

Developing Useful Programme Theories



For Complex Interventions



Steve Montague
&
Bridget Dillon

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Practical Applications of Mayne's 'Useful Model'

- Need to consider an alternative way to think about, depict and use theories of change (program theory)
- Theories work best when shared – keep TBE a team sport
- Reconciling rigour + practicality

The Problem:

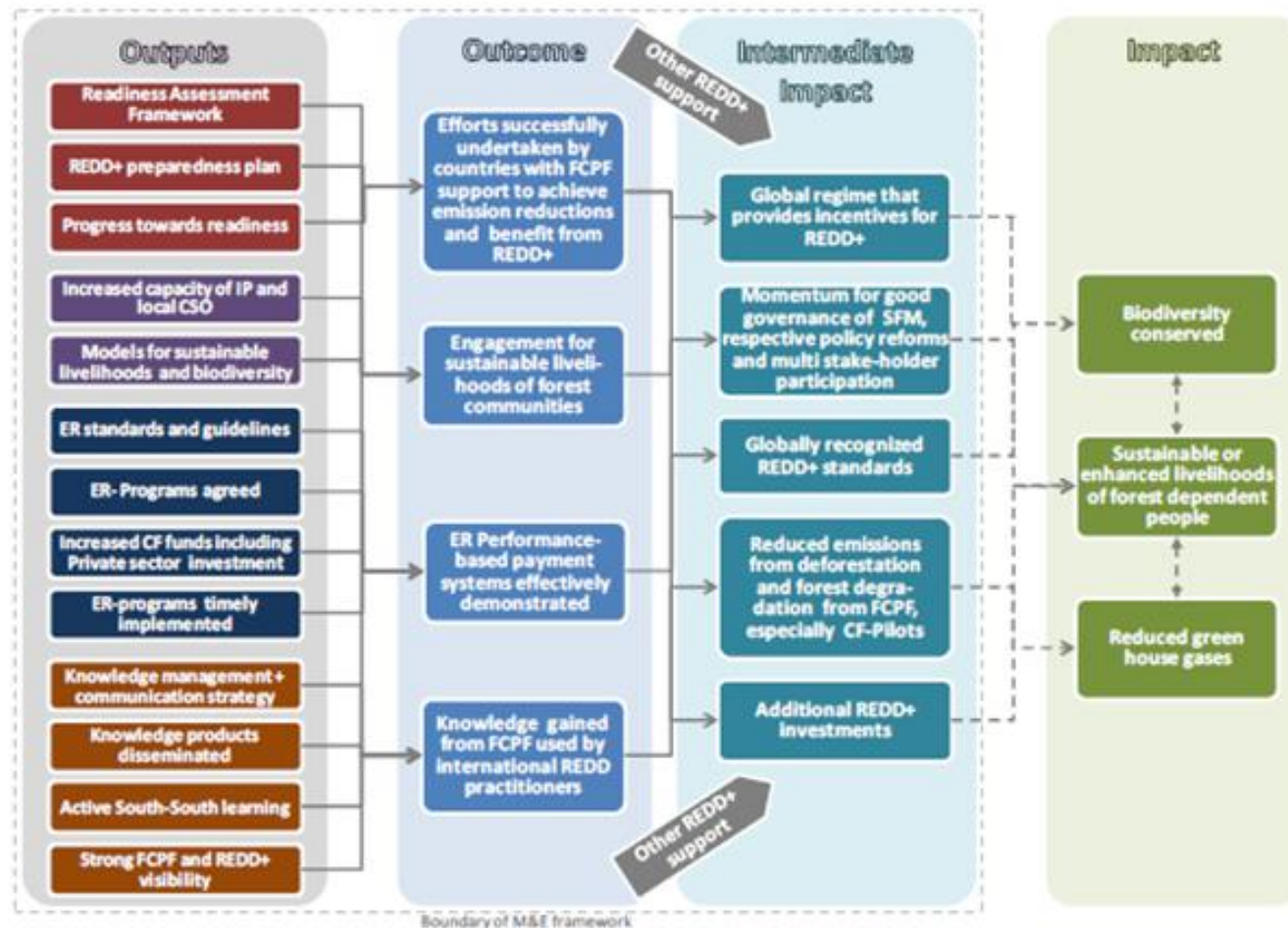
- T of C now core to evaluation approaches
- Easy to use for basic things + simple delivery

BUT

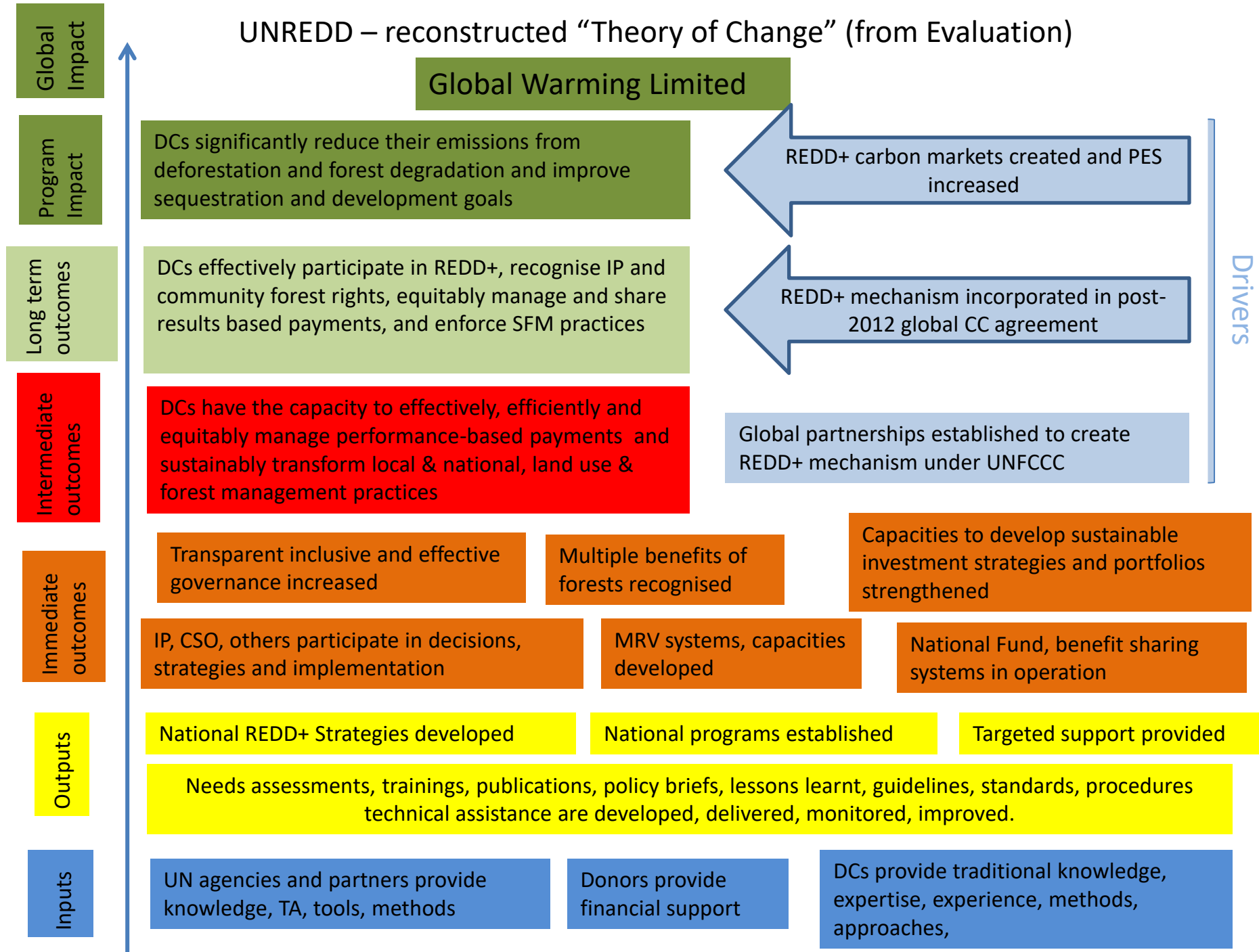
- Difficult for complex delivery arrangements
- Can we adapt?

Results Chain

FCPF – Program Level M&E Framework



UNREDD – reconstructed “Theory of Change” (from Evaluation)

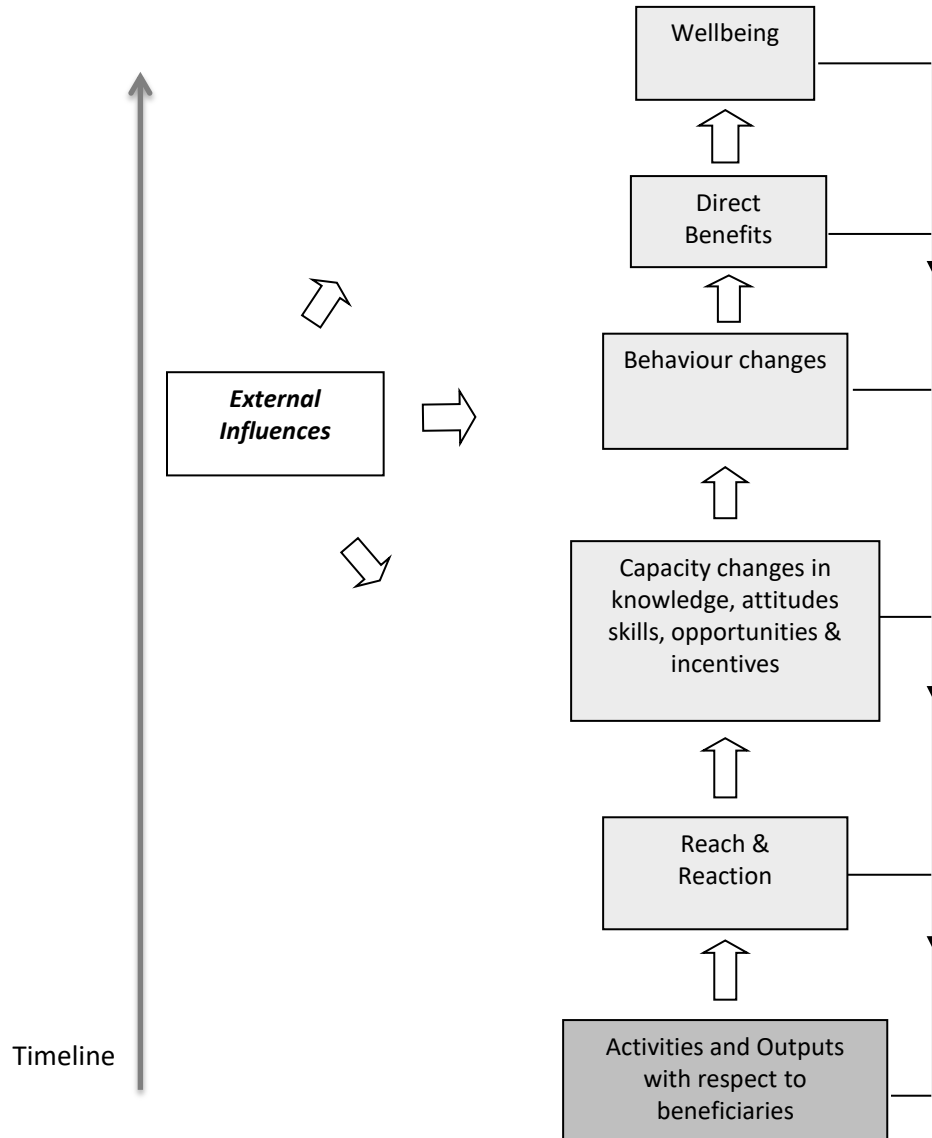


Complex Delivery + linear chains:

- Tendency to oversimplify
- Subsume key things in to outputs (ex 1)
- Make multi-concept results statements (ex 2)
- What is the story here?

- Can we do better?

