UK Futures Programme – Guidance Document:

Potential for impact
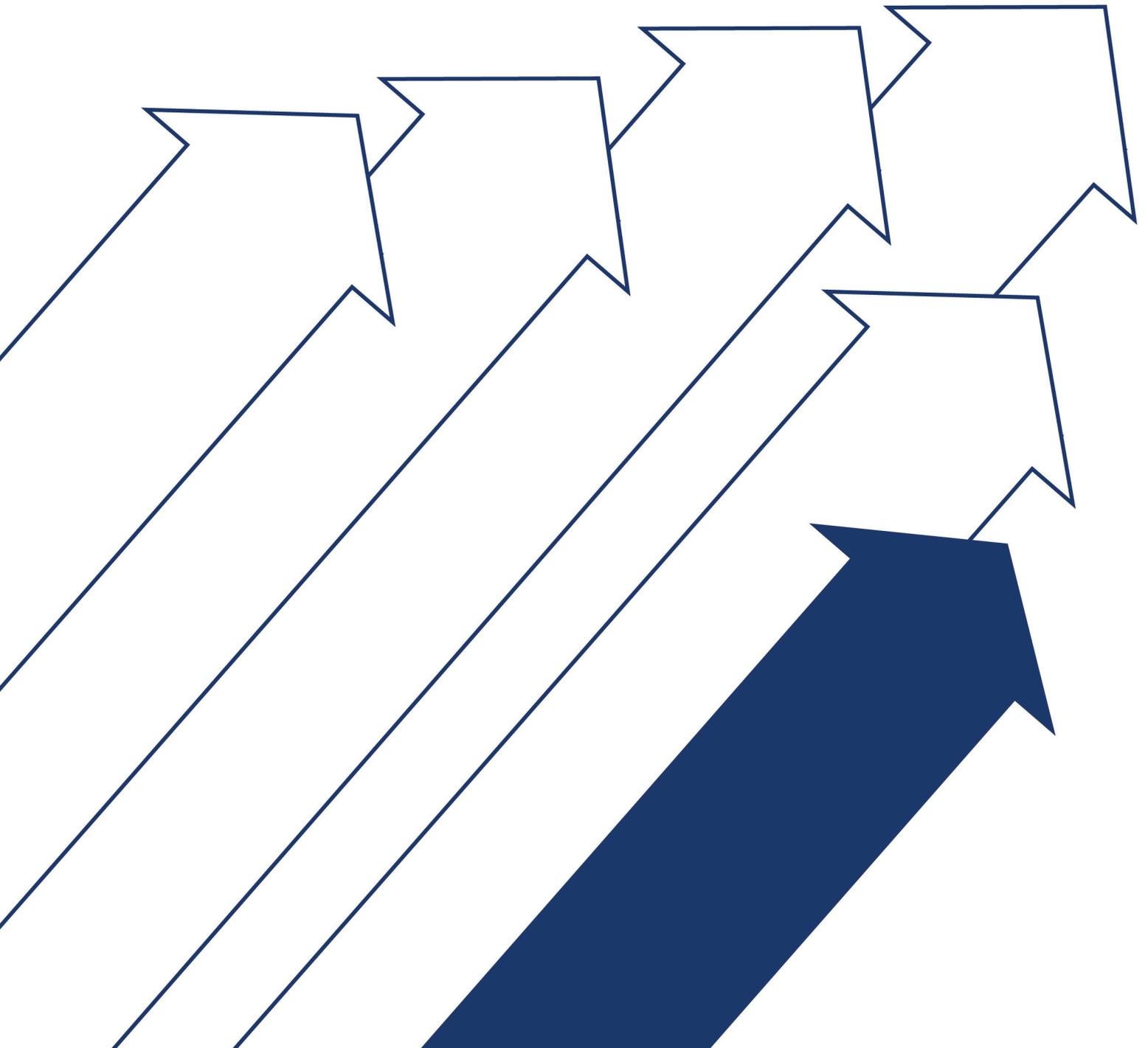
Potential for impact

This guidance supports consideration of how the solution addresses the original problem in order to maximise the potential for impact. Due to the deep roots of many of the problems targeted by the UK Futures Programme, it is unlikely that we will be able to measure tangible impact and determine the effectiveness of solutions within the available funding period. So it is critical that a pathway to impact is demonstrated in which the appropriate milestones are used to measure the effectiveness of the solution and guide modifications where necessary. We are concerned with testing the means to the end more than the end itself.

In assessing the potential for impact, we ask applicants to demonstrate the potential effectiveness of a solution by providing a clear understanding of the problem. We require that applicants provide a logic chain to support doing so, including the identification of factors that will require testing and the appropriate success measures of key milestones. This guidance document provides further detail on these areas.

Understanding the problem/challenge

Before developing a solution to an identified problem, it is important to comprehensively understand the impact of that problem upon a broad range of employers. Only skills solutions that are grounded in the demands of employers and their experiences of the market failure will add sufficient value to be self-sustaining in the longer term.

Shaping a solution to the demands of a wide range of employers requires an understanding of the factors that influence their skills requirements, e.g. the political, economic and social contexts of the businesses; the nature of those skill requirements and the reasons why skills requirements have gone unmet. These barriers may be both of supply (poor quality or low numbers of appropriately skilled people and provision) or demand (the way skills are used in the workplace).

