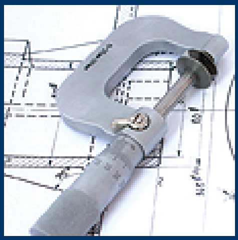
Guidance

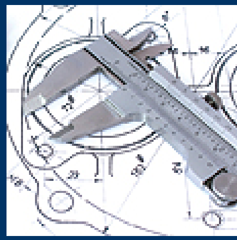
Facilitation of Workshops Using the Outcomes and Impacts Toolkit

LBRO

Better Local Regulation



Purpose of this Guidance



The Local Better Regulation Office commissioned RAND Europe to produce the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit, which helps regulators in local authorities and elsewhere clarify and quantify the benefits they deliver for their communities, citizens and businesses. Ultimately, the toolkit helps with prioritisation, the allocation of resources, and the measurement of performance, including the contribution of regulatory services to numerous cross-cutting outcomes with local authorities' partners.

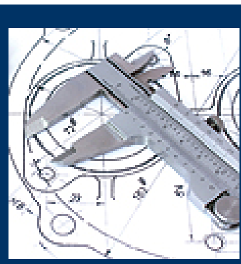
The toolkit is best suited to group working, by partnerships or groups of regulators. We have facilitated many sessions of this type in the course of encouraging sector-led development of capacity to support the use of the toolkit, both regionally and within individual authorities.

This guidance document outlines approaches to facilitating sessions using the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit. The toolkit is extremely flexible and suited to use in a variety of ways so the guidance provides some ideas about its possible use based on our own experience. While it mentions the role of facilitators and provides some ideas about facilitation approaches, this document is not intended to provide comprehensive guidance on generic facilitation skills.

The guidance is neither prescriptive nor comprehensive – there are numerous ways in which you could use the toolkit. Its purpose is to share the approach LBRO staff have taken to the planning and delivery of facilitated sessions to help the sector in taking forward the use of the toolkit.

We are always interested to hear about your experiences of using the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit and suggestions about the further development of this guidance.

Section 1 – Pre-session Planning and Preparation



This part of the guidance covers the preparation and planning required before a session, including some of the ways in which you can facilitate a session using the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit and the basics of the approach.

What type of session will you deliver?

The Outcomes and Impacts toolkit gives regulatory services a process for building a robust evidence base to clarify and quantify the benefits their activities deliver to local businesses and consumers. The core of this publication is a step by step guide to the development of meaningful indicators to assess the outcomes and impacts of operations, drawing on visual representations called pathways. The use of this toolkit is helping many regulatory services to have more informed discussions about priorities and the allocation of resources, as well as enhancing their profile.

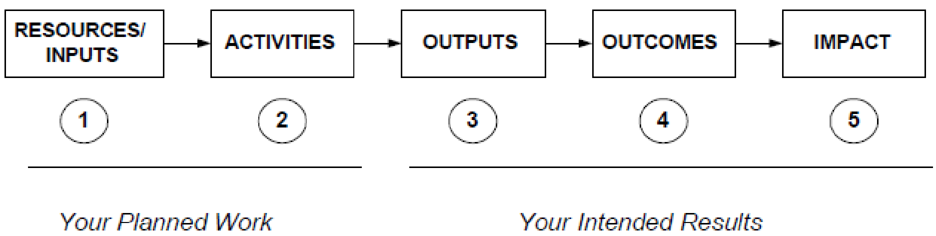
Using the toolkit in a workshop setting is a powerful way for regulators to engage their staff in the process of identifying the outcomes and impacts of regulatory services to support service improvement and performance management, and ultimately to deliver better regulation.

The Outcomes and Impacts toolkit is highly flexible. Workshop sessions can be run in a number of ways.

Basics of logic modelling and key terms

Logic modelling

Logic modelling is a well-established and widely-used approach that entails the identification of the outcomes of individual services or projects and the analysis of the process by which they are achieved. A logic model provides a summary – in words and / or pictures – of the pathway from available resources, through planned activities, to anticipated results. One benefit of logic modelling is that it is focused on outcomes and tests whether they have been achieved. This in turn makes the collection and evaluation of evidence more effective. The five standard elements of logic models are shown in the following figure, and each is then further defined.



Resources / inputs

Every programme or policy will start with inputs. These are the resources needed to operate the programme. They typically include human resources (staff, volunteers, partners, etc.), financial resources (funds, grants, donations, user fees, etc.), and other inputs such as facilities and equipment, and collaboration with partners (e.g. local and national agencies).

Activities

Inputs are transformed during activities or clusters of activities needed to implement a programme. How activities are organized and performed depends on the nature of the programme, the structure of the organisation, and the environment in which the programme operates.