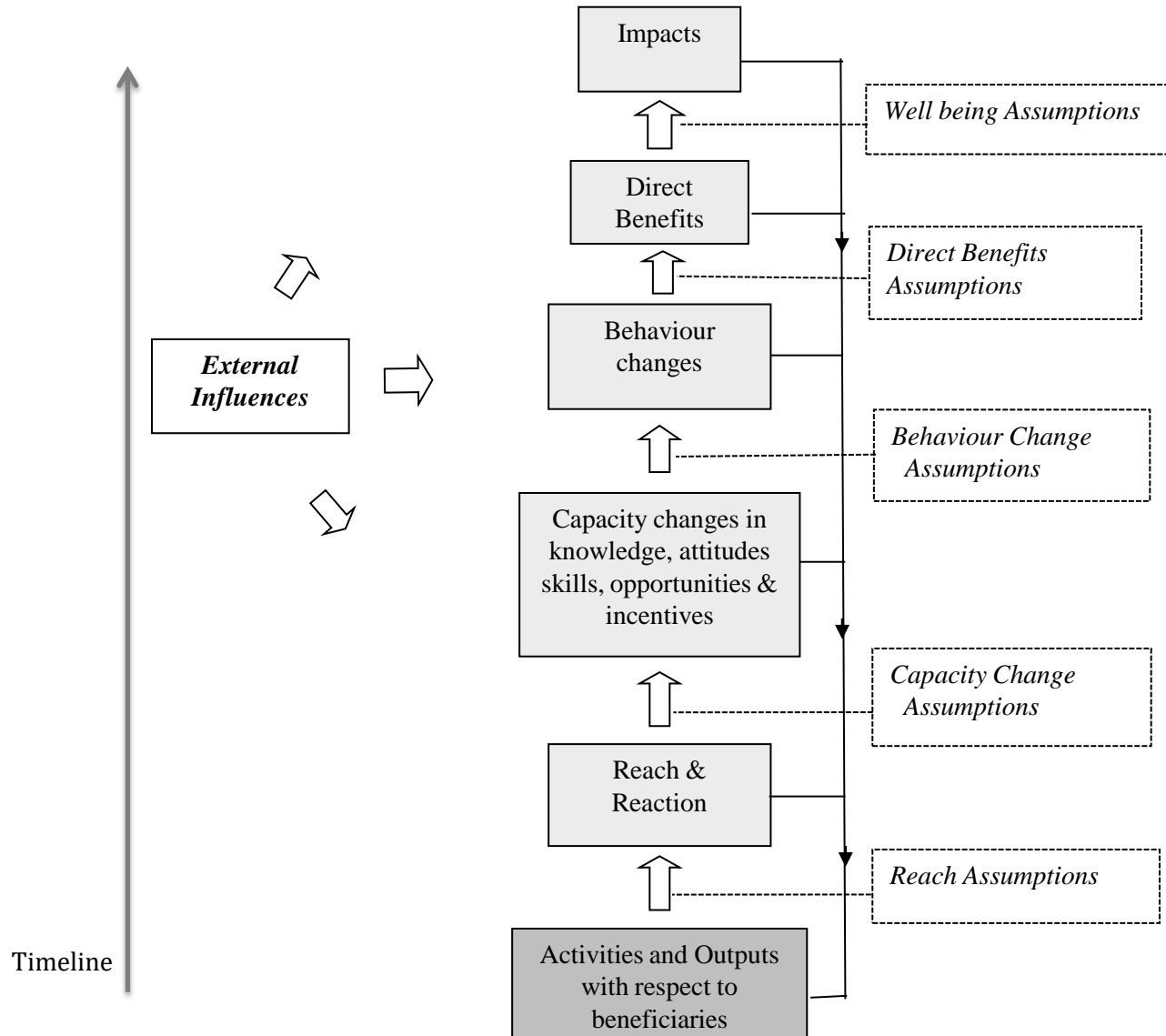
A Generic Results Chain – Mayne’s ‘useful model’



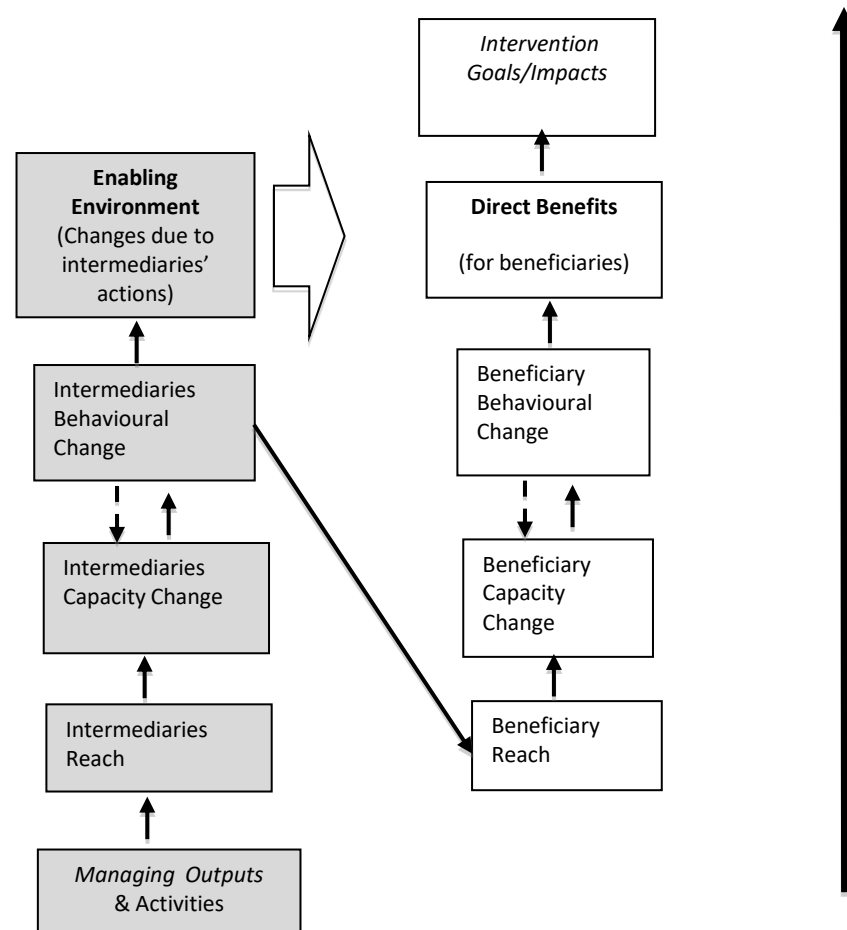
Note

- No labeling of outcomes types
- Focus on program theory
- Timeline
- Built on capacity and practices changes
- Explicit recognition of reach
- Feedback loops

A Generic Useful Theory of Change: Mayne's useful model – with assumptions



A Small Adaptation: Enabling Environment to Impact Pathway



Source: Mayne, J. and Johnson, N. *Using Theories of Change in the Agriculture for Nutrition and Health CGIAR Research Program (Evaluation 2015)*

But: Things Get Complicated Very Quickly!

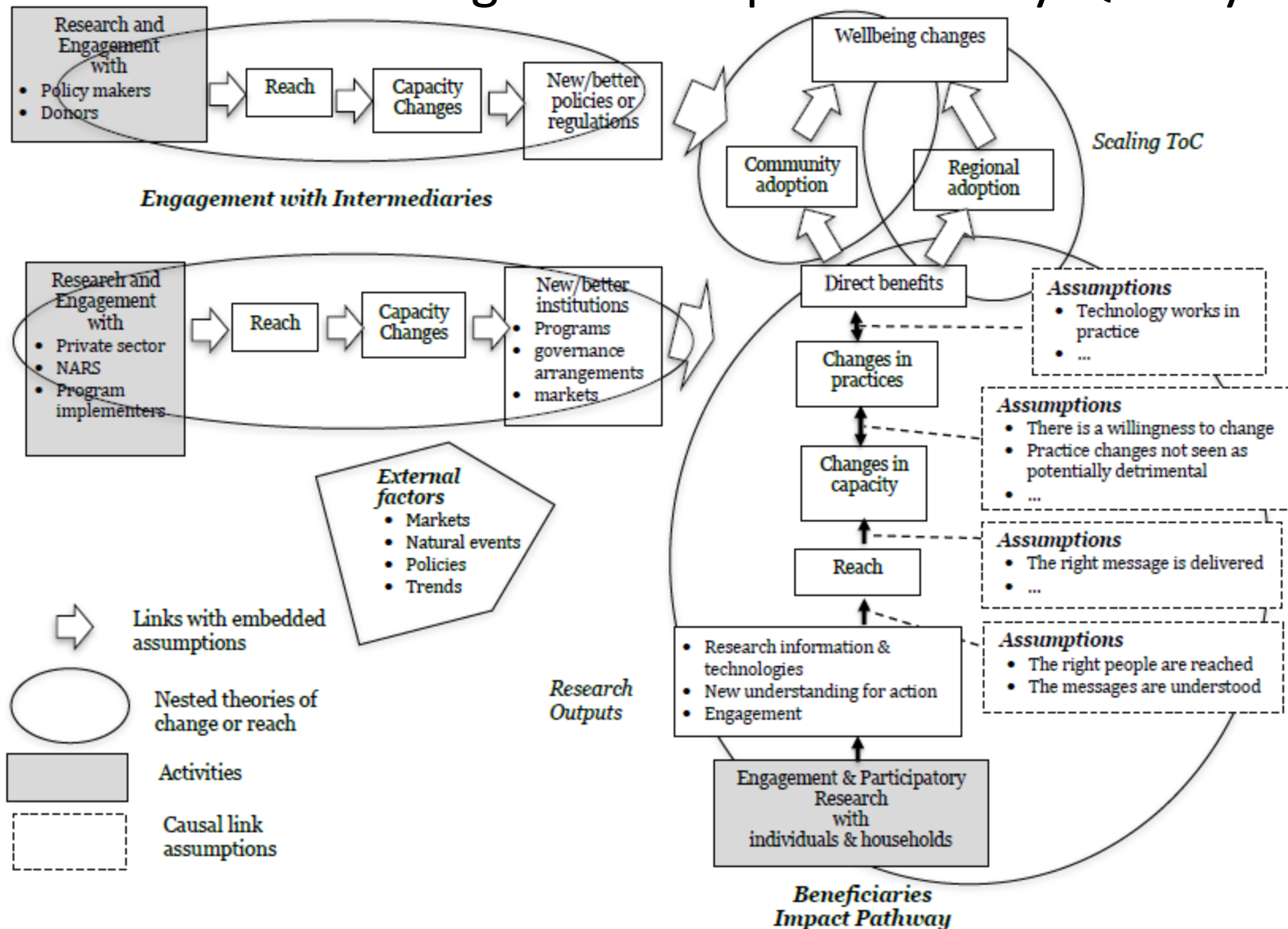
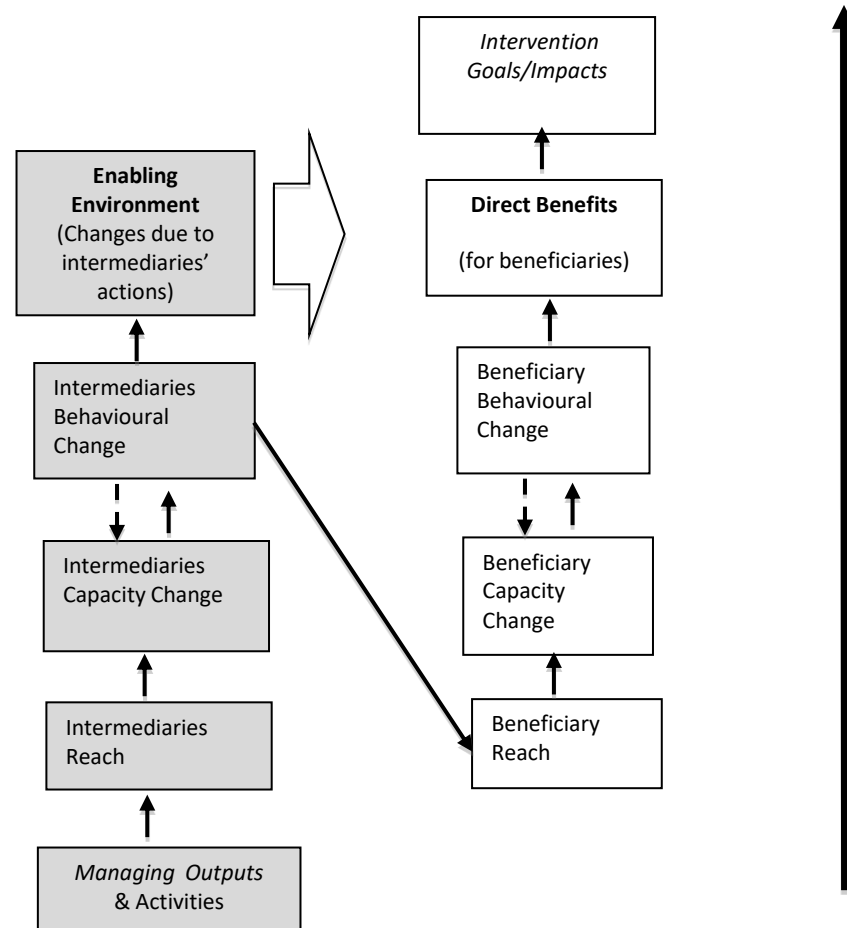


Figure 3. An indicative theory of change for A4NH interventions

Ok – How can we make this work?!

