Planning for Theory of Change Development:

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIMELINE

Country office. . . . . .CO

Development Food Security Activity . . . . .DFSA

USAID's Office of Food for Peace . . . . .FFP

Monitoring and evaluation . . . . .M&E

New business development . . . . .NBD

PowerPoint . . . . .PPT

Request for applications . . . . .RFA

Strategic learning advisor. . . . . .SLA

Theory of Change . . . . .TOC

The time frames included in this guide are suggestions and the amount
of time needed will differ for each organization. All PowerPoints,
tools, and handouts referenced in this guidebook can be found at
www.fsnnetwork.org/theory-change-training-curriculum.

Gantt chart: Theory of Change (TOC) development timeline

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Sample Months	SEPTEMBER (MONTH 1)				OCTOBER (MONTH 2)				NOVEMBER (MONTH 3)						DECEMBER (MONTH 4)			JANUARY (MONTH 5)				FEBRUARY (MONTH 6)	
Team Learning Session 1: Theory of Change (TOC) Overview	■										1				1								
Team Learning Session 2: Data Collection, Organization, and Analysis		1																					
Data Collection and Organization	2 Secondary and primary data collection, organization, and pre-analysis, including stakeholder mapping										Fill prioritized information gaps from PT exercise					Fill prioritized information gaps from TOC exercise							
Team Learning Session 3: Creating the Problem Tree											2												
Problem Tree Development											3												
Problem Tree Vetting and Refinement												■	■	■									
Team Learning Session 4: From Problems to Solutions															2								
Flip Problem Tree to Solution Tree															3								
Team Learning Session 5: TOC Development Part 1															4								
TOC Diagram and Complementary Documentation Development															5					Incorporate new information			
Team Learning Session 6: TOC Development Part 2															6								
Agree on Outcomes the DFSA will and will not Directly Address															7								
Identify and Prioritize Interventions																	■	■	■	■			
Team Learning Session 7: Refine Graphics in TOC Diagram											4					1							
Refine TOC Graphics																2				■		■	
Team Learning Session 8: Logframe Transfer and Indicator Selection																1							
Logframe Transfer and Indicator Selection																2					■		
Team Learning Session 9: TOC Checklist															■								
TOC Checklist for Quality and Completeness																■						■	■

Theory of Change Overview Calendar

Numbers in columns represent sequence of activities (when multiple steps take place during the same week)

PURPLE CELLS: Team Training	
TEAL CELLS: Team Application	
Data Collection	
Problem Tree Development	
TOC Development	
Logframe and Indicators	
Final Quality Check	

1 TEAM LEARNING SESSION 1: Theory of Change (TOC) Overview

SESSION LENGTH: 60 minutes presentation and discussion	**WHEN:** *Pre-award:* As soon as your team determines it will respond to a forthcoming RFA (a brief review before other team learning sessions can be helpful) *Post-award:* As soon as implementation staff are hired
WHO: All team members who will be involved in the TOC process (e.g., NBD, CO, M&E, technical leads, SLA, project managers, senior management, etc.)	
SESSION RESOURCES: IDEAL timeline/responsibilities Excel workbook IDEAL PPT 1: TOC Overview **Resource adaptation needed:** Modify slides to outline staff roles and responsibilities and projected timeline	**WHY:** *Pre-award* • To provide a general overview of the TOC process and the resulting product • To agree on team roles and responsibilities during the TOC process • To alert team members of the anticipated TOC development timeline *Post-award* • To orient new staff to FFP TOC language and expectations

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 2: Data Collection, Organization, and Pre-analysis

SESSION LENGTH:
60 minutes presentation and questions

HANDS ON APPLICATION:
Pre-award: Dispersed across 3-4 months (first round to develop problem tree will be approximately 8-9 weeks)
Post-award: Dispersed across 4-6 months

WHO:
All team members who will be involved in data capture (desk review or primary data), drafting tools for data capture, or analyzing captured data

SESSION RESOURCES:
- IDEAL PPT 2: Data Collection and Organization
- Handout 1.2a: Resilience Framework
- Handout 1.2b: FFP Strategic Results Framework
- Tool 1.2a: Data Synthesis Matrix
- Tool 1.2e: Stakeholder Template

Resource adaptation optional:
You may elect to modify the sample TOPS data synthesis matrix or create a new matrix based on relevant conceptual frameworks

