

## Outcome and Impact Assessment in International Development

### Zewo Guidelines for Projects and Programmes



## Step 2: Develop a results model

If one is to assess and verify the effects of a project, it must first be clear how the effects are to be achieved. The project's results model therefore forms a further basis for outcome and impact assessment. This describes the explicit and implicit assumptions about the project mechanism. It details with what means (inputs), measures (activities), deliverables (outputs) and through what interim results the project objective is to be attained. The results model is crucial for understanding and analysing successes and failures. It should be set out in either graphic or written form.

### How it is done

**Activities** Results models should be developed jointly with the target groups. There are often several ways to reach a goal. In such cases, the results model forms a good basis for choosing the most effective or promising strategy of intervention.

**Questions** Coming up with answers to the following questions can form the second step in an impact assessment:

- How can we solve the problem and change the situation?
- What relation between cause and effect (impact hypothesis) do we base this on?
- What are the preconditions for the objective to be achieved?
- Which external forces work against these objectives?
- What are the conceivable side effects?
- What is the best strategy for reaching the project objective?

**Results** A graphic results models suitable for showing the complexity of a project:

- Simple Logic Model
- Expanded Logic Model
- Results Framework
- Conceptual Framework

**Resources**

- Logical Framework Approach: Problem and Objective analysis
- Outcome Mapping: Intentional Design
- Theory of Change: Backwards Mapping, Identifying interventions

### IMPORTANT

Even if performance is primarily measured at the outcome level, there is a need for a hypothesis that describes how the effects on the target group (outcomes) contribute to achieving the longer-term development goal (impact). Often it is not possible to clearly attribute a long-term effect to a particular project or programme (attribution gap). There should however be a plausible explanation of how the project contributes to achieve the longer-term development goal.

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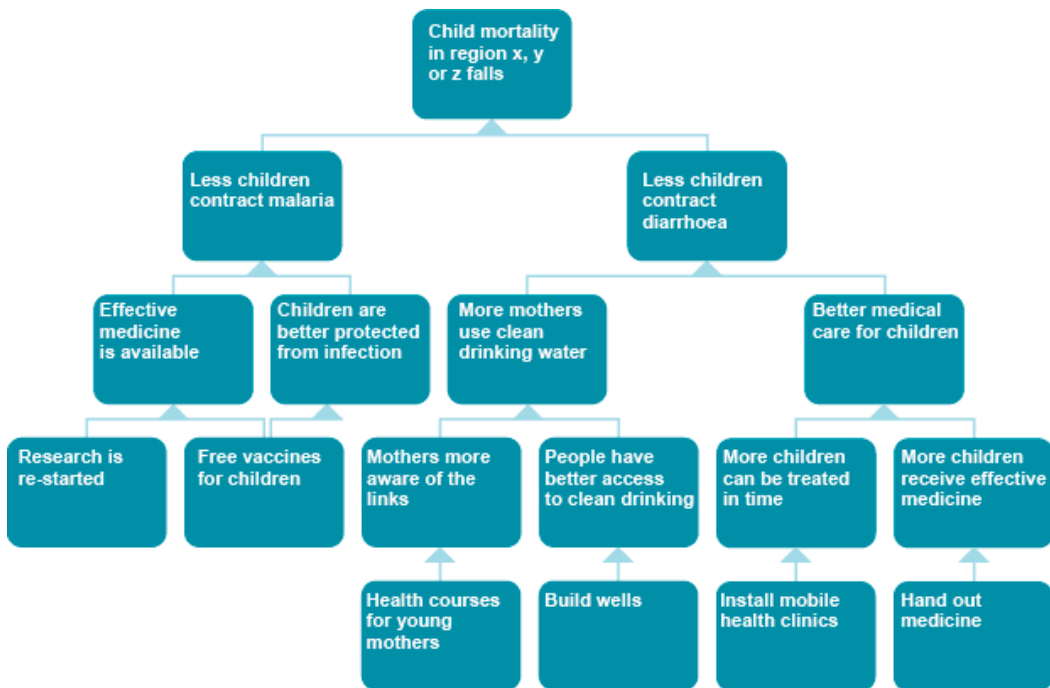
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### Solutions

An objective tree is often drawn up in order to find solutions to the problems. This technique is taken from the Logical Framework Approach. The objective tree is often derived from the problem tree by reformulating the individual problems as positive and desirable future situations.