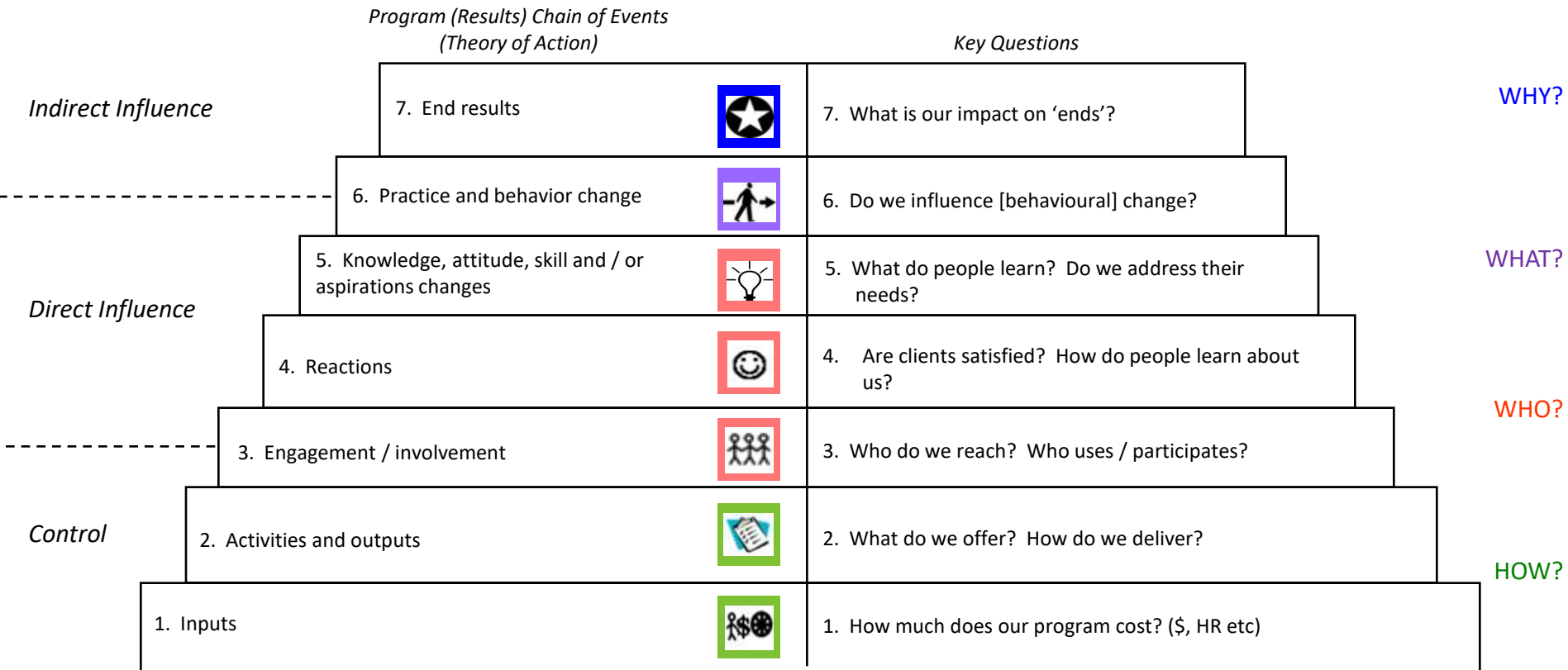
- People don't relate to complex diagrams
- Can we preserve these key ideas related to complex delivery environments while maintaining something that is straight forward to work with and communicate?
- We tried the following:
 - Render things into a (familiar) linear process
 - Develop and apply factors from research to synthesize, analyze and then again synthesize

Start from a simple version



Source: Mayne, J. and Johnson, N. *Using Theories of Change in the Agriculture for Nutrition and Health CGIAR Research Program* (mimeo 2015)

A Basic Results Chain With Key Questions



Source: Adapted for the Canadian Cancer Society by Steve Montague from Claude Bennett 1979. Taken from Michael Quinn Patton, Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text, Thousand Oaks, California, 1997, p 235.

Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program
Simplified Model of Policy and Program Delivery

Benefits
The 'end-state'
results desired

Actions
The behaviours
and actions
taken by key
actors

Activities /
Outputs

Inputs



\$, FTEs

Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program

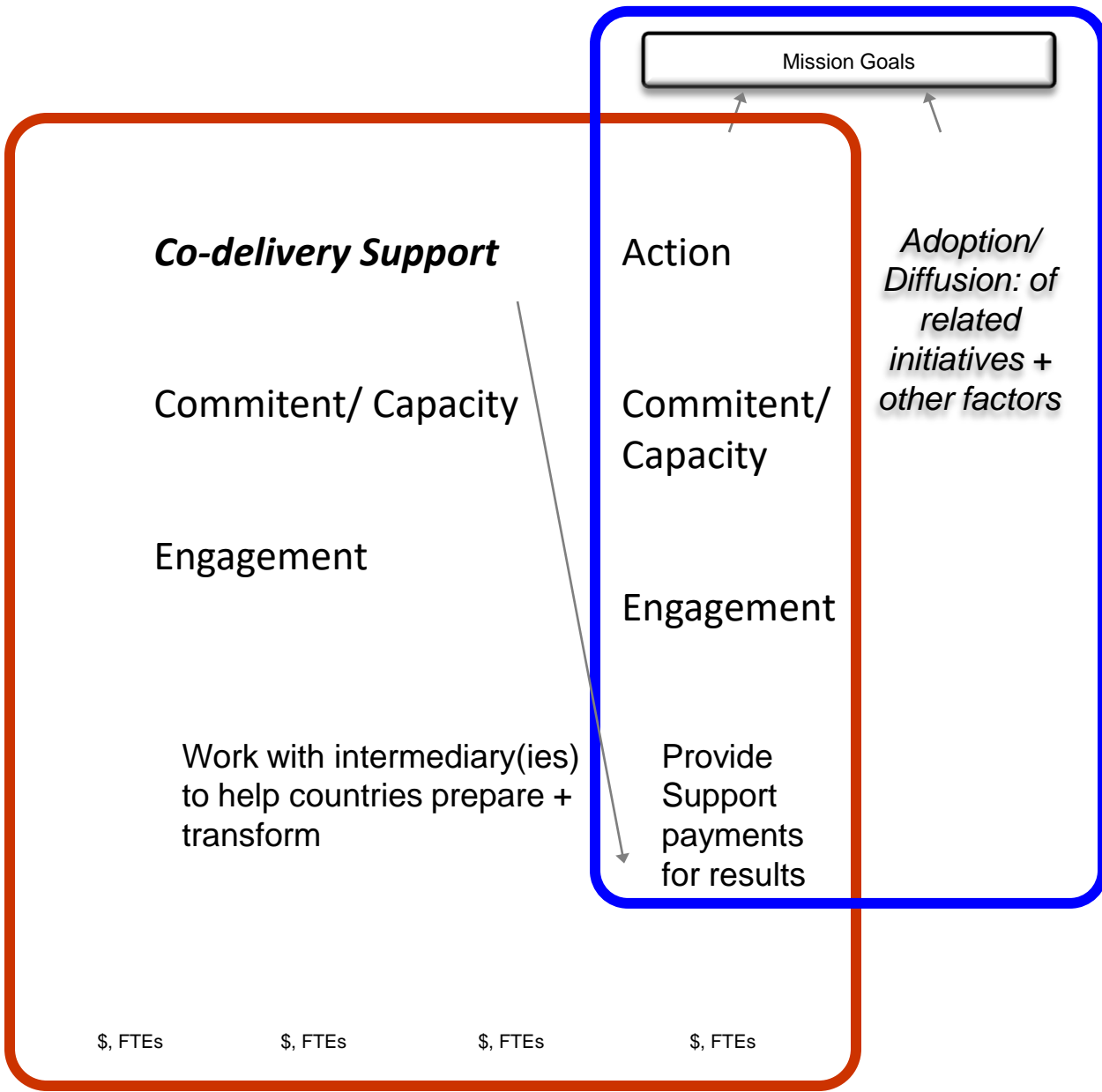
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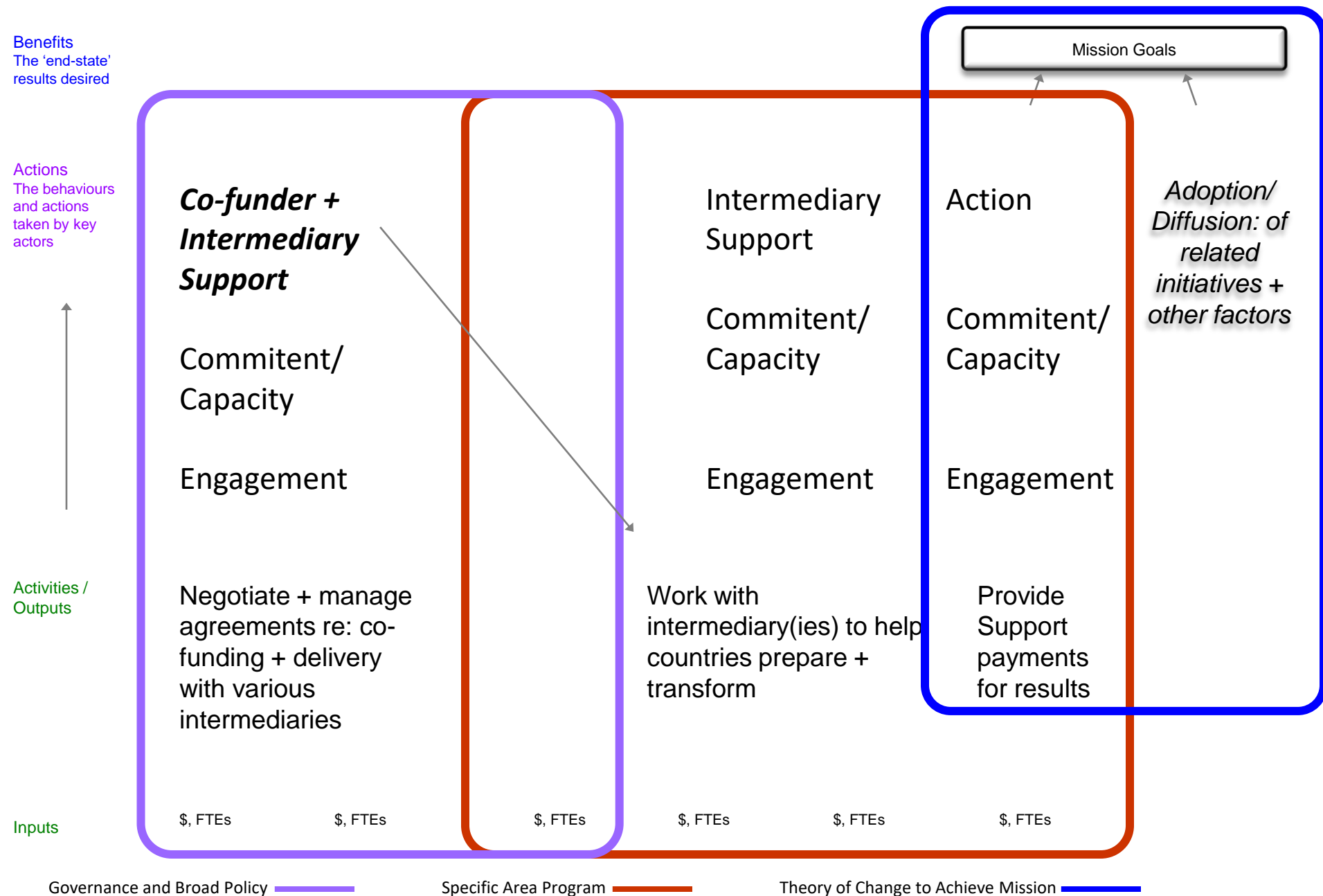
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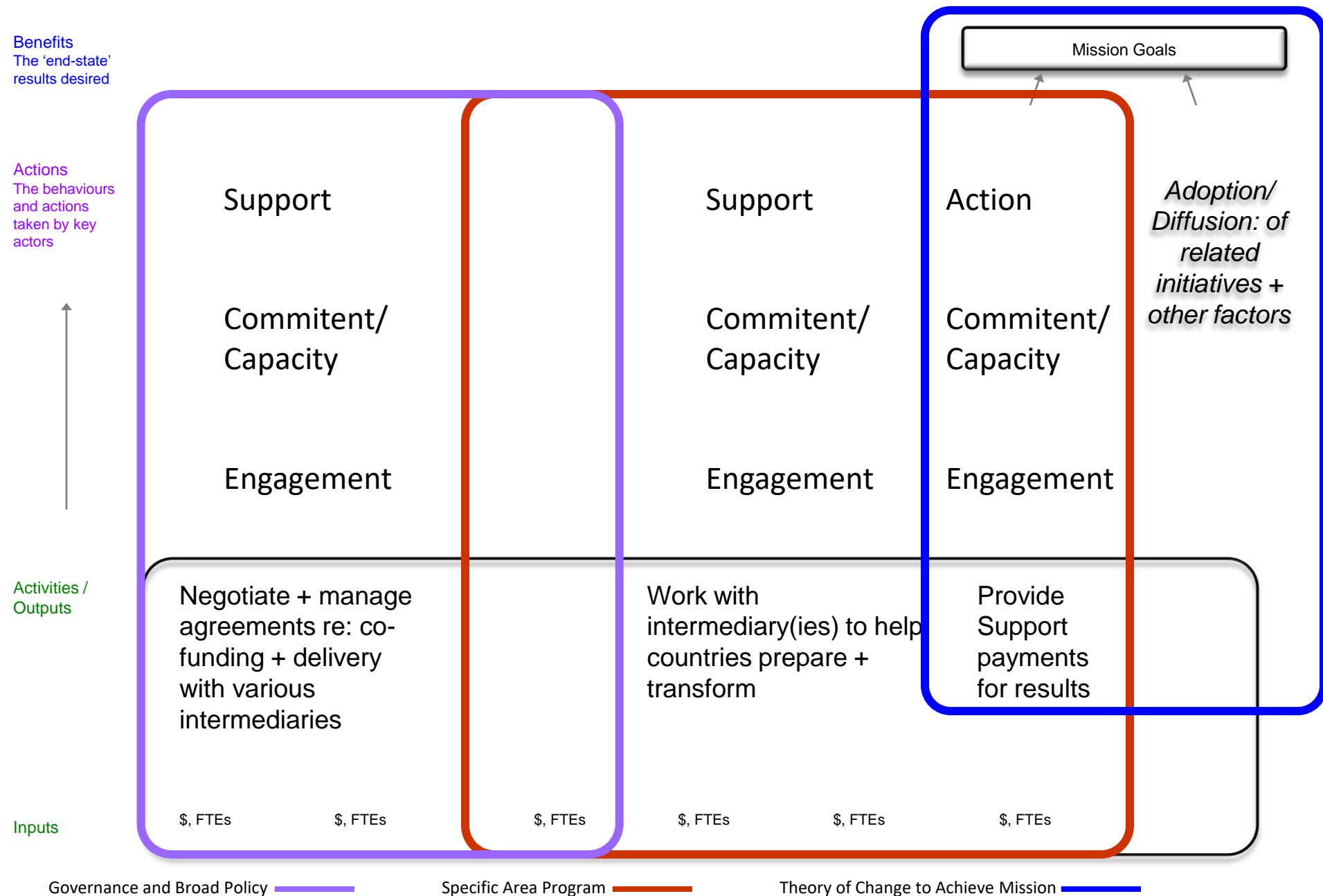
Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program

