Results-Based Management Tip Sheet 2.2
Syntax[1] Structure of Outcome, Output and Activity Statements

This tip sheet is a companion to the Results-Based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada: A How-to Guide. This tool expands on the discussion of the structure for outcome and output statements in the How-to Guide and provides a reference tool that you can use in your day-to-day work.

This tool can be used to develop and assess outcome (result) statements. It can be used as an informal validation tool to help determine whether outcome statements clearly identify the: *who*, *what* and *where* of the expected change. This helps ensure that outcomes are concrete, realistic and focused. The tool can be used in a similar way for output statements.

Outcome, output and activity statement structures

Outcome statements (ultimate, intermediate and immediate)
A strong outcome statement starts with a word that indicates the direction of the expected change, and tells you what will change, who will experience the change, and where that change takes place.

Direction	Use an adjective (drawn from a verb in past tense) to indicate the expected direction of change. For example: increased, improved, reduced, enhanced[2].
What	The actual thing/element that will change. For example: • capacity, such as awareness, skills, knowledge, etc. (for immediate outcomes) • behaviour, practice or performance (for intermediate outcomes) • state, well-being or condition [but not surrounding circumstances] (for ultimate outcomes) To describe the type of change sought for intermediaries or beneficiaries, and to provide further specificity, the "what" often includes: • adjectives (e.g., equitable, effective, sustainable, gender sensitive, etc.) • nouns (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness, quality, accountability, etc.) or • adverbs (e.g., efficiently, effectively, etc.)
Who	Identifies the individuals, groups, organizations or entities who will experience the change described; in other words, intermediaries or beneficiaries. For example: ministry of health, agricultural-extension workers, farmers, journalists, local communities, women, children, men, minorities. Identifying the "who" helps to gauge how realistic the change is and makes it more specific. **Note** that "including," "specifically," "especially" or "particularly" can be used to specify a specific group targeted within a large whole. For example: Increased access to public services for women, particularly marginalized ethnic minorities.
Where	The geographical location of the change being described. For example: community, country, region, village, etc.
Examples: - Improved health of women in Region Y, Country X (ultimate outcome) - Enhanced provision of health services to women and men by the ministry of health in Region Z (intermediate outcome) - Increased awareness of proper hygiene-practices by women in Region Y, Country X (immediate outcome) - Increased protection of the rights of minorities by government X in Country X (intermediate outcome)	

Note: The "where" (or location), must be identified at the ultimate and intermediate outcome levels of the logic model. If the location is different at the immediate outcome level (e.g. specific village within the province or country identified in the ultimate or intermediate outcome) it should be included in the statement. If it is not different, or the location is implicit in the "who" it may be left out.

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[1] In this context, syntax refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed and clear outcome and output statements.
[2] "Enhanced" is used to capture both "improved" and "increased" change.

Output statements

A strong output statement starts with the product or service to be produced or delivered, and includes the topic or subject, a verb in the past tense, the target group and location (what in what for whom). In the context of Global Affairs Canada project or program logic models, outputs always describe the products or services provided by the implementer funded by Global Affairs Canada.

1st What	The product or service provided by the project implementer, and in what topic or subject.
2nd What	The "what" can be qualified (e.g., gender sensitive training delivered… or environmentally responsible disposal strategy developed, etc.) if it helps describe a minimum standard. This qualification should not be subjective (e.g., avoid "efficient process developed, or "user-friendly tools created").[3]
Verb	Use a verb in the past tense describing how the output was delivered.
	For example: provided, delivered, completed, organized
Whom	The individuals, groups, organizations or entities to or for whom the output was produced or provided; in other words, intermediaries or beneficiaries.
	Note that "specifically," "especially" or "particularly" can be used to specify a selected group within a larger whole.
Where	The geographical location of the product or service being delivered or rendered. (See note above).
	For example: community, country, region, village, etc.
Example: Pamphlet on maternal health-services produced for local women's groups in village X.	

Activity statements

A strong activity statement starts with a verb in the present tense, followed by what specific activity, in what topic or subject the implementer will perform, with or for whom and where.

