

The Darwin Initiative



Developing a Theory of Change



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



UKaid
from the British people

Introduction



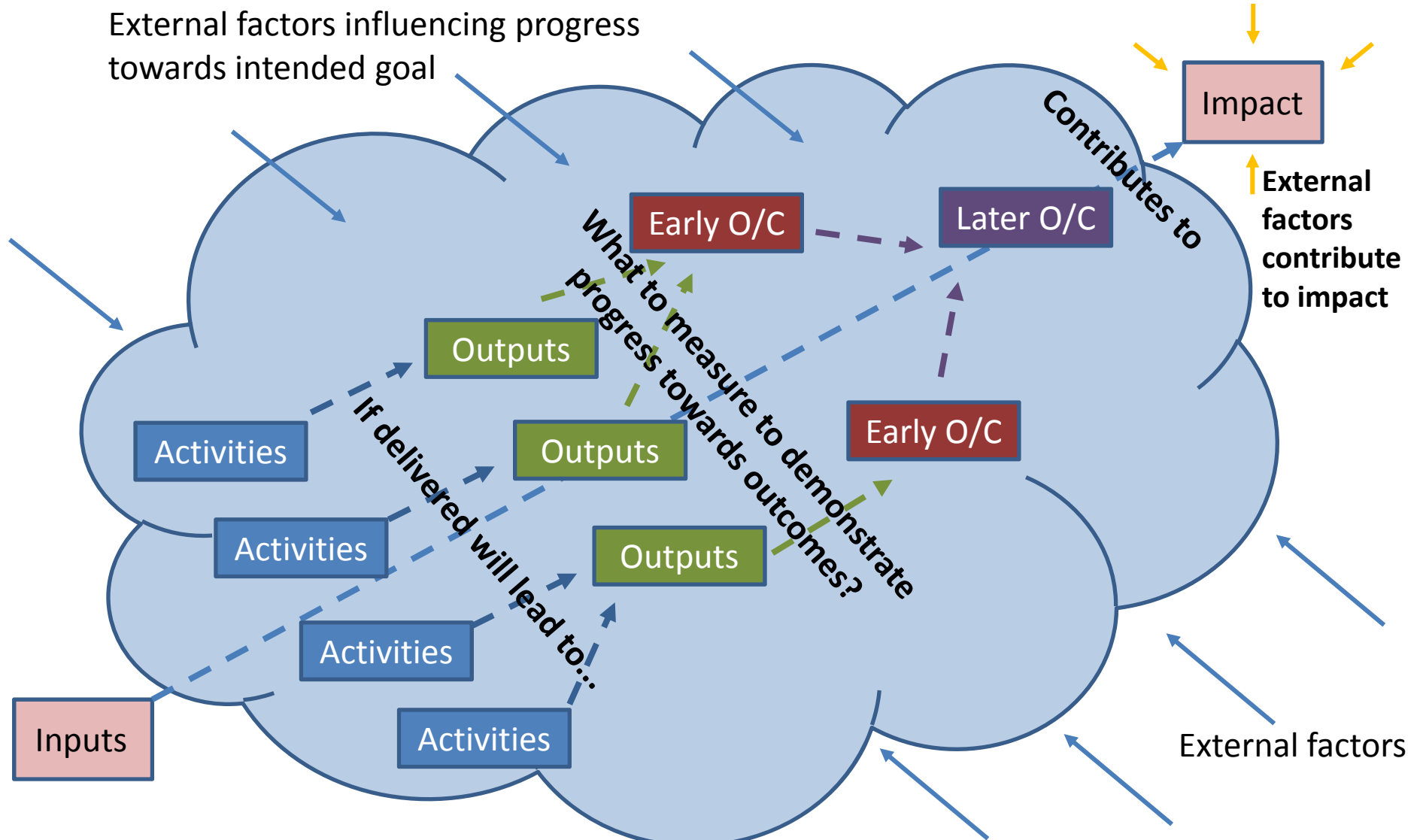
- Purpose of this session
- What is a Theory of Change?
- Why use a Theory of Change?
- Developing a Theory of Change?
- What is the outcome of using a Theory of Change?
- Group Exercise (30 mins)

What is a Theory of Change?