Simplified Model of Policy and Program Delivery



Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program

Simplified Model of Policy and Program Delivery



Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program Theory for Policy and Program Delivery

Gaps in
practices +
ultimate
outcomes

Mission Goals

Establishment
•Implementation of
related policy
•Public, private and
third sector
(sustained) support
•Payment for
results

Capacity built and
established to fully
implement results
payments

Constructive 'good
faith' reactions to
assistance and
use of assistance
across key actors

Engagement of
key actors re:
results payments
and processes

Support
established for
payments for
results

Strategy, Management and Learning

\$, FTEs

Benefits
The 'end-state'
results desired

Actions
The behaviours and
actions taken by key
actors

Capacity
The abilities,
capabilities and
commitments of key
actors

Reactions
The reactions and
responses by those
engaged

Engagement
Nature and extent
of groups engaged

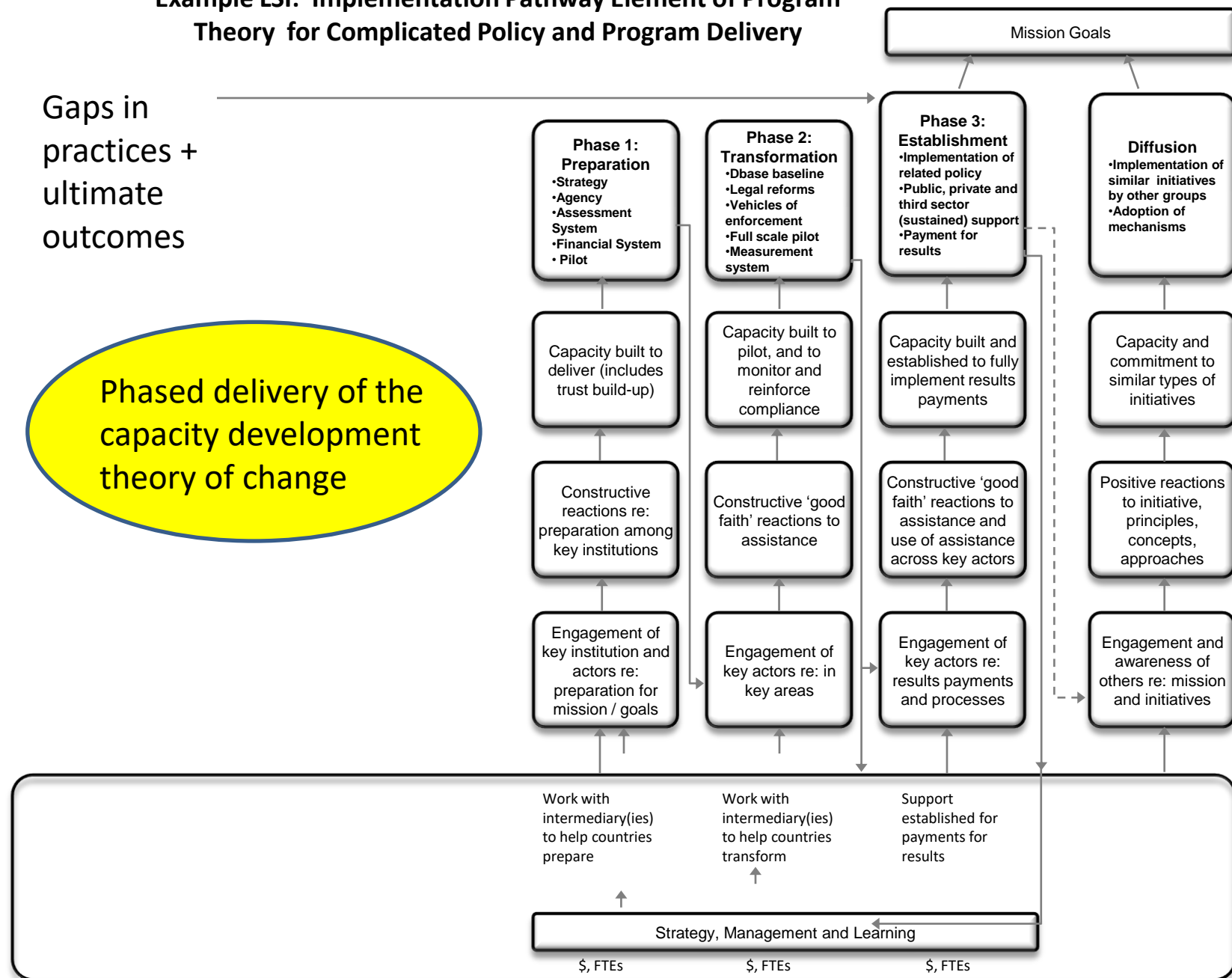
Activities /
Outputs

Inputs

Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program Theory for Complicated Policy and Program Delivery

Gaps in
practices +
ultimate
outcomes

Phased delivery of the
capacity development
theory of change



Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program

Theory for Complicated Policy and Program Delivery

Benefits
The 'end-state'
results desired

Actions
The behaviours and
actions taken by key
actors

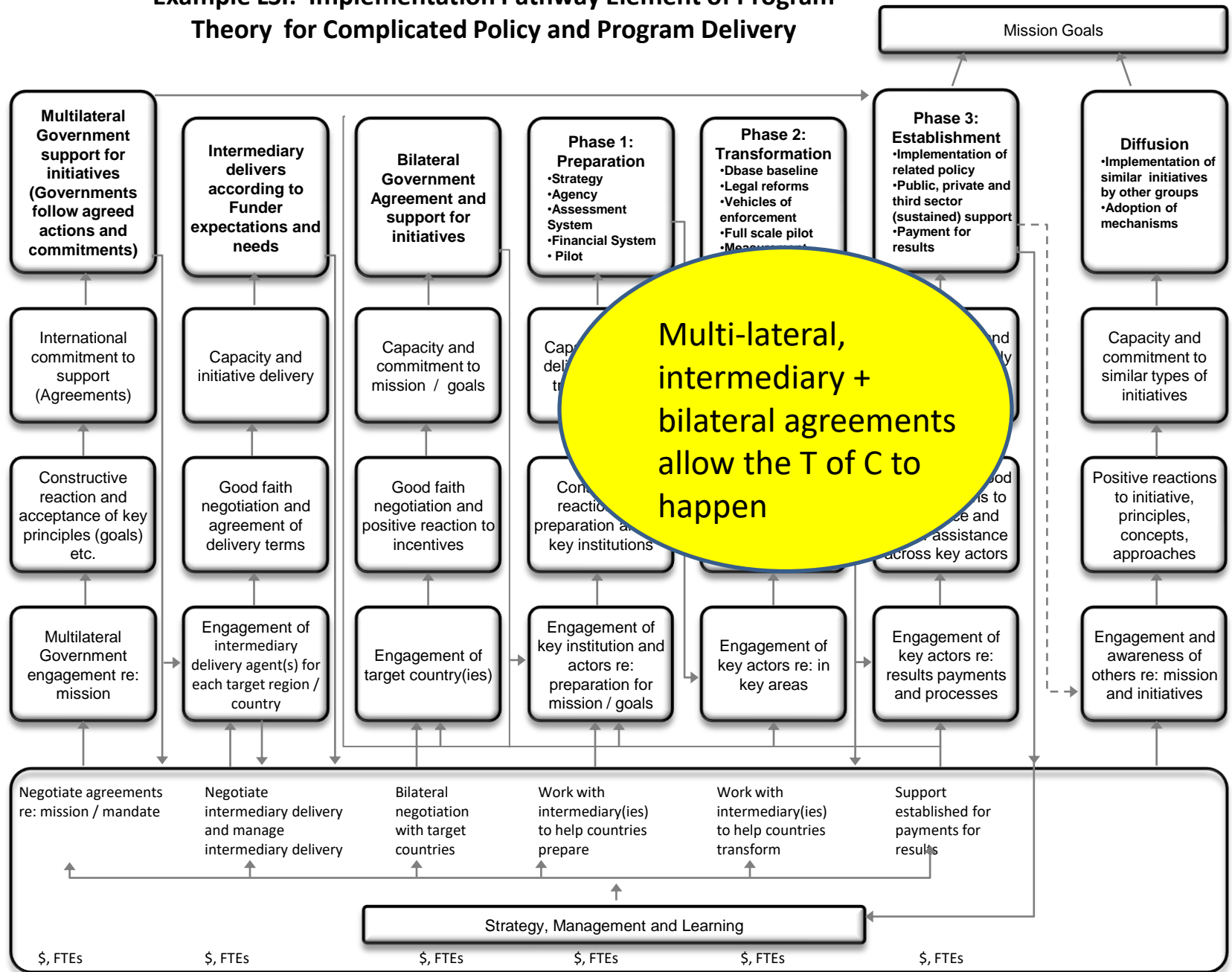
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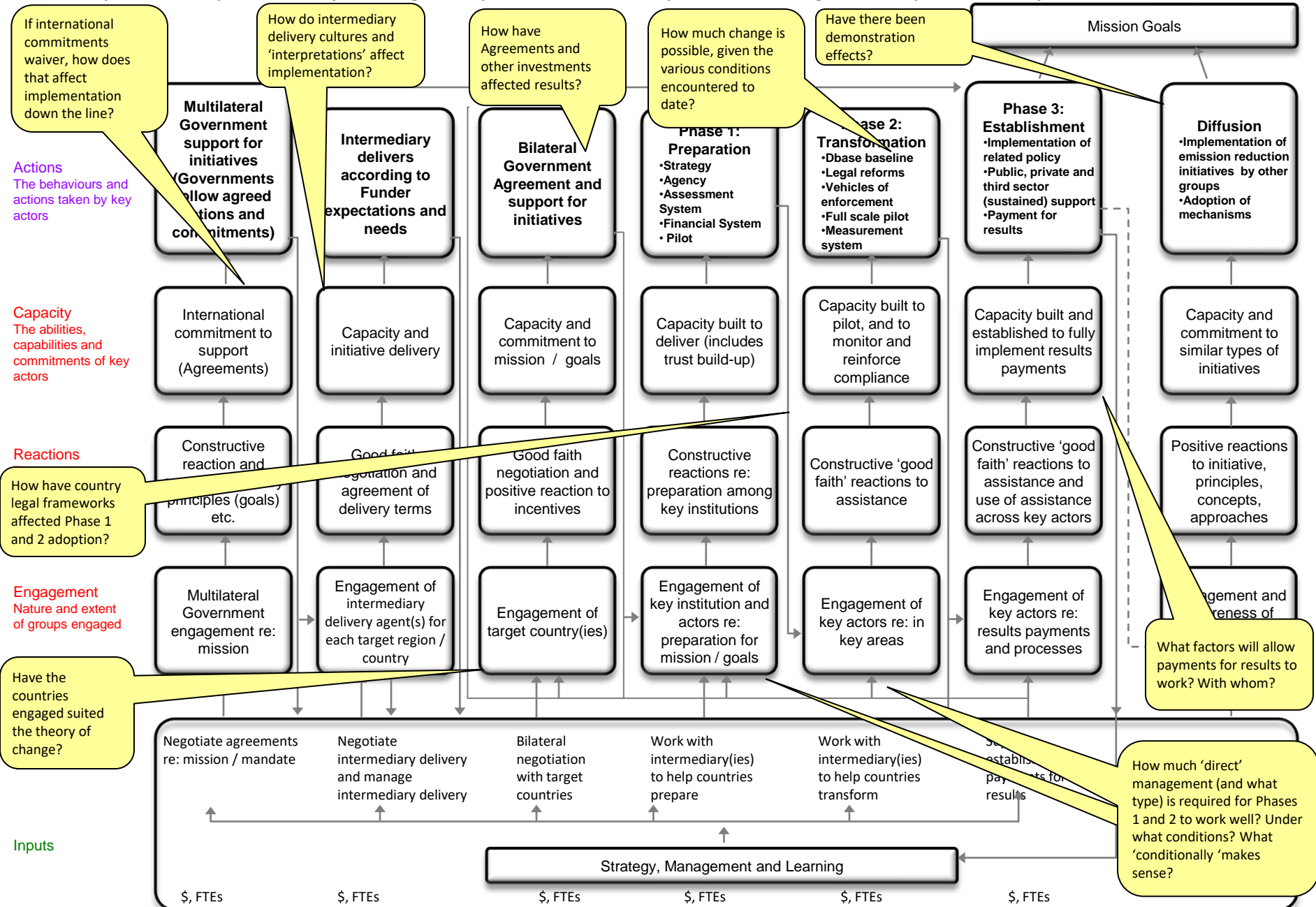
Engagement
Nature and extent
of groups engaged

