

## AN AGILITY LAB RESOURCE

# DIY Theory of Change Workshop

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Overview](#)
  - [Materials](#)
  - [Walkthrough Videos](#)
  - [Recommended Process](#)
  - [How to use your Theory of Change](#)
  - [FAQs](#)
- 

### OVERVIEW

In a self-serve, do-it-yourself (DIY) process you will develop a lightweight, adaptable [Theory of Change](#) (ToC): a foundational document outlining a team's hypothesis of the impact they are trying to make. The process is structured in three parts:

1. **Context Setting:** Answer foundational questions on which you'll build your ToC.
2. **Draft ToC:** Draft your hypothesis of how this body of work will have an impact and achieve your goals.
3. **Mapping Assumptions:** Identify and refine your understanding of the critical risks and assumptions underpinning the success of the ToC.

**Note:** These DIY materials are designed to help a team **create a first draft** of a Theory of Change, not a perfect one. In fact, by definition, no Theory of Change is "perfect"—they are meant to be simplified hypotheses / models that are continuously iterated on!

---

### MATERIALS

There are three core materials to the ToC DIY Package: the Miro board, the Theory of Change template, and recorded video walk-throughs.

**[Miro Board:](#)** This is the main element of the DIY workshop. It's designed to be facilitated by someone, and includes complete, step-by-step instructions on how to do so.

- We recommend beginning by reviewing all instructions and tips in the blue panel at the top left, under "START HERE" to get a good sense of how to interpret the board.
- You won't be able to edit this template directly. If you have not already received your custom DIY Miro board copy, please let us know how many DIY Miro board copies you would like and what they should be named (For example, "DIY Theory of Change - Kalimantan Peatlands"). Below are the best contacts:
  - **NAR and Global Teams:** Kendra Opatovsky, [kendra.opatovsky@tnc.org](mailto:kendra.opatovsky@tnc.org)
  - **APAC and Africa teams:** Alexia Preston, [alexia.preston@tnc.org](mailto:alexia.preston@tnc.org)
  - **Latin America Teams:** Guillermo Tafurt, [guillermo.tafurt@gmail.com](mailto:guillermo.tafurt@gmail.com)

**Theory of Change Template:** This is a template for drafting a single slide version of the ToC you produce as a result of the DIY ToC process. **Please duplicate before editing!**

(Optional) **Foundation worksheet:** This helpful document will enable you to gather input from team members or key parties who can't participate in the full ToC process, or serve as a way to help participants begin gathering their thoughts prior to a group workshop session. You can choose to pre-populate the Miro board with responses if helpful. Again, **please duplicate before editing!**

---

## WALKTHROUGH VIDEOS

### Walkthrough Videos:

- These videos are designed to guide you through the process by first orienting you to the workshop, and then explaining each of the three sections..
- We recommend watching these *before* starting to engage your team in a ToC development process, as they contain tips and tricks for facilitating a successful experience together.
- The materials are meant to be fully self-service, but there's a lot here, and we are always more than happy to hop on a call with you (or anyone else) to answer remaining questions after watching these walkthrough videos.

---

## RECOMMENDED PROCESS

### READINESS CHECK

- **Objective:** The team should be aligned at a high level on the team's objectives, and have an idea of how they relate to the 2030 goals. If not, consider first doing the [Defining Objectives module](#) from CbD.
- **Problems:** The team should be familiar with the core challenges affecting your conservation objectives, and the most promising leverage points for intervention. If not, consider first doing the [Situation Analysis](#) module or the [Clarifying the Problem Worksheet](#).
- **Strategic Approaches:** The team should be at least mostly aligned on the strategies and interventions they intend to use to address the problems and achieve objectives (the ToC module is not the time to make major prioritization decisions, though rich discussion about logical connections between them and the problems / objectives will hopefully result). If not, consider first doing the [Strategy Selection](#) module.
- **Scope:** The facilitator and decider must be fully aligned on the scope for the Theory of Change the team will draft. Is it focused on a single strategy? A set of strategies? Etc.

### BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

- Consider if the team has done **previous work** that might allow them to accelerate different portions of the Theory of Change process. For example, if the team has recently done one or more of the other CbD modules, various elements of the ToC might be shortened or skipped, based on what feels right for your situation. See FAQs for more details.
- Identify a **facilitator** (or facilitators) to own the ToC process
- Identify a **decider** for the ToC (ideally separate from the facilitator), who will make the final call on what content is included in the ToC, who will participate, etc.
- Identify who should be involved in the ToC process, and how they should be involved:
  - **Participants:** we recommend 5-12 participants, who can be present for the entirety of the workshop time. Carefully consider whose viewpoints may help shape the outcome of the ToC: field team, science, policy experts, leadership, partners, key parties, skeptics, etc. While building the participants list, also consider that the balance of voices in the room is amenable to an equitable conversation, and avoid tokenizing viewpoints. Here are [team agreements](#) you may consider when setting the container.

