

## Task 2.4 Develop a theory of change

### Task 2.4.1 Reflect on how change is supposed to happen

#### What is this task about?

This task details your vision and its high-level outcomes, to better understand and agree on the broad systemic changes your region needs to make to achieve its vision. This task improves your understanding about and makes explicit these changes, how different stakeholders may benefit from and/or respond to them, as well as the degree of change your stakeholders will be willing to engage in. It helps you to better understand the series of assumptions underlying your vision (i.e., the underlying, often implicit, beliefs that are used to understand how processes of change happen), which then help you to identify the key dependencies, needs and weaknesses in your vision moving forward.

As your vision is long-term and exposed to a wide variety of uncertainties, it is not the intention of this task to identify the specific activities or interventions to be taken to achieve the vision. Rather, the task is principally concerned with identifying the preferred chains of outcomes to transition your region towards climate resilience in the short-, medium- and long-terms.



**Insight:** “Changes” and “outcomes” are not activities or their results (their outputs) but the changes that these actions bring about. For example, if an activity is to develop a stakeholder forum on a topic, the result (output) may be the number and diversity of people that participate. The outcome (the change) may be the connections that this activity creates: how people took the conversations into their own context and workplaces, etc., which can then activate other changes.

#### Why is it important?

Your vision provides you with a high-level understanding of where your region wants to be in the future. It needs to be translated into a series of more concrete systemic changes and their associated requirements and outcomes for your various regional sectors and groups. This serves to clarify the scope, level of ambition and commitment that achieving the vision will entail for the regional stakeholders involved. These series of systemic changes and sectoral requirements are used in Phase 3 to guide the formulation of your adaptation pathways and innovation portfolio.

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#### Explainer: What do we mean by 'change'?

A change describes a behaviour, involving regional actors doing something differently. One useful way of understanding change is as combination of motivation, capability and opportunity framework.

- Capability: the psychological or physical ability to enact a behaviour
- Motivation: reflective and automatic mechanisms that activate or inhibit a behaviour
- Opportunity: physical and social environment that enables the behaviour.

For example, if you want to improve the resilience of your region to heat stress, regional actors need to know and understand heat management strategies (e.g., through training on heat resistant retrofitting), be motivated to be prepared (e.g., through raised awareness of heat risk and feeling ownership of their role in the region's heat adaptation strategy), but also have access to the physical and environmental infrastructures that allow them to respond to heat stress (e.g., subsidies available for retrofitting and existing economic structures to provide needed materials and service).

In a complex setting like this, not every stakeholder group needs to change in the same way, but many may need to contribute to the solution. This is where considerations of power become important – which stakeholders have more capacity to respond to a given problem? Who will benefit, who will lose?

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#### How can you complete it?

We strongly suggest developing this task in a participatory workshop setting, led by a facilitator familiar with Theory of Change methodologies. This participatory workshop can take 1 or 2 days, depending on resources and availability of participants.

This can be conducted in two broad stages: (i) defining the broad systemic changes and high-level outcomes needed to achieve the vision, as well as their underlying assumptions and (ii) aligning these changes and outcomes with the principles, planning objectives and performance metrics identified previously.

**For part (i) defining the broad systemic changes and high-level outcomes, we suggest the following activities:**

- **Revisit your vision developed in 2.3.1 and the system map developed in 1.2.1:** This will provide the basic context for your discussions in terms of what are the changes you want to achieve, in which time-frame, as well as what are the systems in which you would need to intervene to achieve that vision.
- **Identify the “changes” that underpin your vision:** Start with the longer-term changes, followed by mid and shorter-term changes. Express these changes in terms of outcomes: how would your region, or a specific part of your region, look like once that change takes place?
- **Review, consolidate and analyse these changes and outcomes,** ensuring that you have covered all the sectors and relevant stakeholder groups that you identified in your systems and stakeholder map; considering not only positive changes, but also what needs to diminish to be discontinued; what conflicts could emerge and how could these be addressed.
- **Identify your underlying assumptions:** When you are describing outcomes, there are implicit assumptions about factors, internal and external, that are likely to affect the success of the initiative. These can be positive (enablers) or negative (risks). Identify these.

**For part (ii) aligning these changes and outcomes with the principles and planning objectives, the following activities are suggested:**

- **Cross-check your chain of outcomes with your guiding principles and updated planning objectives and performance metrics** (from Task 2.3.1) and revise them accordingly.
- **Share your aligned high-level outcomes, assumptions, principles and objectives with other stakeholders:** Translate the outputs from the above activity into a simplified diagram and a short narrative to share with other stakeholders. In the Appendix you can find examples that you can use as inspiration.

