

Logic Models

Think of a time when you had to tackle a difficult problem. Was it more successful to launch into action without a plan of how you were going to solve the problem, or better to take some time to think strategically about what you were trying to accomplish and how you would achieve it? Most of us take this approach in our everyday lives without having a formal planning process. Having a strategic plan can help you improve the impact of your outreach. It is not only useful to have a plan written down as a way to direct your activities, but the planning process itself can be immensely helpful in conceptualizing what you are trying to achieve.

The Logic Model Planning Tool

There are numerous planning tools that can help you with this conceptualizing process. The **logic model** is one of these; the name comes from the core idea developing a logical connection between your activities as an outreach professional with outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Logic models not only provide a powerful template for thinking through your actions, but also serve as a tool for communicating the logic behind your programming. In addition, logic models provide a powerful framework for program evaluation, as it not only identifies the goals of your efforts, but lays out how you intend to get there.

Start with the End Goal

The logic model approach to planning is most effective when it begins with an assessment of the situation and what changes you are trying to achieve (your goals or desired impacts), then working backwards through a change process to identify activities that can help you achieve your goals. This may seem counterintuitive; it is often easiest to think about the activities we are currently doing and what we know we can achieve. The power of the logic

model process is it allows us to think broadly about what **needs to be done** to achieve our goals rather than limiting us to what is **currently being done**.

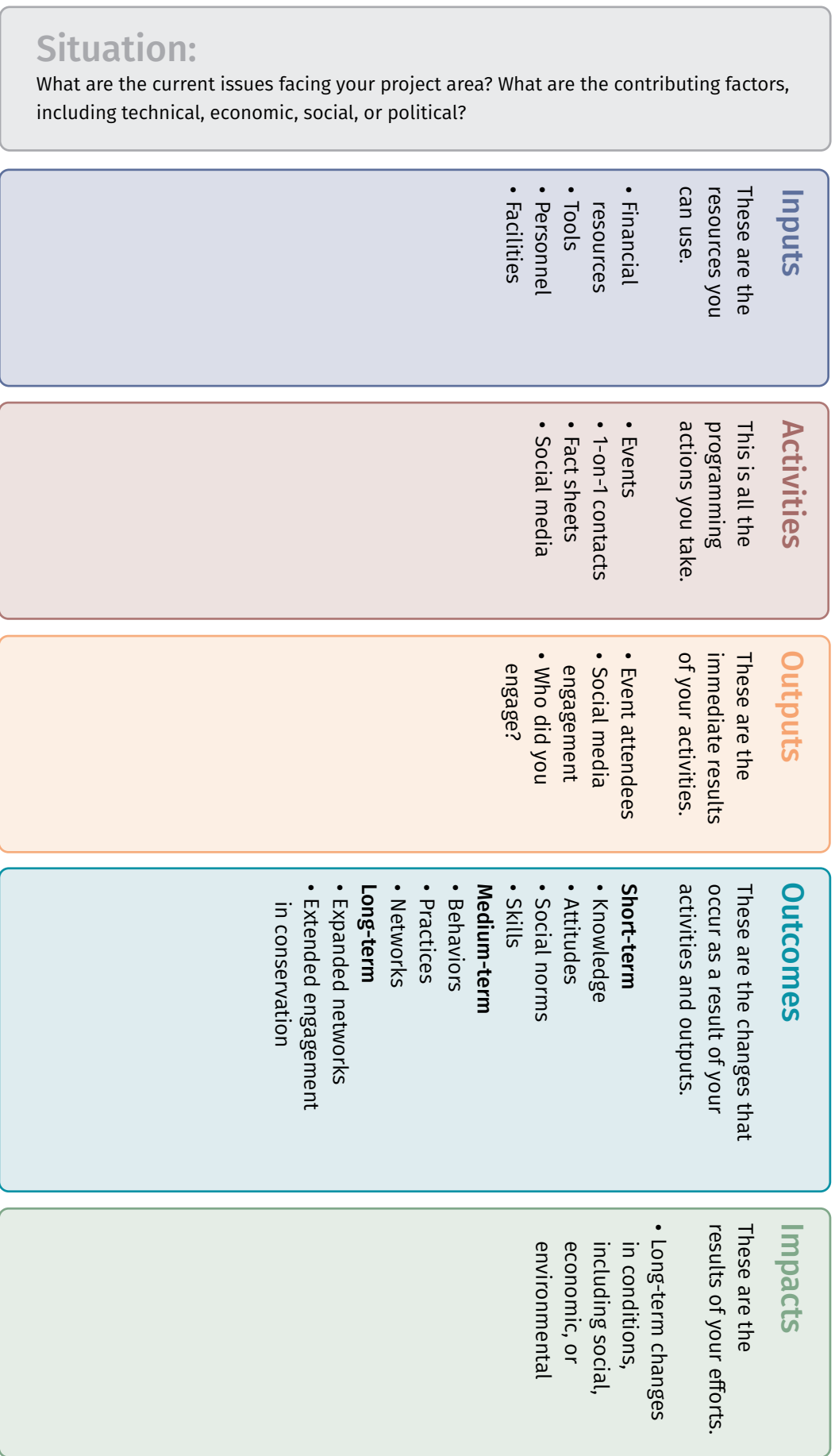
Planning for Complexity

It is also important to note that the logic model is most often presented as a linear model that connects all elements from resources and activities, through outputs and outcomes, to goals and desired impacts. This is a simplified presentation of reality, however. Any complex program, including conservation outreach, should be thought of as a dynamic situation, where our activities, and the activities or behaviors of others, are constantly changing conditions among the audiences we are trying to reach. A robust logic model planning approach will account for this complex and dynamic reality by incorporating ongoing evaluation and adaptation.

