

**ARTICULATE  
STRATEGY**



## ABOUT **SHIFT**

Shift is the leading center of expertise on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Shift's global team of experts works across all continents and sectors to challenge assumptions, push boundaries and redefine corporate practice in order to build a world where business gets done with respect for people's dignity. We are a nonprofit, mission-driven organization headquartered in New York City.

 [shiftproject.org](https://www.shiftproject.org)

 [@shiftproject](https://twitter.com/shiftproject)

## ABOUT **VALUING RESPECT PROJECT**

Valuing Respect Project is a global collaborative platform, led by Shift, to research and co-create better ways of evaluating business respect for human rights. Our aim is to develop tools and insights that can help both companies and their stakeholders focus their resources on actions that effectively improve outcomes for people. Valuing Respect is generously funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norges Bank Investment Management.

 [valuingrespect](https://www.valuingrespect.org)

# STEPS



## ARTICULATE STRATEGY

1

Articulate the intended human rights **outcomes for people.**

2

Articulate whose **behaviors** you are targeting and what you want them to do.

3

Articulate **related activities, outputs, inputs and outcomes for business.**



## ACCOUNT FOR CONTEXT

4

Map contextual factors - risks, dependencies, and assumptions.

5

Set out how you do, or will, address these contextual factors.

6

Establish outcome **targets** to build momentum and accountability.

7

Design a holistic set of **indicators** to measure progress and impact.



## DEVELOP TARGETS & INDICATORS

# ARTICULATE STRATEGY

# CONTENTS

1

## OVERVIEW

3

## STEP ONE

ARTICULATE THE INTENDED HUMAN RIGHTS  
OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE

5

## STEP TWO

ARTICULATE WHOSE BEHAVIORS YOU ARE  
TARGETING AND WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO

9

## STEP THREE

ARTICULATE RELATED ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS,  
INPUTS AND OUTCOMES FOR BUSINESS

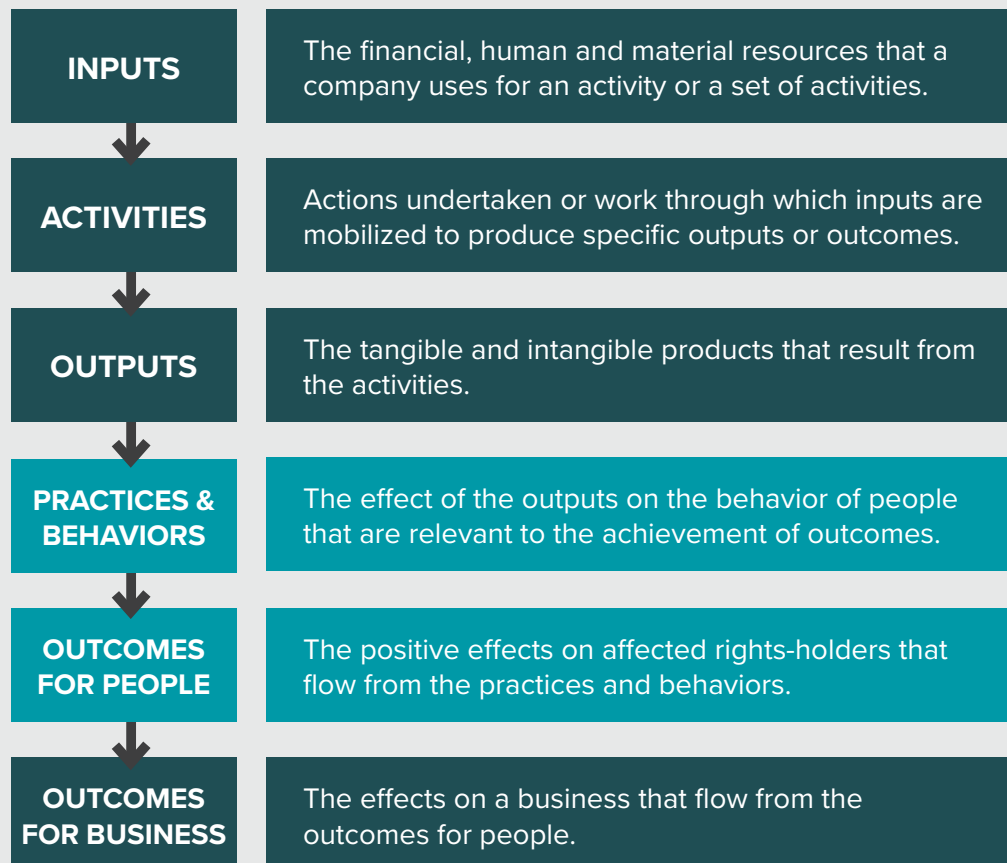
# ARTICULATE STRATEGY

## OVERVIEW

In this part of the process, you articulate what outcomes for people you are trying to achieve and what you are doing, or plan to do, to achieve them. You do this by filling out each layer of the theory of change logic shown below. You will be guided to be *specific and detailed* about your goals and what is needed to reach them. This may take time and require you to develop a few iterations of your thinking. But the reward will be the ability to design a set of indicators that will offer genuine insights about progress and challenges.

The sequencing of the steps will help you to adopt a logical approach and to get the best results from using the tool. However, users will inevitably find the need to circle back and refine thinking done at earlier steps. As such, the step-by-step logic is a starting point and should not restrict holistic thinking.

### ARTICULATING YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE



**When articulating your theory of change, you should be guided by robust engagement:** with internal issue owners and subject-matter experts; wherever possible, with input from the affected stakeholders and/or their legitimate representatives; and where appropriate, with companies (such as peers, suppliers, partners or customers) that are an integral part of achieving the outcomes you have articulated.

Engagement with stakeholders is critical because it will:

- ▶ **Enable** you to truly understand what needs to change for the better from the perspective of affected groups, and how they think that change might be achieved.
- ▶ **Ensure** that your ideas about how to address the human rights issue are building on the company's own experience, leading practices of other companies and the insights of people who understand the local contexts in which you are seeking to drive change.
- ▶ **Increase** the likelihood that internal and external stakeholders will understand the rationale for the indicators you design, and so support data collection, analysis and learning.

# STEP ONE

## ARTICULATE THE INTENDED HUMAN RIGHTS OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE

In this step, you are listing the outcomes for people (workers, communities, consumers or others) that you are trying to achieve. It will obviously be important to base this on any human rights risk assessment that the company has completed. The following tips will help you to do this in a way that makes later steps in articulating a theory of change more straight-forward.

### ▶ ARTICULATE OUTCOMES IN POSITIVE TERMS.

For each of the human rights risks you are trying to address, find a way to describe the status or experience of affected people if the rights in question were fully respected, **or if the barriers to enjoyment of the rights were removed**. For example, instead of, “Female workers are not discriminated against in access to professional training and development opportunities” you might say, “Female workers are gaining all the skills and competencies they need to pursue their professional goals.” The latter sentence is phrased to capture the ultimate positive outcome that training, and development efforts are intended to achieve.

### ▶ THINK IN TERMS OF NEW STATES OF BEING OR ABILITIES.

Reflect on what the human experience is of a right being realized, versus simply saying that a human right is realized. For example, instead of, “Communities right to water is realized” you might say, “Community members can access the clean water **that they need for their own drinking and hygiene, enabling reduced dysentery and water-borne diseases.**”

Sentence structures that can aid with this include:

- “The group or set of individuals **can**...”
- “The group or set of individuals **feel**...”
- “The group or set of individuals **are**...”

## ▶ BE AS SPECIFIC AS YOU CAN BE...

- **About outcomes:** Try to avoid overly general formulations of outcomes as this will make it harder to develop strategies and activities that are targeted. If you do have general formulations, you may want to list out more specific outcomes. For example, instead of, “Workers are satisfied at work,” one might state, “Workers are satisfied with their job responsibilities, their wages and their relationship with supervisors.”
- **About the affected or beneficiary stakeholders:** If you are targeting your action to address the rights of specific groups within a more general label (e.g. “employees” or “communities” or “consumers”) you should specify this in your articulation of outcomes. For example, female workers, indigenous communities, young consumers.

## ▶ AVOID THE COMMON PITFALL of conflating access to a process, or policy commitment, with an outcome for people.

The existence of a process intended to enable the fair treatment of workers, communities or consumers is not **itself** an outcome for people. Such processes might include, wage management systems, fair hiring processes, consumer hotlines, community consultation protocols, or grievance processes. Individuals making use of such processes and being satisfied with the experience are outcomes for people.