- An impact focused causal model used to highlight and articulate key assumptions
- 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

What is a Theory of Change?



What isn't a Theory of Change?



Project Summary <i>A meaningful, easily understood summary of what the project is about</i>	Indicator <i>A specific and measurable characteristic that can be used to gauge project progress towards the impact/outcome/output</i>	Means of Verification <i>The expected source(s) of information that can help answer the performance question or indicators.</i>	Assumptions <i>External factors that the project believes will positively or negatively influence the events of the project</i>
Impact <i>Higher level objective that the project will contribute towards achieving</i>			
Outcome <i>Changes expected from the project and who is expected to benefit</i>			
Output <i>Specific, direct deliverables of the project</i>			
Activities <i>The main, planned tasks that the project will carry out.</i>			

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...then the project should contribute to its impact

If the outcome is achieved and the assumptions hold...

...then the project should achieve its outcome

If the outputs are achieved and the assumptions hold...

...then the output should be achieved ...

If the activities are completed and the assumptions hold...

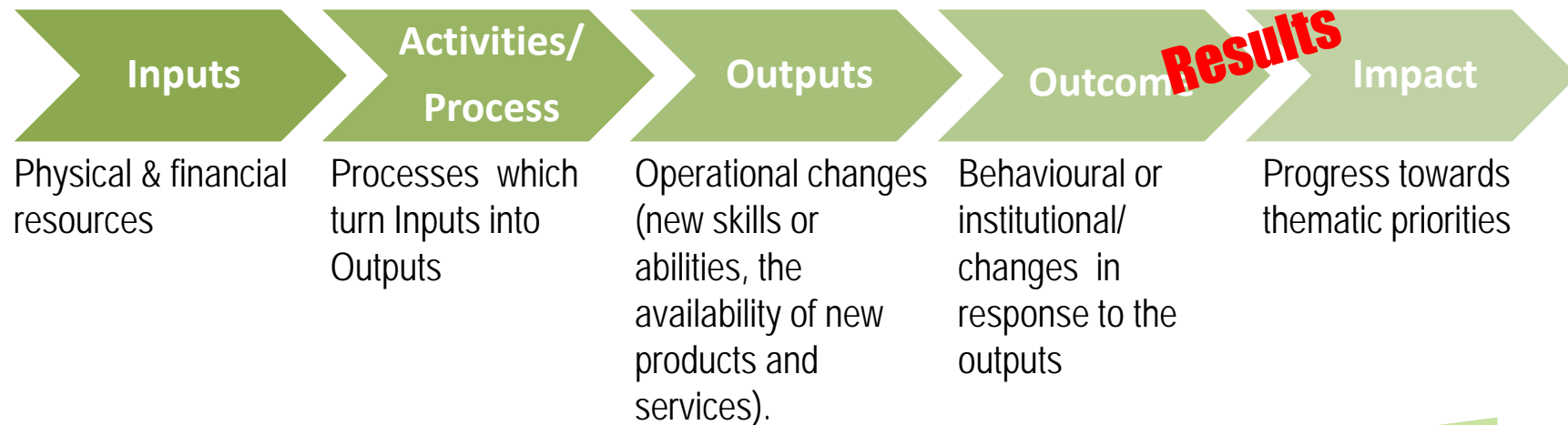
What isn't a Theory of Change?



Management control diminishes

Internal perspective

External perspective



External factors become more important

Why use a Theory of Change?