For an agricultural example, prices of crops and inputs fluctuate over time; federal and state policies can change and provide different incentives and barriers; weather conditions change from growing season to growing season. All of these can affect the goals, needs, and challenges farmers face and provide different opportunities for conservation outreach. It is important to account for these changes and be able to shift messaging and outreach programming to address differing needs over time.

For more information about the components of the logic model, see **Logic Models: Key Elements**.

Logic Models for Effective Conservation Outreach



External Factors:
What other conditions, policies, programs, or efforts might have an effect on your project? These can be positive (supportive factors) or negative (barrier factors).



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*Adapted from Taylor-Powell, E. and E. Hebert, 2008. Developing a logic model: Teaching and training guide. University of Wisconsin-Extension, Program Development and Evaluation.



Logic Models: Key Elements

A logic model is a widely used planning tool that can help with conservation outreach planning and strategic development. This approach links activities—the things you do in your outreach with farmers, ranchers, and other stakeholders—with your conservation goals. This worksheet introduces the elements of the Logic Model so you can better understand how to think of the change process that links actions with impacts.



These are your available resources you can use in your outreach. These could include financial resources, tools, personnel, and facilities. Perhaps some of the most valuable inputs are farmers in your community who can authentically communicate the benefits of using conservation practices.



This is all the programming actions you take, including events, field days, 1-on-1 contacts, communications, and social media. The activities you engage in are a key in outreach, yet in the logic model approach, you do not to begin your planning process with activities. Rather, let your planned activities flow from your desired impacts and outcomes.



These are the immediate results of your activities that reflect the extent of implementation. In most cases with outreach, your desired outputs will be farmer and stakeholder engagement with your activities. Most often, this involves counting people who attend your events, subscribers to your communications, or followers on social media. Another important

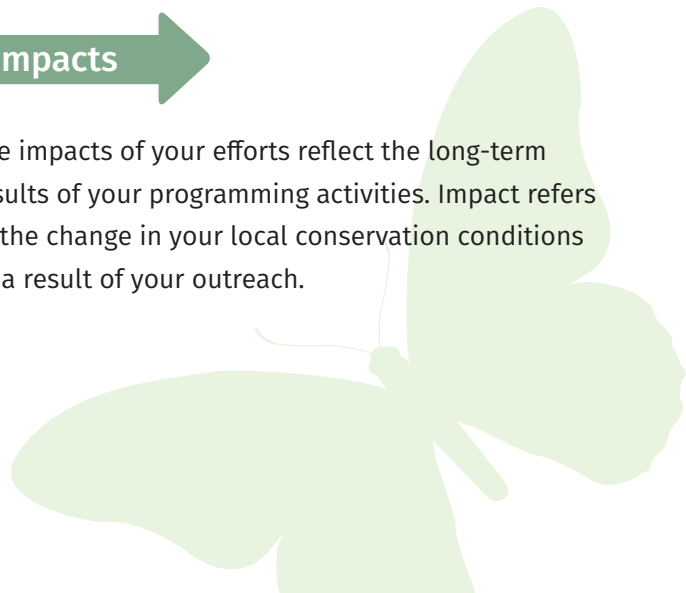
consideration is not just how many people are engaging in your activities, but who these people are. Are you reaching beyond the 'choir' to those who have not yet tried conservation practices?



These reflect what has changed as a result of your activities and outputs. These changes are what show movement toward the project goals and objectives. You can think about short, medium, and long-term outcomes of your programming. In the behavior change approach to outreach, these outcomes could include increases in knowledge of conservation practices, changes in supportive social norms, and new skills or competencies among your farmer audiences.



The impacts of your efforts reflect the long-term results of your programming activities. Impact refers to the change in your local conservation conditions as a result of your outreach.



Logic Models: Situational Analysis

To effectively plan and implement conservation outreach efforts, it is important to have a clear understanding of the problem we are trying to address. Clearly identifying the problem and its root causes is known as a **situational analysis**. This fact sheet presents some concepts you will want to consider before beginning an outreach planning process.

At its core, this process results in a clear and direct problem statement. What is the core problem we are trying to impact with our efforts? This will depend on your organizational goals, your setting, and the goals or objectives of any particular project or funding that underlies your outreach. In the conservation context, this most often has to do with limiting agriculture's

impact on local or regional environmental conditions, or protecting the natural resource base upon which agriculture depends. In the behavior change context, we also need to consider the behavioral aspects that contribute to these conditions, which may come down to not enough farmers using practices we know can protect local natural resources.

After identifying the core problem we are trying to address, the next step is to consider the conditions and factors that contribute to this problem. Environmental conditions are typically the result of the interaction of complex systems that include social, economic, political, and ecological components.



Logic Models: Situational Analysis

Use this space to conduct your own situational analysis. Start by identifying the central problem you are trying to address with your project. Reflect on each contributing factor to help guide your planning efforts.

- **What is the problem you are addressing in your project?**
- **What are the causes of the problem?**
- **What are the social, economic, political, and/or ecological symptoms of the problem?** (e.g. diminished social capital, impaired water quality, etc.)
- **Who is affected by the problem?** This may include both human and non-human communities.
- **What will happen if nothing is done to address the problem?** How will conditions change in the future? What uncertainties are at play?

Developing a clear understanding of the problem, its root causes, and who is affected by it will help in deciding what should be done. Considering the range of contributing factors will help direct resources to the conditions that are most likely to achieve our desired impacts. This situational analysis will help ground the rest of our planning process.