


# THEORY OF SYSTEM CHANGE

## WHAT

Systems thinking tool that aims to identify the preconditions that are needed to reach the desired change by breaking up the process into different time frames and determining the preconditions for change in each step.

## WHEN TO USE

- **Stage(s):** Demonstration, commercialisation & Scale-up
- **Goal:** Plan & implement/apply knowledge
- **Type:** Systems thinking tool
- **Time & effort:** 3 - 4 hrs 

## HOW TO USE

- Use this tool to build a collective theory of change. Causal loops and system maps are valuable inputs. Make a team of 2 tot 3 participants that are part of the core team.
- Start with agreeing on the timeframe of the exercise and draw a timeline. Then define the strategic final impact that the project wants to reach.
- We use iterative loops of backwards thinking, 'what preconditions are needed for these outcomes'?
- When you reach the middle reverse the order and start from the present forward. What are the inputs to the system? try to split them up per dimension of innovation readiness.
- During the process you might need to make assumptions or encounter strategic risks, list these in separate boxes below.
- The final model is tested by reading it from the beginning until the end.

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## STRENGTHS

- As a next step you can identify for each intermediate outcome indicators for success.
- The process can be repeated until you get a simple and concise narrative.
- Aligns team members on a complex plan for change.

## WEAKNESSES

- Biases will impact the project planning, make sure to note down all assumptions so that these are known and understood.
- Not suited for large teams, but you can do iterations with different team compositions.

Source:  
[systemicdesigntoolkit.org](http://systemicdesigntoolkit.org) - [available on teams](#)