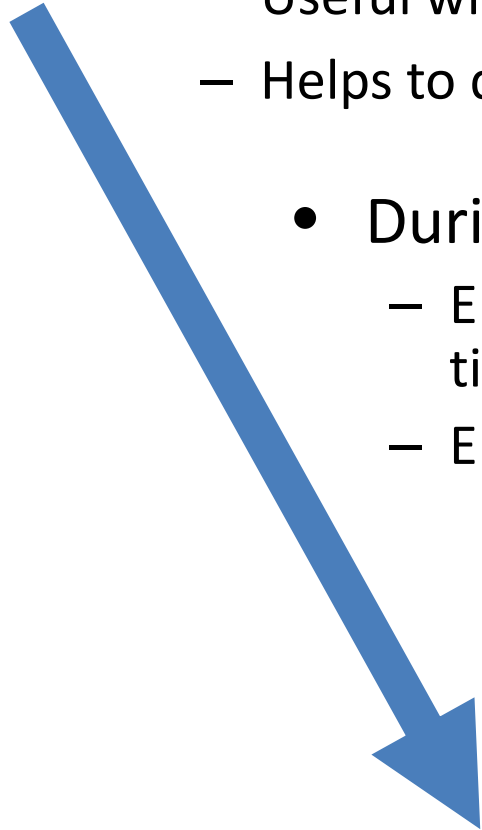


- To identify the conditions necessary to achieve the defined project impact
- To articulate the theory and assumptions underpinning a project's design
- To encourage critical thinking, and helps to draw out the complexity of the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.
- To design 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)

When to use a Theory of Change?



- During project design
 - Useful when designing complex initiatives
 - Helps to develop a clear and rigorous plan for success
- During project implementation
 - Enables you to evaluate appropriate outcomes at the right time and the right sequence
 - Enables you to identify why an initiative is or isn't working
- Evaluation of a project
 - Enables you to identify why an initiative worked or not, and what exactly went wrong