**Activities /
Outputs**

Inputs



Example LSI : Complicated Policy and Program Implementation Pathway Elements of Program Theory: Selected Key Factors and Questions



Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program

Theory for Complicated Policy and Program Delivery

Benefits
The 'end-state'
results desired

Actions
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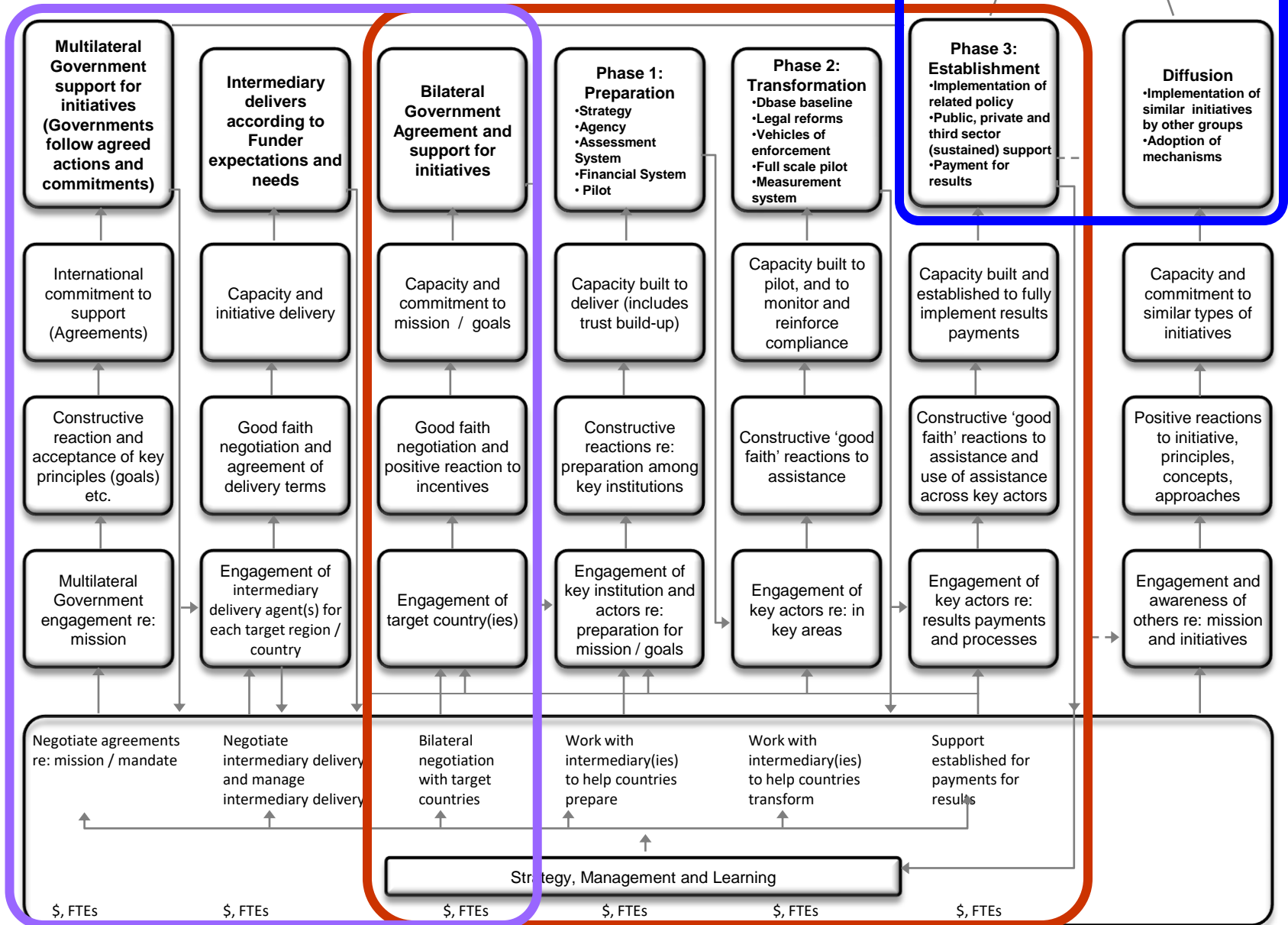
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**Activities /
Outputs**

Inputs



Governance and Broad Policy

Specific Area Program

Theory of Change to Achieve Mission

Example LSI: Implementation Pathway Element of Program

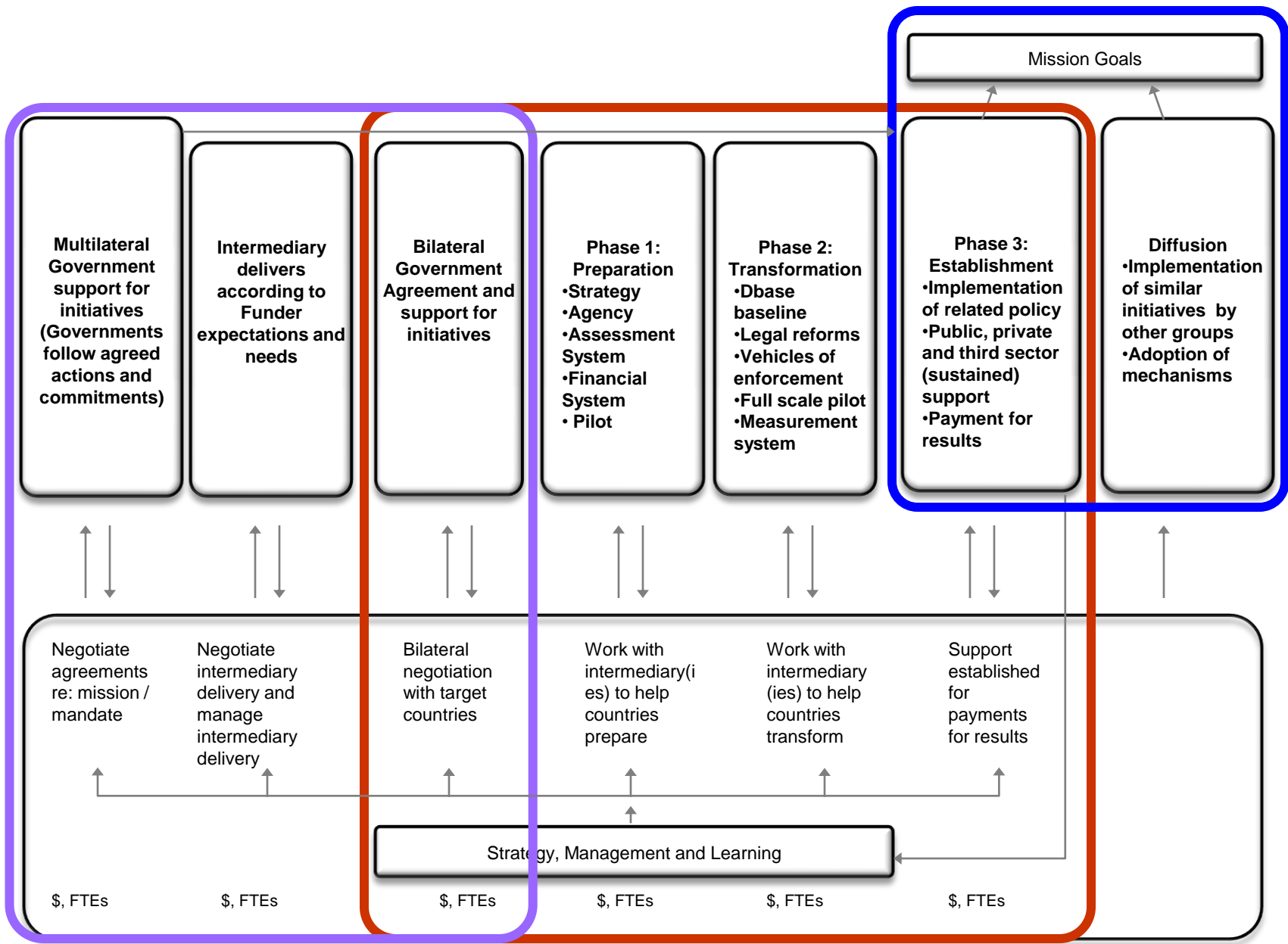
Simplified Model of Policy and Program Delivery

Benefits
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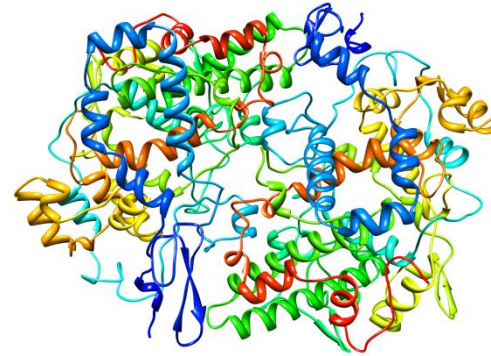


Governance and Broad Policy

Specific Area Program

Theory of Change to Achieve Mission

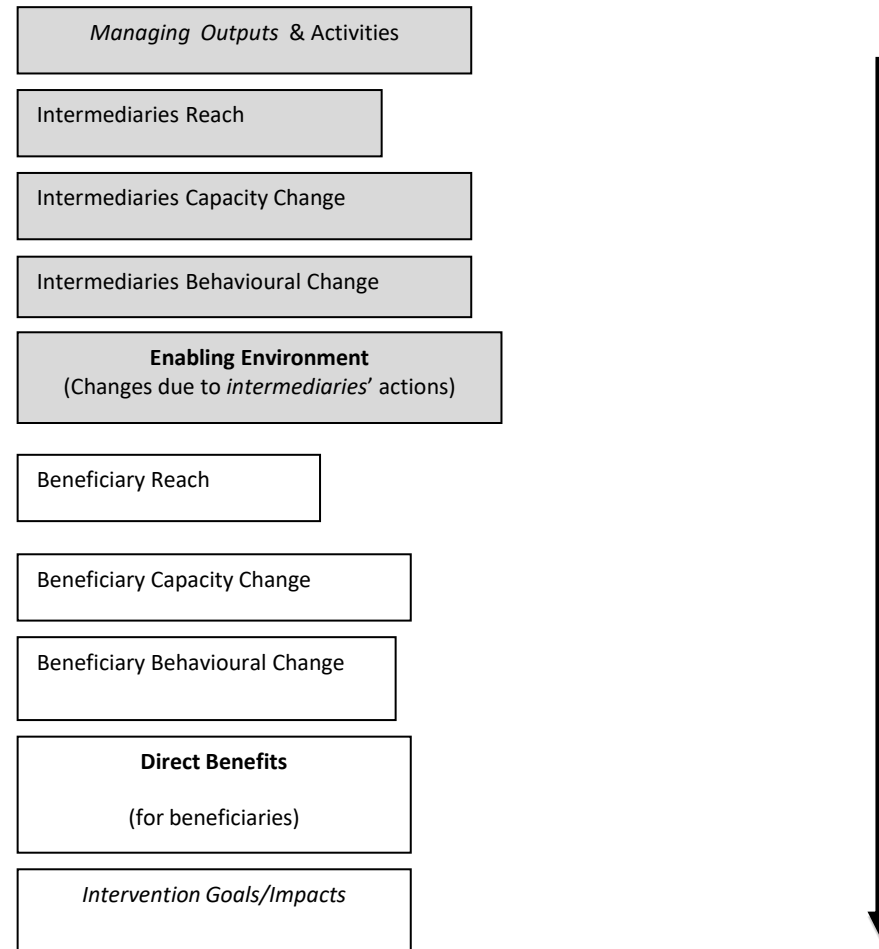
Ok .. It's
complicated...



Can we make it
simpler to
understand
without making it
simple minded?



