

Evaluation planning guide: Logic Models and Evaluability Assessments

Who is this guide for?



Anyone working in the health and care sector and looking to design an evaluation that captures the implementation and impact of a service or innovation will find this guide helpful.

About this guide



This evaluation planning guide is part of a series of resources offering advice on the design, delivery and evaluation of service innovation projects. Our first resource – **Your get started guide** – outlines activities to consider when setting up a project. This second resource introduces two activities to consider when you're designing an evaluation: developing a logic model and conducting an evaluability assessment (EA).

Decisions on the type of outcome data to collect, whom it should be collected from, and how and when to collect it are crucial elements of evaluation design and require collaboration across different stakeholder groups.

This guide provides a brief introduction to each topic with links to relevant resources that detail how to carry out each activity.

Why are these activities important?



Both logic models and EAs are robust activities that will aid your evaluation.

Completing these two activities will help you to:

- adequately plan the evaluation by understanding its feasibility
- highlight possible challenges early in the design process and therefore reduce unnecessary delays
- effectively describe what the service or innovation intends to change and how it will do this
- build a case for ongoing service delivery, funding or resources

A logic model will help you to create a shared understanding among stakeholders of what's included in delivering the innovation or service, whom it will involve and why it should lead to a change in outcomes, as well as what the anticipated outcomes are in the short, medium and long term.

Conducting an EA will help make sure that the evaluation runs smoothly and you only collect data relevant to the project.

When should these activities be done and how long will it take?



These should be done at the start of your project. It's good practice to do both, but they can be conducted independently if time or resources are limited. Typically, you'll need one to three months, but this can depend on; the number of stakeholders and their readiness to engage and complexity of the service or innovation.

You'll need the resources to:

- collect information from different sources for the EA
- gather feedback from stakeholders to co-design the logic model
- produce the outputs (completed logic model and recommendations for evaluation approach)

While this preparatory work does require an investment of time and resources, it will reduce the chances of delays later in the project.

Developing a logic model



What is a logic model?

A logic model is a diagram showing how you think your innovation or service will lead to improved outcomes.

“ It tells the story of your project or programme in a diagram and a few simple words. ”

Evaluation Support Scotland

Key aspects of a logic model

The logic model acts as a sense check for the underlying assumptions of how and why the innovation or service will make a difference. You're encouraged to reflect on the logic and chain of events that are expected to promote an impact.

Adaptable logic model templates are available from a number of sources (see Useful logic model resources).

Components of a logic model

Situation

Consider the rationale for the service and innovation. Useful questions to ask are:

- What is the problem being addressed?
- Why is it a problem?
- What is the unmet need?

Inputs

Identify the resources needed to deliver the outputs. This could include the clinical and

non-clinical workforce to deliver the service or innovation, training and equipment, and building and infrastructure needs. Consider if there are sufficient resources available for planned outputs and, if not, what adaptations might be needed. Overall, think about the specifics needed for your innovation or service improvement.

Outputs

Typically, this component is divided into two sections: activities and participants. For activities, consider what will be delivered as part of the service or innovation. For participants, identify the target population for the service or innovation.

Impact

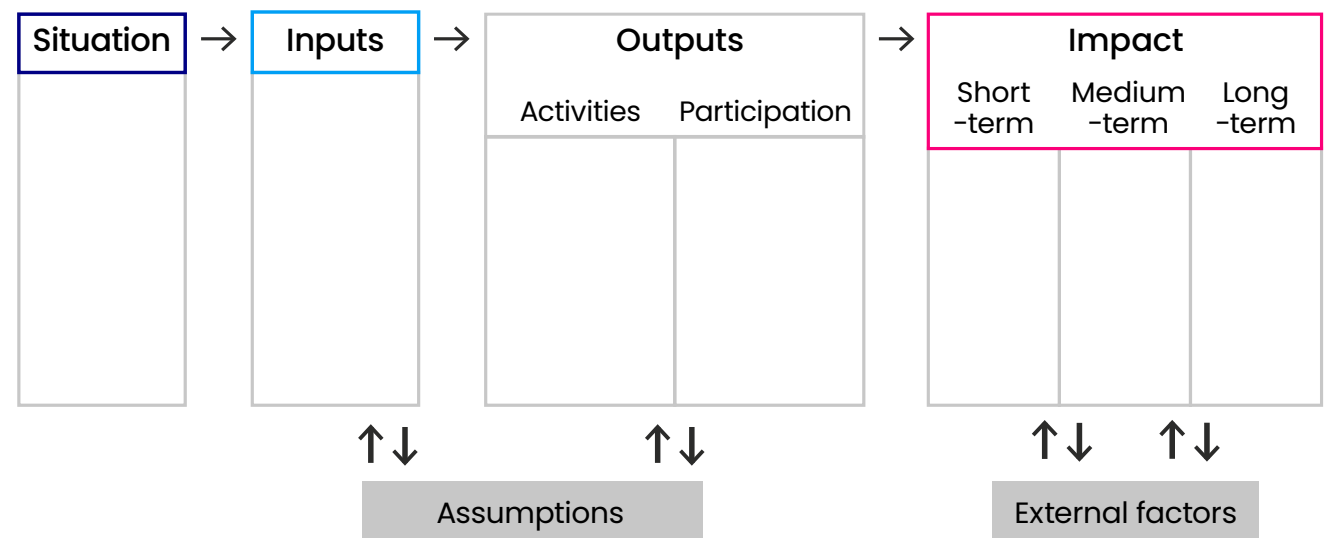
Identify the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes that are expected to change

because of the service or innovation. Short-term indicators are often more feasible to measure and could include a reduction in diagnostic delays or an increase in the number of patients through a pathway. Medium-term outcomes could include surrogate endpoints, such as a shrinking tumour or changes in biomarker levels. Long-term outcomes tend to focus on changes you would expect to measure over a period of years, such as improved survival and quality of life or a reduction in health inequalities.

