

The “Workplan” Approach to ECR-led Interventions

LIBSENSE ECR Leadership Workshop - Nigeria 2026



University of
Sheffield



What is the workplan approach?

- The workplan approach is broadly based on two concepts, Networks of Action (NoA) and Theory of Change (ToC):
- **Networks of action**
 - From the ICT4D (Information and Communication Technology for Development) field
 - It refers to ways of ensuring that action research is sustainable over time and scalable from small pilots to larger projects
 - Is particularly applicable to large-scale, dispersed, multi-stakeholder infrastructure development projects where resources are scarce
 - Is based on the development of networks of people, processes, artefacts etc. that can spread learning experiences of interventions and projects to other sites which can then 'spawn' their own activities
 - Is based on 3 dynamics:
 - Learning takes place in networks
 - Experience travels through people interacting in networks
 - Competence and capacity can be created at local levels and be translatable to other contexts

What is the workplan approach?

- The workplan approach is broadly based on two concepts, Networks of Action (NoA) and Theory of Change (ToC):
- **Theory of change**
 - A way of articulating how and why a particular social change can happen in a particular context
 - For projects with an ICT component, we will be looking at a socio-technical change, where both the social and technical parts of the change will be co-occurring
 - A mapping tool can be used to demonstrate how a particular programme or change initiative can lead to a long-term goal or impact
 - A logic model is usually used to map out ToC's where you work backward from the goals/objectives to 'fill-in' all the pre-conditions, actions and other inputs
 - This type of model assumes causal links between the inputs (interventions, e.g.), the outputs (outcomes, e.g.) and impact (long-term goal for change)

A logic model framework

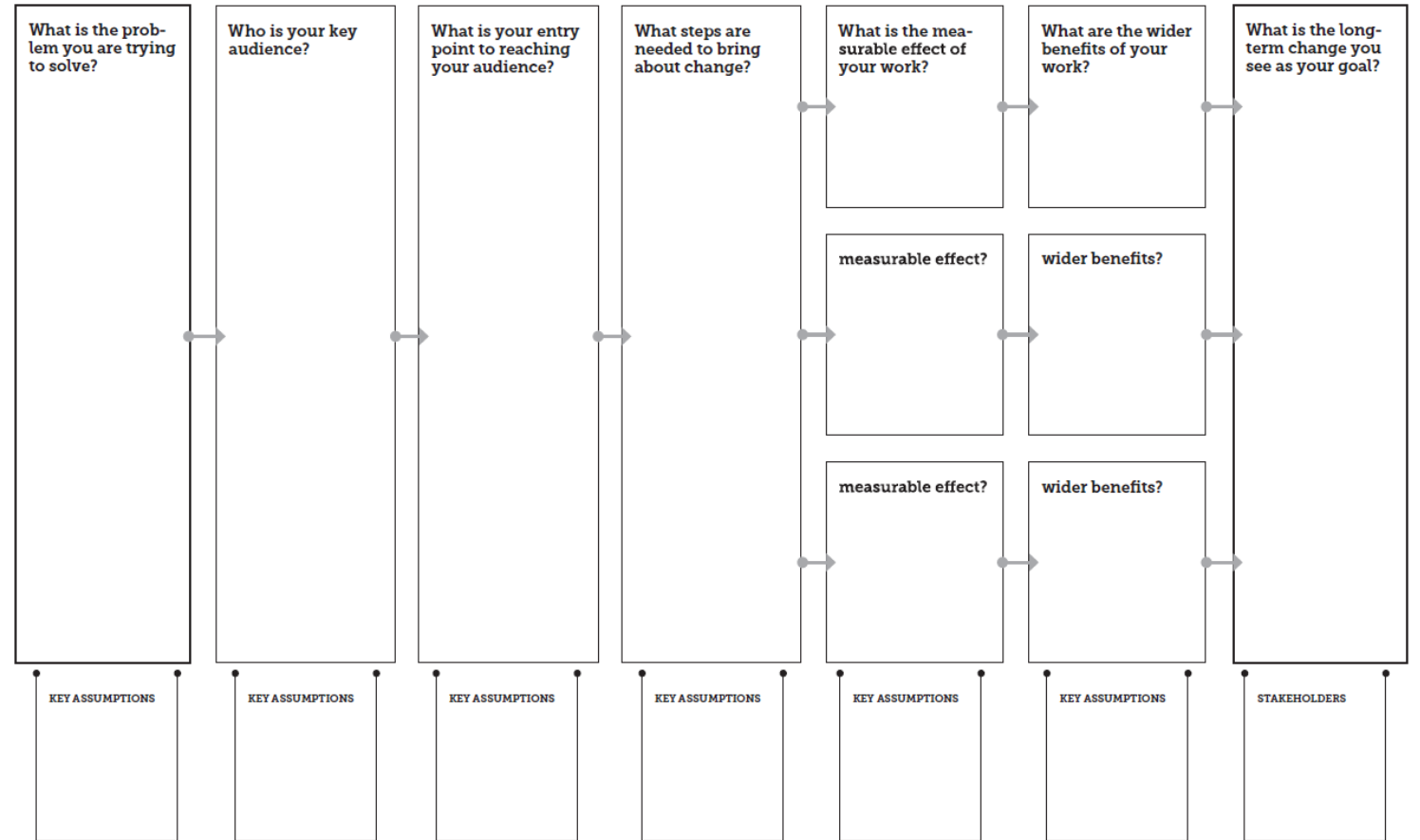
This logic model sets out all of the potential parts of a theory of change and ways in which outcomes can be measured.