#### Example of an objective tree



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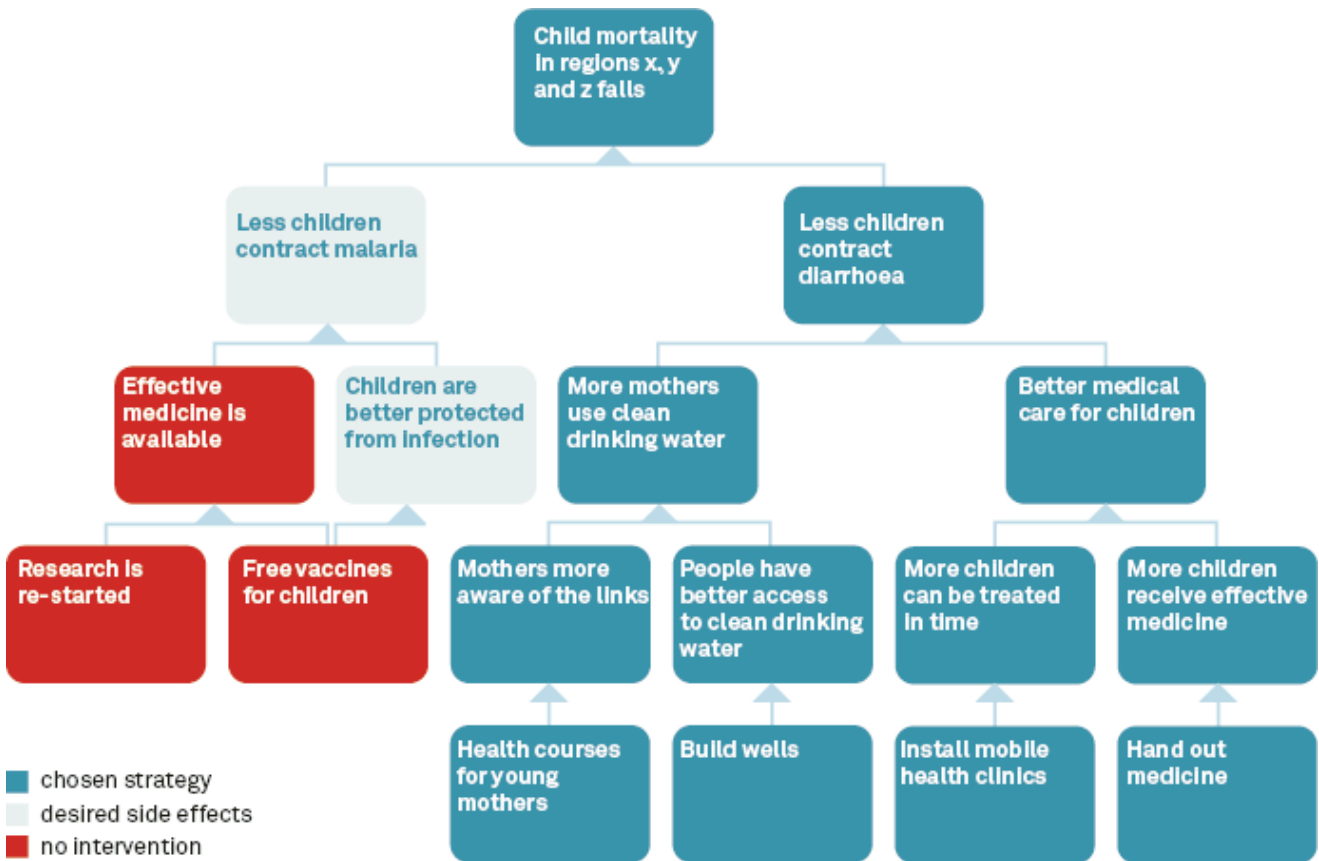
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### Strategy of intervention

Problems are often complex, and there are generally several ways to improve a situation. Aid agencies must decide on a strategy of intervention. The objective tree can be a good basis on which to draw up the strategy of intervention.