With employers playing a lead role in any application, we expect there to be sufficient understanding of the problem demonstrated in the application and consideration of why the proposed solution will fit, subject to the 'development' or 'piloting' projects the Programme offers. It may be that there is inadequate information about the nature of the problem to begin proposing solutions. In those cases, UKCES will be happy to discuss potential new research to fill this gap.

Mapping the potential for impact

It helps to map out the proposed potential for impact from problem to solution to results which address the original problem. This is a requirement of the application process. We refer to this as a logic chain (although it can also be thought of as a cycle, as illustrated below). Essentially this explains the hypothesis that the project sets out to test and learn from.

Problem (or opportunity) → **Inputs** → **Activities** → **Outputs** → **Outcomes** → **Impacts on the original...** → (back to Problem)
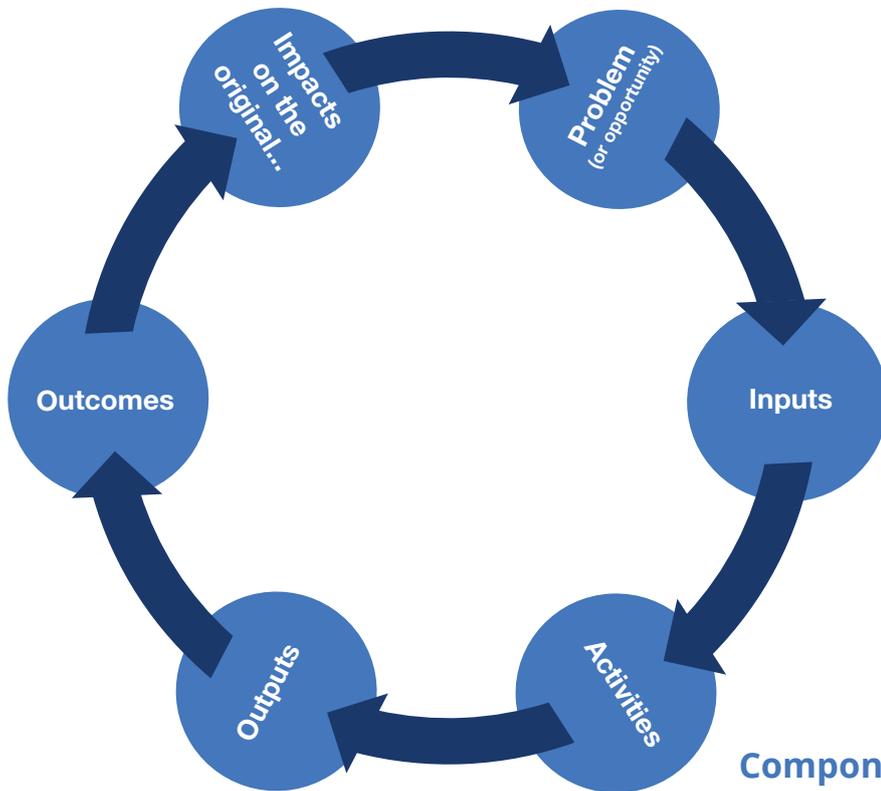
What is a logic chain?

A logic chain presents a simple illustration, in schematic form, of the sequence of expected results for your solution, whether this is a single, distinct product/service or something on a larger scale. Using a logic chain can help clarify:

- the desired and expected results of a solution
- how these components are inter-related
- how they relate back to the original problem identified
- success measures that can be used along the way to thoroughly test the innovation

Components of a logic chain

Within the application form, you are asked to map out the project using a template logic chain which illustrates the 6 elements in the table below. Alternative models are acceptable, but the essential demonstration of potential for impact is required. It must be easy to read. Accompanying narrative is required within the application form to provide a richer understanding of the process.

UKCES can provide support (as part of our co-creation process) for further shaping and implementing the logic chain for successful applicants, including identification of success measures. However, the application form should demonstrate initial planning and consideration of the issues involved in delivering and testing the potential for impact.

Problem	**Problem**	UKCES will outline the challenge it is seeking to address in the competition brief. The applicant must articulate the problem they are looking to tackle and what this understanding is based upon, e.g. the sector being unable to meet a local need for a product or service due to a lack of skills.
Solution	**Inputs**	Any resources you anticipate requiring to deliver your activities, both your own contributions and those which you are expecting from UKCES.
	Activities	The specific processes required to produce outputs e.g. designing a new incentive structure for engaging hard-to-reach employers in a network; developing a new qualification framework; 'piloting' these ideas.
Results	**Outputs**	The quantifiable results signalling the completion of activity e.g. new employers engaged in a network; new qualification framework developed, tested and agreed.
	Outcomes	The intended short-to-medium term effects generated by the outputs e.g. improved collaboration in a sector/locality; enhanced skills.
	Impact	The intended longer term impact of the initiative/intervention which addresses the original problem, e.g. sector/locality able to take advantage of emerging international markets through having skilled employees and employers committed to on-going skills development.

This guidance document is 1 of 6 relating to the UK Futures Programme. The guidance documents and all further information about the UK Futures Programme can be found on the following website - **www.gov.uk/government/collections/ukces-futures-programme-overview.**

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