Beginning with the end in mind: the value of results chains and logic models

The Foundation and its grantees take a results-based approach to project planning. Building a results chain and creating a logic model are crucial early steps that should be taken when designing a project. Taking part in these exercises leads to better designed projects, and the exercises themselves can be a useful way of gaining a deeper understanding of the change that a project is designed to bring about.

A results chain offers project designers a way to view their project in a linear way, and to understand results hierarchy and sequencing. Have a look at the table below and see if you can identify the outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs for your project.

Elements of the results chain

	Term	Definition	That is…	Example(s) from attached logic model
WHY	Impact/ ultimate outcome	The highest-level change that can be reasonably attributed to an organisation, policy, programme or initiative in a causal manner and is the consequence of one or more intermediate outcomes.	Changes in conditions	Improved health, increased income security
WHAT	Inter-mediate Outcomes	A change that is expected to logically occur once one or more short term outcomes have been achieved. These are usually achieved by the end of a project or programme and are usually at the change of behaviour level amongst beneficiaries.	Changes in behaviour	Better policy formulation
WHAT	Short term Outcome	A change that is directly attributable to the outputs of an organisation, policy programme or initiative. Shorter outcomes are usually at the level of an increase in awareness, skills or access amongst beneficiaries.	Changes in capacity and/or performance	Improved ability to advocate for policy reforms
HOW	Outputs	Direct products or services stemming from the activities of an organisation, policy, programme or initiative.	What your activities produce	Formation of Community Action Groups (CAG) of vulnerable farmers facilitated
HOW	Activities	Actions taken through which inputs are mobilised to produce outputs	What you do to direct change	Identify interested community members.
HOW	Inputs	The resources used in an intervention.	What you invest	Money, people, infrastructure, equipment, know how, ideas.

The logic of Logic Models

The results chain is a relatively simple linear picture of a programme or project. A fuller and more nuanced representation can be developed with the use of a logic model, which provides the opportunity to explore and present the specific relationships between the changes you aim to influence and the means of achieving that influence. The logic model builds on the elements outlined in a results chain and shows the logical relationship between activities, outputs and outcomes.

A logic model can serve as a road map that visually shows what causes what, and in what order. This is sometimes described as your project's theory of change. A sample logic model from a current grant project is shown below. We ask for grant applicants to submit a logic model as a part of their application so that we can get a good sense of what the project is aiming to achieve, and more importantly, how and why the project will succeed.

	Logic model example from a current grant project							
Impact/ ultimate outcome	Greater income security of farmers							
Intermediate outcomes	1. CSO-IIG dialogue, addressing the needs of farmers, institutionalised		2. Sustained collective action by famers to secure basic service provision			3. Enhanced business formation and livelihoods management by farmers		
Short term outcome(s)	1.1 CSO-IIG dialogue, addressing the needs of farmers, takes place		2.1 Farmers more confident and competent to take collective action to secure basic service provision			3.2 Farmers more confident and competent to establish and manage successful small business/livelihood activities		
Outputs	1.1.1 Targeted CSOs trained in social mobilisation and advocacy for vulnerable farmers	1.1.2 CSO engagement with institutions in governance (IIGs) brokered	2.1.1 Formation of Community Action Groups (CAG) of vulnerable farmers facilitated	2.2.2 CAGs trained in group management and governance	2.2.3 Socio-economic rights awareness raising activities facilitated with CAGs	3.2.1 Entrepreneurs trained in vocational subjects	3.2.2 Entrepreneurs provided with technical and financial support to establish small business	3.2.3 Entrepreneurs linked to each other through CAG
Activities	1.1.1.1 Assess current capacities. Design training materials.	1.1.1.2 Approach institutions in governance (IIGs) to advocate engagement with CSOs.	2.1.1.1 Identify interested community members. Facilitate agreed objectives and norms.	2.2.2.2 Assess current capacities. Design training materials.	2.2.2.3 Organise workshops and visits around socio-economic rights.	3.2.1.1 Assess current capacities. Design training materials.	3.2.2.1 Broker agreements with micro credit organisations. Identify & organise local mentors for technical support.	3.2.3.1 Create Common Interest Group (CIG) model. Recruit and induct members.