

Guiding Change

The Why, When, How of
Evaluation



The Cheshire Cat on Evaluation

One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree.

“Which road do I take?” she asked.

“Where do you want to go?” was his response.

“I don’t know,” Alice answered.

“Then,” said the cat, “it doesn’t matter.”

- Lewis Carroll, “Alice in Wonderland”

Definition of Evaluation

► Evaluation is...

- assessing the **strengths and weaknesses** of programs, policies, personnel, products, and organizations to improve their **effectiveness**
- systematic collection and analysis of data needed to make decisions, *a process in which most well-run programs engage from the outset.*

Purposes of Evaluation

- ▶ Program monitoring and improvement
- ▶ Policy application and expansion

Evaluation Characteristics

- ▶ It is technical.
 - Knowledge of established evaluation methods
 - Capability to apply them
- ▶ It is applied.
 - Solves practical organizational/social problems
 - Reflected by the sponsors and users (business, government, service, private funding)
 - Requires knowledge of social dynamics of the setting

The Challenges of Evaluation

- ▶ Maintaining Objectivity
 - Validity
 - Long-term usefulness
- ▶ Maintaining Ethical Integrity
 - Sponsor Intent
 - Changing Policy Expectations
 - Resources

Types of Evaluation

The Four Types



Needs Assessment

- ▶ Identify weaknesses or areas of deficiency
- ▶ Project future conditions to which program needs to adjust
- ▶ Results:
 - Allocate resources efficiently/effectively
 - Meet identified, unfulfilled needs

Community Needs Assessment

- ▶ What are the populations at risk or in need?
- ▶ What are the most frequent health problems?
- ▶ What are the current services/programs targeting these needs?
- ▶ What are the problems/deficiencies with these programs?
- ▶ What strategies can be tried for improvement?
- ▶ How can a course of action be implemented to address the most pressing problems?

Process Evaluation

Efficiency and Procedure

- ▶ Operations of a particular program
- ▶ Focuses on staffing, budget, activities, services, materials, and administration
- ▶ Assess implementation
- ▶ Assess compliance with regulations
- ▶ Assess problems encountered at the implementation stage

Important Process Questions

- ▶ What are the critical activities, services, and their schedules?
- ▶ How are they operated?
- ▶ How are resources allocated and managed?
- ▶ What is the relationship between activities and objectives?
- ▶ Has the program been implemented as planned?
- ▶ Is the implementation efficient?
- ▶ What are the anticipated and unforeseen problems?
- ▶ What adjustments are necessary?

Outcome Evaluation

- ▶ Impact of service, program, or policy
- ▶ Effectiveness in attaining intended results
- ▶ Comparison with status quo or competing alternatives
- ▶ Continue/discontinue a program/policy
- ▶ Look for unintended/unanticipated outcomes

Important Outcome Questions

- ▶ What are the goals and objectives?
- ▶ How are they measured and assessed?
- ▶ What alternative programs are available?
- ▶ What is the relationship between essential components and goals?
- ▶ How successfully are intended results accomplished?

Policy Analysis

- ▶ Inform policy/decision makers of options
- ▶ Provide a framework of valuing options
- ▶ Predict consequences of options
- ▶ Assist policy/decision makers in making informed decisions

Characteristic of Policy Analysis

- ▶ Determines goals
- ▶ Identifies alternatives to meet goals
- ▶ Uses logical/rational processes for evaluation of identified alternatives
- ▶ Chooses best/optimal way of reaching goals
- ▶ Usually performed under time constraints
- ▶ Relies on techniques of economics, mathematics, operations research & systems analysis