Outputs

These are the direct product of an activity and typically are tangible and countable. Outputs generally refer to what is being done or what is being produced. In principle, there is full control over the outputs produced. The type of output will depend on the activity under consideration. For example, the outputs of an advertising campaign typically include the number of local press adverts and of television adverts, website activity, and so on. The output of food standards work, for example, might be an inspection or a particular type of enforcement action. The compliance of a food business, on the contrary, is already an outcome as it is beyond the immediate control and might (or might not) be the result of inspection activity.

Outcomes

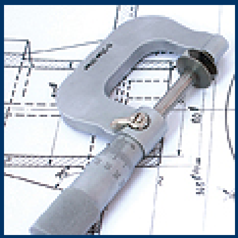
Outcomes are the intended and unintended results and consequences of your activities. Typically, outcomes tend to be categorised into short-, medium- and longer-term results: specific changes in program participants' behaviour, knowledge, skills, status and level of functioning. Short-term outcomes should be attainable within 1-3 years, while longer-term outcomes should be achievable within a 4-6 year timeframe. The logical progression from short-term to long-term outcomes should be reflected in impacts occurring within about 7-10 years.

Impacts

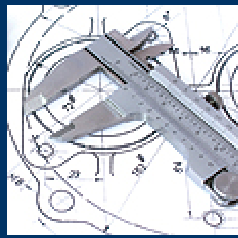
We consider impacts to be outcomes that are more long term and have a wider impact on the community or environment. They are the fundamental direct and indirect effects of your activities over a long-term period on the wider community or environment. They include changes in economic and financial conditions, in social conditions (e.g. reduced violence or increased cooperation) or in environmental and political conditions (e.g. participation and equal opportunities).

Causal pathway / chain

These refer to the link between the different elements identified in the workshop, indicating how inputs are ultimately linked to impacts. There are, for example, different ways of ensuring a fair trading environment. You could educate consumers about where and how to shop, or you could inspect traders and prosecute non-compliant businesses. Each of these activities is linked to the ultimate outcome through a different causal chain.



Section 2 – Delivering the Session



This section of the guidance concerns the delivery of a session using the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit in a half-day workshop. It provides examples of an agenda and structure that, while not exhaustive, provides a baseline which might help you plan your own sessions. Finally, this section deals with some key generic facilitation issues which may be helpful for some users of the guidance in considering the facilitation of sessions.

Half-day workshop sessions

These tend to last approximately 3½ hours and are therefore quite intensive. The agenda below is a typical example of a half-day session.

09:30 Introduction and outline

- Introduction – If necessary, each person introduces themselves either to the whole group or to the person sitting next to them (name, organisation, job role, what they hope to achieve from the session).
- When the group feeds back, note on the flip chart what each person hopes to achieve from the session, and revisit these with attendees at the end of the session to see if they have been met.

09:50 Overview of outcomes

- Presentation of the policy environment and the relevance of an outcome focus in the design, delivery and resourcing of regulatory services.
- Discussion – respond to any questions that delegates may have.

10:00 Stage 1

In small groups (typically), start with activities or outcomes, and then work through the other elements of the logic model. If you want to assess the outcomes delivered by current work start with your activities; if you want to identify the actual or potential contribution of current or proposed work to a particular objective, start by defining specific outcomes.

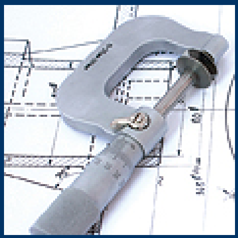
- Refer to steps 3-7 in the Outcomes and Impacts Toolkit Summary (www.lbro.org.uk/docs/impacts-and-outcomes-toolkit-summary.pdf)
- Identify and map activities;
- Think about partners that may be involved;
- Identify and map inputs, outputs; and
- Identify the outcomes and impacts.

11:00	**Break**
11:15	**Stage 1: Causal Chains**
	• Still in groups, identify causal pathways within the logic model. • Refer to step 8 in the Outcomes and Impacts Toolkit Summary (www.lbro.org.uk/docs/impacts-and-outcomes-toolkit-summary.pdf) • Get each group to create a narrative for how its activity contributes to identified outcomes and subsequent impacts.
11:45	**Stage 2: Measuring performance**
	• Brief discussion on measuring performance – set in the context of local regulatory services. • Choose one of the groups from Stage 1 to create a comprehensive list of indicators for the logic model. (This is usually carried out as a whole group exercise which demonstrates how to develop performance measures from the logic modelling in Stage 1.) • Refer to steps 9-10 in the Outcomes and Impacts Toolkit Summary (www.lbro.org.uk/docs/impacts-and-outcomes-toolkit-summary.pdf)
12:30	**Next Steps**
	• Revisit the initial aims and objectives of the session, identified by participants, to see whether they have been met. • The participants should take away the information and develop a process map. This is the first stage and will involve further discussion within their team to arrive at a final version. • Optionally, you may wish to request feedback from delegates on the session for evaluation purposes. • Follow up – point to examples of process maps available on the LBRO website and ask the participants to share their logic models, pathways and performance measures with LBRO. These should be subject to a continuous process of review and refinement.
	Lunch

