

The Darwin Initiative



Project Design Tools



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



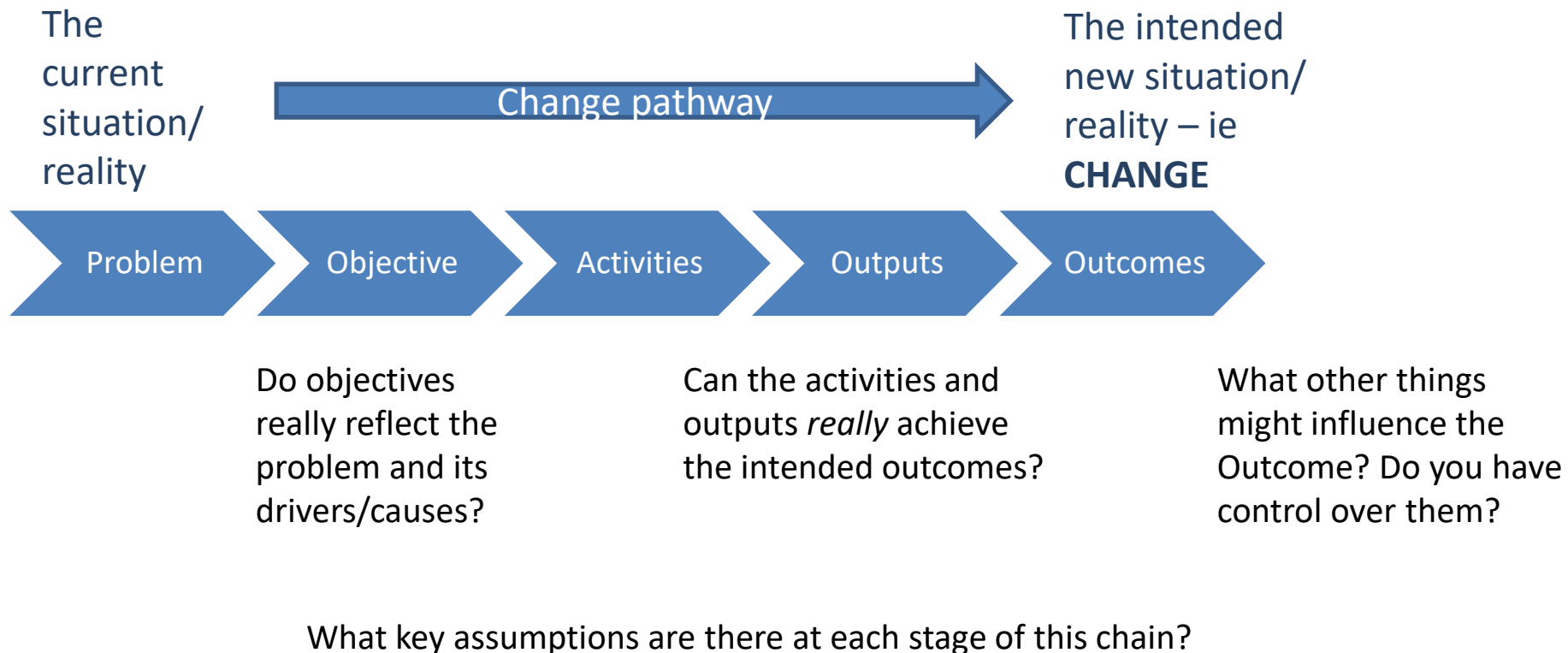
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Introduction



- What is a project design tool?
- Why use these tools?
- Logframes – a quick recap
- Logframes and project planning
- Theories of change
- Group exercise (45 mins)