- **Input team:** these are people whose opinions may be critical to incorporate, but who it may not be possible to include for the entire ToC workshop process. You can gather their insights ahead of time via the [Foundation Worksheet](#).
- **Feedback team:** these are folks, often leadership, whose approval of the ToC is vital, who you may want to gather feedback from after a first draft has been created.
- Schedule your workshop. We recommend 3 sessions of 3-4 hours each. It can be helpful to space the sessions out with 1-2 days in between, to leave space for synthesis in between. It's best to complete all sessions within a 2 week period, to minimize time spent refreshing memories between sessions.
- Create a copy of the [DIY Theory of Change Miro board](#) and customize it as needed in preparation for the workshop sessions. You will need to contact someone from the Agility Lab to make a copy for you. Below are the best contacts:
  - **NAR and Global Teams:** Kendra Opatovsky, [kendra.opatovsky@tnc.org](mailto:kendra.opatovsky@tnc.org)
  - **APAC and Africa teams:** Alexia Preston, [alexia.preston@tnc.org](mailto:alexia.preston@tnc.org)
  - **Latin America Teams:** Guillermo Tafurt, [guillermo.tafurt@gmail.com](mailto:guillermo.tafurt@gmail.com)

#### *DURING THE WORKSHOP*

- Refer to the Miro board for tips and tricks of how to facilitate through the workshop.
- Change, customize, and adapt whatever feels right for your situation!
- The biggest risk teams face is getting bogged down in analysis paralysis and never finishing the workshop. There are many pieces to the workshop, and it is intentionally designed to help you articulate a **FIRST DRAFT**, which can then be edited and polished asynchronously post-workshop. As facilitator, it's critical that you help the team aim for "good enough for now". Rely on time blocking to help you move through the elements quickly enough to help participants focus on high level vision and logical connections, and avoiding wordsmithing at this stage.

#### *AFTER THE WORKSHOP*

- Transfer the drafted Theory of Change into a slide format (if wanted) for easy sharing
  - Gather and integrate feedback on the ToC as needed
  - Ensure your Intermediate Results are measurable and scientifically feasible
  - Ensure your Intermediate Results & Outcomes align with 2030 metrics guidance
  - Define targets (aka fill in the "X's") for your Intermediate Results & Outcomes
-

## HOW TO USE THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Your friends at the Agility Lab and the rest of the CPT (Conservation Programs Team) are here to help if you want support or guidance related to any of the below. **Please** reach out if you're interested! For more information than what is included here, here's a [recording](#) of a presentation we gave in Dec 2023 about Theories of Change and Adaptive Management! (if that link doesn't work, here's another one)

### **ToC & MEL:**

As part of your Theory of Change, you've identified Intermediate Results. These should form the backbone of your Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan. Consider doing the [MEL module](#) as a next step (reach out to Colleen Fugate, [colleen.fugate@tnc.org](mailto:colleen.fugate@tnc.org), for help).

### **ToC Assumptions:**

The assumptions in your Theory of Change should represent the biggest leaps of logic in your ToC that can make or break your ability to have the intended impact. We strongly recommend proactively gathering additional evidence to de-risk your assumptions, so you can recognize as early as possible where an adjusted approach might be needed. Reach out to the above mentioned Agility Lab team members for help, as needed.

### **ToC & Adaptive Management:**

No Theory of Change is EVER perfect. We highly recommend a regular, frequent cadence of "Pause, Reflect, and Adapt" (PRA) meetings regarding your Theory of Change: every 3-6 months. Take 1-2 hours with your team and reflect on the Intermediate Results and Assumptions: *What did we expect to have achieved by now? What have we actually achieved? Have we validated any of our assumptions, or made progress on our IRs? What, if anything, might we do to adjust our approach if we're **not** on track?* Again, this is something your friends at the Agility Lab will be excited to help you do! Don't hesitate to reach out.

---

## FAQs

### ***When should we run this process?***

We recommend finding at least three blocks of uninterrupted collaboration time that are at least 2.5 hours long each. There are a myriad of triggers to kick off this workshop process, such as refreshing a strategy, starting a new project, bringing new team members into the process,

strengthening the assumptions underpinning your ToC, or connecting your ToC to TNC's 2030 goals.