By way of illustration:

- “Workers have access to a grievance mechanism” is not an articulation of an outcome for people. On the other hand, “Workers are satisfied with the process to address the issues, concerns and complaints they raise through grievance mechanisms,” is an outcome for people.
- “Workers are entitled to overtime payment” not an articulation of an outcome for people, it is really an articulation of a company’s policy commitment. On the other hand, “Workers that work overtime are being paid extra as per the company’s policy commitment,” is an outcome for people.



# STEP TWO

## ARTICULATE WHOSE BEHAVIORS YOU ARE TARGETING AND WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO

THERE ARE  
**TWO PARTS TO**  
THIS STEP:



- 1 IDENTIFYING CLEARLY** the actor or actors whose practices or behaviors will be the primary focus of your efforts. Where there are multiple actors with distinct activities, you should start a complementary theory of change logic and template.



- 2 ARTICULATING** what you think those actors need to do in order to achieve the outcomes for people that have been identified in Step One.

### 1. IDENTIFYING THE TARGET ACTOR OR ACTORS

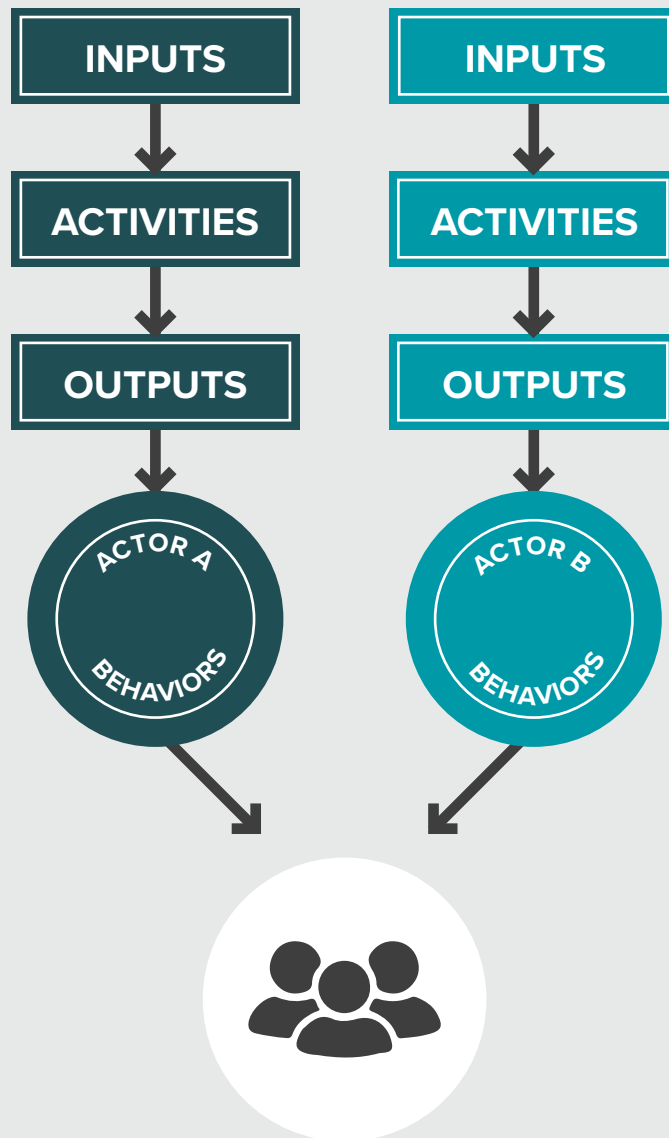
At this stage, you should identify the actor(s) whose day-to-day practices and behaviors have a direct impact on the affected people you hope to benefit, and who are therefore the focus of your current or planned activities.

If there is one target actor, proceed to the second part, this step below where you are guided through articulating the things you want those people to start doing, keep doing or stop doing. **If there is more than one target actor, you should articulate a theory of change in a new template for each additional actor, following all steps in the tool.** This will support you in making your logic clear and will be especially valuable as you layer in more information, and eventually indicators.

The diagram below illustrates this concept.

For the purposes of these tools, target actors are not organizations or individuals who may have a role to play in delivering activities (for example, expert trainers or certain internal teams or industry peers working in collaboration with you). They are also not actors that you imagine might influence the context in which you are trying to achieve change (for example, investors). There will be space to think about these actors in the system, *Part Two: Account for Context*.

