

THEORY OF CHANGE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change sets out HOW and WHY a desired change is expected to come about. It provides a clear and testable explanation to convincingly show your plan is a really good workable solution.

It includes the same things as a programme logic, but a Theory of Change goes further by explaining the connections and assumptions sitting behind the programme, project, or initiative.

2. Why use a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change leads to better design of your programme, project or initiative and therefore improves the likelihood of success.

A good Theory of Change helps show how change actually happens in practical terms. When the precise link between activities and the achievement of the long-term goals is well described you are able to reassure and show others why this plan should work.

A Theory of Change also leads to better evaluation. It helps identify your indicators and measures when you are planning an evaluation.

A Theory of Change is useful for:

- Planning and refining your programme, project, or initiative.
- Communicating what a project does and its impact in a clear and convincing way.
- A first step in designing an effective evaluation.

3. Who can use a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change is something that everyone in the Ministry should think about. However, it is most useful to policy analysts and staff in the Ministry that delivers programmes, projects, or any initiative.

4. What does a Theory of Change look like?

There is no single way to create a Theory of Change. In its simplest form, a Theory of Change describes the:

Need/Assumptions - the problem we are trying to address and the assumptions sitting behind the programme, project, or initiative.

Inputs - what resources we are investing.

Activities/Outputs - what are we doing with the resources and the immediate 'things' we expect to see as a result.

Outcomes - what difference we are hoping to make in the short, medium, and long term.

5. Is a Theory of Change also known as something else?

Yes. A Theory of Change is similar to an Intervention Logic, Theory of Improvement, Outcomes Framework, Programme Theory, Programme Logic and Benefits Mapping. Each of these describe intended goals and the strategies being used to get there. Sometimes they are used interchangeably but they are each a bit different.

The visual representation of the Theory of Change is called a logic map, logic frame or a logic model. You do not have to show your Theory of Change using a visual representation. It can be described as a narrative instead. However visual representations tend to be easier for people to understand and can also be useful communication tools.