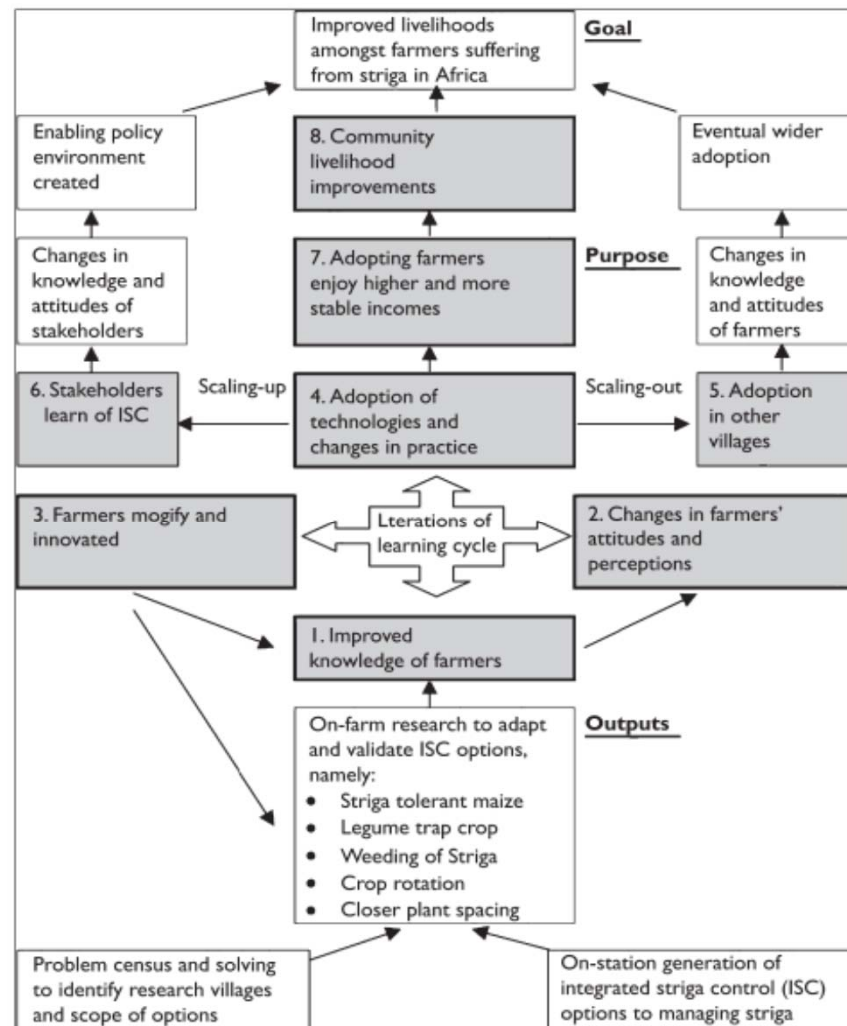
Developing a Theory of Change



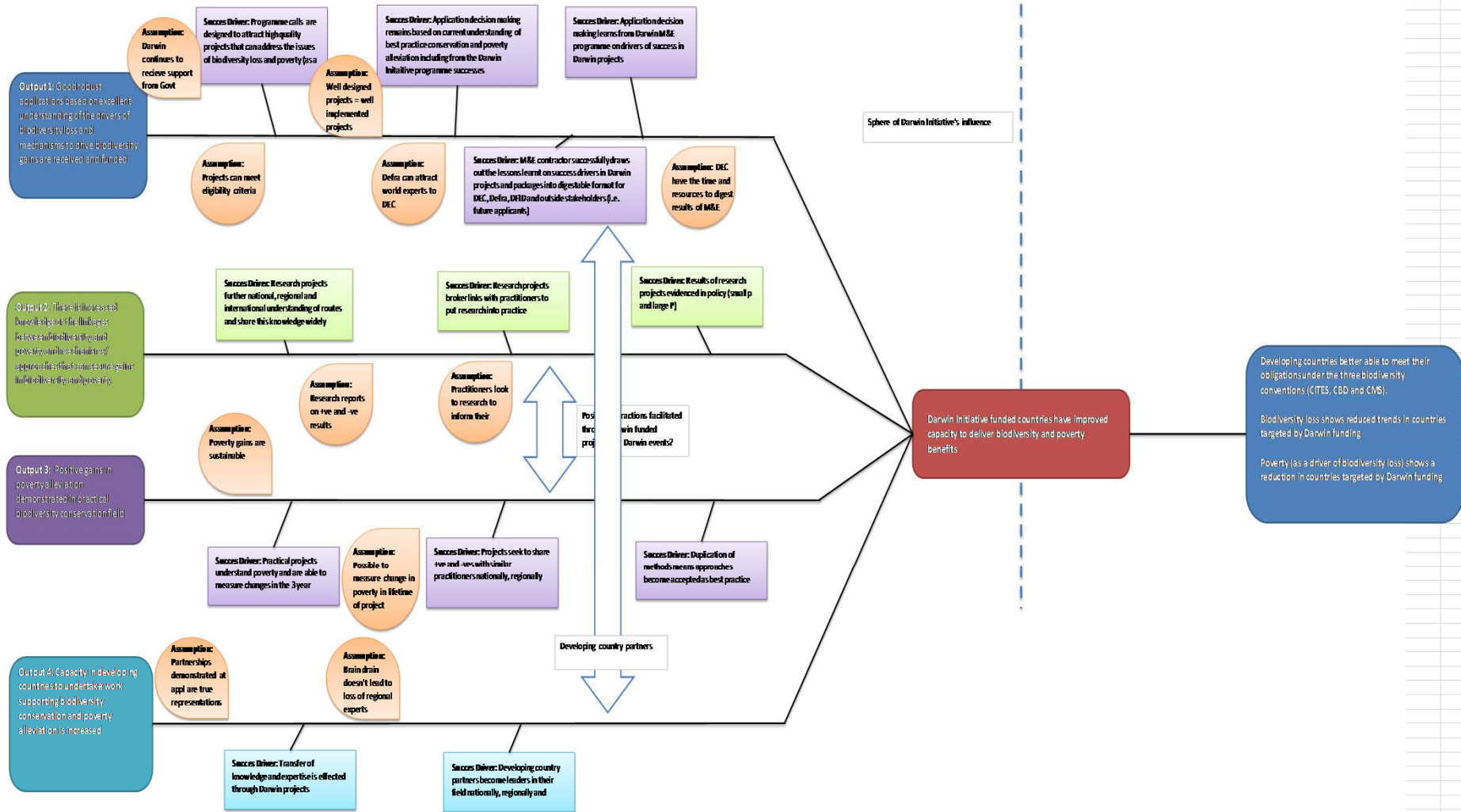
TOC maps out your initiative through 6 stages:

