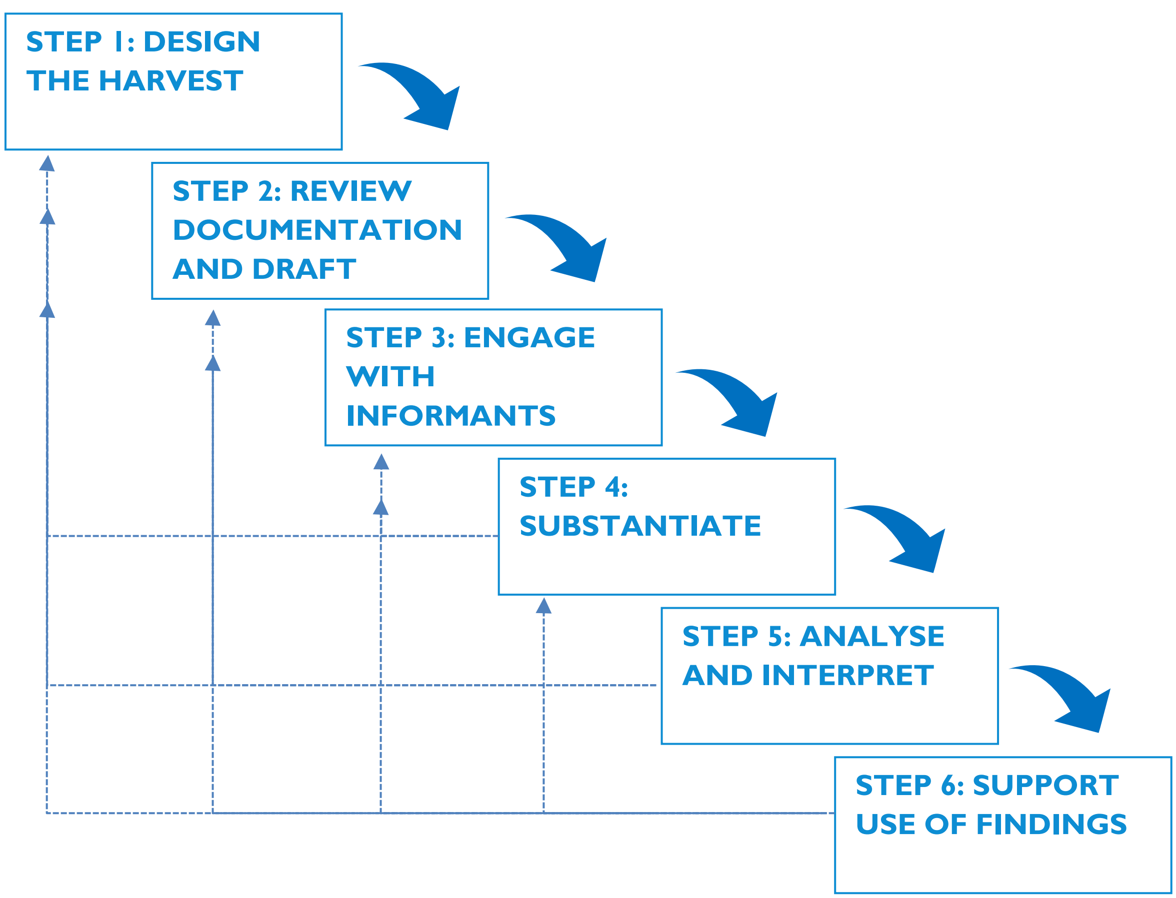
CIVICUS

HTG-OG-V1.0

How to Guide
6 Steps to create your OUTCOME HARVESTING



Outcome Harvesting is a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodology used to identify, describe, verify and analyses the changes brought about by a campaign, support or advocacy initiative.[1] In outcome harvesting one collects evidence of change ('outcomes' – e.g. changed policy legislation, a new coalition formed, shifted voting behaviour) and then works backwards to assess contribution to that change. Please note that the change can also be a negative change, and/or the change cannot be linked to one's own contributions but rather to those of other actors. It may be referred to as Outcome Mapping methodology. However, in outcome harvesting, there are also other methodologies used during the harvest process.