Verb	A verb in the imperative mood describing the action to be taken.
	For example: provide, train, produce, hire, prepare, develop, etc.
1st What **2nd What**	The activity being undertaken by the project implementer, and in what topic or subject.
Whom	The individuals, groups, organizations or entities for whom, or in cooperation with whom, the activity is undertaken; in other words, intermediaries or beneficiaries.
	Note that "specifically," "especially" or "particularly" can be used to specify a selected group within a large whole.
Where	The geographical location of the activity being described.
	For example: community, country, region, village, etc.
Example: Conduct inclusive consultations on maternal health needs with local women's groups and health service providers in village X.	

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[3] For more information, please see *Results-Based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada: A How-to Guide, Part II, Section 2.1 Outcomes and Outputs*.

Structural elements to avoid

Consequence or causal bridges

Terms such as "through," "to," "leading to" and "by" (also known as consequence or causal bridges) should NEVER be used when they indicate a causal relationship between phrases in an outcome statement, since it would generally indicate the existence of more than one result at multiple levels in one statement. NEVER include consequence bridges in an outcome statement. For example:

"Increased access to primary health care leading to improved health of children in community X" is an inappropriate outcome statement.

Why? "Increased access to primary health care in community X" should be located at one level below "Improved health of children in community X" in the logic model.

In other words, in this example, "Increased access to primary health care in community X" would be an intermediate outcome leading or contributing to an ultimate outcome of "Improved health of children in community X."

Coupling results

Conjunctions and semi-colons ("and," ";") should generally not be used. They often indicate the presence of two results (outcomes) in one statement.

However, two *whats* may work in one result if they are experienced by the same *who* (intermediary or beneficiary) and supported by the same elements in the lower levels of the logic model. For example:

"Improved effectiveness and accountability of public institutions" is OK.
"Improved accountability of public institutions and increased usage of government services by women" is not OK.

Examples of correct structures - outcomes, outputs and activity statements

Outcomes

Direction	What	Who	Where
Ultimate Outcome			
Improved	health	of women	in region Y, country X
Increased	enjoyment of human rights	by men, women and children	in country X
Reduced	vulnerability to food insecurity	of conflict-affected women, men, girls and boys	in country X
Enhanced	economic empowerment	of women and youth	in selected rural communities of country Y
Intermediate Outcomes			
Strengthened	representation and participation in local decision-making	by women, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged populations	in country X
Enhanced	provision[4] of health services	by staff in regional clinics to men, women and children	in region Z
Reduced	weapons of mass destruction stockpiles	by the government	in country X
Increased	respect for the rights of women	by the national government	in country Y
Immediate Outcomes			
Increased	knowledge of key social services, public policy and decision-making processes	by community-based organization	in town X
Increased	awareness of availability of basic essential obstetric care	by women	in province Y
Increased	ability to identify and address security threats	by government X	in country X

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[4] This could be measured by quality, timeliness, appropriateness of service…need vs provision, etc.

Outcomes (alternative order)

Direction	What	Who	What	Where
Intermediate Outcomes				
Increased	participation	of ordinary citizens	in politics	in country Z
Increased	access	by civil society	to information and policy fora on government policy and decision-making related to environment and natural resources	in country X
Immediate Outcomes				
Increased	ability	of health workers	to address the nutrition challenges of women of reproductive age, newborns and children under age five	in country Z
Increased	ability	of female and male members of the community water-collectives in region Y	to maintain wells	(implied)
Improved	skills	of local health-centre male and female staff	in gender-sensitive triage, diagnosis and primary healthcare	in region Y

Outputs

What	What subject	Verb (past tense)	To or for whom
Technical assistance	on gender-responsive and environmentally sensitive project management	provided	to regional government staff
Training	on human rights	provided	to selected women in refugee camp X
Training	in gender-sensitive community-consultation and -participation mechanisms for policy planning and design	provided	to selected regional-government staff
Technical assistance	for the operationalization of regional planning centres	provided	to selected regional government staff
Pamphlet	on maternal-health services	produced	for local women's groups in village X

Outputs (alternative order)

What	Verb (past tense)	What subject	To or for whom
Outreach meetings	convened		with the communities at the grassroots level
Training	provided	on trade-negotiation techniques	to staff (f/m) in organization X

Activities - Example of activities for the following output:

Pamphlet on maternal health-services produced for local women's groups in village X

Verb	What / What	For Whom	Where
Conduct	inclusive consultations on maternal-health needs	with local women's-groups and health-service providers	in village X
Provide	technical assistance on how to produce pamphlets	to local print Micro Small and Medium Enterprises	in region Y
Print	pamphlets		