



Top Tips



Setting clear outcomes

Mission and Values

This guide will be useful for: organisations that want to ensure their work and activities are focused on achieving their mission.

What you want to achieve:

Your organisation is clear about what change it is trying to achieve and how it will measure success, giving greater focus to your work. 

What you'll need:

Your 'thinking cap' 

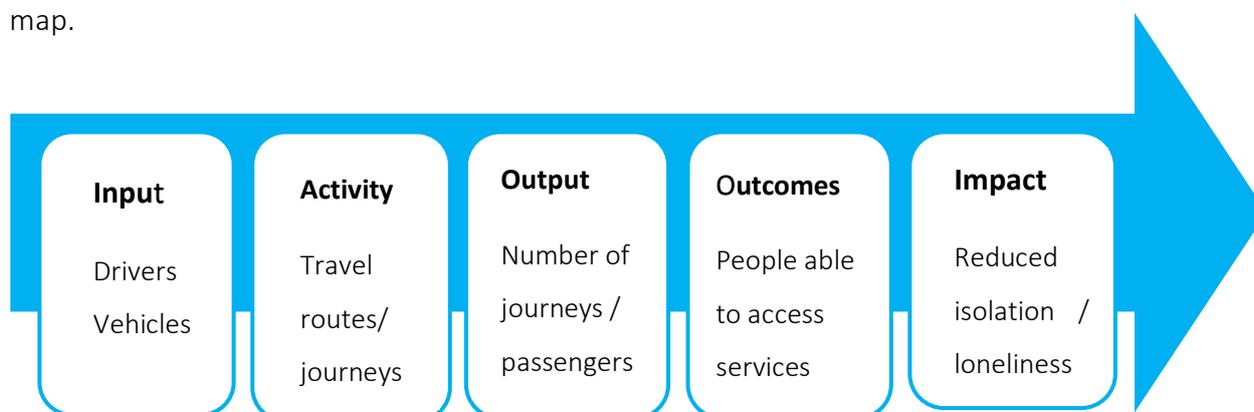
Theory of Change information 

Understanding of your vision and mission 

How you'll do it:

- **Outcomes are the real-life economic, social and / or environmental improvements** that you seek to achieve from your project.
- **Outcomes can be about actual improvements** in quality of life, such as whether people are getting jobs, whether health is improved or whether they are less isolated. **Or they can be about structures** that will facilitate wider benefits over time e.g. has a partnership been established, does it have inclusive representation, is it functioning well, are communities able to influence decisions? **Or they can be about capacities:** whether people are more confident and involved, whether community groups and organisations are able to work together.

- **Each outcome needs to be measured by a specific suite of indicators.** How will you measure the changes your project will bring about, both in the short and long-term? How will you know if the project is going well? What information will you need to gather to monitor your project? How often will you need to gather it?
- **The value of outcomes is that they clarify purpose, guide what evidence to collect, and strengthen partnerships and communication.** Many projects have lost their way through being unclear as to what practical achievable changes they expected to make.
- Express your outcomes in **'SMART'** terms. **SMART** is an acronym that refers to: **Specific** (the way you express your outcome must target the issue you were concerned with precisely), **Measurable** (express your outcome in a measurable form), **Achievable** (need to 'stretch' the organisation and get the best outcome possible for the resources invested yet still be achievable), **Realistic** (you need to set outcomes that are within reach), and **Timebound** (making clear by when the objective is to be achieved).
- **'Impact practice'** is what an organisation does to plan, understand, communicate and improve its impact. **This follows a 4-step cycle: Plan** (plan how to create the desired impact) **Do** (measure your performance against clear goals) **Assess** (make sense of the data you collect) **Review** (communicate the results, and learn how to improve work).
- **Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects** that result from what the project offers or provides.
- **Outputs are the products, services or facilities** that result from an organisation's or project's activities. For example, workshops, leaflets, casework sessions or a brokerage service.
- **'Theory of change'** is a very useful tool for considering outcomes: a process for thinking about an organisation's or project's 'story', logically linking target group, activities, outcomes and impact. **It encourages people to consider how change happens in the short, medium and long-term to achieve the intended impact.** Theory of change is often associated with some sort of visual map.



- Be clear about what you are trying to achieve, for whom, and why. Only then will you be able to assess whether your planned sequence of activities can be expected to create the desired results. This is also the first step towards deciding what data to collect, so you can use the results to judge **to what extent you've caused change on the ground**.
 - **Who will you share your learning with?** It may have a wider relevance beyond your own organisation.
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Connecting Communities in Wales

This top tips guide was put together as part of the Connecting Communities in Wales project run by the Community Transport Association. The project is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and aims to support community transport in Wales through creating new partnerships, bringing funding into the sector and creating new transport networks.

Find out more at ctauk.org/cciw