Outcome harvesting can be used for ongoing monitoring throughout a project or programme, in order to produce real-time information on change. It can also be used with evaluation or impact assessments during projects or programmes, at the end or after they have been completed.[2]

Outcome harvesting involves participation with different stakeholders. According to Wilson-Grau (2015) participation is described by the methodology's main developer as necessary for a successful outcome harvesting process and product.[3]

Outcome harvesting is considered most useful under three conditions according to Wilson-Grau (2015)[4]

- **Focus on outcomes rather than activities-** It is not designed to assess whether activities were carried out according to plan, rather than assessing what has changed and why.
- **Complex programming contexts-** Outcome Harvesting is suitable for complex programming context where the relationship between the cause and the effects is not fully understood. Examples of complex situations could include in areas such as advocacy, mobilization, capacity development, empowerment or network development.
- **Monitoring and evaluation-** Outcome Harvesting can also be used when the purpose as an M&E exercise is to learn about the change and understanding why those changes occurred.

STEP 1: DESIGN THE HARVEST

- The harvest should be informed by key questions which the project team identifies as important in identifying outcomes. For instance, "What are examples of how the CSOs have accessed new funding sources?"; "What are the contextual differences between CSOs that influence success?".

[1] Wilson- Grau, R, (2015). Outcome Harvesting, Better Evaluation. Retrieved from http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting
[2] ibid
[3] ibid
[4] http://www.managingforimpact.org/sites/default/files/resource/wilsongrau_en_outome_harvesting_brief_revised_nov_2013.pdf

- This can be conducted as a brainstorming session with representatives from the project or via email. The questions are guiding questions as a starting point for the harvest.

STEP 2: REVIEW SOURCES AND DRAFT OUTCOMES

- All project and programme key information sources such as the proposals, minutes, conference materials, reports, SWOT analysis, case studies, data sets, videos, blogs, pictures and audio content. These will form the source of outcomes to be harvested. Using the agreed harvest questions all outcomes should be grouped into clusters/categories that are aligned to evaluation question. For example, all outcomes relating to successes/challenges of advocacy campaigns should be in one cluster.

STEP 3: ENGAGE WITH INFORMANTS

- A series of facilitated discussions should be held with key informants to review the draft outcomes, clarify and determine other outcomes which have not been identified through the document review.
- These discussions can be conducted virtually or face-to-face.
- During this process determine contextual influences and assumptions about the relationships between the project and outcomes.

STEP 4: SUBSTANTIATE

- The outcomes harvested must be reviewed based on all inputs received.
- Identify additional (external) project representatives to validate the outcomes identified are true and complete.

STEP 5: ANALYSE AND INTERPRET

- Analyze the outcomes based on the number of outcomes, and the number by each outcome category (related to knowledge change; funding sources; policy change; geography, etc).

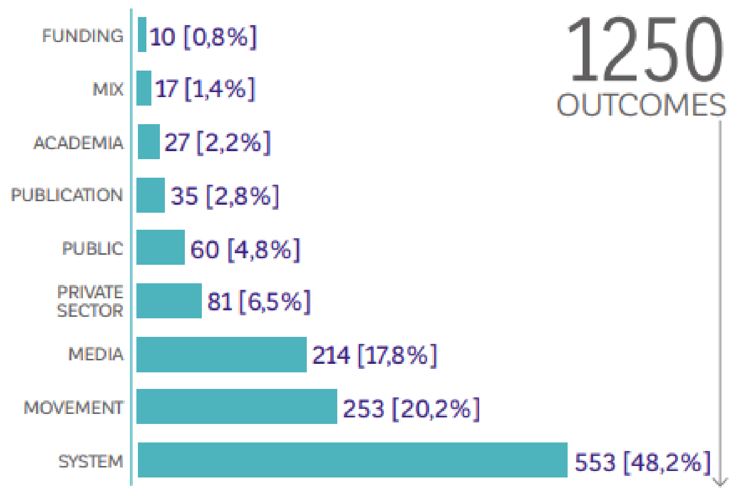
STEP 6: SUPPORT USE OF FINDINGS

- Document the findings and conduct a facilitated discussion and dissemination process to support interpretation and use of the information to improve the project.
- Key outcomes can also be packaged as case studies/best practices and used for broader communication and sharing of lessons.

Examples

The Learning Review harvested 1250 outcomes from grantee reports. Figure 1 indicates the proportions of outcomes in diverse spheres that grantees contributed towards influencing.

FIGURE 1: NUMBERS OF OUTCOMES IN EACH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



INGOs using their resources to support constituencies in self-organizing

SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHRDS MENA COALITION

Contribution: In March 2015, AWID provided key support including resource mobilization for a meeting to consolidate an organization of women's human rights defenders in MENA.
Outcome: That same month, the Women Human Rights Defenders Middle East and North Africa (WHRD MENA) Coalition was officially launched. (AWID #32)

Source: https://www.openglobalrights.org/userfiles/file/Towards%20a%20new%20ecology_SHRW%20Review%20Public%20Report_11_2017%20Final_compressed.pdf