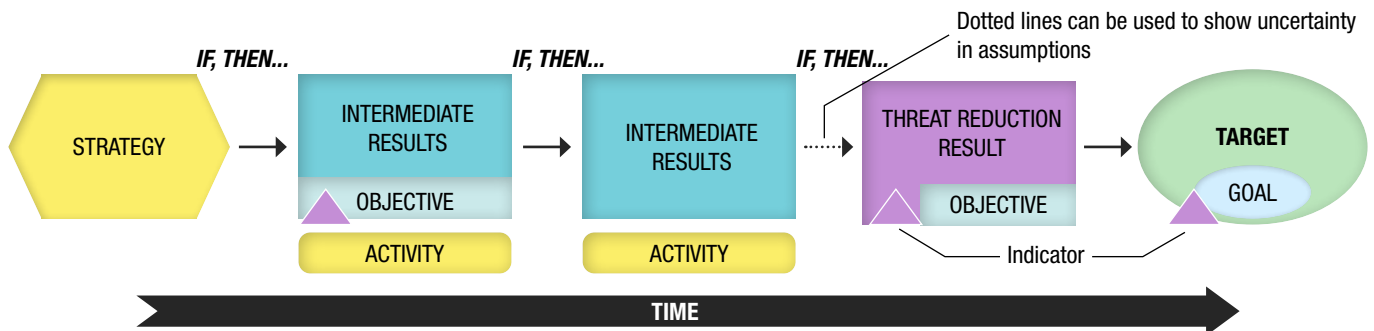# RESULTS CHAINS

Project teams should be explicit about their assumptions in terms of how they think an action will achieve both intermediate and longer-term results. These assumptions represent their **theory of change**. A **results chain** is a diagram that illustrates a project team's **theory of change** using a series of boxes and arrows. Due to the causal, if-then sequence of a **results chain**, it also shows the chronological and temporal nature of expected results.
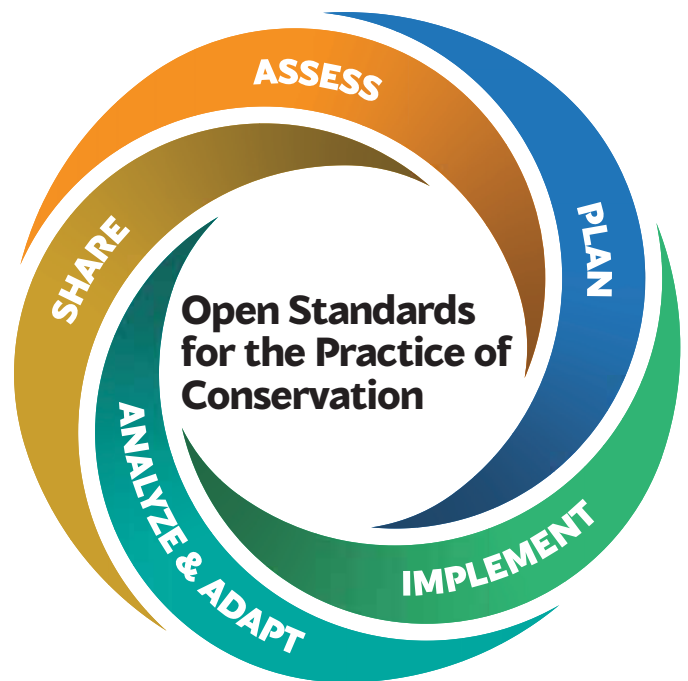
Results chains are developed as part of Step 2: Plan.

CONSERVATION STANDARDS PROCESS WHEEL:

ASSESS
PLAN
IMPLEMENT
ANALYZE & ADAPT
SHARE

Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation

ELEMENTS OF A RESULT CHAIN:

IF, THEN...   IF, THEN...   IF, THEN...

Dotted lines can be used to show uncertainty in assumptions

STRATEGY

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS
OBJECTIVE
ACTIVITY

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS
ACTIVITY

THREAT REDUCTION RESULT
OBJECTIVE

TARGET
GOAL

Indicator

TIME

Results chains show causal "if…then" relationships between factors. For example, if we implement a strategy, then we expect to achieve the first **intermediate result**. If we achieve the first **intermediate result**, then we expect to achieve the second **intermediate result** and so on and so forth until we reach a threat reduction result. If we successfully reduce a threat, we expect to maintain or improve the **target**.

⚙ BUILDING A RESULTS CHAIN:

Situation models show the current state ("how we think the world currently works"), whereas **results chains** show anticipated results and desired future state ("how we think we'll change the world"). Situation models form the basis of a **results chains**. Factors in a situation model are converted to the desired results.