Logic Models

The GPS of Change

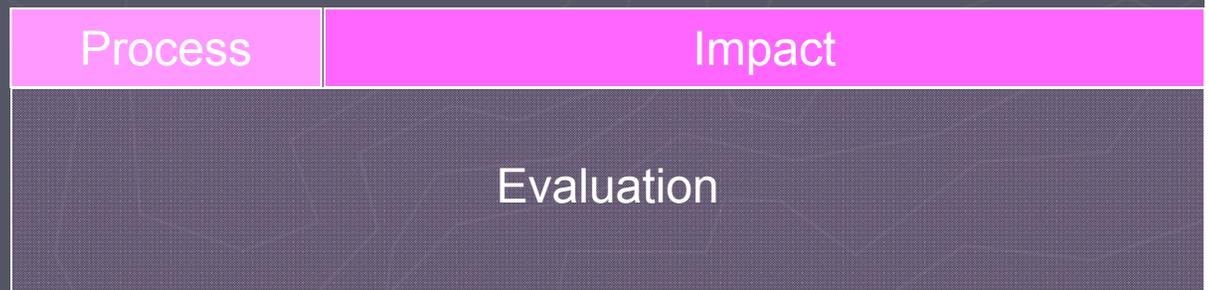
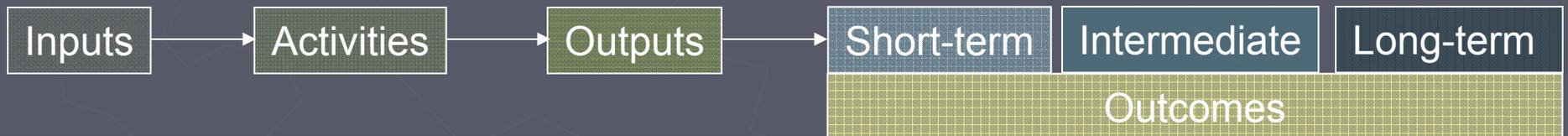


What is a Logic Model?

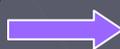
A systematic and visual way to present and share program relationships:

- Resources you have (inputs)
- Activities you plan to do (implementation)
- Changes or results you hope to achieve (outputs and outcomes)

General Logic Model



Reading a Logic Model

From left to right, columns are in “if  then” sequence:

- ▶ “If we undertake these activities, then we can achieve these short term outcomes.”
- ▶ “If we have these resources, then we can undertake these activities.”
- ▶ “If we can achieve these short term outcomes, then we can achieve these long term outcomes.”

What is Success?

- ▶ Most evaluations **will not prove activities caused** intermediate and long term outcomes.
- ▶ A logic model shows how your strategies and activities lead to intermediate and long term outcomes.
- ▶ Choose evidence-based activities, then plan to evaluate process and impact.

Logic Model Summary

- ▶ Demonstrates ability to evaluate
- ▶ Links activities to results, prevents mismatches
- ▶ Integrates planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting
- ▶ Creates understanding and agreement
- ▶ Promotes learning

