

RISA Overall Theory of Change

30 June 2022

A Theory of Change (To) framework to:

- help Research and Innovation Systems in Africa (RISA) Fund learn and adapt,
- demonstrate the anticipated change from projects, and
- validate the actual change
- connect with UK development

What is the purpose of RISA's ToC?

- Helps RISA **IMPROVE** our work by informing how we adapt the RISA approach, as well as **PROVE** our thinking
- Demonstrates hypotheses
 - How do we expect change to happen? What specific changes do we expect to happen?
 - What are we trying to learn?
- Reflects the work that's being done
 - It's an explanation of the work we're doing and how it will lead to change
 - Represents the portfolio of work (e.g. broken down by country)
 - Top level (with nested ToCs for more detail)
- Guides learning towards a defined outcome
 - We test our approach, trying to find out what works (and doesn't) to inform action
 - We use the ToC to reflect on our approach and prompt for emergent learning by the RISA team, FCDO and wider stakeholders.
- Adapts as the work does – it's '**living**'
 - In line with what we learn, we adapt the ToC to show our emergent findings and evolving hypotheses

Connection of the RISA ToC with UK Development Priorities

The change within the RISA overall ToC will contribute toward the following UK strategies:

- UK government's International Development Strategy (May 2022)
 - British Investment Partnerships
- UK Integrated Review (March 2021)
 - Strategic Framework 1 (Sustaining strategic advantage through science and technology)
 - Strategic Framework 2 (Shaping the open international order of the future)
- UK's Partnerships with Africa Strategy
 - Area 1: Unlocking inclusive economic growth in Africa

ToC Framework Approach

- A **Learning Strategy** shows our approach to testing and learning during inception and beyond.
- The **ToC** captures outputs that show a trajectory to outcomes/impact, from inception and implementation projects.
- We are **not** going to see intermediate outcome or outcome level change from the inception projects by the end of inception in June 2022; we **will** see outputs that build a trajectory toward higher level change.
- The ToC shows the basis of the change process which will evolve during implementation, and will also link to an overall programme logframe for RISA.

ToC Evolution: Overall ToC and Country level ToCs

The **overall RISA ToC** evolved in early inception (August 2021) within early consortium task force discussions (Task Force 1, including IMC Worldwide, Brink, Chemonics and SOAS), and led throughout inception by the Research and MEL Unit (IMC).

- It was presented to the RISA SMT and to FCDO in December 2021.
- It evolved further in 2022 to reflect the inception projects, which were confirmed in late 2021.

RISA Country level ToCs were developed by IMC in March and April 2022 for Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, with input by SOAS and R4D research and innovation technical leads and RISA country technical leads (CTLs) for Kenya and Nigeria. There is a separate document for each country ToC.

Each country ToC corresponds to the overall ToC, with each country diagram reflecting its respective RISA focus (ie ATIP and/or SRIA) and the relevant RISA objectives. The intended changes within stakeholders and institutions are tailored to the country focus areas and informed by national strategies.

The 'living' ToC during RISA implementation

The ToCs, overall and country-level, will evolve further in year 1 of implementation, with a **review of the ToCs** planned in six months (late Nov/early Dec 2022), as learning from the second funding round influences our understanding of how change happens within research and innovation via the RISA fund. This is to ensure the ToC diagrams remain a relevant expression of the changes the RISA fund is working towards.

Considerations to inform the evolution of the overall and country ToCs:

1. The extent of involvement by wider stakeholders - for example, a stakeholder workshop focused on the overall ToC, and/or one in each of the four focus RISA countries to evolve the country ToC? Or something much lighter touch with a core group of stakeholders feeding in through a facilitated, remote process?
2. The LOE for the review of the ToCs planned for six months in and (and other reviews in implementation) will be determined within the revised SoW for implementation, to be finalised in July 2022).

How will we use RISA's ToC?

- To clearly show our emergent thinking
 - Using clear and concise language to ensure intended impact and the steps towards it are clearly understood by the RISA team, FCDO, and other stakeholders
- To assist our learning
 - Quarterly, we will use the ToC to test our assumptions and hypotheses, and surface learning across countries and ecosystem goals
 - What have we learned about our questions?
 - Do our assumptions hold true?
 - Semi-annually we will use the ToC to sense-check our strategy
- To reflect our work
 - Based on the need and desire to keep RISA adaptive, the ToC will remain responsive to changes in the ecosystem as well as programmatic objectives through review cycles and validation processes.
 - Quarterly, we will update the ToC, based on what we have tested and learned, and to make sure it reflects existing work/plans

For all of the above, we will hold consultations within Taskforce 2, the wider consortium and when logical, with FCDO and/or stakeholders, to ensure its relevance and to ensure a shared understanding.