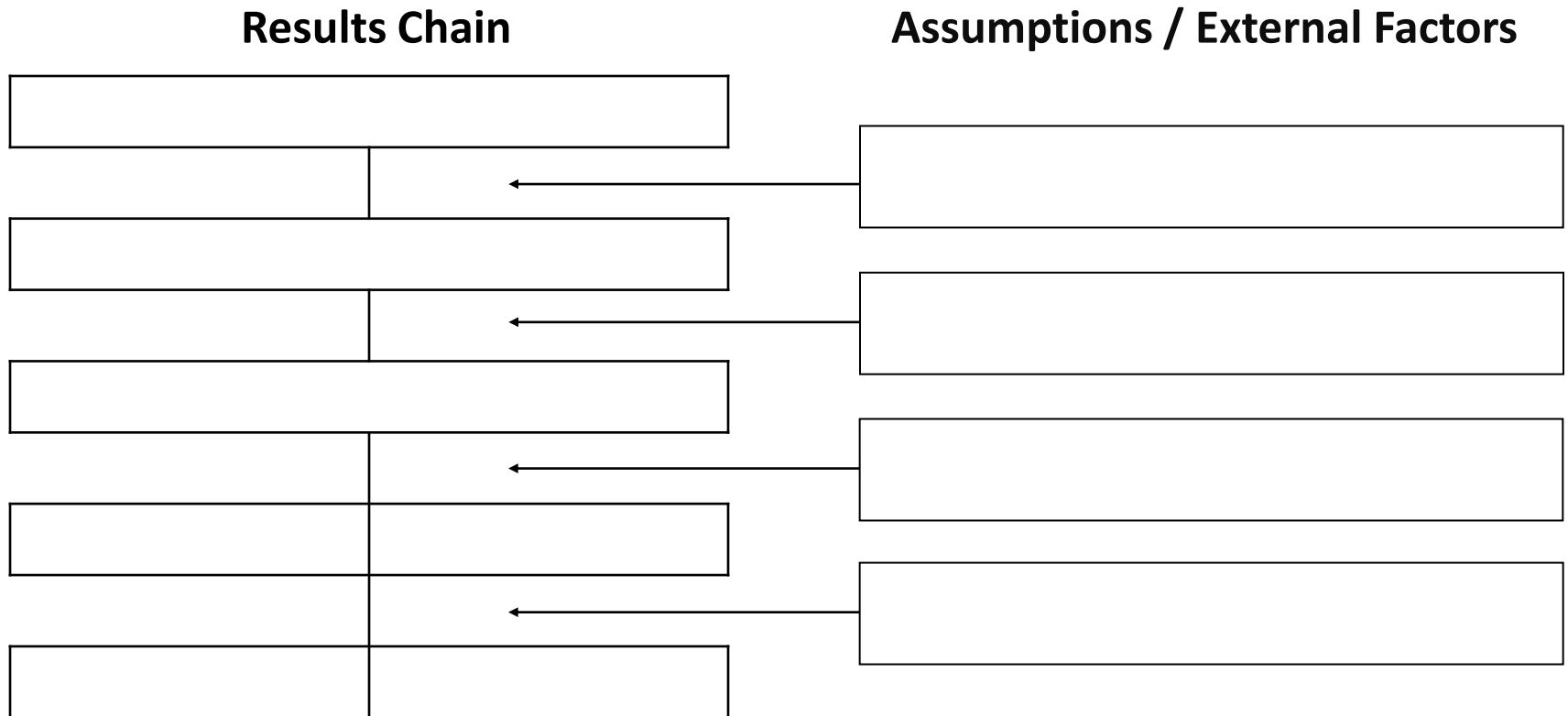
line basic elements up to form a Linear flowchart



Six Steps For Contribution Analysis

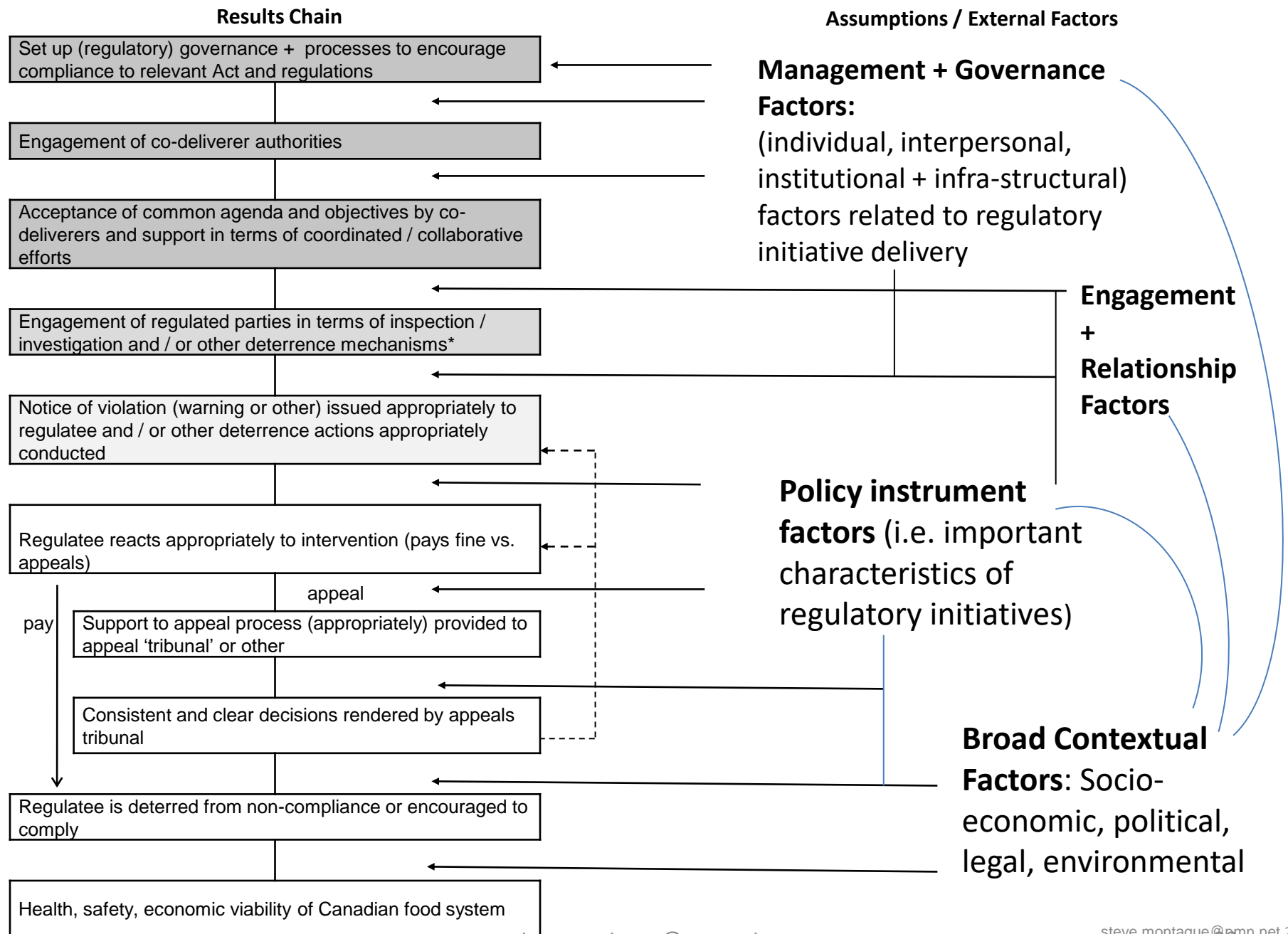
- 1: Set out the attribution problem to be addressed
- 2: Develop a theory of change and risks to it using existing effectiveness evidence
- 3: Assemble the contribution story
- 4: Assess the performance story
- 5: Seek out additional evidence
- 6: Revise and strengthen the contribution story

This sets up the: **Contribution Analysis Approach**



Sources: Mayne (various 1999 - 2012), Government of Canada Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts + Practices (2012)

RP EXAMPLE: Broad Categories of Assumptions + Factors Applied to a Results Chain (Regulatory Program)

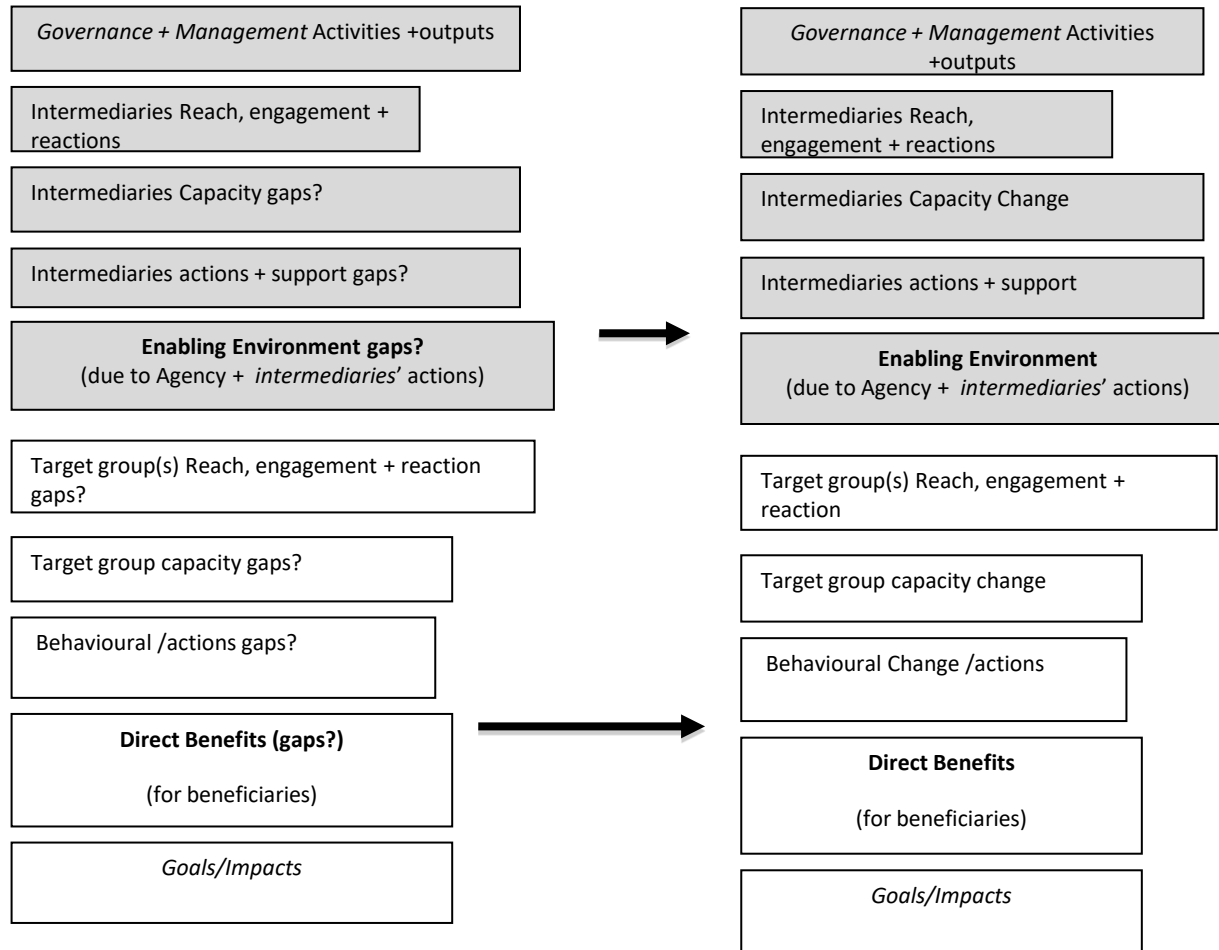


*Deterrence mechanisms could include information, consultations, programs, commercial or criminal sanctions / prosecutions, licence revocation or other actions intended to influence behaviour.

Summary of the Process

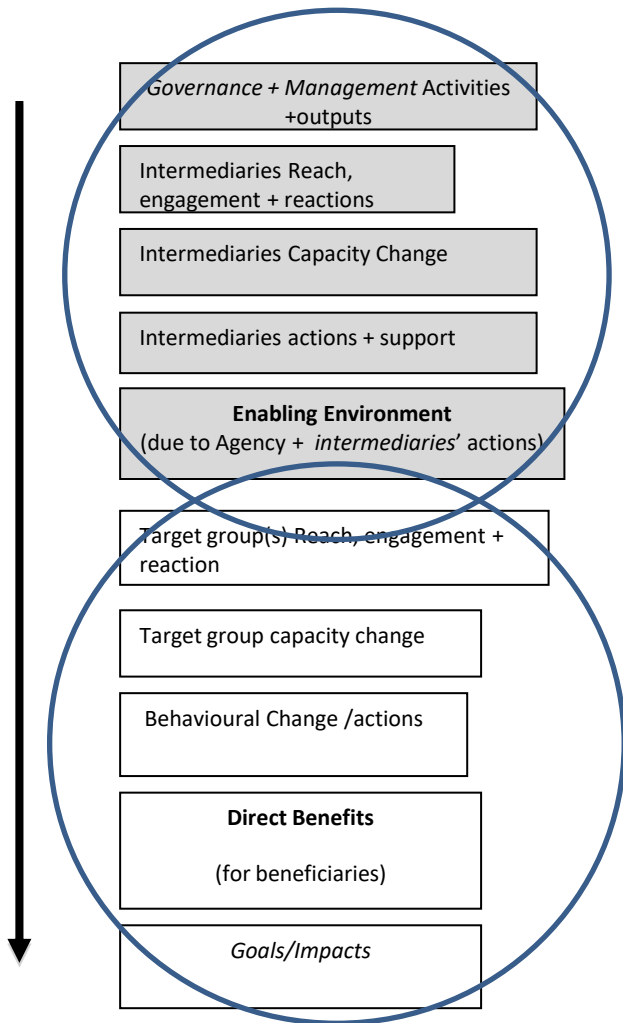
- Needs to Results
- Theories of Implementation and Change
- Set up Evaluation Design
- Synthesis-Analysis-Synthesis

1. Consider Needs to Results



■ Implementation Theory □ Change Theory

2. Establish Theories of Implementation + Change



Theories

Reasoned action theories
But also: empowerment, diffusion, socio ecological, network + various engagement theory notions + ideas

Engagement (relationship) theories followed by reasoned action theories - bolstered by empowerment, diffusion, socio ecological, network theories
PLUS theories related to policy instruments (i.e. carrots, sermons + sticks: e.g. deterrence pyramid, or pay for results) micro-economic theories, broader policy change theories etc.

