Theory of Change Checklist

A Theory of Change (TOC) must include the following elements or meet the following conditions:	Yes	No	Note further actions needed
DIAGRAM ELEMENTS[1]			
General			
1. An overall **goal**, stated as a completed condition or state of being in the general population (not a sub-group)[2]			
2. **All pre-conditions** needed to achieve the goal, are described, including:			
a) **Outcomes**: Purposes; Sub-purposes; intermediate outcomes			
b) **Outputs**: include all outputs from interventions promised in the Award document, e.g., one-off assessments, studies, events, etc.			
c) **Assumptions:** outputs, conditions, and outcomes outside the activity's scope of influence that are backed by sufficient evidence. See 20-24 for more detail. (There should be no assumptions about participant motivation, openness, willingness, etc. These should be addressed by interventions.)			
• includes **outputs and outcomes by other actors**			
• includes key contextual conditions			
3. **Rationales** that support the likelihood of connections/changes along a pathway (*required* when reason for expected change is not clear to readers)			
4. Integration of **cross-cutting areas** (i.e., gender, environment, community participation, sustainability, and conflict-sensitivity)			
a) As a cross-cutting purpose diagram; or			
b) As represented in the wording of the outcomes and outputs in the diagrams (e.g., "gender-equitable", "climate change sensitive", "inclusive", "conflict-sensitive"); or			
c) Other representation in diagram			

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[1] Elements include all components of the TOC diagram (i.e., outputs, outcomes, sub-purposes, purposes, goal, assumptions, rationales, directional arrows).

[2] This is true for development activities. Goals for emergency or resilience activities (probably in a context experiencing or recovering from an emergency) that address the needs of a population that is highly dynamic, e.g., displaced populations in contexts where there is on-going movement, may state a condition in a sub-group of that population in a geographic area.

Pathways			
5. All elements are portrayed in logical sequence, using directional arrows, showing the causal pathways that follow through from outputs, to outcomes, to the goal.			
6. No precondition leading to an outcome represents a component of the subsequent outcome. (For example, "Household members wash their hands at critical times" should *not be* represented as a precondition for the outcome "All household members apply good health practices". Instead, a measure of handwashing would be an indicator for the outcome related to good health practices.)			
7. All causal pathways start from an activity output *or* a condition that is outside the influence of the activity (i.e., an assumed condition, including outcomes produced by external actors) and connect to the goal.			
8. Assumptions that are not an output or outcome of a clearly identifiable external actor (e.g., they may relate to weather or general economic/security conditions) are clearly linked to a TOC element or the part of the TOC diagram to which they are critical.			
Format			
9. All elements are stated as completed, measurable states of being or results, not processes.[3] Adjectives that reflect only incremental change, like "Increased", "Improved", "More", "Less", are avoided and do not appear in the goal or purposes.			
10. Different shapes, colors, shading, numbers, or font size distinguish the different elements of the TOC.			
a) Outputs, intermediate outcomes, purposes, sub-purposes, assumptions, and rationales are clearly distinguishable			
b) Elements outside the control of the activity (e.g., outcomes produced by other actors) are clearly distinguishable from those affected by the activity and from other types of assumptions.			
c) Elements that are repeated from another page of the TOC and connectors that show causal pathways that flow between the diagrams are easily recognized.			
11. A key that explains the significance of different shapes, colors, shading, or font sizes appears on every page of the TOC diagram.			
12. The TOC includes a single-page, all-inclusive diagram in addition to pages for purpose or sub-purpose level detailed diagrams.			
13. Causal pathways that flow between TOC diagrams are easy to follow and understand, with consistent use of associated shapes, colors, fonts, etc. across diagrams.			
a) The elements at either end of cross-purpose linkages across pages are shown clearly on both pages, and the common/repeated element is highlighted (See 5, above).			

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[3] For example, "Households have continuous access to nutritious food."

NARRATIVE			
General			
14. Does not repeat <u>anything</u> that is already clearly presented in the TOC diagrams. (It does not begin with a summary of the TOC.)			
15. Does not present the problem analysis. (This should be presented in the proposal or other activity documents).			
16. The links between references in the TOC diagram(s) and the details in the narrative are easy to follow. The detail of the assumptions or rationales from the diagrams can be quickly and easily located in the narrative.			
17. Discussion of how the activity addresses **cross-cutting areas** (i.e., gender, environment, community participation, sustainability, and conflict-sensitivity) is included throughout the narrative, as needed. See 25-29 for more detail.			
Rationales			
18. Includes full explanations of the rationales that support the connections between pre-conditions and outcomes that are not obvious to the average reader and not fully presented in the diagram.			
19. Provides text, web links, or other references to research and literature that supports the rationales.			
Assumptions/preconditions outside of the activity's control			
20. Adds necessary detail and evidence to support assumptions.			
21. Discusses the likelihood that the assumptions will remain true through the activity's lifetime.			
22. Identifies sources of risk to assumptions, and, when risk is high, presents contingency measures that might be activated to assure that the conditions required by the assumption are met at the time needed.			
23. Describes how outcomes/outputs of actors or environmental circumstances outside the activity will be realized, including:			
a) Identity of the actors			
b) The scale of the external intervention relative to activity's coverage			
c) The expected level of activity collaboration with external actors			
d) The approximate timing when the external outcome/output is anticipated and will be required			
e) How the outcomes/outputs of other actors will be monitored			
f) The likelihood other actors will achieve designated outcomes			
g) The risks to the activity if external outcomes/outputs are not realized in time			
24. Clarifies how targeting a limited number of direct participants will result in sustained population-level changes, if necessary.			

INTEGRATION OF CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: All areas (i.e., gender, environment, community participation, sustainability, and conflict-sensitivity) are evident across the TOC, in the diagrams or in the narrative.			
25. The TOC addresses **gender**-equity and considerations to act in gender-responsive ways. Wherever the activity intends to incorporate gender-sensitivity in implementation:			
a) Do TOC statements reflect how the activity intends to address various genders differently? or;			
b) Does the TOC diagram use a visually distinguishable color/shape/font to show that the gender of the participants/beneficiaries will be considered separately?			
26. The TOC shows intent to protect or enhance the natural **environment,** and all assumptions and issues uncovered by the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) are addressed.			
27. The TOC demonstrates where and how the **participation** of members from the communities and sub-groups within the communities (e.g., age, livelihood group, geographic location) are critical to the TOC.			
28. The TOC indicates, particularly in the narrative, how the outcomes will be **sustained** beyond the life of the activity (not just achieved by activity end). Does the TOC reflect the activities' approach to ensuring conditions are in place to sustain outcomes, including:			
a) Necessary resources?			
b) Access to capacity building?			
c) Continued motivation of beneficiaries and service providers?			
d) Established linkages between critical actors to maintain resources and services?			
29. In accordance with a "**Do No Harm**" approach, the TOC shows the ways that the activity interventions and their implementation are sensitive to potential sources of conflict and unintended negative outcomes of interventions.			