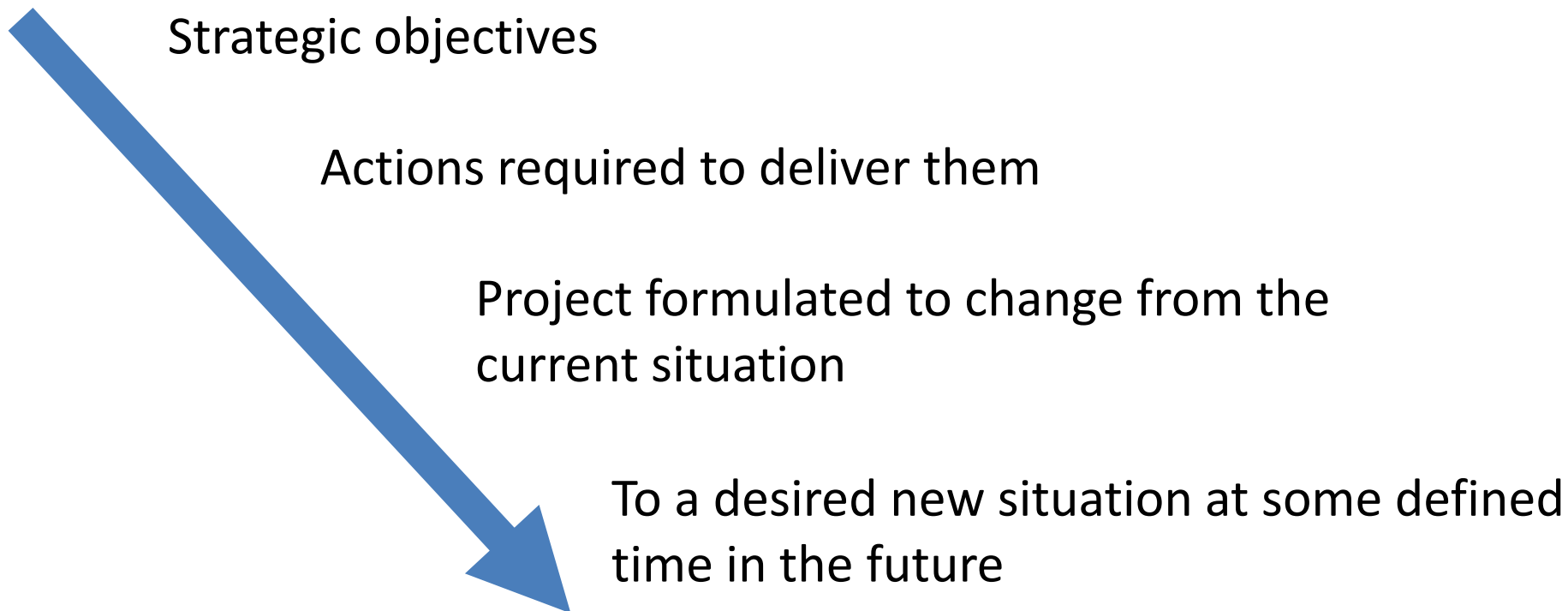
What is a project design tool?



Why use a project design tool?



Every project is different, but logical steps should be the same:



Outcomes from tools



- A clear statement of overall objective
- Understanding of conditions necessary to achieve objective
- Realistic and achievable lower-level objectives (that can be monitored)
- Knowledge of the theory for / assumptions underpinning project design
- Identification of external factors critical to success or failure
- Builds common understanding across team
- Supports selection of appropriate solutions to identified problems

Logframes – a quick recap



- A tool for improving the planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects
- A way of structuring the main elements in a project and highlighting the logical linkages between them
- Perceived benefits of logframes:
 - Provide a clear statement of overall objective
 - Articulate realistic/achievable lower-level objectives
 - Help identify causal links between different project components
 - Identify external factors critical to success or failure
 - Build common understanding across project team/partners
- Limitations of logframes:
 - Oversimplifying the project process
 - Creating a false linearity that does not fit real-world circumstances
 - Prescriptive and lacking flexibility
 - Taking little account of context



Logframes – Impact



- The higher level objective that your project is contributing to
- The long term result your intervention seeks to achieve
- The broader issue that the project seeks to contribute to

“Marine resources and coastal fisheries of Island X are secured, supporting food security, enhancing resilience, and serving as a scalable model for other Small Island Developing States”



Logframes – Project Outcome



- The end state that you are trying to achieve
- The project's overarching objective
- The primary result the intervention is trying to achieve
- A localised result that the intervention seeks to achieve in support of the Impact

“Introduction of sustainable management regulations for marine resources, improved enforcement, and awareness raising activities, increases incomes for local fishers whilst building ecosystem resilience to climate change”



Logframes – Project Outputs



- The key products you need to produce to achieve your project's overall objective
- The specific direct deliverables of the project
- Tangible services, products and other immediate changes that lead to achievement of Outcome

“Sustainable fishing regulations including no take zones and quotas agreed and implemented through a participatory approach”