Assumptions + factors

Public Management + Governance

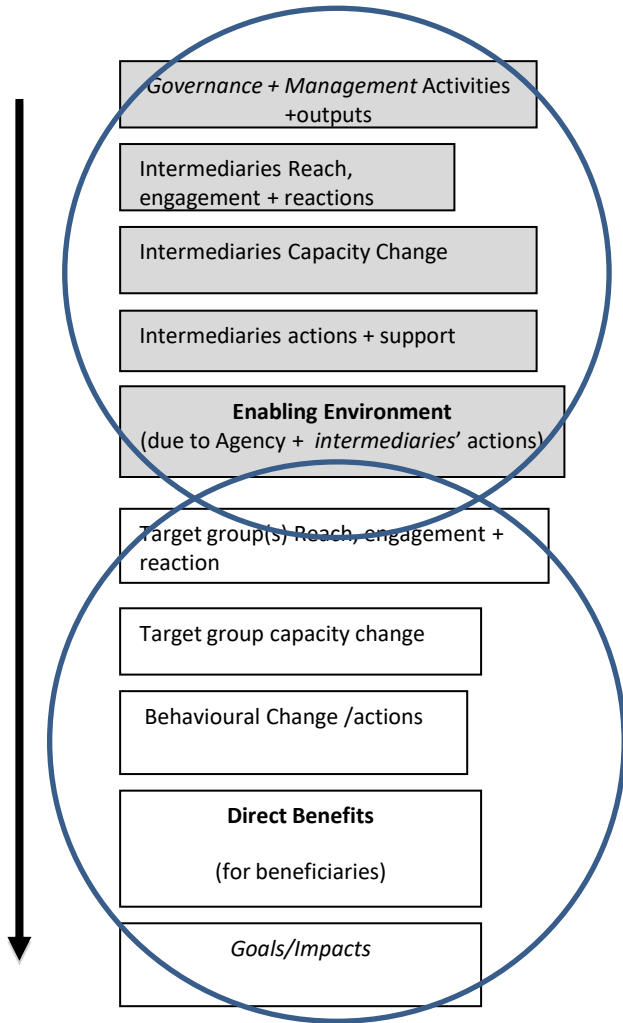
Internal + intermediary engagement

External target group engagement

Policy instrument factors

Broad contextual factors

3. Setup Basic Evaluation Design



Approaches

Authorities, governance + management review of plans and process flows. Independent observations of compliance (+other actions) re: internal processes, systems + procedures. Engagement assessment + internal stakeholder perspective on policy, program and initiative roles clarity, responsibilities etc.

Engagement analysis of the level and content of interactions among stakeholder and target groups as assessed quantitatively and qualitatively vs. expectations, history and/or established norms.

Observed or self assessed changes to perceptions, attitudes, commitments and actions

Realistic Contribution analysis

Specialized socio-economic and or policy area assessment

steve.montague@pmn.net

Sources

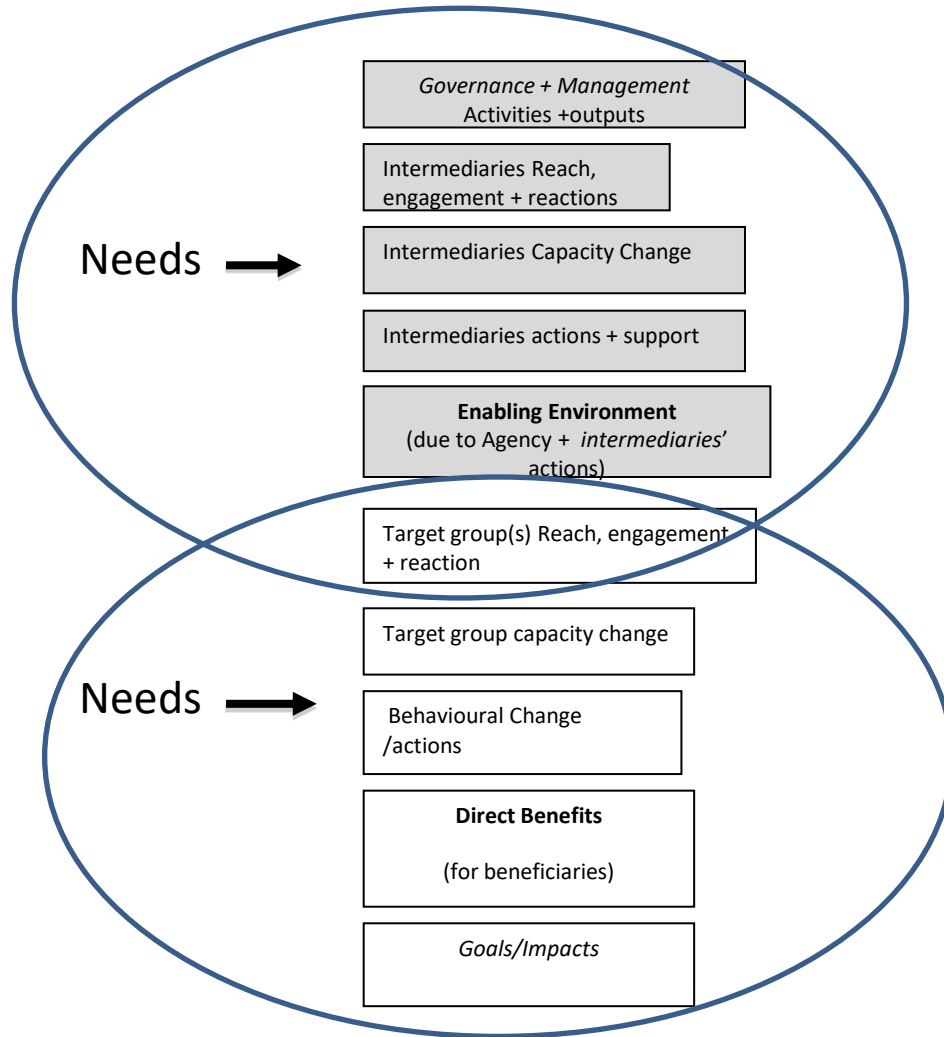
Plans, priority setting documents, governance records, MOUs, meeting and decision records, project files, internal + intermediary stakeholders at all levels. Source docs could include past reviews, audits, studies etc.

Correspondence, meeting attendance, web interactions, social media contact and content,

Consultations interviews + surveys with representative stakeholders

Specialized CB or CE studies, policy analysis of broader changes + impacts

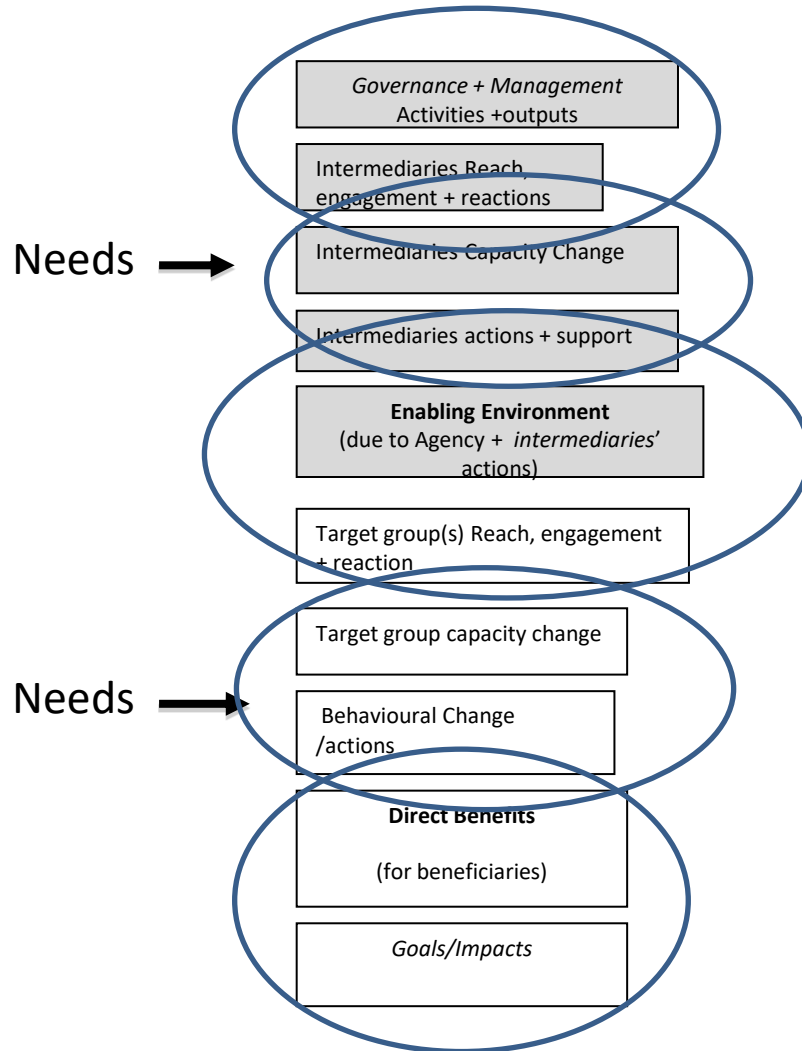
4. *Synthesis* – Analysis – Synthesis:



Look at past documentation to examine the needs – both for the actual changes or actions to be influenced and for the Agency to do something. Describe the initiative in terms of *both* implementation (action) *and* the theory of change leading to overall benefits or desirable outcomes.

Draw from historical learning about this kind of theory of change and this kind of implementation to develop the results chain logic and to identify key factors and assumptions which have been found to be important for success.

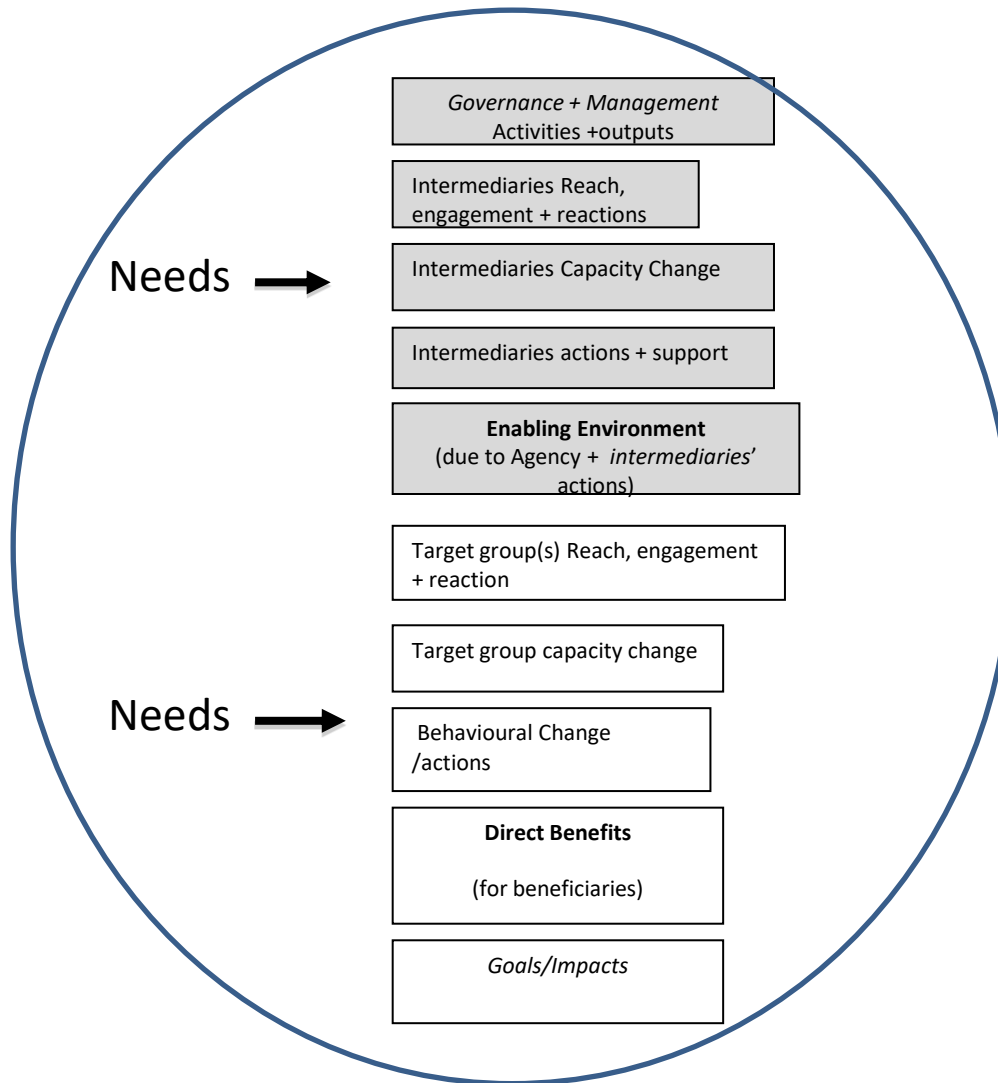
4. Synthesis – *Analysis* – Synthesis:



Examine theories of change sequentially and analytically to determine whether key expected patterns of behavior are followed and the transitions from one result to the next have occurred and if so whether they can be plausibly explained by the program actions and results which precede it. Use key informants and sources close to each section to help in the analysis.