It is very detailed and comprehensive.

More detail about this can be sourced
Sourced from: <https://diy-toolkit.org/>

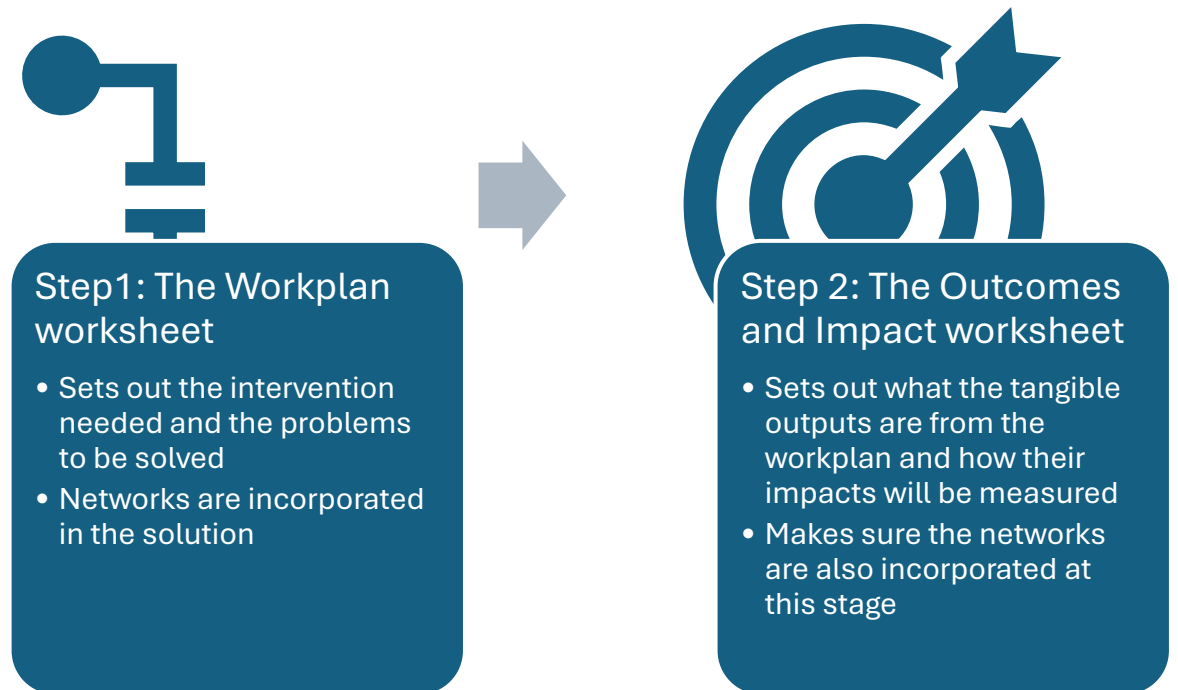
The [Center for Theory of Change](#) is also a good source to find out more information.