Further detailed technical guidance on completing this task, along with useful tools and methods, can be found in **Appendix D9**.

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### What are key inputs for the task?

- A general understanding of your base-line assessment and systems map, including why the current system is not fit for purpose and the innovations or changes that may be already happening or relevant to your region.)
- Stakeholder mapping, to understand who could serve as change agent in your region and which groups would be affected by these changes.
- Shared vision (including updated problem framing) developed in Task 2.3.1.

### What are the expected outputs?

The key outputs from this task are a clear set of changes necessary to translate your vision into more concrete outcomes for your region that will guide subsequent tasks of the Regional Resilience Journey. These are combined with the set of key underlying assumptions to be shared with stakeholders in order to generate a common understanding of the underlying rationale for selecting the various interventions and innovations to affect these changes during Phase 3.



### Before moving on, have you...

- ☐ Developed a shared understanding of the key changes that need to happen for your vision to be accomplished, translated into a graphic and a narrative.
- ☐ Identified a set of assumptions that underlie your vision?
- ☐ Shared this graphic, narrative and set of assumptions with key stakeholders and incorporated or addressed their feedback?

D9.

### Task 2.4.1 Reflect on how change is supposed to happen – Technical guidance on how to complete

To complete this task, we suggest a participatory workshop setting conducted in two broad stages: (i) **defining the broad systemic changes and high-level outcomes needed to achieve the vision, as well as their underlying assumptions** and (ii) **aligning these changes and outcomes with the principles, adaptation objectives, assessment and evaluation criteria identified previously.**

**For part (i) defining the broad systemic changes and high-level outcomes, we suggest the following sub-steps:**

**Revisit your vision developed in 2.3.1 and the system map developed in 1.2.1:**

This will provide the basic context for your discussions in terms of what are the changes you want to achieve, in which timeframe, as well as what is (are) the systems in which you would need to intervene to achieve that vision.

**Identify the “changes” that underpin your vision:**

Start with the longer-term changes, followed by mid and shorter-term changes. Express these changes in terms of outcomes: how would your region, or a specific part of your region, look like once that change takes place? This process works well when done visually, where the outcomes can be “boxes” connected by arrows (see Figure D9.1). We suggest using a template with space for short-, mid- and long-term outcomes, defining roughly what these time frames mean. We advise against the traditional theory of change template with input-activities-outputs-outcomes, because at this point, we would like to focus the discussion on high level system changes and outcomes, rather than specific activities which will come further down in the process (Phase 3).

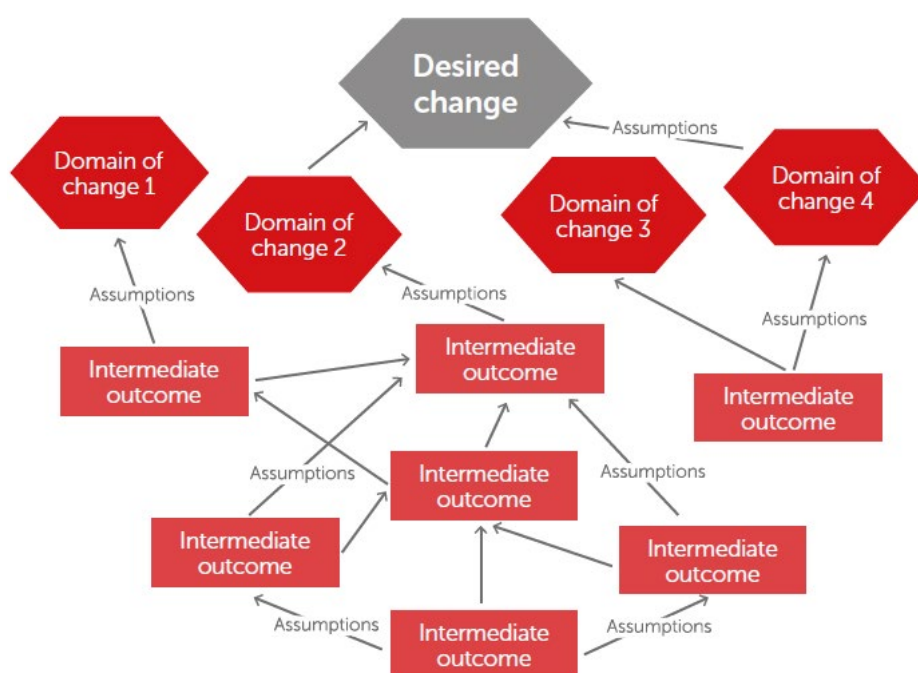


Figure D9.1: Example of how changes and outcomes can be connected in a Theory of Change diagram. Source: HIVOS Theory of change guide (2015)