Logic Model Example

Light Bulb Changing Project



Efficiently Run Light Bulb Changing Project Inputs and Activities

Steps being taken

Adequate IT systems

Adequate Human Resources systems

Suitable premises

Sufficient funding

Appropriate light bulb changers employed

Suitable ladders obtained

Changers effectively instructed in how to change light bulbs

Changers effectively instructed in occupational health and safety requirements

Incoming jobs recorded accurately

Incoming jobs assigned appropriately

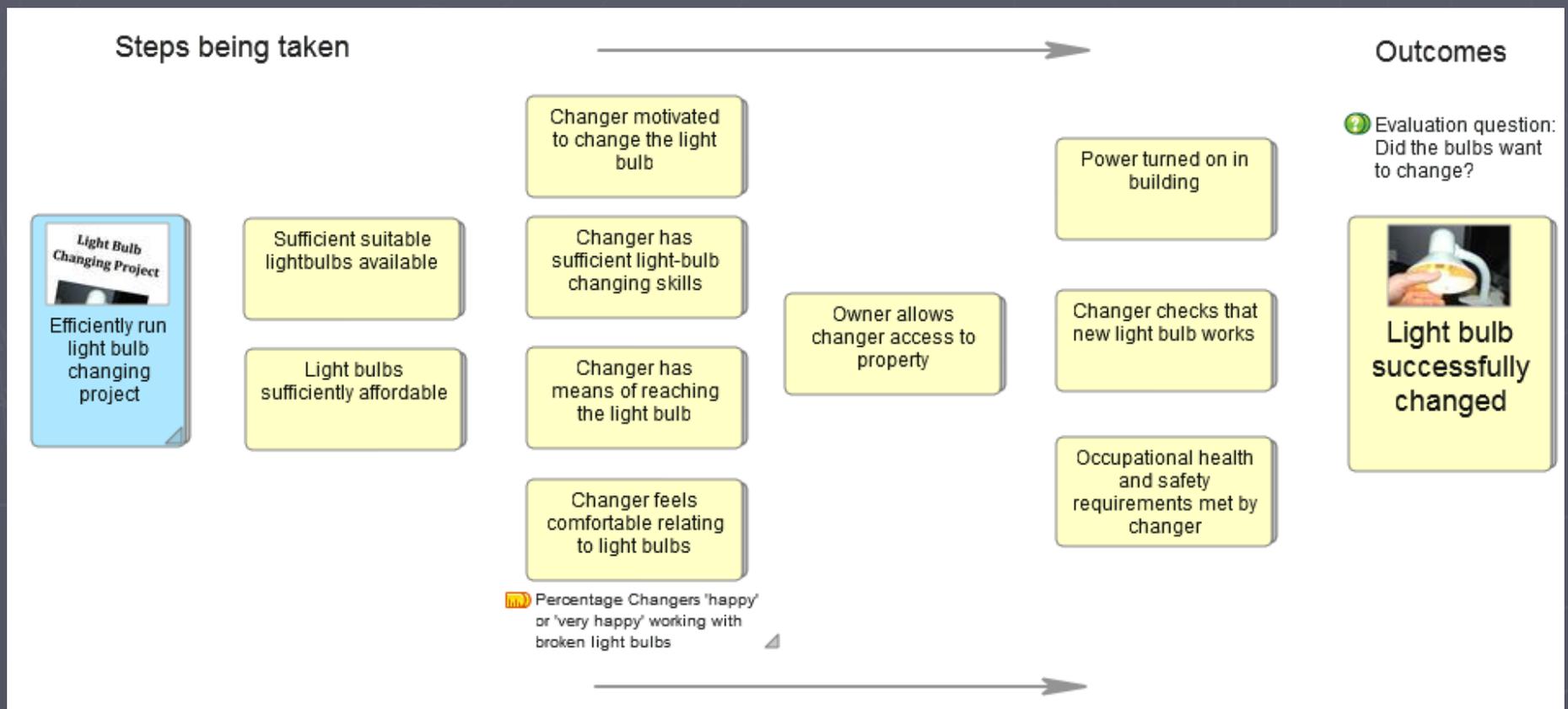
Incoming jobs assigned in a timely fashion

