

Business Retention & Expansion

Program Evaluation

Is Evaluation Important?

- Why would a BR&E Visitation Program be interested in evaluation?
- What factors could indicate whether or not a program is successful?
- Why would demonstrated program success be important to the future of the program?
- What stakeholders would be interested in the documented success of the program?

Evaluation Components

- Utility – How useful is program evaluation to you and your stakeholders?
- Feasibility – How practical is evaluation for a program?
- Propriety – How appropriate is evaluation for those who are involved?
- Accuracy – How accurate is program evaluation and the information it conveys?

Utility

- **State your purpose clearly** – Describe the reasons you are doing the evaluation
- **Consider your audience(s)** – Describe the users of the evaluation and the type of information they require and find credible
- **Communicate your findings** – Develop a plan to share information and how you can increase the chances that the information will be used
- **Provide value to stakeholders** – Draw a connection between the evaluation and how it provides useful information. Does it provide new information or confirm previous information?

Feasibility

- **Show practicality** – Show that the evaluation does not disrupt the program and that it can be implemented given existing costs, resources, and the situation
- **Consider political viability** – Predict political contingencies or consequences that might affect the evaluation's implementation or the misuse of its results
- **Calculate costs relative to benefits** – Determine whether the value of the evaluation output can be justified with regard to its costs

Propriety

- **Respect people and their rights** – demonstrate honesty, ethical practice, and respect for human dignity in the choice of evaluation plan, methodology, and result use
- **Disclose evaluation findings properly** – Develop a plan for the effective communication of findings to the persons involved or affected by the evaluation
- **Assess completely and fairly** – Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the BR&E program so that your evaluation information can be used to strengthen it

Accuracy

- **Describe the program's implementation** – Document the program clearly
- **Explain evaluation procedures** – Describe evaluation questions in detail so that the program can be replicated
- **Demonstrate defensible information sources** – Describe sources of information in detail to determine their appropriateness
- **Ensure valid and reliable information** – Describe the sources of information in detail so that appropriateness can be determined

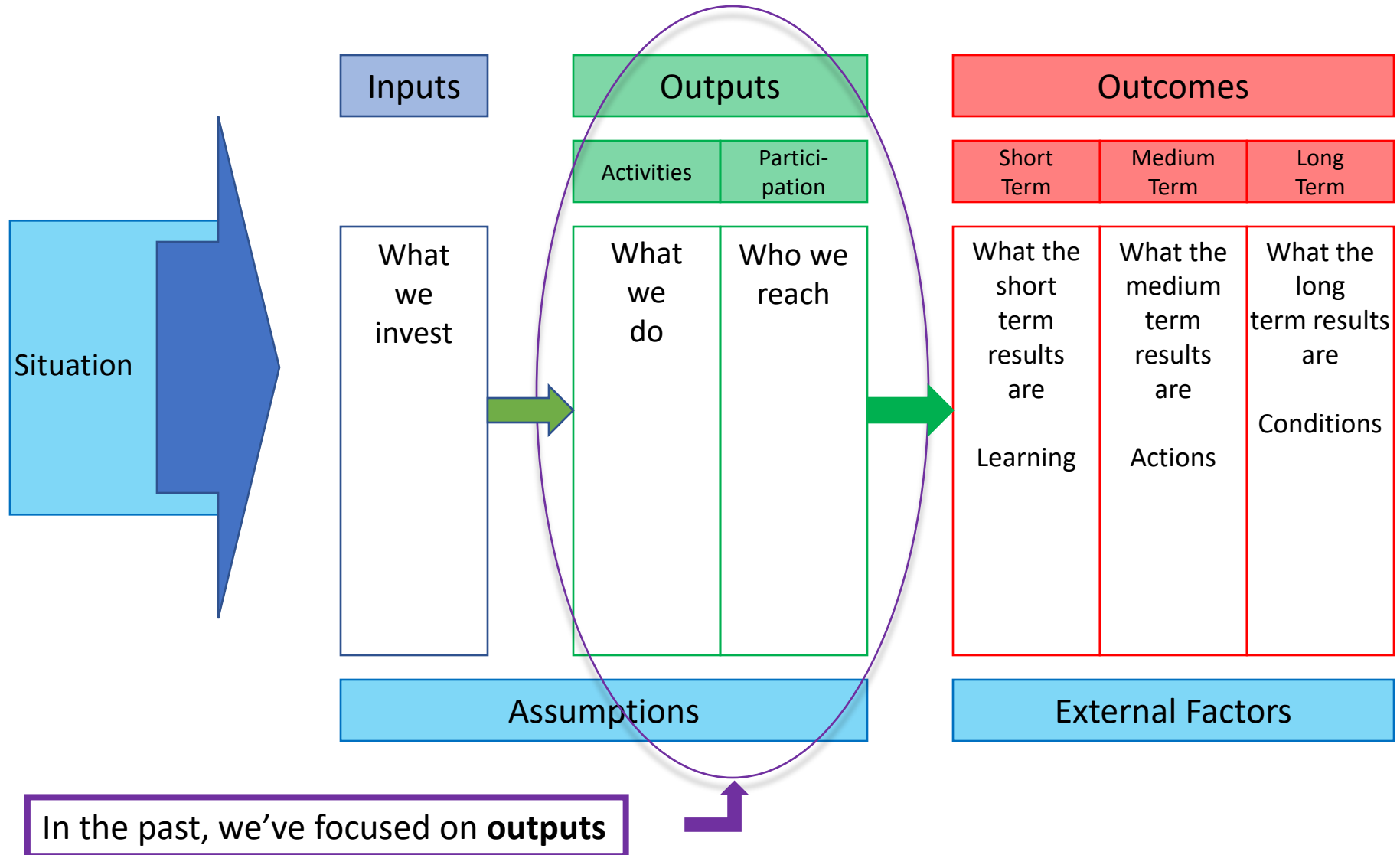
Accuracy (continued)