A GENERIC SITUATION MODEL SHOWING THE CURRENT STATE:
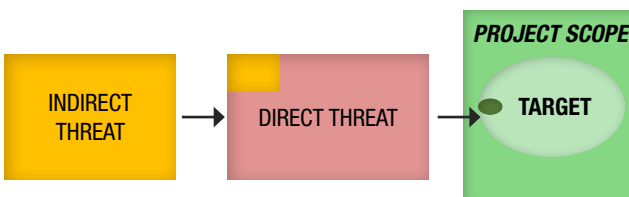
THE SAME FACTORS CONVERTED TO A RESULTS CHAIN SHOWING THE DESIRED FUTURE STATE:
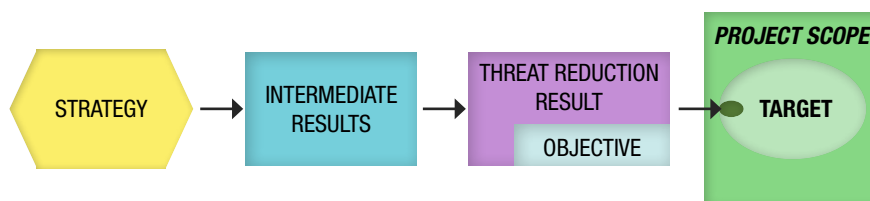
KEY TERMS:

Results chain: a visual diagram of a project's **theory of change**. A **results chain** includes core assumptions about how a **strategy** will help to maintain, improve or restore a **target**. It also contains the logical sequence linking project **strategies** to one or more **targets**.

Theory of change: a series of causally linked assumptions about how a team thinks its actions will help it achieve both **intermediate results** and longer-term **goals**.

Strategy: a set of **activities** with a common focus that work together

to achieve specific **goals** and **objectives** by targeting key intervention points, optimizing opportunities and limiting constraints.

Activity: a specific action or set of tasks within an overall **strategy**.

Intermediate result: a specific result that a project is working to achieve en route to accomplishing a final **goal** or **objective**.

Threat reduction result: a specific result that a project is working to achieve in terms of reducing a **direct threat**.

Target: within the project scope, the ecosystems, species and cultural values on which the project or program is focused.

Goal: formal statement detailing a project's desired impact, especially the desired future status of a **target**.

Objective: a formal statement detailing a desired outcome of a project, such as reducing a critical threat.
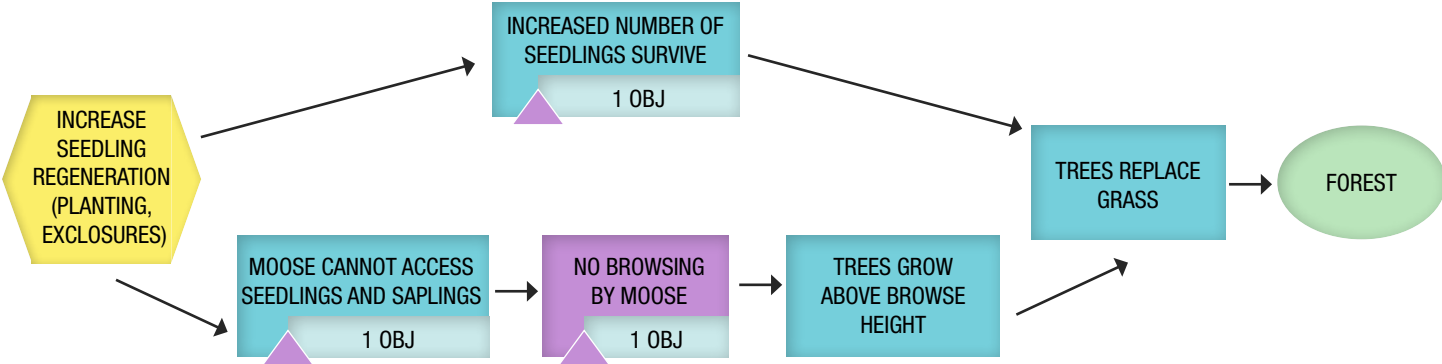
Indicator: a measurable entity related to a specific information need (e.g., the status of a **target**, progress toward an **objective** or **goal**)

⭐ BENEFITS OF A RESULTS CHAIN:

A **results chain** helps project teams to:

1.	Document assumptions and be explicit.	**5.**	Identify interim results.
2.	Document existing evidence and uncertainty.	**6.**	Develop **objectives**.
3.	Define how actions achieve results.	**7.**	Facilitate targeted monitoring and evaluation.
4.	Define realistic timelines.		

EXAMPLE RESULTS CHAIN:

For additional examples, see 'shared projects' on Miradi Share.

KEY: STRATEGY | INTERMEDIATE RESULTS | THREAT REDUCTION RESULT | TARGET