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PURPOSE IMPACT ACTION

Key impact evaluation concepts

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1. What is impact evaluation?

Definitions for impact evaluation differ.
Typically, however, there is consensus that it involves:

1. **Systematic** evidence collection
2. Assessment **against some kind of standard**

Social impact measurement is the **systematic process of assessing the effects of an organization's activities, programs, or interventions on society and the environment.**

It involves:

- Collecting and analyzing data to understand whether and how these efforts create positive changes.
- Going beyond financial metrics to capture individual, community-based and societal outcomes

2. Why does impact evaluation matter?

Impact evaluation matters to make informed decisions that improve delivery, enhance accountability, and demonstrate your organization's social value to stakeholders.

If you don't review performance, you can't tell success from failure



If you can't **distinguish success**, you can't promote or build on it:

Measuring success - identifying what works, for whom and what contributes to outcomes.



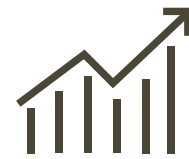
If you can't **recognize failure**, you can't avoid or correct it:

Measuring failure - identifying what does not work as planned, or barriers to change.



Improving delivery - feedback on successes and failures, across stakeholders, supports program development and delivery processes.

3.What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation?



Monitoring

What is it? When is it undertaken?

- Continuous and systematic collection of data and information throughout program delivery.
- Focuses on overseeing activities and outputs i.e., measurable direct results.
- Enables assessment of delivery against set of targets.

How is it done?

- Quantitative methods
- Often undertaken in-house



Evaluation

What is it? When is it undertaken?

- Scheduled periodic assessment of activities at set points.
- Focuses on assessing outcomes and impacts against stated objectives.
- Assess why and how well the change has occurred and attributes to the intervention.

How is it done?

- Typically mixed-methods, combining quantitative and qualitative



Monitoring is like keeping an eye on the oven to make sure the cake doesn't burn. Evaluation is like tasting the cake to see if it turned out well.