- **Use appropriate analysis** – Analyze the data in an appropriate and correct way
- **Draw justified conclusions** – Link the interpretation to the data. Consider alternative explanations for documented program outcomes. ***Do not draw generalizations beyond what your evidence can support!***
- **Report impartially** – Only communicate evaluation findings, not feelings, opinions, or biases

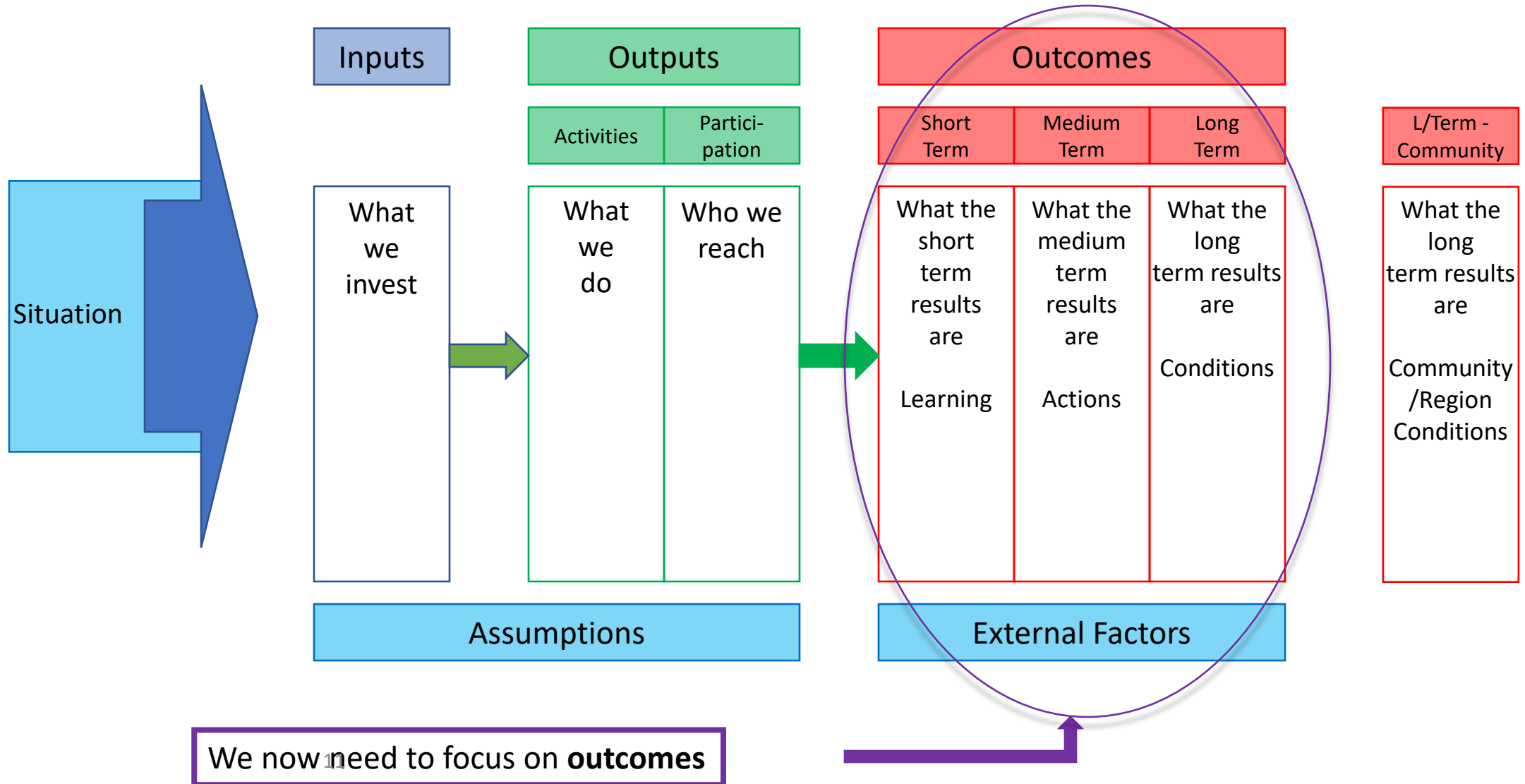
Program Evaluation Structure

- The logic model is a picture of a program in response to a given situation
- Demonstrates the logical relationships that take place among the:
 - Resources that are invested
 - Activities that take place
 - Benefits or changes that may result
- Provides an underlying rationale of the program or initiative
- Core of program planning, evaluation, program management, and communications
- <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>

Logic Model Overview



Logic Model Overview



SMART Goals

- S – specific/measurable
- M – motivating
- A – attainable
- R – relevant/rigorous
- T – time bound/trackable

Goals – Specific/Measurable

- Goals should address specific issues; over generalized, vague goals have no place in the program
- Einstein said that everything that can be measured doesn't count and everything that counts can't be measured
- However, in evaluating an economic development program, what can't be counted or measured doesn't count

Goals – Motivating

- Goals adopted by the BR&E program should be of interest to the Stakeholders, the program's Management and Operations Teams, the Action and Response Teams, and the general community
- If these interested parties don't feel that the goals and strategies identified in the program aren't of interest to them, there would be little interest in following through by the persons charged with implementing the goals

Goals – Attainable

- While the goals adopted by the program should not be all “low hanging fruit,” they should be able to be achieved by the persons working with the program
- Continuous adoption of goals that are unattainable discourages participants and leaves the community and stakeholders wondering if the mission of the program is realistic

Goals – Relevant/Rigorous

- In order for the community and the stakeholders to remain committed to the BR&E program, the goals adopted by the program must be relevant to the issues faced by the community's businesses
- Do not solely depend on goals that are easily achieved. While these types of goals can provide some early motivation for the program, solely relying on easily achievable goals can oversimplify the program

Goals – Time bound/Trackable

- While the BR&E program is not an effort that can usually be fully realized in a short time, goals that have an extremely long time frame to completion can discourage the teams and stakeholders
 - Break these types of goals up into smaller, manageable pieces that can be grasped
- Program evaluation methods focus on goals that can be measured or are trackable. This type of focus allows stakeholders and the general community to monitor the progress of the program and its effectiveness.

Questions

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