1. Identifying long-term goals
2. Backwards mapping and connecting the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve that goal and explaining why these preconditions are necessary and sufficient
3. Identifying your basic assumptions about the context
4. Identifying the interventions that your initiative will perform to create your desired change
5. Developing indicators to measure your outcomes to assess the performance of your initiative
6. Writing a narrative to explain the logic of your initiative

What does a ToC look like?



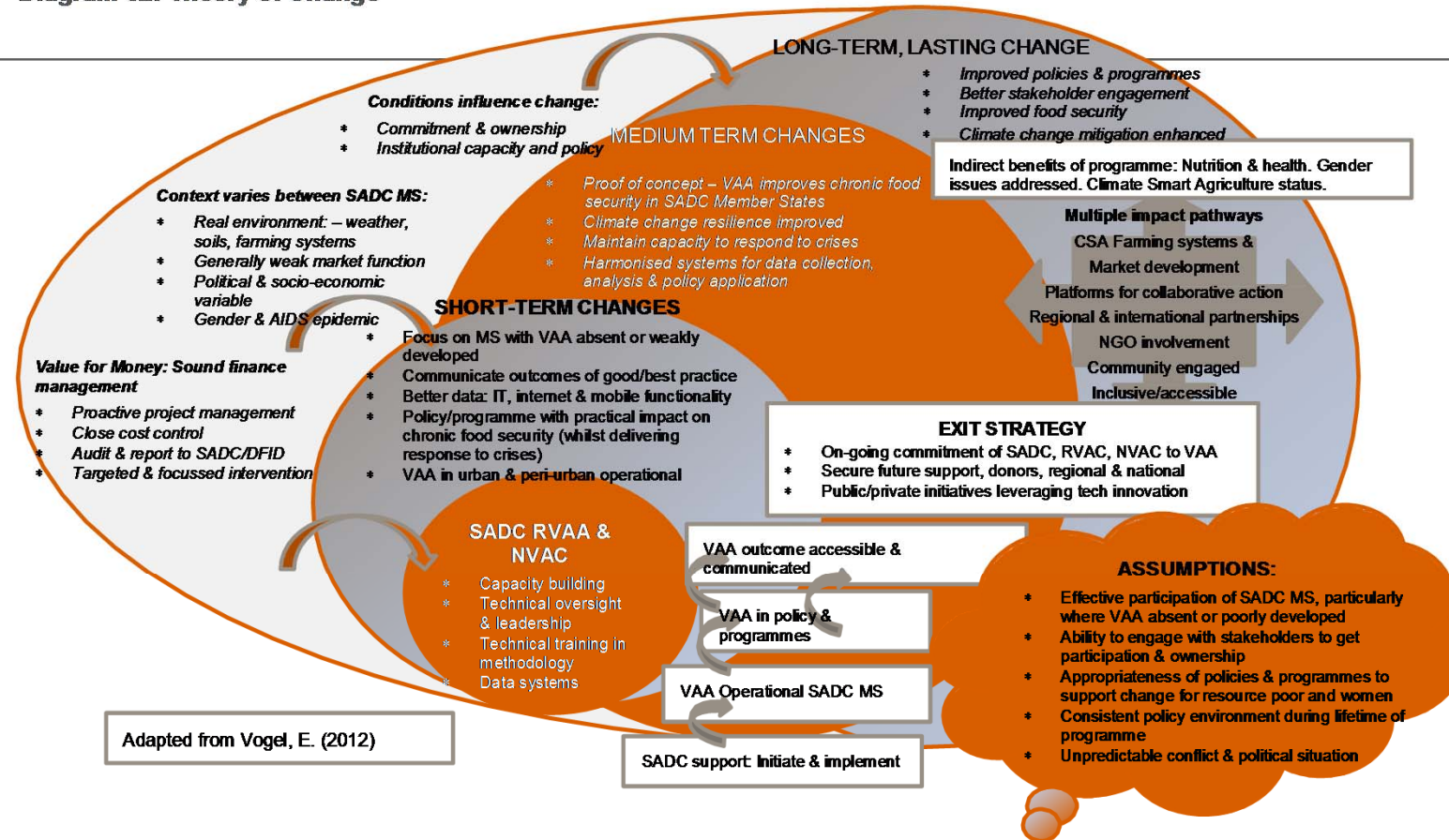
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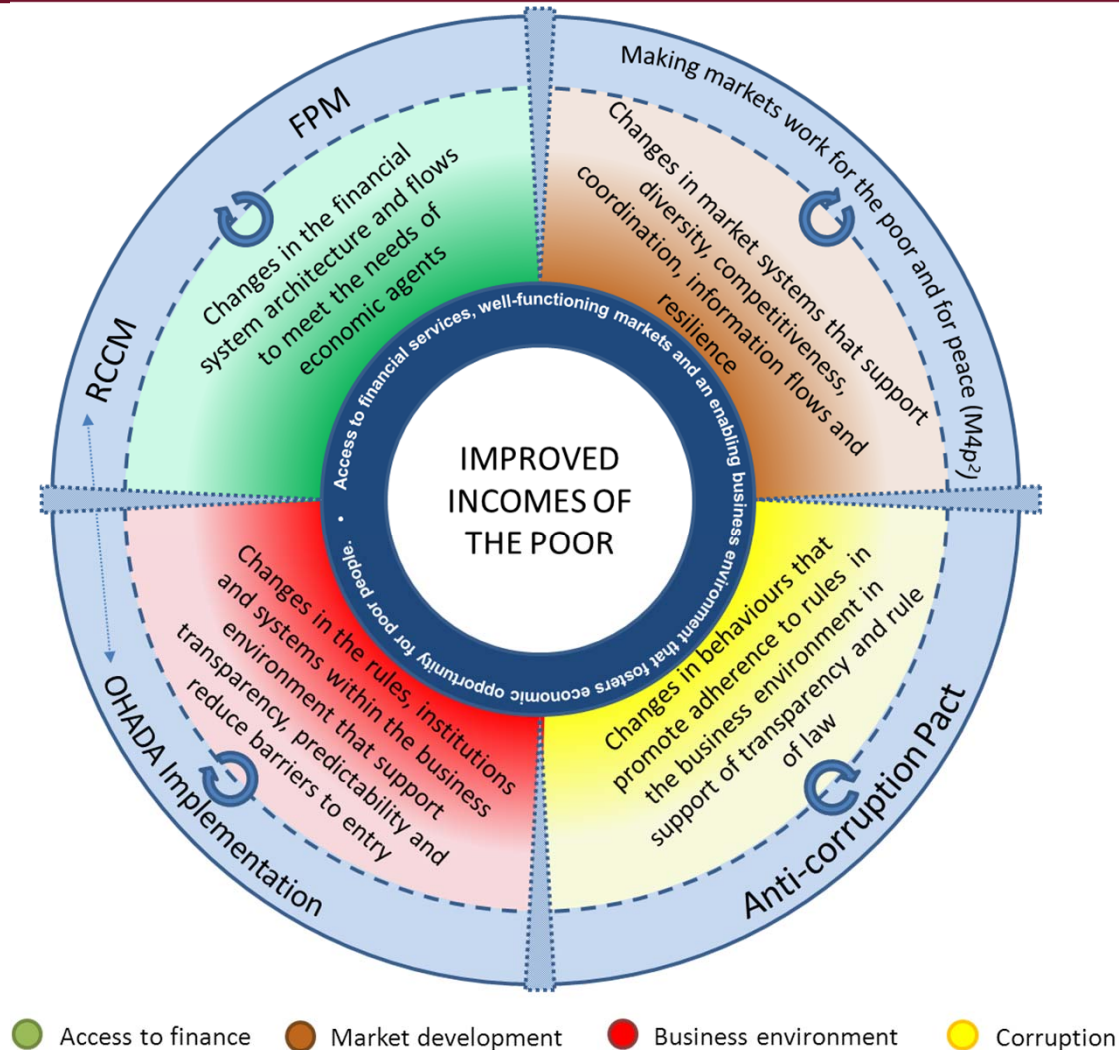
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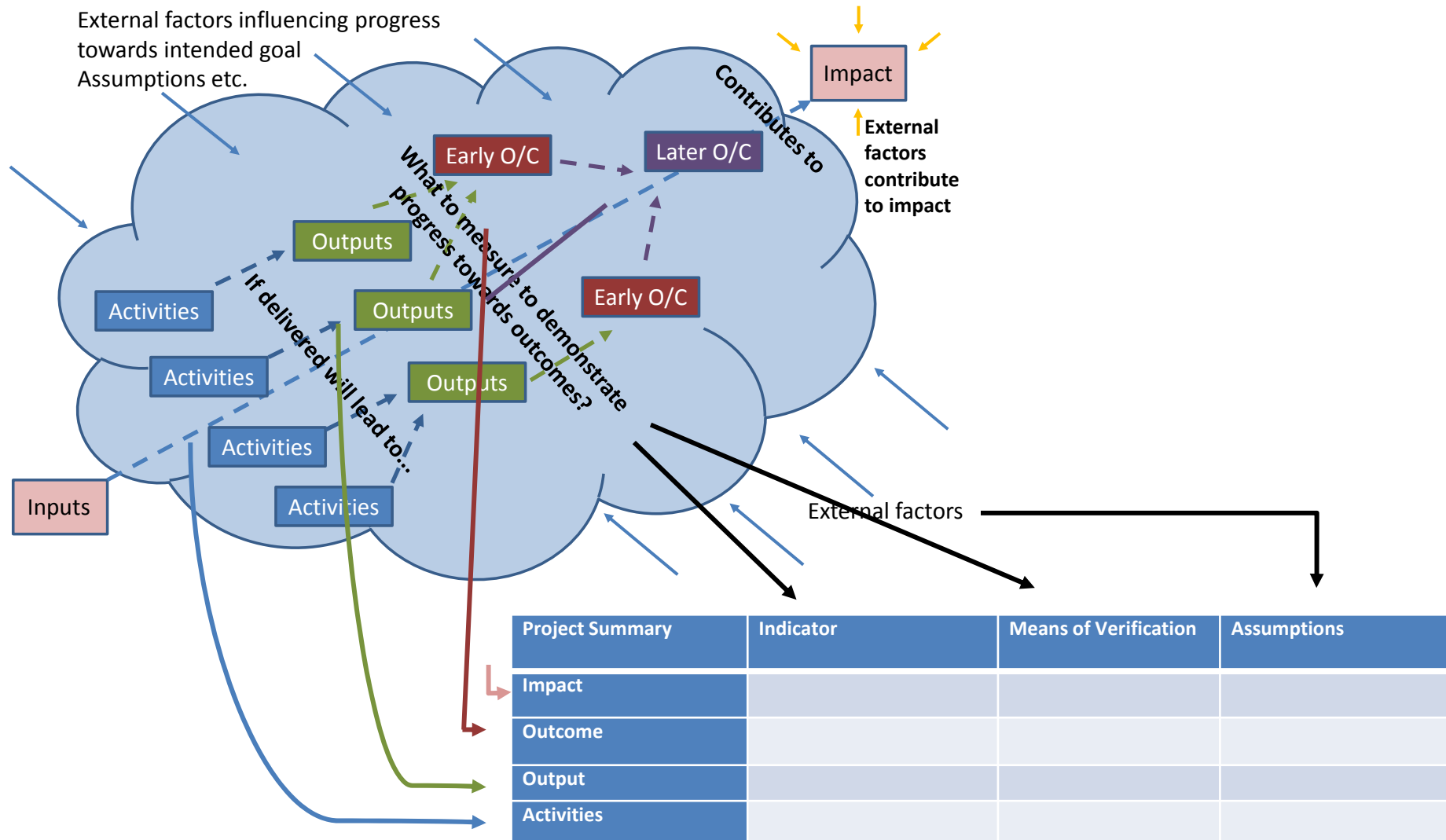
Diagram 02: Theory of Change