WHEN:
Pre-award: Before beginning any data collection (e.g., desk review or field visits)
Review after first round of data collection is complete and before data organization and preliminary analysis begins

Post-award: In preparation for the R&I inception workshop (identification of key information gaps) and before formative research begins

WHY:
Pre- and post-award
- To demonstrate how the team will prioritize data collection needs for TOC development
- To articulate team expectations for early and ongoing stakeholder mapping
- To agree on the matrices that will guide data organization prior to analysis

MORE INFORMATION:
- Process Check
  # 1: Data Collection
  # 2: Data Organization
- TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Module 1 Session 2

APPLICATION: Data Collection, Organization, and Pre-analysis

WHAT	WHO (EXAMPLES ONLY)	Approximately 8-9 weeks Round 1 - Proposal Phase*								
		WEEK								
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Develop and/or agree on the data synthesis templates to guide data organization and analysis**	Technical leads, M&E, SLA, and NBD (3-4 people representing diverse perspectives)	▓								
Enter all secondary information into synthesis templates	Interns, technical leads, and M&E		▓	▓	▓	ONGOING				
Identify and prioritize data gaps for primary data collection	Technical leads, M&E, SLA, NBD, and CO staff (4-6 people representing diverse perspectives)				▓					
Draft data collection tools & review with team	M&E/technical leads					▓				
Preliminary analysis (create high-level basic problem tree based on secondary data)	2-4 person team representing diverse perspectives					▓				
Vet basic problem tree with full team	Technical leads, M&E, SLA, NBD, and CO staff (6-8 people)						▓			
Collect primary data	CO staff and technical leads							▓	▓	
Enter primary data into data synthesis template	2-3 person team (e.g., M&E, SLA, and technical leads)								▓	▓

*The data collection process is iterative. Several rounds are necessary to fill new information gaps as they arise.
**It is helpful to develop a standard template that can be used for all FFP proposals/activities.

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 3: Problem Tree Development, Validation, and Refinement

SESSION LENGTH: Presentation and questions 60 minutes **HANDS ON APPLICATION:** Dispersed across 3-4 weeks Development 1 week, vetting and refining 2 -3 weeks	**WHEN:** As soon as possible after all primary and secondary data are collected and entered into the synthesis matrix
WHO: 8-20 people representing diverse perspectives (e.g., technical leads, M&E, SLA, NBD, and CO staff, if they exist during proposal stage) **SESSION RESOURCES:** IDEAL PPT 3: Problem Tree Development **Resource adaptation optional:** You may wish to replace sample problem tree slides with diagrams from your own organization	**WHY:** To explain how the team will: • Use causal analysis to understand underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity • Develop a problem tree to explore cause and effect pathways, including cross-causal linkages • Document, prioritize, and develop an action plan to fill remaining information gaps • Validate the problem tree with other stakeholders
	MORE INFO: • Process Check #3: Problem Analysis • TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Module 2 Session 1

WHAT	WHO (EXAMPLES ONLY)	3-4 weeks WEEK			
		11	12	13	14
Critically analyze and organize problems and causes into a logical flow, including cross-causal linkages (problem tree)	Technical leads, M&E, SLA, NBD, and CO staff (6-20 people representing diverse perspectives)	■			
Identify and prioritize remaining information and evidence gaps		■			
Capture the problem tree in electronic format	Graphic lead: One person versed in the software your organization uses to create TOC diagrams	■	■		
Data collection Round 2: Attempt to fill priority information gaps through secondary data capture (or primary, if feasible)	Technical leads, M&E, SLA, NBD, CO staff, and interns	■	■	■	■
Document the evidence for each problem statement in an easily referenced template (to be used by proposal writers and by CO post-award)	1-2 person team (M&E, interns, etc.)	■	■	■	■
Vet the problem tree with other relevant stakeholders	In-country team (not limited to DFSA staff; could be any of your projects working on food and nutrition security) and regional government, if possible			■	■
Refine the problem tree based on stakeholder feedback and filled information gaps	2-6 person team (from original problem tree working group)				■

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 4: From Problems to Solutions

