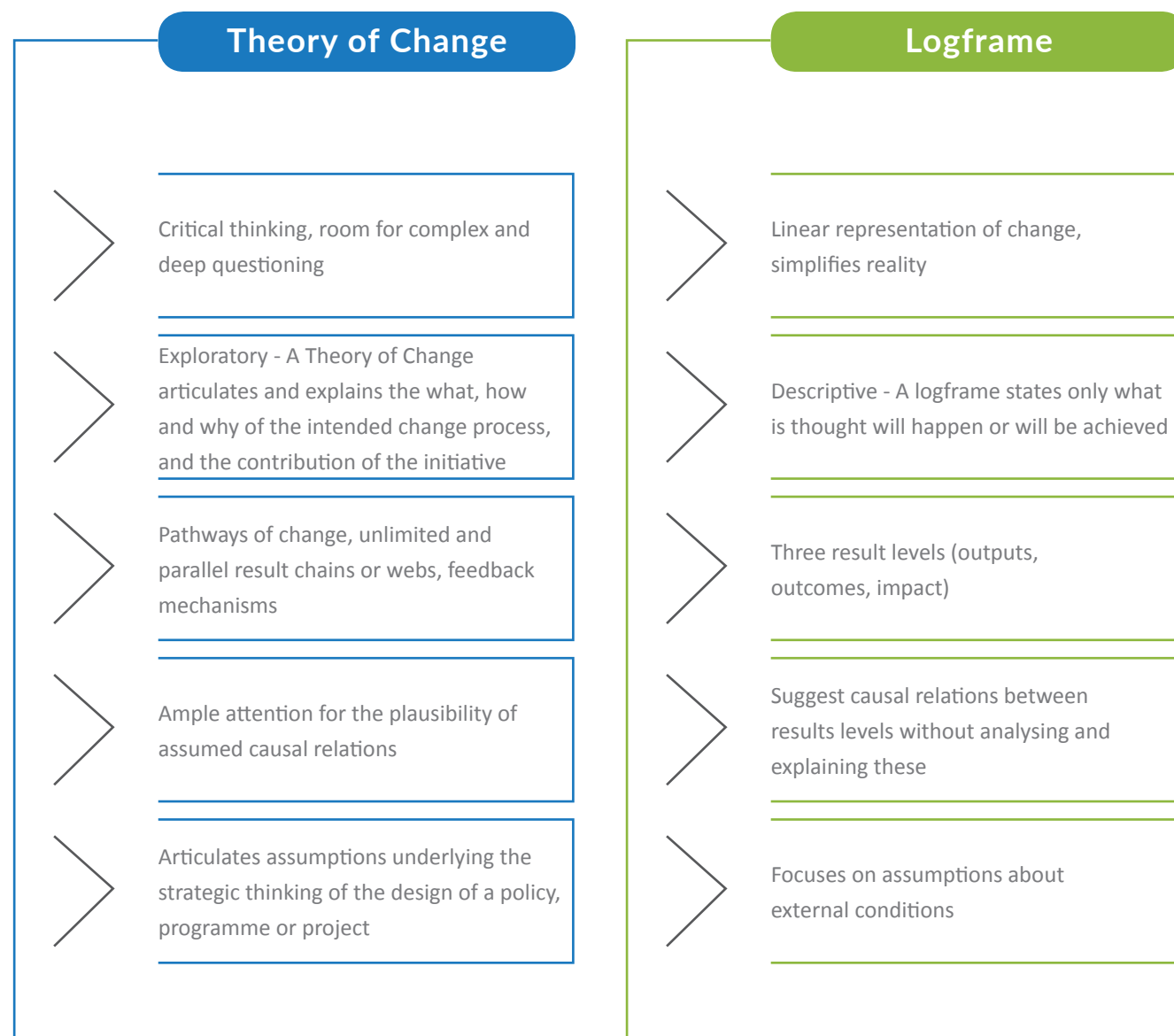


## Logic Model Framework

In practice, a Logic Model Framework typically:

- Gives a detailed description of the programme showing how the programme activities will lead to the immediate outputs, and how these will lead to the outcomes & goal (the terminology used varies by organisation)
- Could be used to complete the sentence “we plan to do X which will give Y result”
- Is normally shown as a matrix, called a logic model framework, but can also be shown as a flow chart, which is sometimes called a logic model
- Is linear, which means that all activities lead to outputs which lead to outcomes and the goal – there are no cyclical processes or feedback loops
- Includes spaces for risks and assumptions, although these are usually only basic, and doesn’t include evidence for why one thing will lead to another
- Is mainly used as a tool for monitoring impact
- Is mainly used as a tool for programme design and evaluation

## Comparing and Contrasting Theory of Change and Logframe



# Indicators

## What It Is

- A variable metric that measures one aspect of a programme that's directly related to the program's objectives and subsequent outcomes.
- A variable whose value changes from the baseline (at the time the programme began) to a new value (after the programme concludes). At that point, the variable, or indicator, is recalculated.
- A measurement unit or standard. It measures the value of the change in meaningful units that can be compared to past and future units. This is usually expressed as a percentage or a number.
- An indicator focuses on a single aspect of a program. This aspect may be an input, an output, or an overarching objective, but it should be narrowly defined in a way that captures this one aspect as precisely as possible.

A good indicator should:

- Produce the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same condition or event
- Measure only the condition or event it's intended to measure
- Reflect changes in the state or condition over time
- Represent reasonable measurement costs
- Be defined in clear and unambiguous terms

## Why It Is Important

Indicators provide **critical performance measurement data and information** for decision making at every level and stage of programme implementation:

- Indicators of programme **inputs** measure the specific **resources** that go into carrying out a programme (for example, amount of funds allocated to the health sector annually).
- Indicators of **outputs** measure the immediate results obtained by the programme (for example, number of multivitamins distributed, or the number of staff trained).
- Indicators of **outcomes** measure whether the outcome **changed** in the desired direction and whether this change signifies programme "success" (for example, contraceptive prevalence rate or percentage of children 12 to 23 months old who received DTP3 immunisation by 12 months of age).
- Indicators of **impact** measure the depth and range of **change** for specific stakeholders of an intervention (for example, an increase of 3% in pass rates for female students in higher grade maths in grade 12 over a 36-month period in a specific school).





## How It Works

Generally, one or two indicators per result are used. At least one indicator is used for each activity, but no more than 10 to 15 indicators per area of significant programme focus.

Typical characteristics of indicators:

- 1 Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative
- 2 Indicators require a metric/unit/standard
- 3 Indicators require clarification/definitions of terms used
- 4 Indicators must be consistent with international standards
- 5 Indicators should be independent from each other
- 6 Indicator values should have certain qualities
- 7 Indicators should allow for benchmarking, and measure change over time



### Tips for Choosing Indicators

Choose indicators that will provide a variety of data types.

- **Quantitative versus Qualitative Indicators:** The tension between quantitative and qualitative data is the subject of a timeless debate. Today, evaluation experts generally agree that these two types of data support each other, and both are necessary to produce a complete picture. As the saying goes: “No numbers without stories, no stories without numbers.”
- **Numbers versus Percentages:** Quantitative data can take the form of whole numbers or ratios. Generally, a mix of the two is necessary for generating meaningful data. For example, an organisation placing high school students in colleges would likely want to look at the number of students who complete its programme rather than the ratio or percentage of participants who complete it.





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