What does a ToC look like?



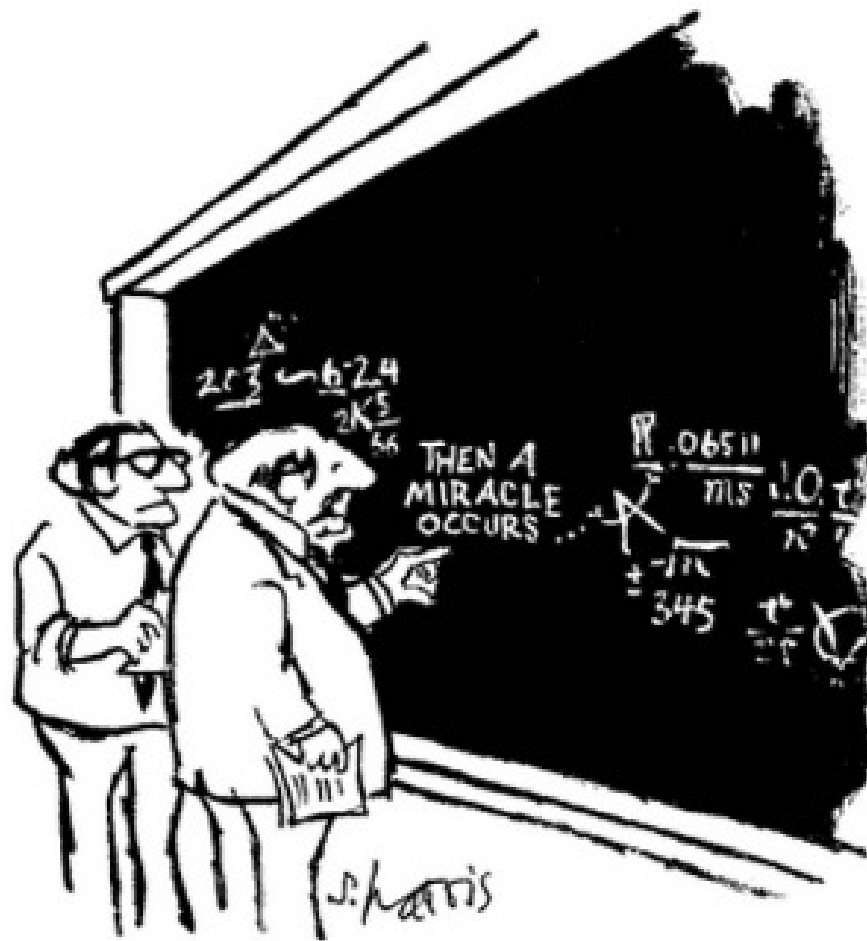
You have a ToC, what next?



Group Exercise



- Divide into groups
- You will be given a list of activities, outputs and outcome taken from an existing Darwin project
- It will be up to you to decide which is which
- In whatever format you wish map out the theory of change
- Consider, and identify critical assumptions and key areas of risk and uncertainty



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."