SESSION LENGTH: Presentation 30 minutes **HANDS ON APPLICATION:** 1-2 days No detailed application timeline necessary	**WHEN:** As soon as problem tree is vetted by relevant stakeholders and modifications are incorporated
WHO: 1-3 people (recommend an M&E lens to ensure measurable results statements)	**WHY:** • To illustrate the transition from problem trees to solution trees/skeleton TOC • To agree on what constitutes a measurable solution statement
SESSION RESOURCES: IDEAL PPT 4: From Problems to Solutions **Resource adaptation:** No	**MORE INFO:** • Process Check #4: Problem Tree Flip • TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Session 3.1

5 TEAM LEARNING SESSION 5: TOC Development Part 1 (Distilling Pathways and Complementary Documentation)

SESSION LENGTH: Presentations and questions 60 minutes **HANDS ON APPLICATION:** Dispersed across 5-6 weeks	**WHEN:** As soon as electronic problem tree is flipped to measurable results statements

WHO:
All team members who were involved in Team Learning Session 3 (e.g., 8-20 people representing diverse technical and geographical perspectives)
 	
Try to carry out this step in-country if you have staff who will likely be a part of proposed DFSA
	WHY:
	• To update full team on the problem tree to TOC transition
	• To gain agreement on how the team will:
	   ◦ Check pathway logic and ensure all preconditions are causal versus definitional
	   ◦ Check the balance and relationship of systemic, knowledge-related, and behavioral changes
	   ◦ Add assumptions and rationales to TOC diagram and support them with evidence in the complementary documentation
	   ◦ Depict distinct pathways for distinct populations
	   ◦ Document, prioritize, and develop an action plan to fill remaining information gaps (either pre-proposal or in refinement year)

SESSION RESOURCES: • IDEAL PPT 4: From Problems to Solutions • IDEAL PPT 5: TOC Pathways • Complementary Documentation Matrices for Assumptions and Rationales **Resource adaptation optional:** You may wish to adapt the complementary documentation matrices to suit organizational preferences	**MORE INFO:** • Process Check #5: TOC Pathways • TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Sessions 3.1 and 3.2

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 6: TOC Development Part 2 (Identifying External Actor Outcomes and Prioritizing Interventions)

SESSION LENGTH:
Presentation 30 minutes

HANDS ON APPLICATION:
2-3 weeks

WHO:
Full team participating in the TOC process, including country office representatives

Try to carry out this step in-country if you have staff who will likely be a part of the proposed DFSA

SESSION RESOURCES:
- IDEAL PPT 6a: Who Does What?
- IDEAL PPT 6b: Prioritizing Interventions
- Complementary Documentation Matrix for External Actors
- Complementary Documentation Sustainability Matrix
- Your organization's stakeholder mapping results

Resource adaptation optional:
You may wish to adapt the matrices to organizational preferences

WHEN:
After the team refines TOC logic and distills pathways, share the two presentations with the same group in the same workshop

WHY:
To explain the process your team will use to:
- Prioritize which outcomes the proposed activity will address
- Identify outcomes that will be addressed by external actors
- Set a foundation for prioritizing (e.g., necessary and sufficient) proposed interventions
- Identify services and input provisioning that must continue beyond the life of the activity in order to sustain key outcomes

MORE INFO:
- Process Check
  #6a: External Actors
  #6b: DFSA Interventions/Sustainability
- TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Session 4.1

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 7: Graphic Refinement of the TOC Diagram

SESSION LENGTH: Presentation 10 minutes **DISCUSSION:** 1 hour **HANDS ON APPLICATION:** Iterative (1-2 days for each round over 6-7 weeks)	**WHEN:** • Offer a basic introduction to agreed-upon graphics before the team creates the problem tree • Provide a full design session as soon as the team completes first round of TOC development
WHO: Graphic leads (1-2 people well-versed in whatever software your organization uses to create TOC diagrams)	**WHY:** • To agree on your organization's graphic standards • To understand FFP graphic requirements
SESSION RESOURCES: • IDEAL PPT 7: TOC Graphic Refinement • Handout 4.3: TOC Key **Resource adaptation needed:** Adapt the slides and handout to depict standardized colors and shapes used by your organization	**MORE INFO:** • Process Check #7b: TOC Graphics • TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Session 4.3

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APPLICATION: TOC Development Part 1 & 2 and Graphic Refinement