#### Example of high child mortality



The following points should be considered to find the best path:

- What lies within our sphere of influence, and what does not?
- Is the cost proportional to the results?
- What are the preconditions for successful implementation?
- What risks are there? How likely is it that they will occur? Could the consequences jeopardise the success of the project?
- What desirable or undesirable effects are conceivable?

An intervention should be as effective as possible and the costs of carrying it through should remain proportionate. The necessary conditions for successful implementation must be realistically present. There should be no risks that

are highly likely to occur and thereby jeopardise the success of the project. Undesirable side effects should be avoided as best as possible.

### Evaluation of various measures

Measure	Sphere of influence	Effect	Cost	Precondition	Risks	Side effects
Health courses	Education OK	Medium	Low	Realistic	Low	Positive
Well building	Infrastructure OK	High	High	Realistic	Medium	No negative
Medical care	Humanitarian aid OK	Medium	Medium	Realistic	Medium	Low negative
Malaria vaccinations	–	–	–	Not present	–	–
Malaria research	Not within our sphere of influence	–	Very high	–	–	–

### Chosen strategy of intervention

We implement a programme containing the following projects in the poorest parts of Country A from 2008 to 2015:

1. **Health course project**

We offer preventive health courses for young mothers so that they may find out about the links between drinking water and health and adjust their behaviour accordingly.

2. **Well-building project**

We improve the infrastructure and build wells so that within a short space of time more people have access to clean drinking water and use it instead of drinking unclean water.

3. **Medical care project**

We improve medical care for children by introducing mobile health clinics and handing out medicine.

### Contribution to longer-term development goal (impact hypothesis)

Less children falling ill with diarrhoea as a result of increased use of clean drinking water and ill children receiving better medical care are both contributions to reducing child mortality in the affected region (Millennium Development Goal).

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### Simple Logic Model

The Logic Model is a simple and widespread form of illustrating a results model. It depicts how a project is to function in the form of a linear chain of cause and effect. The illustration does usually not include external factors.

#### Example of a health course



#### Suitability

This model forms a good basis for monitoring and assessing the outcomes of simple projects in situations of low complexity.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple illustration	Reduces cause and effect to a linear chain
Focus on the project's core elements	Does not take account of external factors
Good basis for impact assessment	The process of change is not visible
Widely used	Risk of tunnel vision

#### **N.B.**

Do not confuse 'Logic Model' with 'Logframe'. The 'Logic Model' is an important part of the widely used Logical Framework Approach. It is the basis for the Logical Framework Matrix, known as 'Logframe', but 'Logic Model' should not be equated with 'Logframe'. Firstly, a Logframe contains more information than a pure Logic Model and secondly, far more complex and not strictly linear results models should be used to produce a Logframe. Cf. overview of the [Logical Framework Approach](#).

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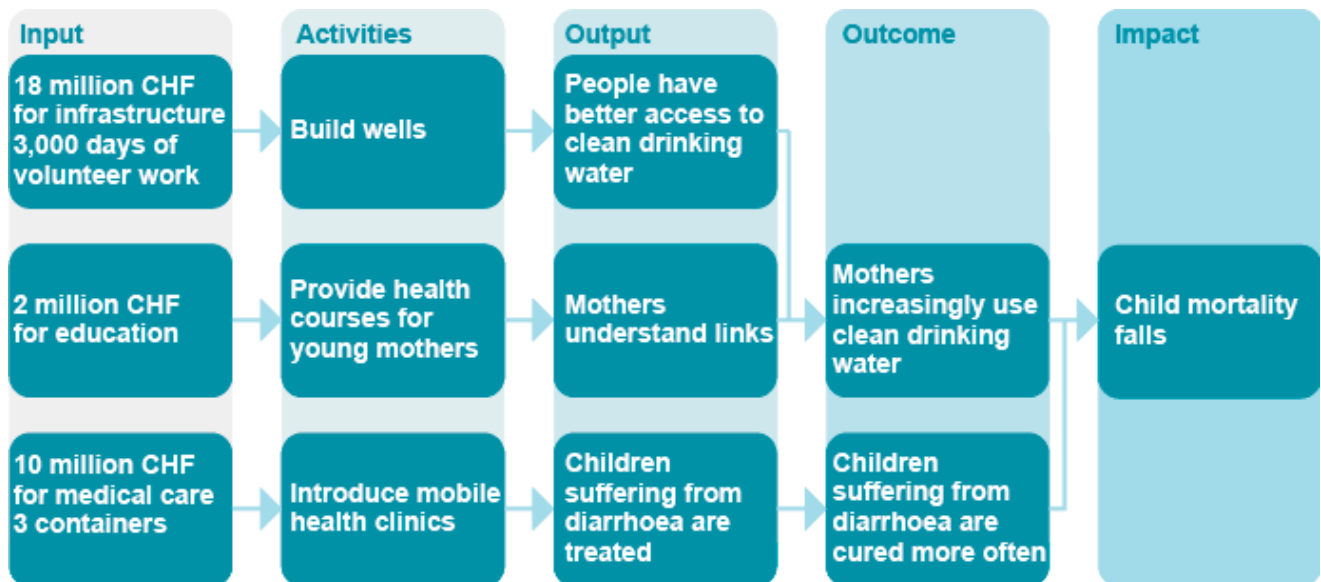
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### Expanded Logic Model