***Who should join?***

We encourage you to think about the different groups of key parties impacted by, or contributing to, your work. Outside of your core team members driving this work forward, we'd love for you to invite a few people that will diversify the perspectives you are centering in this work.

***Not everyone that I want to join the DIY ToC process is available. Is there another way for them to get involved without attending the DIY sessions?***

Absolutely! We are supporting teams with running pre-ToC interviews with various key parties and ensuring their perspectives are centered throughout the process. You can also create a survey, or an input worksheet ([example here](#)), and send to key parties (including participants!) ahead of the workshop to gain their input.

***Who should facilitate? Can the Agility Lab facilitate?***

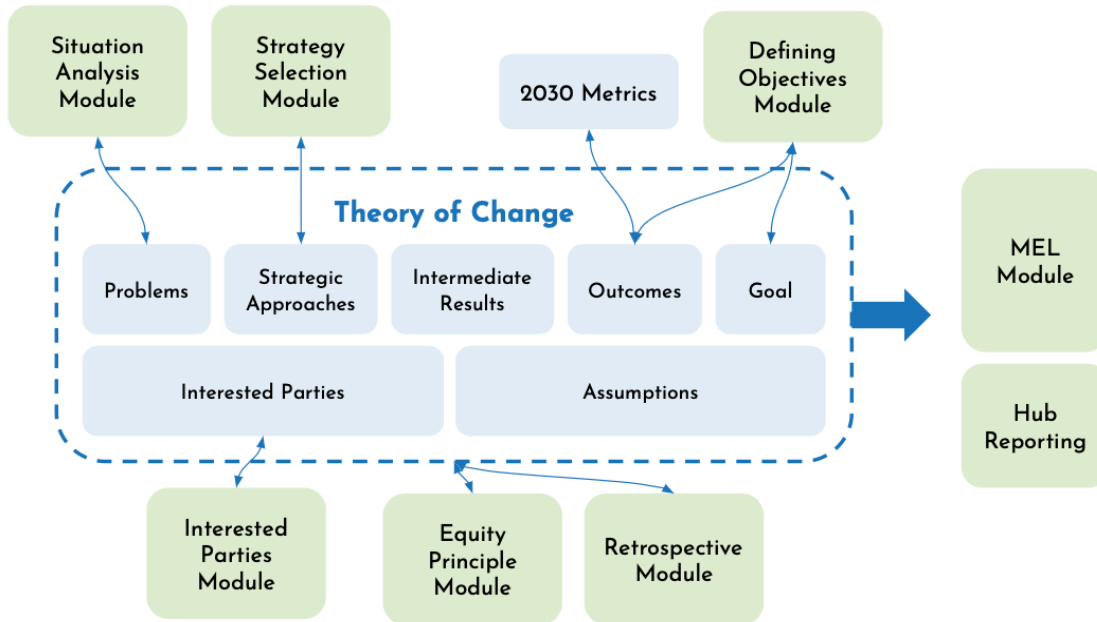
If you would like a workshop facilitated by the Agility Lab, feel free to get in contact directly or leave a response on our interest form [here](#). The process described in this document is designed to be facilitated by someone of your choosing, in a "do-it-yourself" format. All facilitation prompts and tips are directly on the Miro board. We have found that it works much better to nominate someone on the team to facilitate the process, while others participate.

***I'd love to strengthen the ToC that we develop. Can we get feedback on our first draft?***

Yes! We highly recommend that every team gets feedback on their first draft, as gaining feedback is a great way to strengthen your ToC. We can support via Office Hours with Craig Leisher, a feedback showcase with key parties, or you can assess your ToC using our scorecard.

***If we've already completed other CbD modules (or done prior work that relate to specific elements of the ToC), does that change how we should run the workshop?***

Yes! Absolutely. The workshop is designed for a team that may not have completed other CbD modules yet. You can integrate previous work to shorten or even skip certain sections of the workshop based on what feels right for your situation.



Questions? Please reach out to our Agility Lab team members!

- NAR and Global Teams: Kendra Opatovsky, [kendra.opatovsky@tnc.org](mailto:kendra.opatovsky@tnc.org)
- APAC and Africa teams: Alexia Preston, [alexia.preston@tnc.org](mailto:alexia.preston@tnc.org)
- Latin America Teams: Guillermo Tafurt, [guillermo.tafurt@gmail.com](mailto:guillermo.tafurt@gmail.com)