

CLEAR Outcome Design Canvas

A guided record for defining a valued change, the evidence that would make it credible, the agency available to act, and the guardrails that keep pursuit responsible.

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An outcome is a meaningful change in condition, behaviour, capability, performance, experience, risk, or value - not the work performed or the output delivered.

HOW TO USE THIS CANVAS

1. Frame the need	Start with context, affected actors, boundaries, and the present condition.
2. Define the change	State what should become different without embedding a preferred intervention.
3. Design the evidence	Use a baseline, indicators, qualitative evidence, counter-evidence, and guardrails.
4. Test agency	Separate what the owner controls, influences, depends on, and must escalate.
5. Review and revise	Pre-agree when evidence should change the action, measure, outcome, or decision to continue.

WORKING RELEASE

Version 0.1 - for bounded testing. The method and resources are original working materials. They have not yet completed cross-industry practitioner validation. Apply required domain standards, controls, and specialist review.

clearoutcomes.org | Define the change. Design the evidence.

What situation, opportunity, or risk are we addressing?

Affected people, users, assets, service, or system

Scope and boundary - what is inside, outside, and materially constrained?

Present condition and supporting evidence

What should become meaningfully different - and why does it matter?

Change for whom or what?	
Value to which stakeholders?	
Wider purpose supported?	
Trade-offs or conflicts?	

Write the outcome without turning a solution into the goal.

Within [context and scope], [actor or system] will experience [changed condition, behaviour, capability, performance, experience, risk, or value] by [horizon].

DRAFT OUTCOME

- ☐ Describes a change, not work or a deliverable
- ☐ Identifies the actor or system experiencing change
- ☐ States direction, boundary, and horizon clearly
- ☐ Leaves room to test alternative interventions

Make the causal reasoning visible, including uncertainty.

Need -> Inputs -> Activities -> Outputs -> Outcome -> Wider impact

Which outputs or changed capabilities may precede the outcome?

What mechanism is expected to connect them to the outcome?

Evidence-supported links	
Plausible but untested links	
Contested or unknown links	

What evidence would support, challenge, or qualify the outcome?

Baseline	Document the starting condition, reference period, and source.
Outcome evidence	Define indicators and qualitative evidence closely related to the changed condition.
Decision criteria	State the direction, range, threshold, or condition and why it matters.
Counter-evidence	Identify evidence that would weaken the belief that progress is being made.
Distribution	Check whether averages conceal differences between groups, sites, assets, or conditions.

Evidence record

Evidence	Definition	Source / method	Frequency	Limitation

Who can influence the change, and what must be enabled or escalated?

Accountable owner	
Contributing actors	
Within direct control	
Within influence	
Outside influence	
Critical dependencies	
Assumptions to test	
Resource or capability limits	

Candidate interventions - preserve alternatives

What must not be sacrificed while pursuing the outcome?

Consider safety, security, legality, quality, accessibility, equity, privacy, environmental effect, cost, reliability, and other domain obligations.

Guardrail	Evidence / threshold	Owner	Escalation rule

Potential harm or exclusion	
Ways the evidence could be gamed	
Unintended effects to monitor	

When will evidence trigger a decision rather than a status update?

Review cadence	
Participants and authority	
Revision triggers	
Stopping / retirement conditions	
Decision record location	

- ☐ Evidence contradicts a critical assumption
- ☐ Context changes materially
- ☐ A guardrail is breached or credibly at risk
- ☐ Evidence no longer represents the outcome
- ☐ Value, feasibility, or agency becomes insufficient
- ☐ Cost or risk of pursuit becomes unacceptable

Available decisions

Continue | Adapt intervention | Revise evidence | Revise outcome | Escalate | Pause | Stop | Retire

Is this outcome ready for a responsible bounded trial?

Dimension	0-3	Material weakness	Required revision
C - Clear and Concise			
L - Linked to Objectives			
E - Evaluative and Measurable			
A - Achievable and Realistic			
R - Revisited and Reviewed			

- ☐ Reject as not an outcome
- ☐ Revise before use
- ☐ Approve for a bounded trial
- ☐ Approve for operational use after required review

Important: Do not use the total score alone. One critical weakness may make an outcome unusable. Use the separate Quality Checklist for scoring anchors and decision rules.