A simple Logic Model often does not allow one to visualise the effects of more complex projects or entire programmes. It must be expanded when several activities lead to the same output. It can also be organised as several interlinking steps. This kind of expanded Logic Model is often used in practice.

#### Example of a child health programme



#### Suitability

This model is well suited as a basis for assessing the outcomes of simple programmes or detailed projects.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Relations between problems can be simply illustrated	
Focus on central elements	Does not take account of external factors
Good basis for impact assessment	The process of change is not visible
Widely used	Risk of tunnel vision

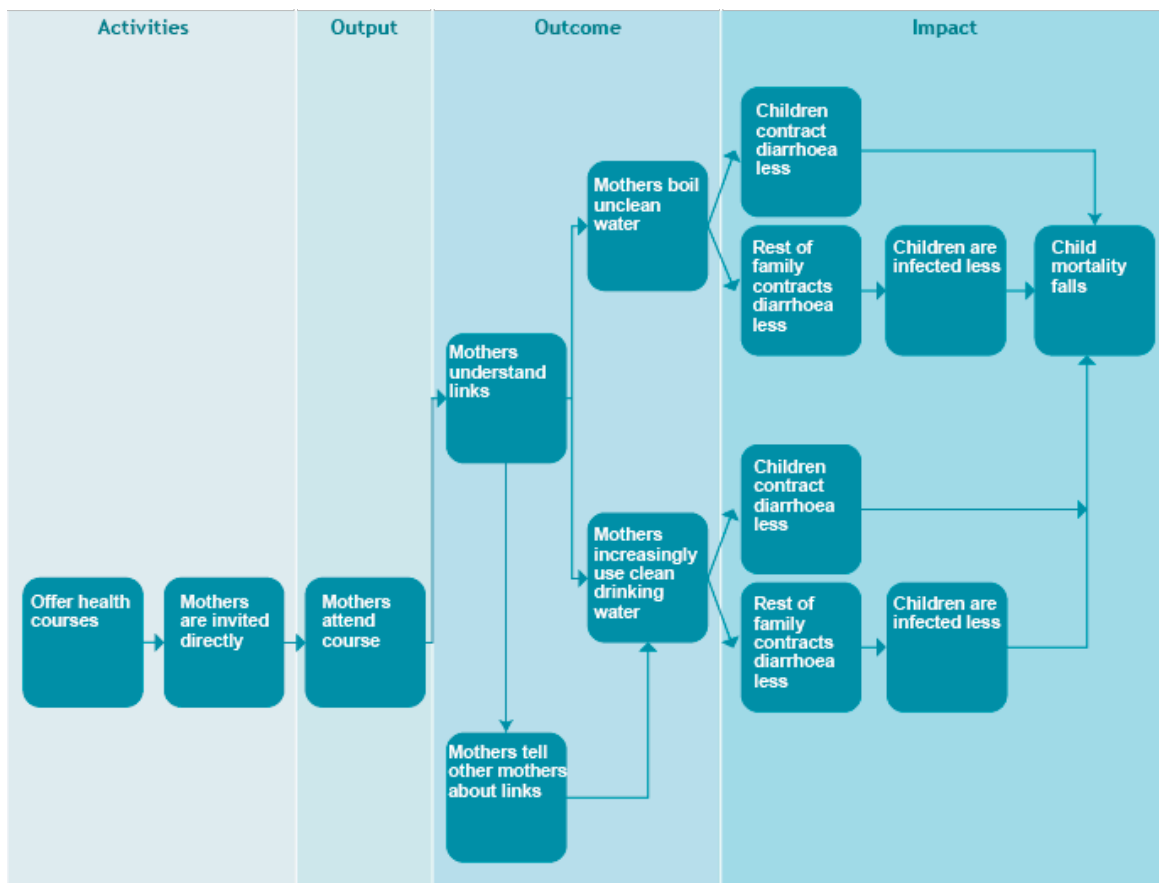
#### Further examples

The two examples of health courses and child health programme are also Logic Models, even though they have a higher degree of detail. In particular, they allow for several outputs and outcomes per results strand. It should also be noted that the outcome of a project may be an outcome from the perspective of a higher programme, just as an impact of a project may be an outcome of a programme.

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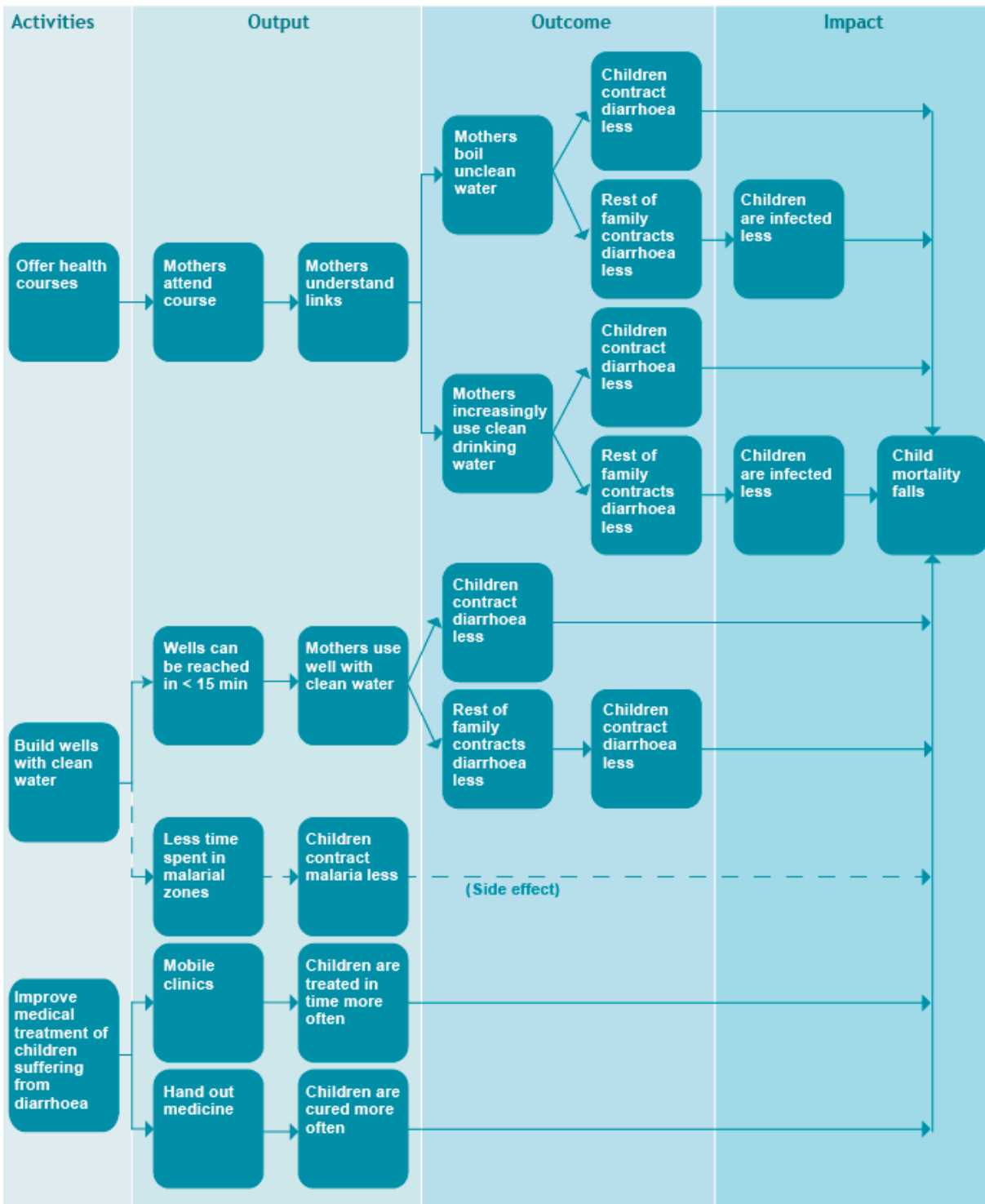
### Example of health course project