Sufficient monitoring, evaluation and risk management

Purpose

Light Bulb Changing Project
Efficiently run light bulb changing project

Light Bulb Changing Outputs and Outcomes

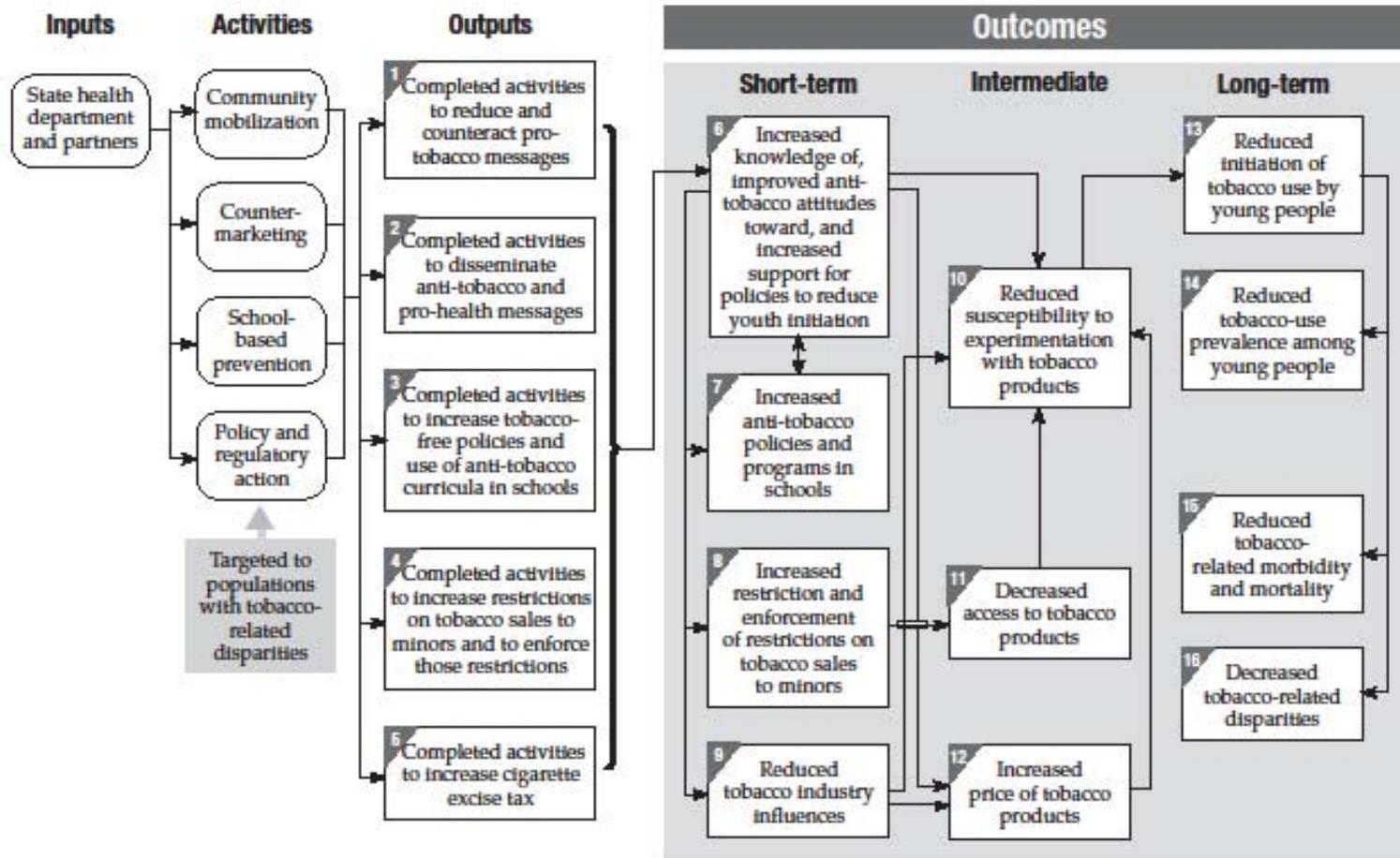


Tobacco Logic Models

- ▶ Preventing initiation of tobacco use among young people
- ▶ Eliminating nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke
- ▶ Promoting quitting among adults and young people.