Note that multiple lines of evidence + specialized expertise may be brought to bare in different areas of the results chain.

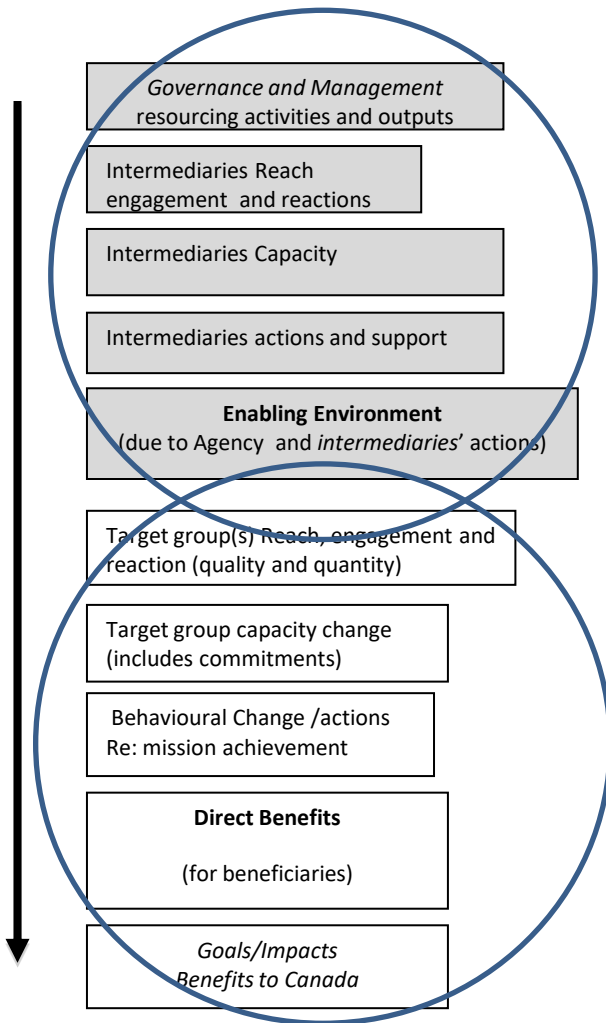
4. Synthesis – Analysis – *Synthesis* :



Bring the findings back into a synthesis, working with key informants and stakeholders in a participative fashion. Address systems thinking and 'double-loop' learning questions as well as accountability, value-for-\$ and contribution assessment questions.

The key is that the synthesis should produce *insights* as well simply findings. The goal is to explain, not just relative contribution and success, but to help explain why results occurred the way they did and to bring forward strategic, tactical and operational lessons to be applied going forward.

FP EXAMPLE: Findings by Area



Assumptions and factors

Findings

Public Management and Governance

- Resourcing relatively consistent, but varies with different regional partner linkages affecting initiatives, in some cases complicated funding arrangements from multiple parties leads to fragmentation, lack of strategic management and reporting burden
- Consolidated applications have created efficiencies for the traditionally strong players in traditional sectors

Internal and intermediary engagement

- Intermediary capacity improved and integrated for traditional product-market sector areas. May have actually reduced for newer areas featuring smaller enterprises
- Intermediaries and others appreciate Initiative staff and role in mobilizing multiple groups in key opportunity areas

External target group engagement

- External target groups in traditional areas well engaged. Engagement in newer, innovative sectors very limited

Policy instrument factors related to advisory, information and education programs

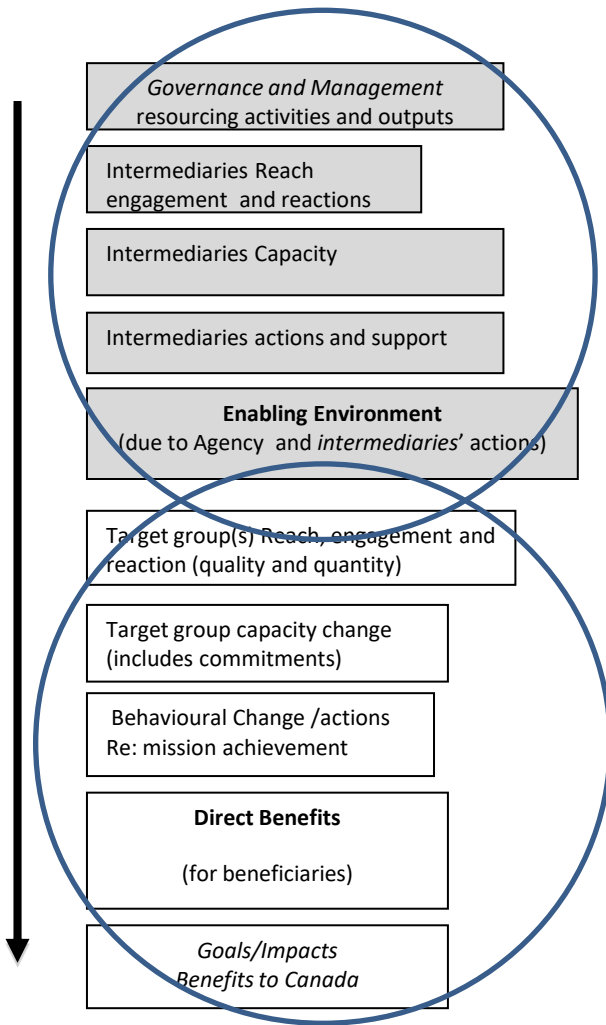
- Multiple complementary initiatives key – especially for more mature sector areas. Includes links to non-program players in other agencies

Broad contextual factors

- Pricing and exchange rates, competitor positioning, non-tariff barriers and alternative products positioning combined with the nature of the sector and market/sector cultural factors greatly influence progress to success.

☐ Implementation Theory ☐ Change Theory

FP Example: 'Systems' Findings When Implementation Linked to Change Theory



Assumptions and factors

Public Management and Governance

- Resourcing relatively consistent, but varies with different regional partner linkages affecting initiatives, in some cases complicated funding arrangements from multiple parties leads to fragmentation, lack of strategic management and reporting burden
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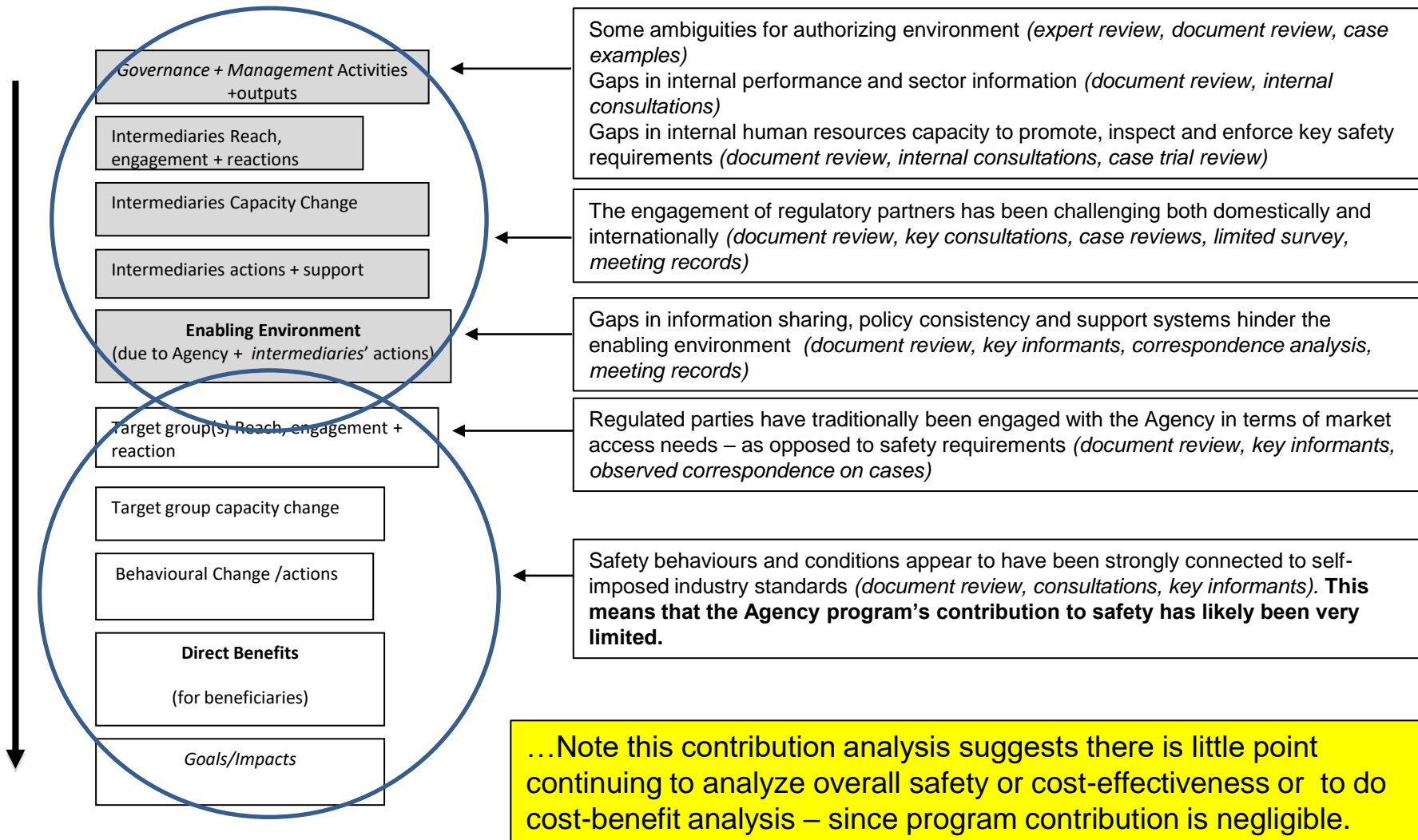
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Findings suggest 'success to the successful' systems result.

EXAMPLE MRP: Summary Reporting – Stall along the chain



An explanatory compendium for complex programmes (Pawson, Ray 2006 Evidence-based Policy A Realist Perspective)

Program theories – how is the programme supposed to work?

Reasoning and reactions of stakeholders – are there differences in the understanding of the programme theory?

Integrity of the implementation chain – is the programme theory applied consistently and cumulatively?

Negotiation and feedback in implementation – does the programme theory tend to bend in actual usage?

Contextual influences – does the programme theory fare better with particular individuals, interpersonal relations, institutions and infrastructures?

History of the programme and relationships with other policies – does the policy apparatus surrounding the theory advance or impede it?

Multiple, unintended, long-term effects – is the theory self-affirming or self-defeating or self-neutralizing?

Conclusions

- Useful Theory of Change Model *Can be useful* for complex interventions if we :
 - Use a participative approach
 - Keep diagrams ‘manageable’ (consistent model)
 - Do homework and build on research
 - Conduct Synthesis – Analysis – Synthesis

Basic Value Proposition / System Strategy Map

WHY we exist

(Broad system – indirect influence)

Safe, healthy and accessible food supply, risks to food minimized

WHO we reach
and

WHAT we want
(Agency sphere of direct influence)

**Governing,
Regulatory Bodies +
Support**

Constructive
engagement,
information sharing
and supportive actions

**Industry
Representatives & Value
Chain**

Engagement, support,
compliance and risk
management practice

**Canadians and
Consumer Associations**

Awareness,
understanding, support
and appropriate food
consumption

HOW we operate

(Agency sphere of control)

Activities

Risk oriented, consistent, high quality programs, operations and science support

Surveillance, inspection and enforcement systems

Inputs

Agency authorities, \$, people and other assets

Basic Value Proposition / System Strategy Map (with example indicators)

WHY we exist

(Broad system – indirect influence)

Safe, healthy and accessible food supply, risks to food minimized

WHO we reach and

WHAT we want
(Agency sphere of direct influence)

- % of collective activities and outputs:
 - Per plan (time and budget)
 - According to agreed standards
 - Viewed as sufficient by key stakeholders
- Level of information sharing

Governing, Regulatory Bodies + Support

Constructive engagement, information sharing and supportive actions

Industry Representatives & Value Chain

Engagement, support, compliance and risk management practice

- % appropriate registration / licence applications etc.
- % of compliance to relevant standards
- Level of observed risk management practice and performance beyond compliance
- Level of information sharing

Canadians and Consumer Associations

Awareness, understanding, support and appropriate food consumption

- Level of key messaging and type of communications re: info sharing
- Level of self reported / observed actions re: food safety

- Level of food borne illness
- Level of (healthy) food access

HOW we operate

(Agency sphere of control)

Activities

Inputs

Risk oriented, consistent, high quality programs, operations and science support

Surveillance, inspection and enforcement systems

Agency authorities, \$, people and other assets

- % of activities and outputs:
 - Per plan (time)
 - According to internal standards
 - On budget
- Level of information sharing (with all key stakeholders)