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## Example of a child health programme





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### Results Framework

A Results Framework presents the results of the project as a series of interim results to be achieved (effects, but also outputs). The activities needed for this are generally not mentioned explicitly.



### Suitability

This model is often used to depict entire programmes with several projects that might be carried out by a number of service providers.

#### Advantages

- Relations between projects can be presented clearly
- Focus on the project's - or programme's - core elements
- Good basis for impact assessment

#### Disadvantages

- Takes no account of external influences
- Risk of tunnel vision

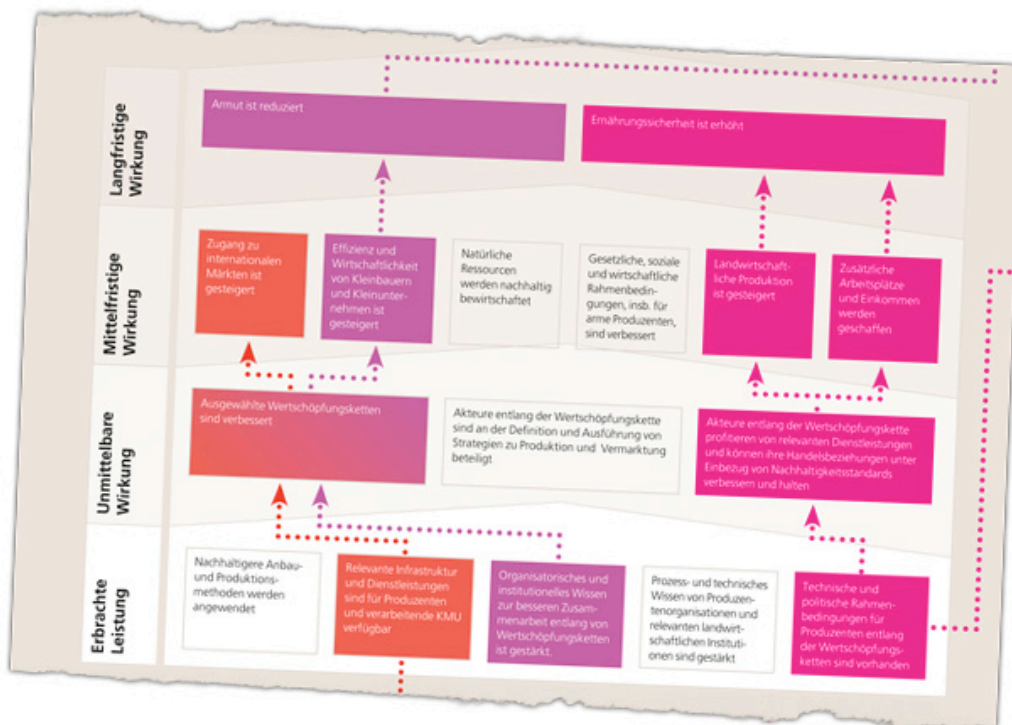
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### Example of a value chain

Example of a Results Framework from the 2010 SDC Report on effectiveness in the Agricultural Sector (further examples in the report).



**LINK**

SDC (2010) – Report on Effectiveness: Swiss Development Cooperation in the Agricultural Sector