Learning Strategy (Legend)

Big vision for RISA

This is our overall vision (you can see it on slide 6)

Inception outcome

This is our ambition for inception (you can see more on slide 6)

What do we want to learn during inception?

These questions represent what we need to learn during inception. We believe finding answers to these questions will help 1) focus attention and consolidate learning 2) provide insight into key components of the ToC that will inform future RISA activities, projects and strategies.

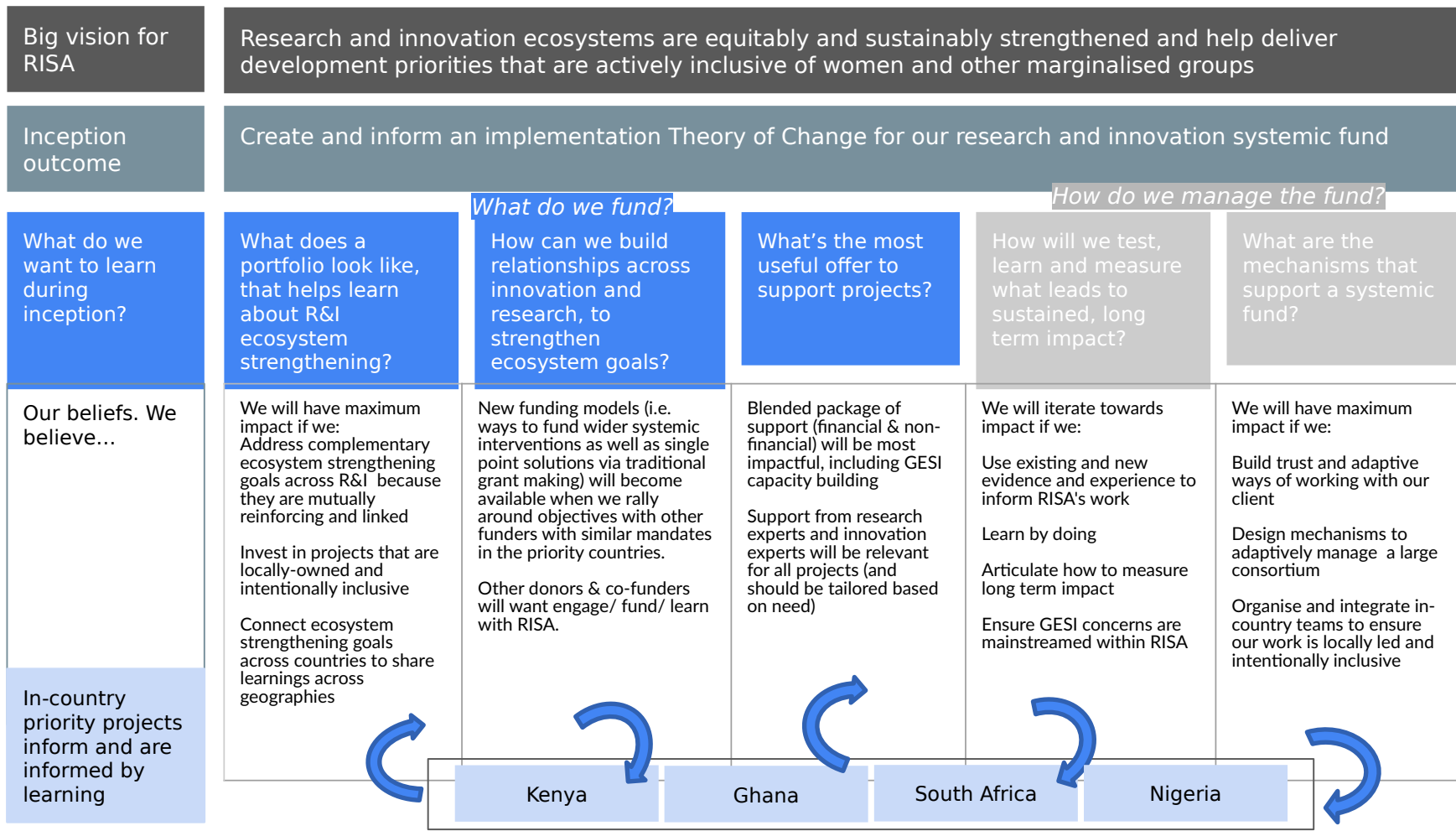
Our beliefs. We believe

These are the beliefs we're testing. We believe they are important considerations for setting up a systemic fund, and we'll test our assumptions as we go.

