

# Essential Components for Theory of Change Narrative: The **RECAP** Framework

A tool to help evaluators write clear, evidence-informed ToC narratives



Developed by **Roxana Salehi, PhD**, Vitus Consulting, 2024

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# R

## RISK

**What could go wrong, and can we plan for it?**

As you write the narrative for each outcome pathway, consult your risk registry. If you don't have a risk registry, make one.

**What knowledge, data, or experience informs our approach?**

As you write each outcome pathway, see if you can incorporate evidence from any of these sources:

- Scientific research
- Previous evaluations
- Stakeholder /expert knowledge
- Gender & human rights analysis
- Environmental analysis
- Costing studies
- Environmental scans/scoping review

# E

## EVIDENCE

**What political, social, regulatory institutional, and individual-level factors shape this intervention?**

Consider these levels :

1. Individual-Level:
  - e.g., baseline capabilities, demographics
2. Organizational-Level
  - e.g., leadership, culture, internal capacity
3. Environmental/Sociopolitical
  - e.g., policies, climate, natural disasters, wars
4. Regulatory (e.g. AI Act, EHDS)

# C

## CONTEXT

As you write each outcome pathway, ask: **What needs to be true for this pathway to work as planned?**

# A

## ASSUMPTIONS

# P

## PEOPLE

As you write each outcome pathway, ask: **Who are the key players, what roles do they play, and how will they be affected by the intervention along this pathway?**

# How to Use The **RECAP** Framework?

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1

Break your ToC narrative into chunks, aligned with each pathway in your logic model. Even if your Theory of Change visual diagram is not a logic model and is a circle, for example, there are still pathways that link your activities to your outcomes—they are just more fluid in your diagram.

For each pathway, use the RECAP prompts to flesh out that specific pathway.

2

3

Once all the pathways have been written up, streamline your text. Avoid repetition—if a risk or assumption is already described in Section X, simply refer back to it: “*As discussed in Section X...*”. These linkages help the reader see the interconnections.

Ensure you examine the horizontal connections between the boxes in the logic model, as well as any additional requirements, for example, those specified by your funding agency.

4

5

Remember that RECAP is not meant to be an exhaustive list—because it can't be. Funders, clients, they all have different requirements, and you should always read the instructions **VERY** carefully. But RECAP has you covered for the essentials.