— EvalCommunity

4. Developing an impact evaluation framework

Impact evaluation as part of outcomes-based planning for programs

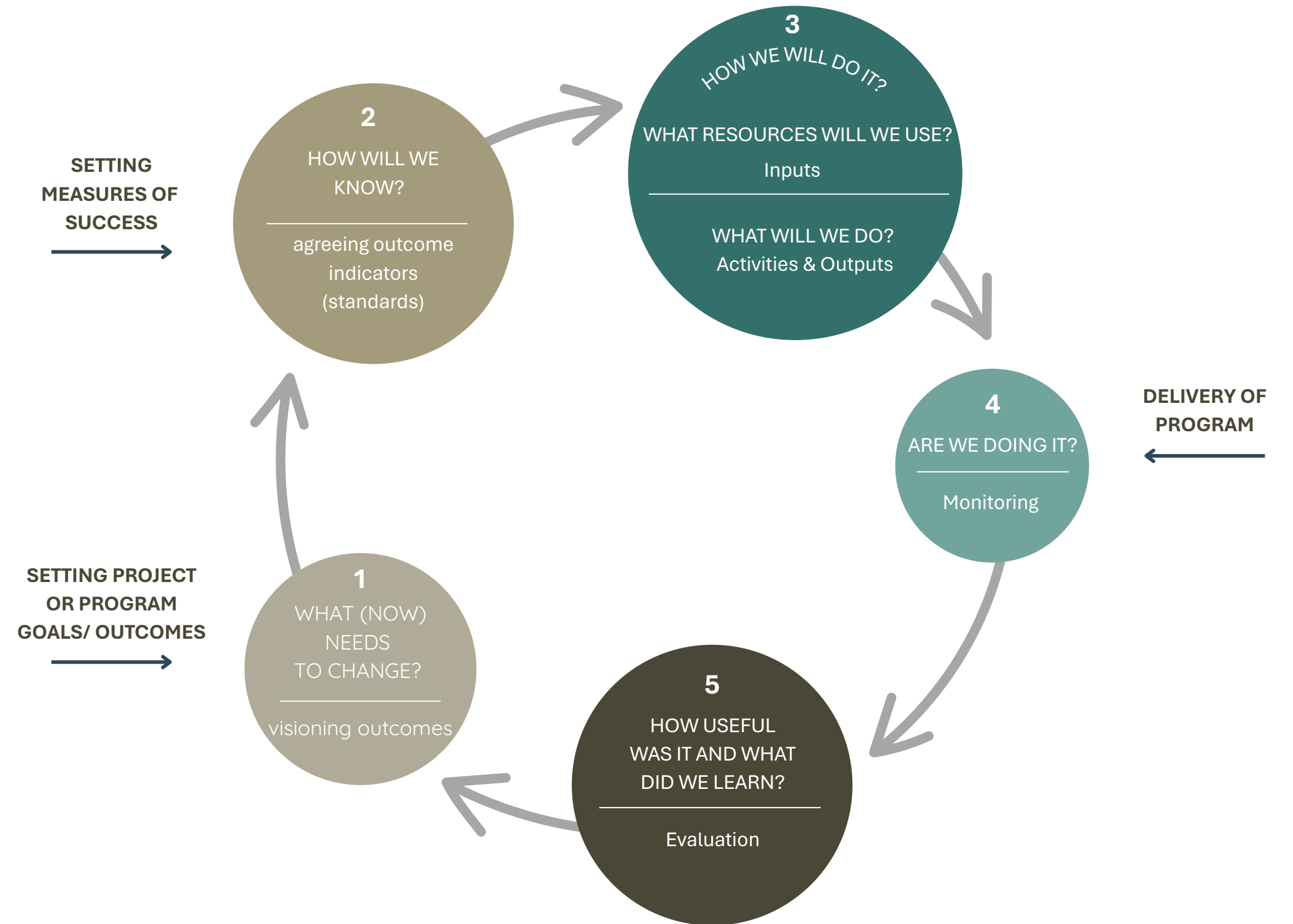
Impact evaluation frameworks aim to provide an assessment of performance against some sort of standards/indicators. These **standards need to be articulated at the program design stage.**

Evaluating how an ‘intervention is doing’ needs clear goals/outcomes, but also **clear measures of success for these goals/outcomes**, so that organizations know if/when the goals/outcomes have been met. This is often **forgotten in the rush to focus on delivery.**

Impact evaluation framework typically comprise two elements:

- a) Theory of Change
- b) Outcome framework

Outcomes-based planning



4a. What is Theory of Change?

Theory of change: a program planning tool and cornerstone of an evaluation framework

A common way to capture results of an outcomes-based planning exercise for an intervention is to develop a **‘Theory of Change’ (ToC)**.

A ToC provides a visual, and explanatory, account of how an intervention is expected to achieve the desired results. It identifies: the program resources; related activities; how the outputs delivered through the program will lead to a set of plausible outcomes (‘measures of success’); how these are linked to longer term impacts.

A ToC is the bedrock for the impact evaluation, as the **impact evaluation tests out whether the hypothetical logic that links the program’s chain of activities > outputs > outcomes > impacts holds true in reality.**

See [ToC Guidance](#)



Theory of Change: The Key Idea

A visual tool that established the types of outcomes and impacts the organization expects to see as a result of its intervention.

Like any theory, it must be **tested in practice so you can claim your theory** on how your activities lead to the desired **holds true!**

For steps to develop a ToC, please refer to [PIA Resources](#) on website.

4b) Outcome framework: why and how?

Developing an outcome framework is an approach that unpacks the program's ToC and provides a structure to collect data on the immediate and longer-term changes that lead to the desired transformative outcomes.

Principles of outcome frameworks:

- **Clarity of outcomes** - clearly aligning with your ToC and program's goals to ensure impact evaluation focuses on what matters most.
- Use of **SMART indicators** - identify appropriate indicators for each outcome (SMART = **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-bound).
- Use of **relevant and accessible data sources** - specify reliable data sources and collection methods to track progress accurately.



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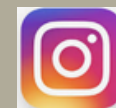
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