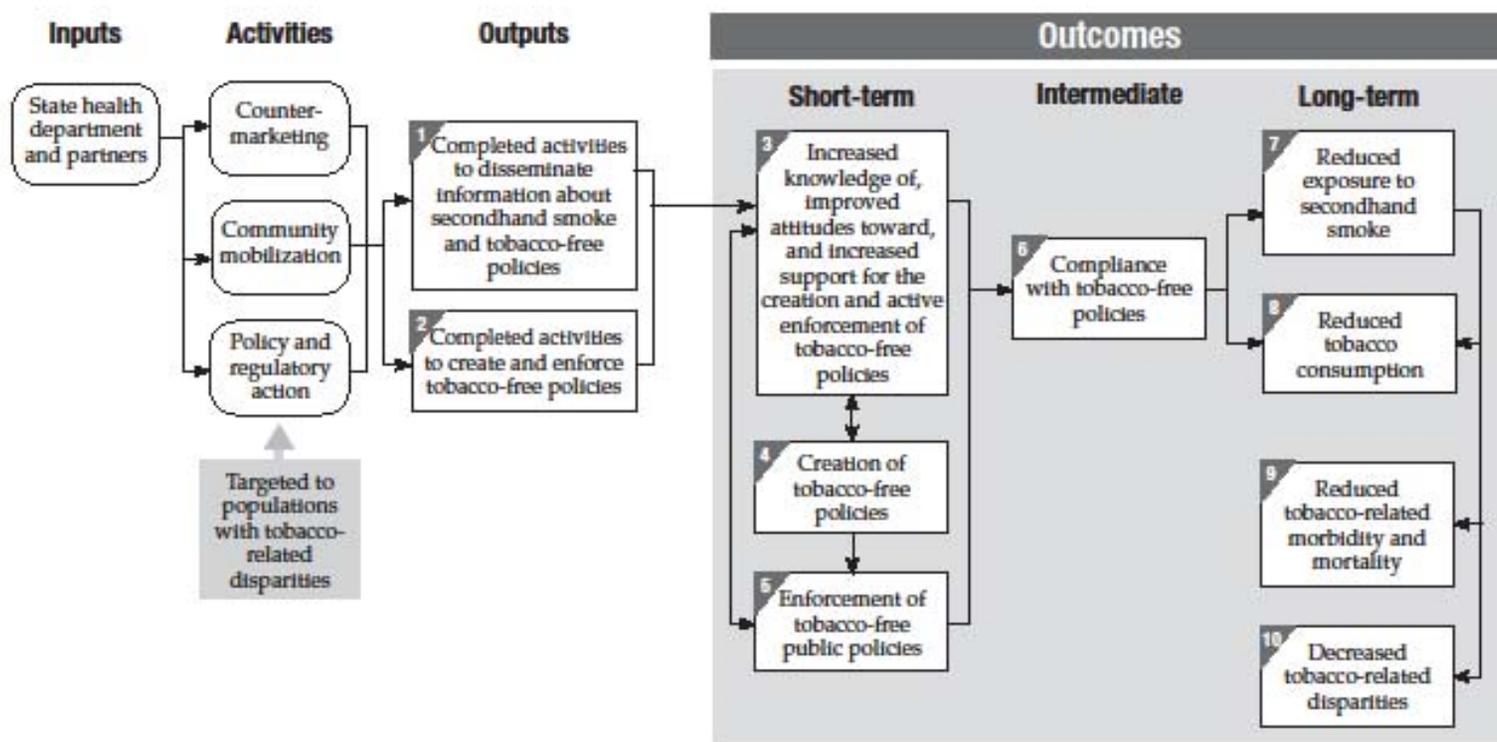
Goal Area 1 □

Preventing Initiation of Tobacco Use Among Young People



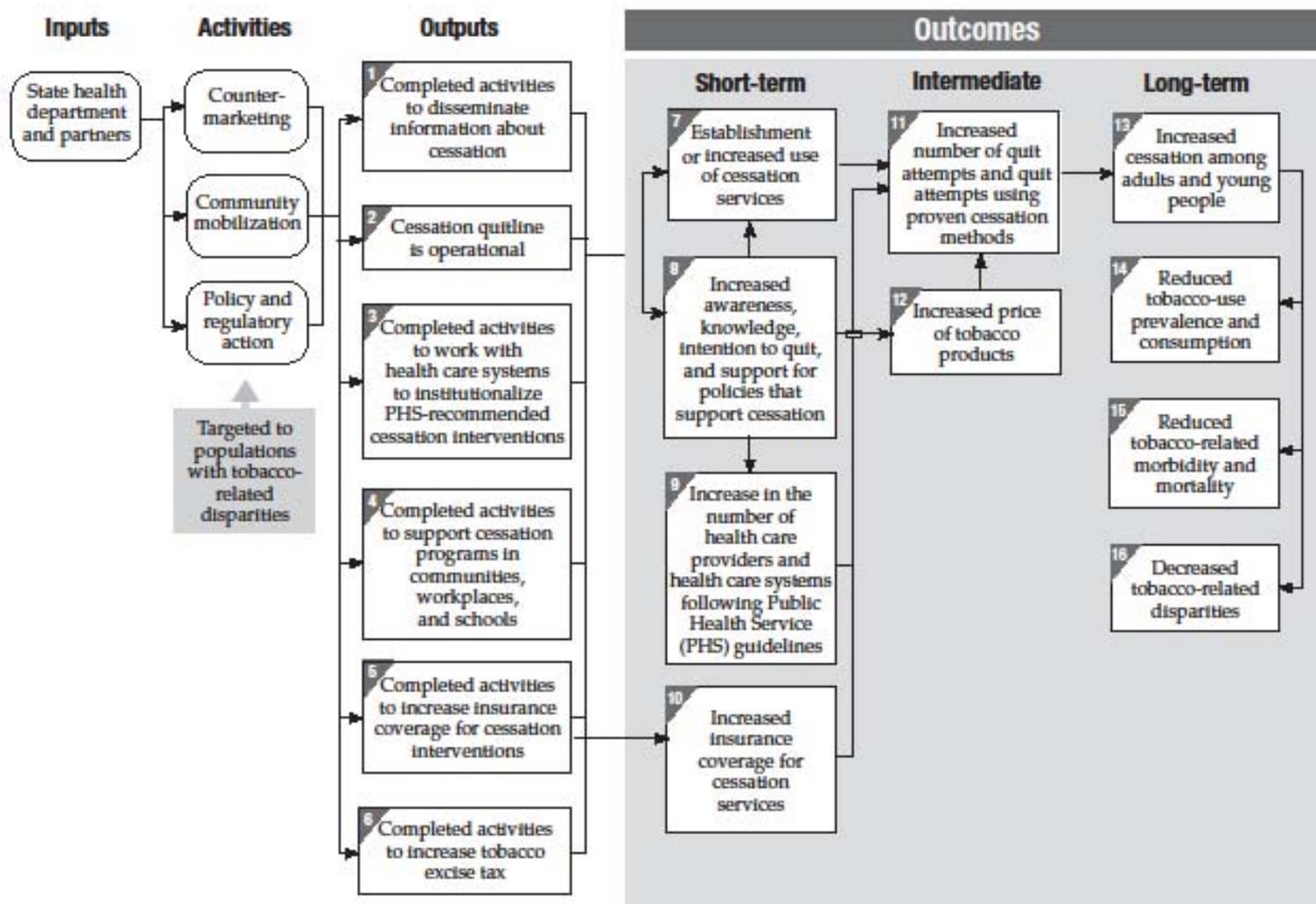
Goal Area 2 □

Eliminating Nonsmokers' Exposure to Secondhand Smoke



Goal Area 3 □

Promoting Quitting Among Adults and Young People



Planning Your Evaluation

MapQuesting the Change You
Want

Evaluation Outline

- ▶ Get Ready
- ▶ Choose Outcomes
- ▶ Select Indicators
- ▶ Get Data
- ▶ Analyze Data
- ▶ Report Findings

Get Ready

- ▶ You are the expert!
- ▶ Funding
- ▶ Tap into as many guiding resources as possible
 - State TA
 - Online resources
 - Trainings

Choose Outcomes

- ▶ Use the logic models provided
- ▶ Focus on short term outcomes
- ▶ Imagine your community 6 months after your planned activities are over.
 - What knowledge, skills, behaviors would you like to see?
 - What policy, systems, environment changes do you want?

