



Fact Sheet 5. Program Logic



Description

A program logic model is a “picture” of how your project or program will work. Logic models link program outcomes (short-, medium-, and long-term) with program outputs and inputs, while articulating the assumptions of the program.

Benefits

Program logic is a useful communication tool in that it articulates what the program is, what it expects to do, and how success will be measured. It is a basis for checking the proposed design for adequacy of cause and effect, and the reasons or assumptions behind this. It can ensure that team members have a common understanding of the program goals and how these will be achieved.

Limitations

Program logic does not seek to take account of the unintended consequences of actions. As program logic focuses on a single issue, it does not capture the interaction between a range of programs that may have common outcomes.

Challenges

A major challenge in developing a program logic is overcoming the terminology that often surrounds evaluation frameworks. Keeping the logic simple, focused on one issue and keeping it grounded can be a major challenge. Don't be scared!

Skills

There are no specialised skills required to develop a program logic model.

Resources

Staff time to prepare a program logic model. Template or whiteboard.

Information

There is no specialised information required to develop a program logic model.

How hard is it?

✓ = low level

✓✓ = medium level

✓✓✓ = high level

Skills required:

To set up ✓✓

To conduct: ✓✓

To analyse ✓✓

Resources required:

✓

Information required:

✓

Desktop Tool

Snap Shot

When to utilise:

In the early stages of planning and as the basis for evaluation and review

Other tools for similar situations:

- Bennett's Hierarchy

How to Use Program Logic

When should I use Program Logic?

Program logic is a useful tool to utilise in the early stages of planning. It can also be used as a basis for preparing a monitoring and evaluation plan/program and as a framework for review.

Steps in using Program Logic

Populate the template using the following as a guide to each component of the program logic. It's a good idea to start to the left hand side and populate towards the right hand side.

1. *Outcomes* - the expected impact, results or changes that could be expected. Long term outcomes are the "ultimate change" that the program seeks to achieve, such as a change to condition (eg environmental, social, economic). Medium term outcomes are those changes required to achieve the ultimate outcome; this may be a change in behaviour, practice or activity. Short term outcomes are those outcomes that are required to result in a changed behaviour; these may be learnings, knowledge, change in attitude or skill development.
2. *Outputs - Participation* - the individuals or groups of people who participate, access or use the activities
3. *Outputs - Activities* - these are the products, activities, services or events that are developed, conducted or provided
4. *Inputs* - these are the resources that are required to deliver the outputs, such as staff time, funding, office space and equipment, and contributions from other parties.
5. *Objectives* - the intended impacts or results.
6. *Assumptions* - these are the linkages that you assume will occur (eg that targeted parties will participate).
7. *External Factors* - those things outside the program that interact with, and influence, the program and its success.
8. Once you have populated the boxes, check your logic by reading the boxes, from left to right, as a series of statements starting with "IF" and finishing in "THEN".
9. Don't forget that program logics are living documents. Keep revisiting the logic as a means for adaptively managing your program over time.

References & links for additional information

Program Development and Evaluation Unit, University of Wisconsin.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>

Zammit C, Cockfield, G Funnell, S (2000) An outcomes-based framework for evaluating natural resources management policies and programs, Published by Land and Water Australia Social & Institutional Research Program.

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