

# CLEAR Outcomes Methodology Primer

A concise account of what the CLEAR Outcomes Methodology is for, the reasoning beneath it, and how to design a reviewable outcome.

Created by Anshul Lalit and Ania Mendoz | Free to use | CC BY-SA 4.0

**Working release 0.1. Use for structured practice and review. This resource does not replace domain obligations or establish that CLEAR has completed cross-industry validation.**

## THE PURPOSE

**Define the change clearly enough to pursue it with freedom, evidence, responsibility, and review.**

CLEAR is a practical methodology for the quality of an outcome definition and its supporting record. It does not prescribe a delivery lifecycle, change programme, governance model, or universal metric. It is purposeful only when it helps people distinguish intended change from the work used to pursue it.

## A PRACTICAL DEFINITION

**An outcome is a meaningful change in the condition, behaviour, capability, performance, or experience of people, organisations, or systems that an intervention seeks to influence within a defined context and time horizon.**

## THREE NECESSARY DISTINCTIONS

|          |                                                                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activity | Work performed: train, build, install, migrate, inspect, or communicate.          |
| Output   | A product of work: a portal, model, course, control, report, or installed sensor. |
| Outcome  | The changed condition experienced by an actor or system.                          |
| Impact   | A wider or longer-term effect to which outcomes may contribute.                   |

## THE FIVE DIMENSIONS

### Each dimension answers a different quality question.

|                                      |                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>C - Clear and Concise</b>         | Who or what changes, in which direction, within what boundary and horizon?                                |
| <b>L - Linked to Objectives</b>      | Which legitimate objective and need does the outcome support, for whom, and with what trade-offs?         |
| <b>E - Evaluative and Measurable</b> | What evidence would support, weaken, or contradict progress, and what are its limitations?                |
| <b>A - Achievable and Realistic</b>  | Who can influence the outcome, with which resources, dependencies, assumptions, and intervention options? |
| <b>R - Revisited and Reviewed</b>    | When will evidence trigger a decision, and which guardrails and unintended effects must remain visible?   |

## MINIMUM VIABLE RECORD

Keep the statement concise, but preserve the reasoning: actor, change, context, horizon; objective, need, beneficiaries, rationale; baseline, indicators, sources, decision criteria, counter-evidence, limitations; owner, contributors, resources, dependencies, assumptions, intervention options; cadence, participants, guardrails, unintended effects, triggers, and decisions.

## Completion is not change, and change is not proof of causation.

A results chain can connect inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and wider impacts. The links are hypotheses. A completed output does not guarantee an outcome. An observed outcome does not by itself prove that one intervention caused it. External context, interacting actions, selection, measurement error, and unintended effects must remain open to examination.

|                                 |                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contribution pathway</b>     | State how plausible interventions are expected to influence the outcome.         |
| <b>Critical assumptions</b>     | Name what must be true at important links in that pathway.                       |
| <b>Counter-evidence</b>         | Predefine observations that would weaken the claim of meaningful progress.       |
| <b>Alternative explanations</b> | Examine other changes that could produce or conceal the observed result.         |
| <b>Review decision</b>          | Continue, adapt, revise, escalate, pause, stop, or retire based on the evidence. |

### A TARGET IS NOT THE PURPOSE

A target can make a decision criterion explicit, but it can also distort behaviour. Use guardrails, distribution, qualitative evidence, counter-measures, and independent sampling where the consequences justify them. If the indicator becomes easier to improve than the intended condition, revise it.

## From a feature launch to a usable production workflow.

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Starting statement</b>   | Launch a new onboarding wizard in Q3.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Why it is weak</b>       | It is an output, predetermines the intervention, and says nothing about customer change.                                                                                |
| <b>CLEAR outcome</b>        | Within the B2B onboarding journey, increase new tenant administrators completing a first verified production workflow within 24 hours from 35% to 60% by the end of Q4. |
| <b>Objective and need</b>   | Help new administrators reach a usable production workflow sooner and avoid abandonment before a working configuration.                                                 |
| <b>Evidence</b>             | Defined product events, cohort analysis, support data, and interviews with successful and unsuccessful administrators.                                                  |
| <b>Counter-evidence</b>     | Completion rises while reversals, support demand, or unusable configurations increase.                                                                                  |
| <b>Guardrails</b>           | Accessibility, security, configuration quality, and support demand do not worsen.                                                                                       |
| <b>Intervention options</b> | Guided setup, defaults, permissions, concierge onboarding, or integration changes.                                                                                      |
| <b>Review</b>               | Monthly; formal decision after two complete cohorts.                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Limitation</b>           | Customer mix, sales qualification, partner support, and event quality may affect the result.                                                                            |

BOUNDARIES

What CLEAR does and does not claim.

|                |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Designed to    | Define and assess intended outcomes; expose evidence and assumptions; separate change from intervention; match accountability to influence; support responsible review.      |
| Does not       | Guarantee achievement; prove causal attribution; replace legal, safety, engineering, clinical, security, or other professional obligations; reduce all value to one metric.  |
| Current status | Original working methodology informed by established results, evaluation, measurement, service, safety, and systems guidance. Cross-industry validation remains in progress. |

SELECTED FOUNDATIONS

- OECD, Effective Results Frameworks for Sustainable Development (2024): results chains, indicators, baselines, targets, assumptions, risks, and unintended results.
- UK Government, Magenta Book (updated 2026): theory of change, causal mechanisms, assumptions, context, alternative explanations, and evaluation.
- NIST SP 800-55 Vol. 1 (2024): measure selection, documentation, data quality, uncertainty, testing, and decision usefulness.
- UK HSE HSG254: leading and lagging indicators connected to critical risk controls and review.
- See [clearoutcomes.org/research](https://clearoutcomes.org/research) for links, scope notes, and the validation programme.