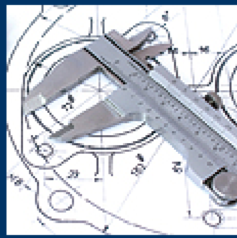
The role of the facilitator

Good facilitation skills are a pre-requisite for delivering effective sessions using the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit. The facilitator plans, guides and manages events to achieve full buy-in from all the participants, ensure the objectives are met, and help everyone reach a successful decision, solution or conclusion. He or she needs to approach the role objectively and independently. This entails taking a neutral stance and stepping back from the detailed content and his or her personal views to focus on the group process. It is also important for the facilitator to be confident about the concepts within the toolkit.

Facilitators will all have their own style and approach. Appendix 1 provides some prompts they may wish to consider in terms of their role in an Outcomes and Impacts session.



Section 3 – After the Session



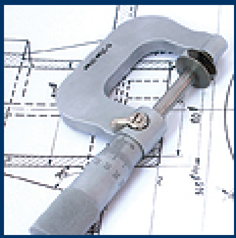
If you would like to collect feedback after a session using the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit, we have used the following six questions to understand how well the workshop went:

1. What were your aims and objectives on entering the session on the outcomes and impacts toolkit training?
2. Have these aims and objectives been met?
3. Did the session meet your expectations in terms of content, competent trainers and delivery?
4. What did you learn as a result of participating in this training?
5. Was the training beneficial to your role?
6. Would you recommend this training and if so to which roles?

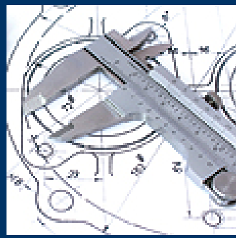
Collecting Pathway Diagrams

LBRO has collected pathway diagrams from regulators that have used the Outcomes and Impacts toolkit which we have shared through our website. In future, it would be extremely helpful if those who have used the toolkit could also share with LBRO any pathway diagrams produced to share learning with other local authorities.

If you are willing to share your pathway diagrams, please forward these to Ben at ben.davies@lbro.org.uk, for uploading to the LBRO website. Current pathway diagrams can be viewed at www.lbro.org.uk/lbro-projects-oi-sample-pathways-2.html.



Appendix 1: Facilitation Ideas



Facilitation tips

- Ensure there are clearly understood ground rules, for example about timekeeping, the nature of your role as facilitator, breaks, closing down discussions and moving the session forward.
- Discuss objectives with the group and ensure you can review the achievement of these objectives at the end of a session.
- Get a high volume of quality output in a short space of time – minimize the pointless talking and get people focused on quality thinking and recording their insights / conclusions / solutions / opinions.
- Keep people focused on task – answering direct questions they have posed.
- Get a record in words they have used – not your interpretation as the facilitator.
- Spark ideas / memories/ creativity from seeing what others have contributed.
- Allow challenge / agreement from within the group.
- Make sure all voices are 'heard'. Giving everyone a pen allows them to 'speak' equally.

Things to think about

- Every facilitator will have an impact – think about what you want that to be.
- Even the most unbiased facilitator will start to influence the group so think about the processes you use to mitigate this.
- More than 10 people are difficult to organize. If you have large numbers, get them to work in smaller groups.
- Silence is golden. They aren't here to hear you speak. Let them do the talking.
- You are in charge. Call 'time out' if you need to re-think the plan or change direction.

The table below can be used as a guide for planning your facilitation of workshops.

Aspect:	Issues to consider:
People	• Ensure all participate positively. • Engage those whose voices are not being heard. • Manage those who dominate or are negative towards the process and think about how to stop one negative person disrupting the group process. • Use processes to secure input from all, for example using post-it notes to record everyone's views. • Observe, sense and manage energy levels, being flexible in your plans to make best use of energy and provide breaks and opportunities to re-energise participants.

Process	• What structure will the session have? There is a continuum from very loose to very tight. Design and document the session in advance. • How will you obtain views and build the desired outcome? • What information do you need for the session?
Place	• The environment influences the way the group activity functions. • Manage the environment and turn up early to make sure it will work for the session design. • If you are unhappy with the layout or nature of the room, make sure you give yourself sufficient time to do something about it. • How will you ensure people move around, contribute and enjoy the session given the nature of the environment? Other environmental factors, that are simple but may be missed are: • Is it too hot, too cold? • Where do you want people to sit? • Is there sufficient light for everyone? • Are there any historical or 'territorial' issues within the group or personalities which you need to manage or consider in establishing the physical environment for the group work?