Logframes – Activities



- The specific tasks that sit beneath each Output
- The discrete actions will you have to carry out to produce high quality products
- The processes through which you turn inputs (financial, material, HR) into Outputs

“Carry out marine surveys in project locations based on approved methodology”



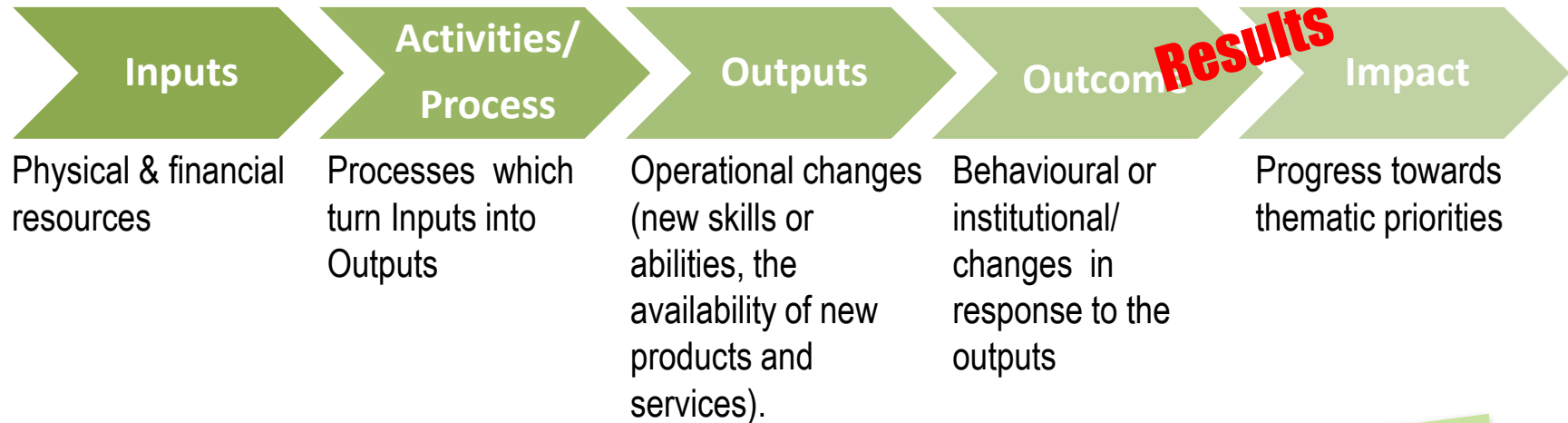
Results chain



Management control diminishes

Internal perspective

External perspective



External factors become more important

Logframes – common challenges



Common logframe weaknesses in Stage 1 applications:

- Confusion between the different logframe components
- Lack of SMART indicators
- Lack of integration of Gender considerations
- Unrealistic or questionable targets/timeframes
- Logframe measuring the wrong things
- Lack of clear logic or significant leaps of faith

“The logframe indicators are not SMART. Many read as activities or are simply items such as reports and action plans.”

“Logframe would benefit from explicit livelihood indicators.” “Requires SMART outcome level indicators to measure direct agricultural benefits.”

“Proposal let down by inadequate logframe that lacks the detail set out in the (convincing) narrative. Indicators not SMART, baselines lacking; not timebound. Assumptions need to be revisited”

Common challenges cont...



“Although gender is briefly mentioned, there is little substantive in the narrative as to how this will be addressed - and nothing in the indicators which would enable it to be measured.”

“The narrative of the proposal mentions a 15% increase in the volume of several NTFPs by project end but there are no logframe indicators to capture this.”

“Many of the targets seem unrealistic e.g. unrealistic targets 57% increase in incomes from alternative livelihood options within project life.”

“I'm always wary of logframes that include a target uplift for income when there is no baseline.”

“More thought needed on assumptions. The first three are that training meets the beneficiaries' needs - surely this depends on correct project design rather than being outside project control?”

“Quite a few 'killer' assumptions, for which a mitigation plan should be provided.”

Theory of Change



- Logical frameworks, “graphically illustrate project components, and creating one helps stakeholders clearly identify outcomes, inputs and activities”
- ToC, “link outcomes and activities to explain HOW and WHY the desired change is expected to come about” and the assumptions upon which it depends
- A backwards mapping exercise that identifies the conditions necessary to achieve a defined impact
- It about identifying the change you expect to happen and the process through which you believe it will come about
- ToC is increasingly regarded as an essential tool in designing and appreciating the complex network of factors which influence project outcomes

Why use a Theory of Change?