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### Review and consolidate your identified changes:

There may initially be many outcomes identified. Review and consolidate these to avoid outcomes that include multiple changes - check there's only one outcome per change statement. If there are a lot of related outcomes identified these can be clustered into groups and ordered. You will notice that outcomes will refer to a similar theme or area of change (for example, policy, behaviour, technology, etc.). You can choose to prompt these areas of change, if relevant, by using the levers of change that were identified during task 2.2.1.

- Depending on the size of the group you are working with, there can be a large diversity of outcomes in the first iteration. This is not a bad thing! But it does make this step particularly important, and you should allocate some time so each group or subgroup clusters and consolidates outcomes.
- Remember that your goal is not to have a detailed explanation of every step in the process, but a general understanding and agreement on the most important system changes that are required for your vision.



**Insight:** It is important to consider the negative or undesirable consequences of changes. When these potential conflicts are brought to surface, it creates a space to discuss what are the changes that each of the different stakeholder groups are willing to engage with, and how to anticipate and address potential conflicts. These discussions might expand or change what you thought of changes initially but will help to make your Climate Resilience Strategy more relevant and robust.

### Indicate when systemic changes and outcomes connect through feedback loops with arrows:

These do not necessarily need to reflect “causal” relationships (one thing leading to another) but simply indicate that two or more outcomes are related.

### Analyse the consolidated changes and outcomes, which includes:

- Ensure that you have covered all the sectors and relevant stakeholder groups that you identified in your systems and stakeholder map. How will they need to change? How will these change affect them? Who will benefit? Who will resist that change? It can be useful to indicate with a figure or a particular colour if a specific stakeholder group is expected to play an important role in a given systemic change.
- Consider not only positive changes, but also what needs to diminish. What current activities or practices will need to be discontinued?
- In both cases, think of what conflicts could emerge and how could these be addressed. Identify the power imbalances that might hinder achieving your desired outcomes, and how you can address them.

**Identify your underlying assumptions:** When you are describing outcomes, there are implicit assumptions about factors, internal and external, that are likely to affect the success of the initiative. These can be positive (enablers) or negative (risks). Identify these. List these assumptions at the bottom of your diagram.

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**Explainer:** What do we mean by ‘assumptions’?

Assumptions emerge from values, beliefs, norms, or expectations about the future. For instance, when planning online meetings we assume (take for granted) that the electricity and internet service will be working. In many cases and contexts, this is not true. There are different types of assumptions:

- **Assumptions about the contexts, actors, and factors at play:** these includes assumptions about people’s needs, motivations, capacities, relationships between actors; norms and values, etc.
- **Assumptions related to change:** these are assumptions related to the causal mechanisms and/or interrelations between different interventions, e.g., in saying that if we do A it will lead to B, this causal link might be true only under certain conditions. Making these conditions explicit is a way to identify assumptions.
- **‘Risks’, or assumptions totally outside of the control of the project,** e.g., that there is no political unrest, etc.

It is important to identify those assumptions which are non-obvious. For instance, saying that there are sufficient funds to implement a strategy is a basic precondition of implementation; however, if there is something to say about the conditions in which these funds are available, it is worth highlighting.



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Figure D9.2: Glasgow City Region Adaptation Strategy - Theory of Change. Available at <https://climatereadyclde.org.uk/gcr-adaptation-strategy-and-action-plan/>



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For part (ii) aligning these changes and outcomes with the principles and adaptation objectives, we suggest the following activities:

**Cross-check your chain of outcomes with your guiding principles and updated planning objectives and performance metrics (from Task 2.3.1), and revise them accordingly.**

- Are the outcomes consistent with the guiding principles that you have defined for your Climate Resilience Strategy?
- Do these outcomes align with your planning objectives?
- Do the performance metrics reflect all the relevant aspects of the outcomes you've identified?

**Share your aligned outcomes, assumptions, principles and objectives with other stakeholders: Translate the outputs from the above activity into a simplified diagram and a short narrative to share with other stakeholders.**



#### Supporting resources:

Useful methods

- <https://hivos.org/document/hivos-theory-of-change/>
- <https://thepalladiumgroup.com/news/How-to-Design-Better-Programs-in-Complex-Systems>
- Michael Patton's Theories of Transformation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zQhbwcE5Eo>