A useful way to conceptualise the different types of outcomes is provided by Evaluation Support Scotland:

1. What will happen immediately (short-term outcomes)
2. What is the longer-term change (long-term outcomes)
3. What will happen along the way (medium-term outcomes)

Example of a logic model template [1]



Assumptions

Consider factors in the health and care system that might be taken for granted and could influence the delivery of the service or innovation. For example, will national or local funding or priorities change and, if so, how might these affect the impact and implementation of the project?

External factors

Discuss potential risk factors that could affect the delivery of the service or innovation. These could include political decisions, legal or regulatory changes and workforce shortages.

Useful resources

- The Strategy Unit's **Using Logic Models in Evaluation**, developed by NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit, focuses on the use of logic models in evaluation and provides a comprehensive overview of what a logic model is, why you should create one and how to develop it.
- For a briefer guide, we recommend **Logic Models in Evaluation** by Public Health Wales, which also includes an easy-to-use logic model template.
- Evaluation Support Scotland provide **interactive templates** (PDF and Excel.)

What is an evaluability assessment?



An evaluability assessment (EA) is a time-limited, systematic process carried out before an evaluation. It enables teams to make informed and strategic decisions about how to evaluate innovations or services. And it identifies readiness for evaluation, the extent to which a project can be evaluated in a way that is reliable and credible.

When assessing readiness, an EA attempts to answer three questions:

1. Is it plausible to expect the service or innovation to have an impact?
2. Would an evaluation be useful and used by key stakeholders?
3. Is it feasible to assess or measure impact?

Key aspects of an EA



An EA is a flexible tool that can be easily adapted to fit the resources and time a team has available. Below is a suggested process to guide your activities:

Stage 1

- Define the scope of the EA.
- Identify whom you could speak with to gather information.
- Consider the practicalities of gathering this data from multiple sources.
- Decide the timeline for the work.
- Decide if you will use an established EA template or design your own.

Stage 2

- Decide how to collect the data. Will it be through a desk-based review of documents? Site visits and observations? Interviews with key informants? It can be a combination of methods.
- Constraints on time and budget may influence the extent of the work, but even brief conversations with key people can improve understanding about evaluability.

Stage 3

- Informed by what you decide in stage 2, collect the data.
- Contact stakeholders, visit sites or review documents to gather information on the plausibility, utility and feasibility of conducting the evaluation.

Stage 4

- Create a summary of your findings.
- Share information with stakeholders and, if a logic model is available, reflect on the findings with stakeholders and refine in response to the feedback.

Combining logic models and EAs

The purpose of conducting an EA is largely focused on identifying the potential outcomes and data sources you'll use in the evaluation. Your findings can be linked to the logic model as a sense check on the feasibility of collecting those outcomes.

Through this work, you'll create a shared understanding of what is possible to evaluate.

Example from practice: Evaluating a physical activity programme delivered in South-East England

There were three evaluation aims:

1. Capture the impact of the programme on physical activity in adults.
2. Explore the relationship between changes in physical activity and psychosocial outcomes, such as loneliness and mental wellbeing.
3. Collect implementation outcomes to understand potential barriers and enablers to programme delivery.

Before starting the evaluation, the research team wanted to explore if the programme was ready for evaluation and establish if the data required to meet the evaluation aims could be collected.

The team conducted an EA to gather input from multiple stakeholders. This included a workshop with local physical activity providers, local authority public health professionals and commissioners, voluntary sector organisations and members of the public. In the workshop, people were asked to identify resources available to support evaluation activities and any existing data sources, and prioritise the outcomes they felt important to capture in an evaluation. In addition to the workshop, the team reviewed

relevant documents, such as service level agreements and reports, to make sure they had complete knowledge about the programme.

The EA highlighted:

Plausibility

Developing a logic model alongside the EA provided an opportunity to interrogate the underlying assumptions about how the programme would impact physical activity and the timeline for these changes.

Utility

Feedback from the workshop emphasised the importance of collecting data on implementation as attendees felt that this was a neglected area. Providers and commissioners reported they would use this information to adapt and modify future iterations of the programme.

Feasibility

Conducting an EA revealed it would be difficult for the potential providers to deliver the programme and collect data in an equitable manner, due to differing resources. Therefore, the team decided to use qualitative case studies with smaller providers and integrate quantitative data with the larger providers.

Useful EA resources

- **Evaluability Assessment: a systematic approach to deciding whether and how to evaluate programmes and policies, by What Works Scotland**, provides a detailed background and rationale on EAs.
- **Evaluability assessment for impact evaluation**, by Better Evaluation, offers a range of resources to plan an EA and tools for completing one, including a practical guide and checklist.

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References

1. <https://logicmodel.extension.wisc.edu/>