- To identify what needs to be in place to achieve your intended impact
- To articulate the theory and assumptions underpinning a project's design – how and why you believe the intervention will work
- To encourage critical thinking, and draw out the complexity of the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.
- To design a project that considers the complex network of factors which influence project outcomes
- To identify and review the assumptions and risks upon which project achievement is dependent
- It helps project staff to understand and convey the way their project works (good for comms)

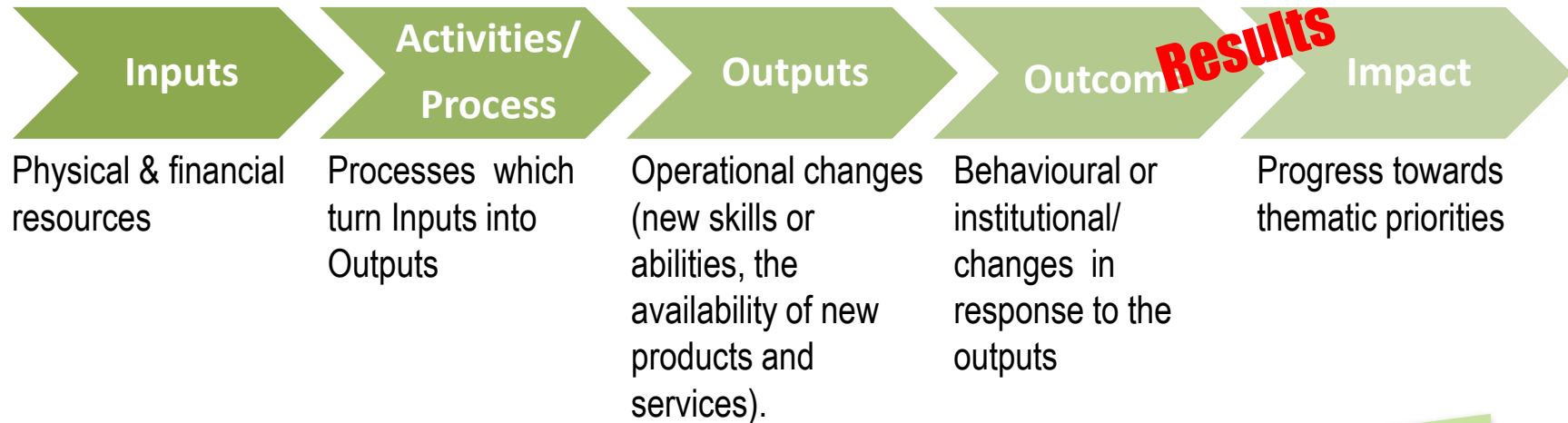
Developing a Theory of Change



Management control diminishes

Internal perspective

External perspective



External factors become more important

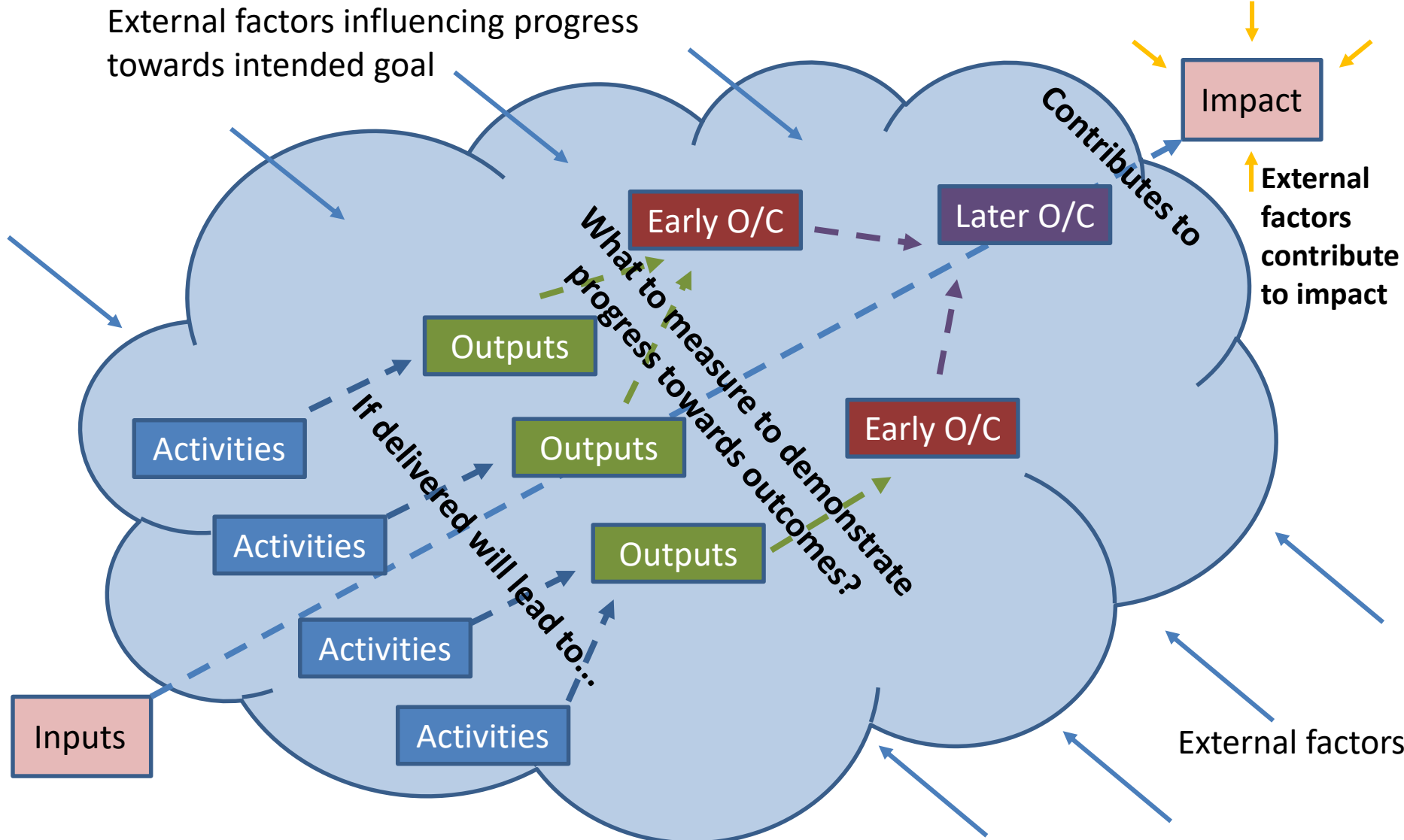
Theory of Change in practice

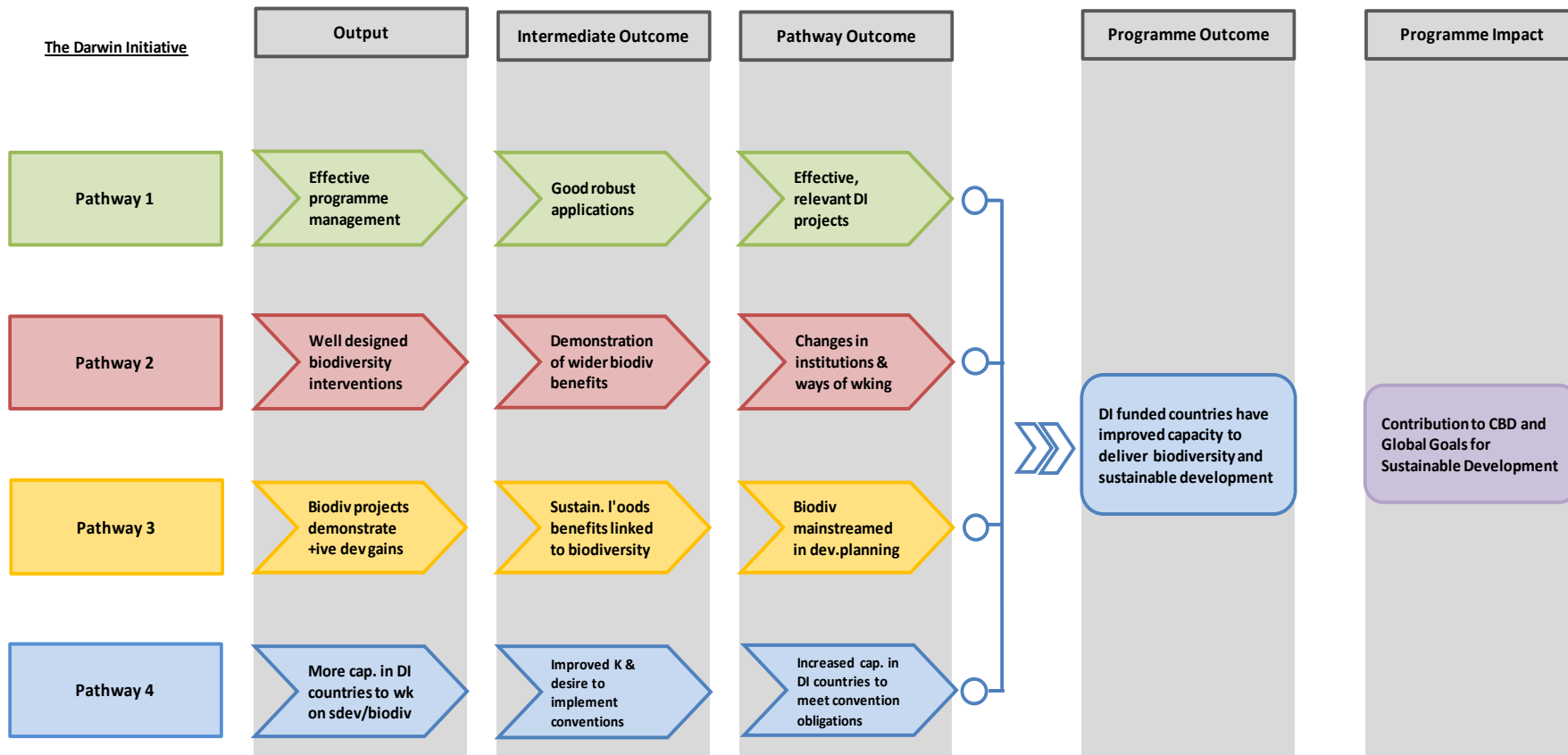


What you need to develop your TOC:

1. Identifying long-term goal
2. Consider the components of the results chain that will help you get there
3. At each step identify what is necessary and sufficient to move to the next stage
4. A range of project stakeholders
5. Time - ToC development should be factored in to project design
6. Post its
7. Understanding of the technical area and context