## MULTIPLE TARGET ACTORS



### FOR EXAMPLE

A company might work in parallel to address the practices and behavior of more than one key actor within a particular context. For example:

- Managers at supplier sites and trade unions.
- Construction sites that employ migrant workers; Recruitment agents and their sub-agents and Labor Inspectors.
- Small holder farms, Workers with children, and local schools.
- Mine management, Private security contractors and public security forces.
- Sales/distribution partners, and Consumers

**OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE**

*\*Diagram is illustrative. There is no limit to two target actions.*

## 2. ARTICULATE THE THINGS YOU WANT PEOPLE TO **START DOING**, **KEEP DOING** OR **STOP DOING**

The following tips will help you to do this in a way that will make the work that follows (in Parts 2 and 3) more straightforward to complete.

- **Think about what people do and say, versus what they think or feel:** A behavior is generally understood to refer to something that we can observe others do. Behaviors are not the same as opinions, preferences, expectations or interests though these can clearly influence behavior. The table below provides some illustrations of what are, and are not, articulations of behaviors.

<b>NOT BEHAVIORS (MAY BE “OUTPUTS”)</b>	<b>BEHAVIORS</b>
Supervisors believe that it is important to listen to worker concerns and address them.	Supervisors seek out and listen to worker concern and take action to address these concerns.
Managers are required to ensure that women have the same job opportunities as men.	Managers check periodically that all job opportunities are communicated to all female workers, and that job advertising is debiased.
The General manager of the mine has plans in place to have annual meetings with community members to hear concerns.	The General manager of the mine routinely seeks out criticism and concerns from community members.
The company has industry-leading PPE process requirements in place for those working with hazardous chemicals.	Managers and supervisors reinforce the importance of following PPE requirements in their interactions with employees and model this in their own work.
The plantation has processes in place to guide its engagement with stakeholders in the local community.	Site managers routinely engage with local community representatives to understand their experience and perspectives.

- ▶ **Be specific:** The more detailed you are in your articulation of practices and behaviors, the easier it will be to explain your theory of change to internal and external stakeholders, and to stress-test the degree to which existing or new activities and related outputs will lead to these behaviors. Moreover, greater detail will make the task in Part Three of the tool - identifying what to measure and how to measure it - more manageable. By way of illustration:

- **DON'T JUST SAY:** “Managers are *reinforcing* the importance of the company’s non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.”

Include an explanation of how they will do this, for example by:

- » *Talking about the company’s commitment at internal company-wide meetings.*
- » *Praising positive behaviors and calling out negative ones.*

- **DON'T JUST SAY:** “Managers are ensuring that workers grievances concerning discrimination and harassment are being addressed in a timely manner.”

Include an explanation of how they will do this, for example by:

- » *Maintaining a case log of grievances filed.*
- » *Regularly reviewing the log of “cases” to spot any that are moving slower than expected.*
- » *Speaking to relevant leaders to “understand and agree actions on slower cases.”*

- ▶ **Where it is important, include reference to the qualities and regularity of behaviors:** Achieving desired outcomes for people will often require that business leaders, managers, supervisors and others not only do or say certain things but do things authentically, effectively and consistently. As such, it can help to specify this in your articulation of behaviors.

By way of illustration from the table on the previous page:

- “The General manager of the mine seeks out criticism and concerns from community members” **is different from** “The General manager of the mine *routinely* seeks out criticism and concerns from community members.”
- “Supervisors listen to worker concerns and take action to address what they have heard” **is different from** “Supervisors listen to worker concerns and *always* take action to address what they have heard.”

# STEP THREE

## ARTICULATE RELATED ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES FOR BUSINESS

In this step, you are listing out interventions or programs to embed the behaviors you have mapped out in Step Two, as well as the outcomes for business that you think should flow from achieving the outcomes for people that you listed in Step One.

In essence, at this step you are asking four questions:



**ACTIVITIES:** What activity or activities do we have in place or want to put in place to address the actor's behaviors?



**OUTPUTS:** What are the immediate, near-term results that these activities seek to achieve that will help embed the desired behaviors?



**INPUTS:** What financial, human and material resources are needed to implement the activity or activities?



**OUTCOMES FOR BUSINESS:** What financial, reputational, operational, legal or other outcomes for business will occur once the outcomes for people are achieved?

