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# Theories of Change for Anti-Corruption Reforms

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# WHAT IS A THEORY OF CHANGE?

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The ideas and hypotheses ('theories') people and organisations have about how change happens. These theories can be conscious or unconscious and are based on personal beliefs, assumptions and a personal perception of reality.

# DISTINCT FEATURES OF A TOC

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- It defines all *building blocks* required to bring about a given long-term goal.
- The building blocks are depicted on a map known as a *pathway of change* (graphic representation of the change process)
- It describes the *types of interventions* that bring about the outcomes depicted in the pathway of change map.
- Each outcome in the pathway of change is tied to an intervention, revealing the *web of activities* required to bring about change.
- It articulates the *assumptions* that underpin the change process.

# THEORY OF CHANGE COMPONENTS

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ToC components often include:

- A big picture analysis of how change happens in relation to a specific thematic area
- An articulation of an organisation or programme *pathway* in relation to that big picture analysis
- A monitoring and evaluation framework that is designed to test both the pathway and the *assumptions* made about how change happens

# PURPOSES

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- *Strategic planning*: to map the change processes and its expected outcomes and thus facilitates project implementation
- *Monitoring and evaluation*: to articulate expected processes and outcomes that can be reviewed over time. This allows organisations to assess their contribution to change
- *Communication*: to communicate their chosen change process to internal and external partners
- *Learning*: to clarify, develop and improve the theory behind their organisation or programme

# STEPS

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**Step 1**  
Clarify  
Purpose of ToC  
Process

**Step 3**  
Analyse Current  
Situation  
*--opportunities  
constraints*

**Step 5**  
Identify Strategic  
Priorities

**Step 7**  
Define MEL  
Priorities and  
Process

**Step 2**  
Describe Desired  
Change/Objective

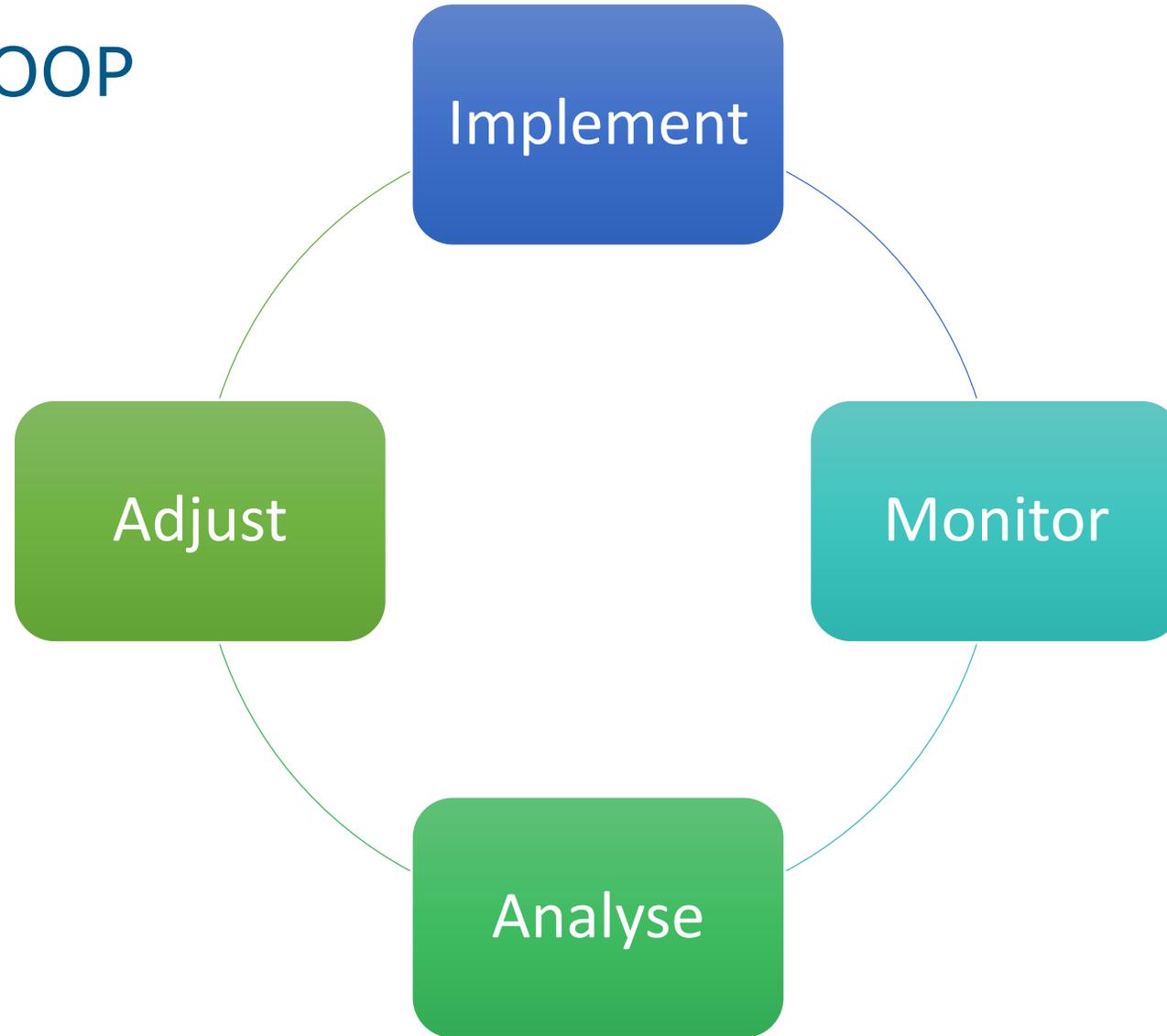
**Step 4**  
Identify Domains  
of Change  
*What needs to change  
in order to overcome  
or plan around  
constraints?*

*What critical assumptions underlie your planned  
course of action? (How can you test them over  
time?)*

**Step 6**  
Map Change  
Pathways  
*What steps will be  
necessary?  
Who needs to act to  
complete these steps?  
What would be needed for  
them to overcome barriers  
to action?*

# FEEDBACK LOOP

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# 1. THE DESIRED CHANGE

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What is the desired change/objective, why and for whom?

-Challenge: People-oriented statement of change, not abstract concept. Be ambitious but not impossible to achieve. Identify assumptions.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION

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What is the current situation in relation to the wanted change/objective?

-Generate a broad and shared understanding of the system in which the desired change is needed.

### 3. DOMAINS OF CHANGE

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Identify the domains where important changes have to take place in order to achieve the desired change/objective.

-Core question: Who and what needs to change, where and in which way, for the desired change to become possible. Who needs to do what differently?

-Challenge: Be selective and choose three to five domains.

## 4. IDENTIFY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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Within the domains what areas, actors or stakeholders are possible to influence?

-Core question: What changes can best be influenced, why and how, in the next 2-3 years?

## 5. MAPPING PATHWAYS OF CHANGE

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By starting from the desired change/objective and the identified domains of change, map the pathway of change backwards to today.

Core question: What needs to happen before the next positive step in the process can take place?

## 6. MONITORING EVALUATION AND LEARNING PRIORITIES

What information do we need to track and analyse the change process as it evolves, and to learn about assumptions for continuous improvement?

Define: MEL priorities and process, with clear actions for regular monitoring and learning –updating the first ToC