A Theory of Change





Key Output to Impact pathway assumptions

Darwin Initiative continues to receive support from the UK Government
 Darwin Initiative is able to adapt to wider programme level changes
 Defra can attract and maintain world experts to DEC
 Well designed projects become well implemented projects
 Improved conservation contributes to wellbeing
 Improved conservation outcomes precipitate sustained behaviour change
 A lack of demonstration is preventing behaviour change
 Improved development contributes to biodiversity gains
 Possible to measure change in poverty and wellbeing over project lifetime
 Brain drain doesn't lead to loss of regional experts
 Better use of new and existing data
 Evidence informs policy and action
 Beneficiary countries are motivated to implement the conventions

- Strong partnerships + buy-in from civil society
- Wider political change (elections), federalism courses design, political priority
- Changing people in Government departments leads to change

Information = knowledge on ecosystem service = biodiversity links to livelihoods + wellbeing, in the context of CF, are compiled, documented + shared with state+ civil society forest management stakeholders; entry points for mainstreaming biodiversity into pro poor CFM identified



Key points to consider



- Can include “top down” or “bottom up” planning or a mixture of both
- Important to clearly identify the problems and the causal relationship between them
- Objectives are statements of how you want the world to look when you have fixed a particular problem
- Indicators to assess performance



Group Exercise



- Divide into groups
- You will be given a packet with impact, outcome, outputs, activities and a problem for a project design (3 types of projects available!)
- Plan as theory of change
 - Are there any leaps of logic?
 - Identify critical assumptions and key areas of risk and uncertainty
 - Think about key success factors
- Then map them onto logframe format, discuss as a group
- Feedback thoughts to the plenary



Group Exercise cont...



- How activities are combined to achieve outputs (what processes need to occur)
- How those outputs combine to effect intermediate change (outcome)
- How that is stimulated to achieve more substantive change (impact)
- The critical assumptions that need to be considered
- The particular contextual issues that need to be considered
- Does this project design truly address the problem statement?
- Are project components necessary and sufficient to bring about intended change?