The arrows represent feedback loops between ALL in-country projects and ALL learning questions.

In-country priority projects

Insights into our questions and beliefs will come from what we learn through in-country projects. Our in-country projects will be informed by what we learn 📖 and across countries



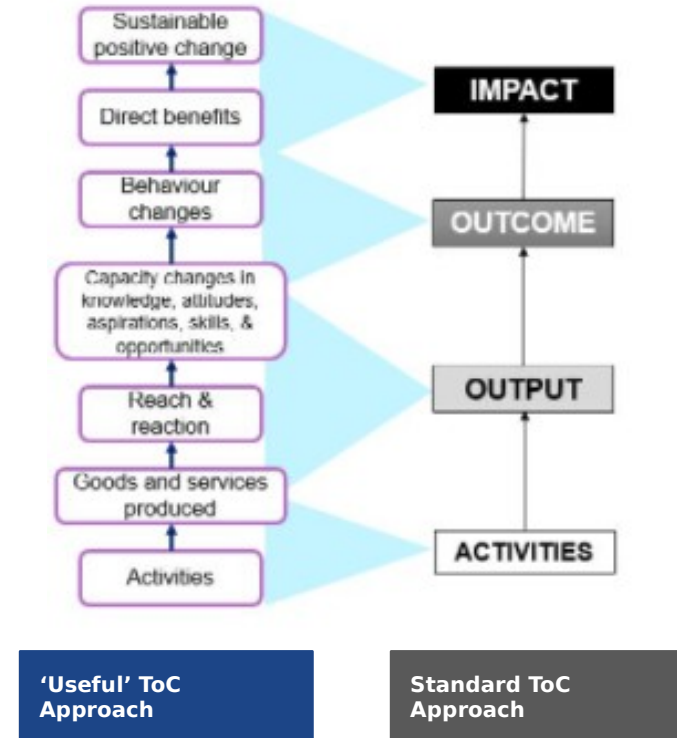
RISA ToC

- RISA is using an approach called the 'Useful ToC'. The RISA team identified it as an appropriate tool for RISA as it is particularly effective for the following:
 - as a basis for capturing the complex nature of RISA
 - for bringing a discipline to the ToC to ensure essential levels or steps in the process of change are given explicit recognition – in order to ensure they happen and are not overlooked.
 - as it articulates the change in a way that makes it easier to measure and to identify what is/is not working, and to develop a meaningful results framework.
 - as it is more translatable to wider stakeholders and increases use of plain language (i.e. decrease the chance of text being interpreted differently by different people).

RISA ToC

How the 'Useful ToC' levels fit into the standard ToC and logframe levels:

- The standard ToC approach often includes many or most of the aspects of change captured by the 'Useful' ToC approach, and this 'Useful' ToC **ensures they are explicit**.
- The diagram to the right shows where the terminology of the 'Useful' ToC approach fits within a standard ToC.