I want to clarify my priorities
by defining my goals and the path to reach them



The NoA-ToC workplan approach

- The workplan approach combines both NoA and ToC by introducing a key component in the process: networks
- LIBSENSE has created impact mainly through its networked activities, the NoA-ToC approach seeks to amplify that
- For the ECR networks, the primary networks of action are your peer groups on campus with whom you can plan and create change
- For the change to take effect, you will also need to cultivate networks of influence, which are those who hold influential and powerful positions outside of your peer groups
- As an ECR champion, you will learn to work with both your peer and other influential networks



What is the workplan worksheet?

- The workplan worksheet is a tool through which the ECR Champion can identify a problem area within the institution for which, on their own or in conjunction with members/experts in the LIBSENSE network, they can plan an intervention.
- Step 1:
 - Planning an intervention begins with a proposed change to the institutional research environment that the ECR Lead envisages.
- Step 2:
 - The next step is to explain the current situation and problems that currently exist that are hampering the research environment.
- Step 3:
 - This is followed by working out what actions would help to bring about change and listing these.
- Step 4:
 - The final step is to identify the networks that will help to co-develop and implement the desired change.

Example of the workplan template

Workplan Template Follow the guidelines for completing this workplan template in the toolkit as presented in the ECR Champions Workshop			
ECR Lead Name:			
ECR Lead Institution:			
Attachments: Project Proposal, Project Plan etc...			
Current problem/situation in research environment <i>I have found the following existing problems hindering good research practice... which then leads to....</i>	Networks to be mobilised to enable the desired change <i>I will need these resources, expertise from these networks...</i>	Actions needed to enable the desired change <i>I will need to take these actions to enable the change ...</i>	Desired Change to Research Environment <i>I would like my institution to start ...</i>
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Explanation of how to use the workplan template – step 1

Step 1:

- Planning an intervention begins with a proposed change to the institutional research environment that the ECR Lead envisages.

DESIRED CHANGE TO RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

I WOULD LIKE MY INSTITUTION TO START ...

Producing and disseminating up-to-date ethical guidelines for research and training staff in applying them appropriately

Explanation of how to use the workplan template – step 2

Step 2:

- The next step is to explain the current situation and problems that currently exist that are hampering the research environment.

CURRENT PROBLEM/SITUATION IN RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

I HAVE FOUND THE FOLLOWING EXISTING PROBLEMS HINDERING GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE... WHICH THEN LEADS TO....

Researchers do not adhere to any ethical practice when collecting and analysing data. This leads to errors in reporting on that data and lack of trust in the results. This further leads to hesitation of research collaborators to work with colleagues at my institution. This further leads to lower quality research output.

Explanation of how to use the workplan template – step 3

Step 3:

- This is followed by working out what actions would help to bring about change and listing these.

ACTIONS NEEDED TO ENABLE THE DESIRED CHANGE

I WILL NEED TO TAKE THESE ACTIONS TO ENABLE THE CHANGE ...

Work on a research ethics framework which can guide researchers on how to undertake ethical research practice in gathering and analysing their data.

Work on training materials to help train researchers on proper ethical practice.

Explanation of how to use the workplan template – step 4

Step 4:

- This is followed by working out what actions would help to bring about change and listing these.

NETWORKS TO BE MOBILISED TO ENABLE THE DESIRED CHANGE

I WILL NEED THESE RESOURCES, EXPERTISE FROM THESE NETWORKS...

People:

- Ethics review board
- Research office

Infrastructure:

- Platform for disseminating guidelines and training materials

Other:

- Sample ethical guidelines from other institutions
- National guidelines on ethical research, if existing

Filling in the Workplan Template

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