WHAT	WHO (EXAMPLES ONLY)	5-6 weeks WEEK					
		15	16	17	18	19	20
Flip problem tree to solution tree	1-3 people (M&E lens to ensure measurable results statements)	▓					
Causal logic check (distill TOC pathways to necessary and sufficient outcomes, add assumptions & rationales, and keep problem tree up to date)	8-20 staff (diverse perspectives)*	▓	▓	▓			▓
Prioritize information gaps to fill pre-proposal and those to fill in refinement year	Technical leads, M&E, and SLA						
Agree on outcomes the DFSA will address and those that will be addressed by external actors	8-20 staff (diverse perspectives)*		▓				
Document supporting evidence for rationales and assumptions in complementary documentation	Two-person team to document but support from full team to provide evidence			▓	▓		
Graphically refine the TOC diagram (Round 1)	Graphic lead			▓			▓
Fill prioritized information gaps	M&E, SLA, CO, interns, and technical leads			▓			
Determine necessary TOC modifications resulting from new information	4-6 staff (diverse perspectives)					▓	
Identify and prioritize interventions	Technical leads			▓	▓		
Add prioritized intervention outputs to TOC diagram	Graphic lead					▓	
Final check pathway logic and sustainability of proposed interventions	6-10 staff (diverse perspectives)						▓

*Same group who participated in the problem tree workshop/causal logic check

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 8: Logframe Transfer and Indicator Selection

SESSION LENGTH: Presentation 30 minutes **HANDS ON APPLICATION:** Dispersed across 4-6 weeks	**WHEN:** *Round 1:* As soon as team agrees on TOC pathway logic and the outcomes the DFSA will address *Round 2:* Once interventions are prioritized and the full team completes a logic and sustainability check
WHO: M&E staff and select technical advisors	**WHY:** To explain the process your team will use to: • Transfer the TOC to a FFP DFSA logframe • Identify effective indicators for TOC outcomes and outputs so that the activity can recognize whether change has occurred at all TOC levels (necessary for informing adaptive management decisions)
SESSION RESOURCES: IDEAL PPT 8: TOC Transfer to Logframe & Indicators Current list of FFP indicators, including PIRS for all annual monitoring indicators **Resource adaptation:** No	**MORE INFO:** • Process Check #8: Logframe/Indicators • TOPS TOC Facilitator's Guide: Session 5.1

APPLICATION: Logframe Transfer and Indicator Selection

WHAT	WHO (EXAMPLES ONLY)	4-6 weeks dispersed WEEK					
		16	17	18	19	20	21
Agree on logframe numbering (especially for preconditions that contribute to more than one outcome)	2-3 person team, including one M&E staffer	▓					
Transfer outcomes and assumptions to logframe	One M&E staffer	▓					
Map FFP required indicators to TOC and identify custom indicators to fill gaps	M&E team and technical advisors		▓				
Enter outcome indicators in logframe	One M&E staffer			▓			
Transfer prioritized intervention outputs to logframe	One M&E staffer						▓
Identify indicators for outputs that will transfer to logframe	M&E team and technical advisors						▓
Enter output indicators in logframe	One M&E staffer						▓

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TEAM LEARNING SESSION 9: Theory of Change Checklist

SESSION LENGTH: 20 minutes **HANDS ON APPLICATION:** 1-2 days (in intervals over 8-9 weeks)	**WHEN:** • Introduce before TOC diagram development begins • Review when first round of TOC development process is complete • Final review prior to proposal submission
WHO: 1-2 team members responsible for checking the quality and thoroughness of the TOC diagram and complementary documentation (TOC narrative) **SESSION RESOURCES:** TOPS/FFP TOC Checklist	**WHY:** To understand how to ascertain the quality and thoroughness of the diagrams and complementary documentation using the same criteria as donor reviewers

APPLICATION: Theory of Change Checklist

WHAT	WHO (EXAMPLES ONLY)	4-6 weeks dispersed WEEK					
		18	19	20	21	22	23
Checklist items related to general diagram elements (1- 4c) and general formatting (9-13) as well as evolving complementary documentation (external actor, rationales, and assumption documentation)	1-2 team members responsible for checking the quality and thoroughness of the TOC diagram and complementary documentation (TOC narrative) as well as the graphic lead	■					
Checklist items related to DFSA outputs (2b, 4b, 5, 7, 9) and cross-cutting themes (23-26)				■			
Final quality check (all checklist items)						■	■

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