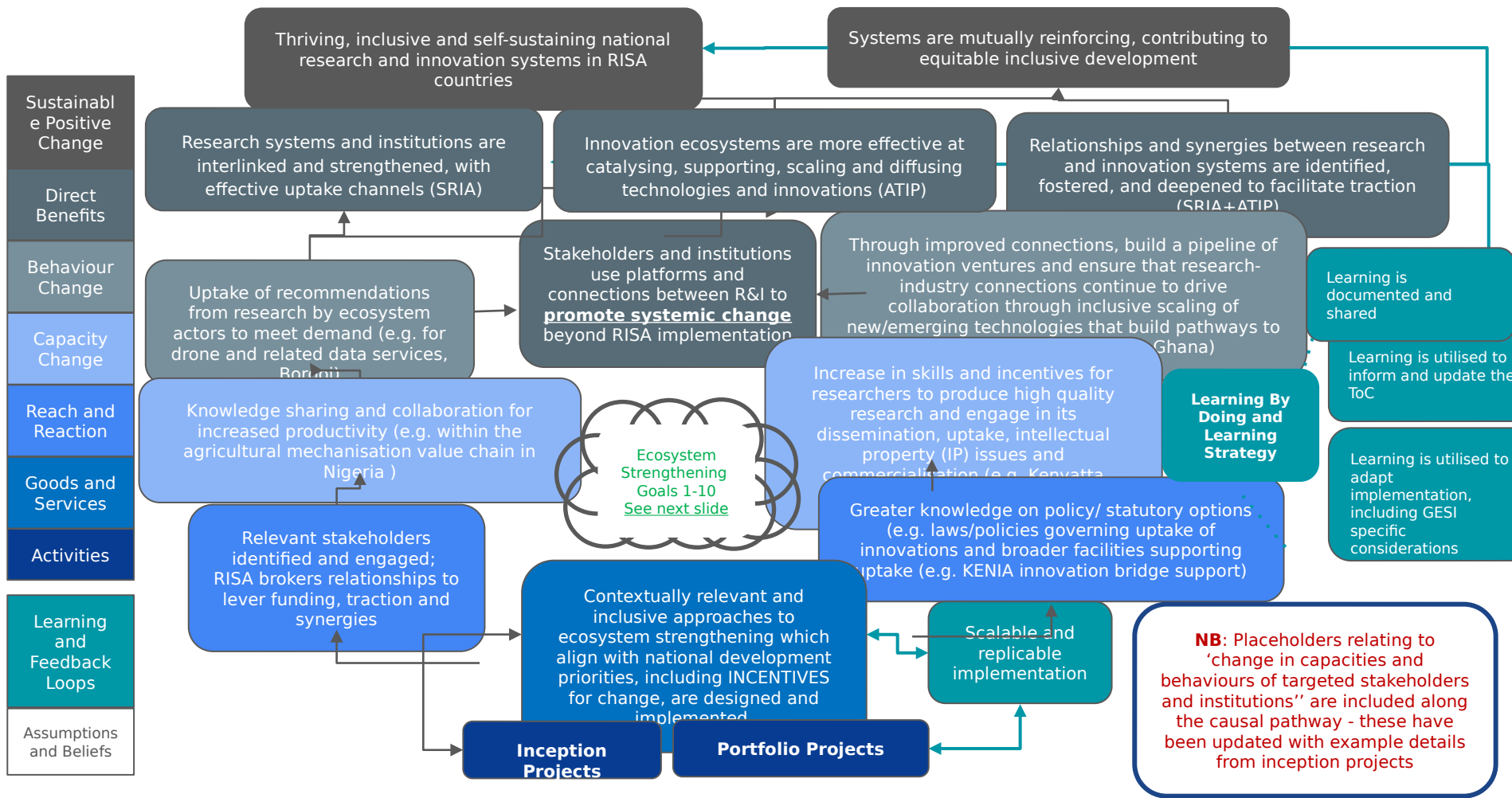


Ecosystem Strengthening Goals: The heart of the RISA ToC

FIGURE 2: Ecosystem Strengthening Goals



- In the main ToC diagram (next slide), the ecosystem strengthening goals are at the centre.
- RISA projects will work toward change by R&I stakeholders and within R&I institutions.
- The RISA team will observe how RISA projects interact with these ecosystem strengthening goals.
- These goals are partly adapted from the recently published IDIA framework on '[Strengthening Innovation Ecosystems](#)'.



Assumptions

Targeted stakeholders and institutions are able to translate individual projects into more capable institutions and functioning ecosystems.

Innovation and Research institutions and stakeholders brought together by RISA have incentives to create synergy.

Stakeholders and institutions respond to incentives to change behaviour as intended by individual project designs.

Relevant relationships are strengthened in a meaningful and measurable way which can be documented, and is guided by a RISA strategy.

GESI mainstreaming efforts and capacity building will lead to sustained intentional investments at the stakeholder and institutional level in the proactive inclusion of women and marginalised groups across research and innovation ecosystems.

Project Example: Supporting Africa’s Next Generation of Female Research Leaders in Academia and Beyond (Mawazo)