Select Indicators

- ▶ Identify at least 1 indicator per outcome.
- ▶ Ask yourself: What would I see, hear, read about my community that means progress toward the outcome?
- ▶ Include numbers and percent regarding behavior
 - 100 quitline callers from Utopia County (50%) will quit smoking after completing all counseling sessions
- ▶ Don't spend a great deal of time trying to find the perfect numbers and percentages for your indicators – ask for Epidemiologist assistance

Get Data

- ▶ Identify the information you need
- ▶ Is it practical to get?
- ▶ When should you collect data?
- ▶ Choose a method
 - Questionnaires
 - Interviews
 - Surveys
 - Document review
- ▶ Write a procedure (grant application format)

Analyze Data

- ▶ Consider getting professional help 😊
- ▶ Select Quantitative or Qualitative methods as appropriate.
 - Quantitative
 - ▶ Numbers
 - ▶ Percentages
 - ▶ Rankings
 - Qualitative
 - ▶ Recurrent themes
 - ▶ Patterns of response

Tips for Analyzing Quantitative Data

- ▶ Tabulate the information (add up the ratings, rankings, yes's, no's for each question)
- ▶ For ratings and rankings, consider computing a mean, or average, for each question.
- ▶ Consider conveying the range of answers, e.g., 20 people ranked "1", 30 ranked "2", and 20 people ranked "3".

Tips for Analyzing Qualitative Data

- ▶ Read through all the data
- ▶ Organize comments into similar categories, e.g., concerns, suggestions, strengths
- ▶ Label the categories or themes, e.g., concerns, suggestions
- ▶ Attempt to identify patterns, or associations and causal relationships in the themes

Reporting Your Results

- ▶ Informal meetings
- ▶ Memos
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Formal presentations
- ▶ Formal written reports
- ▶ Scholarly publications

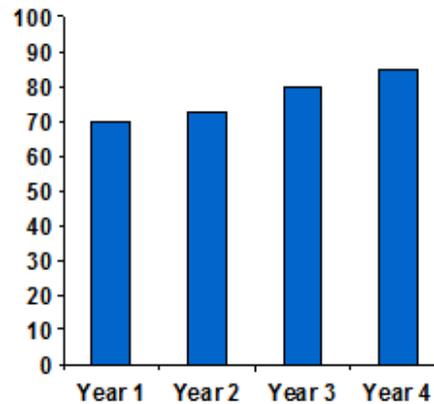
Evaluating the Light Bulb Project

- ▶ Evaluation question: Did the light bulbs want to change?
- ▶ Method: A convenience sample of broken light bulbs will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview script. Questions will explore:
 - How it feels to be a broken light bulb
 - Whether these light bulbs wish to change
 - How the light bulbs interpret the concept of "brokenness"
- ▶ Timeline: May to March
- ▶ Who will conduct the evaluation: The Department of Critical Light Bulb Studies

Light Bulb Changing Project Indicator

Percentage Changers 'happy' or 'very happy' working with broken light bulbs

This indicator collected in an annual questionnaire to all light bulb changers working for the project



Integrity

- ▶ Clearly understand the limitations and/or constraints of your evaluation
- ▶ Realistically assess what can be accomplished
- ▶ NEVER sacrifice validity and reliability of findings
 - use a smaller sample
 - clustered sampling or more narrow definition of sample
 - shorter data collection procedures

Why Evaluate?



Evaluation Powers Change

- ▶ Potential for impact on policy
- ▶ Program improvement through development and modification
- ▶ Great practical utility

A final thought

- ▶ "The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew every time he sees me, while all the rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them."

- George Bernard Shaw