The following tips will help you to complete this step.

In relation to outputs:

## ▶▶ **OUTPUTS CAN BE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF THINGS**

Enabling and influencing individuals to behave in a certain way is a complex undertaking. In any given situation it may involve providing some combination of new knowledge, guidance, standardized processes, action plans, inspiration, mindset changes, and incentives. Don't hesitate to think about outputs in as broad terms as necessary. A helpful prompt is to consider and document both:

- **Tangible products:** (that your eventual activities will need to deliver) – these might include operating requirements, documented processes, improved management systems, formal or informal committees, guidance materials, action plans etc.
- **Intangible products:** these might include knowledge, skills, awareness, mindset shifts, new relationships, motivation etc.

## ▶▶ **DON'T CONFUSE EVIDENCE THAT AN ACTIVITY HAS HAPPENED WITH AN OUTPUT**

Examples of this misconception include when an output from a training activity is defined as “X number of individuals trained,” or when an output from an assessment is defined as “X numbers of assessments conducted.” In the former, the output will hopefully be some form for new awareness or skills for the individuals trained. In the latter, the outputs may be new knowledge or insights and some form of action plan.

## ▶▶ **YOU CAN REFER BACK TO THE “NOT BEHAVIORS” EXAMPLES IN THE PREVIOUS STEP**

These are in fact all good examples of outputs and how to articulate them in ways that make it clear who is associated with them.

- Supervisors believe that it is important to listen to worker concerns and address them.

- Managers are required under a new Standard Operating Procedure to ensure that women have the same job opportunities as men.
- The General Manager of the mine has plans in place to have annual meetings with community members to hear their concerns.
- Warehouse managers recognize that motivating employees is good for employee morale and the business productivity.
- Site-managers have in-depth knowledge of industry health and safety codes.
- Factory owners appreciate the important role that foreign migrant workers play in ensuring the commercial success of the company.

In relation to inputs:

## ▶ **INPUTS CAN BE IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS**

They are usually a mixture of:

- **Financial resources** i.e. adequate budget to cover the costs of delivering the activities including funds that are needed to pay for any third-party experts or other direct costs.
- **Human resources** i.e. adequate time from appropriately qualified individuals from inside your company or from partner organizations that you have contracted with to support delivery of the activities.
- **Other resources** might include internal policies, materials or guidance (such as for training) or contact information for, and access to, organizations and individuals you would like to participate in the activities.

In relation to financial, reputational, operational, legal or Outcomes for Business:

## ▶ **ASSESSING OUTCOMES FOR BUSINESS:**

Achieving positive outcomes for affected people by ensuring that their human rights are respected will generally result in positive outcomes for business, for example in the form of operational resilience, reputational benefits and reduced financial or legal risk. However,

aspects of outcomes for business can be negative, more typically in the short-term, before benefits are realized. By way of illustration:

- Paying a living wage may increase short-term costs for the business if they are not compensated by other efficiencies, before better pay has the chance to translate into other gains, such as higher productivity or the ability to attract and retain talent.
- Not proceeding with a planned site expansion in order to avoid relocating local community members may have result in a company foregoing increased production capacity, and will be evident in ways that the avoidance of potential future conflict with communities and reputational harm cannot.

Therefore, as you complete this layer of the logic, you should include potential negative as well as positive effects, keeping in mind different time horizons. This is likely to be appreciated by internal stakeholders seeking honesty about the mix of business costs and benefits.

▶▶ **IT CAN BE APPROPRIATE TO LIST BUSINESS OUTCOMES FOR MORE THAN ONE BUSINESS ENTITY** where other entities play a role in the strategy and related activities concerned

It is common for a company's strategy and related activities to address a human rights risk to concern the practices of another business entity or set of companies. For example:

- A **corporate-wide plan to roll-out diversity policies and training globally** might ultimately lead to business benefits at the group-level (for example, reduced reputational or legal risk) as well as for individual business units (such as attracting or retaining talented employees from minority groups).
- A **lender's efforts to drive respect for land rights** by its extractive industry clients might, if successful, lead to benefits for the bank as well as those clients.
- A **brand's initiative to tackle forced labor** in its manufacturing supply chain may perhaps lead to reduced legal, financial and reputation risk for the brand. But it can equally lead to similar benefits for suppliers also.

[Continue to Part 2.](#)