Framework for the Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center (MC3), an Educational Technical Assistance Center, Planning Documentation

MC3 uses the following framework to underpin all of its event documentation. Most commonly, it is used for documenting events within MC3’s Event Database, but it is also used for crafting agendas and report writing.

**Inputs**
- Resources dedicated to or consumed during the event

**Activities**
- What is done with the inputs to accomplish the goal, purpose, and objectives of the event

**Outputs**
- The direct products and services of the inputs and activities of the event

**Outcomes**
- Benefits for participants and other beneficiaries as a result of the activities and outputs of the event

What are Inputs?

Inputs
- are the financial, human, and material resources dedicated to the activities and processes that comprise an event, and
- support the activities and processes that lead to outputs and outcomes.
Examples of inputs
- Staff Members
- Collaborators
- Volunteers
- Expertise
- Supplies
- Facilities
- Products
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Needs Assessment Findings
- Technology
- Online Access
- Constraints
- Regulations
- Funding
- Partners
- Consultants
- Time
- Key Information
- Materials
- Documents
- Agendas
- Curricula
- Equipment
- Computers
- Website
- Laws
- Requirements

What are Activities?
Activities
- are what MC3 does with the inputs to meet its goals and objectives in the work plan;
- are summarized in the Event Description of each Event Database entry
- include the actions, strategies, techniques, processes, interventions, and methods that comprise MC3’s types of technical assistance; and
- are described by indicating who did what using action words/verbs such as the following:
  - designed
  - delivered
  - sponsored
  - provided
  - examined
  - supported
  - implemented
  - developed
  - convened
  - hosted
  - assessed
  - reviewed
  - discussed
  - communicated
  - planned
  - conducted
  - facilitated
  - explored
  - assisted
  - informed
  - cooperated
Also include
- conference/symposium/forum/summit (a formalized event with presentations, concurrent sessions, panel discussions, and/or small group sessions);
- consultation (provision of expert advice, guidance, and/or information in a particular domain or area of expertise), either face-to-face or at-a-distance;
- facilitation (leading people through processes towards agreed-upon objectives in a manner that encourages participation, ownership, and creativity by all those involved; e.g. planning or problem solving);
- meeting (two or more people coming together to discuss a topic or issue), either face-to-face at-a-distance;
- ongoing, sustained intervention (e.g., follow-up observation and feedback, coaching/mentoring);
- training (direct face-to-face instruction on pre-specified knowledge, skills, competencies, etc.);
- training: skill training workshop (less than a day to three days);
- training: institute/academy (four or more days);
- training: train-the-trainer; and
- other.

What are Outputs?
Outputs are
- the immediate results from the combination of inputs and activities/processes that comprise an event,
- the direct, tangible products that emerge from processing inputs through the completed activities that comprise an event, and
- the actual deliverables—goods and services—provided to individuals or organizations to generate the expected outcomes.

Outputs
- relate to the completion (rather than the conduct) of activities;
- quantify what was done, for how long, for whom, for how many people, etc.;
- are usually measured in terms of the volume of work accomplished or units of service provided (types, levels, and targets of services delivered), such as
- the number of individuals served,
- the number of (type of) sessions conducted,
- the intensity of services provided (duration and frequency),
- the (type of) product developed, or
- the distribution of a product or material;
- are expressed in terms of what the product or service is (nouns or noun phrases);
- answer the question, "How much of what service or product did we provide?" They do not answer the question, "What changed as a result of the service?"; and
- lead to the expected outcomes.

**What are Outcomes?**

Outcomes
- are benefits or changes for individuals or groups that result from the activities and outputs of the event;
- may be at an individual or organizational level;
- address changes in awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, norms, decision-making, motivations, beliefs, values, capacities, linkages, or conditions of individuals, groups, organizations, systems, or communities;
- answer the question, "What difference did the event make in the participants and other beneficiaries?";
- are expressed as change statements (e.g., increased, decreased, or maintained, improved);
- are usually expressed in terms of
  - short-term outcomes, such as
    - awareness,
    - knowledge,
    - understanding,
    - attitudes,
    - skills, or
    - motivation;
  - intermediate-term outcomes, such as
    - action,
    - behaviors,
    - practices,
    - decisions,
    - policies, or
    - important milestones on the way to achieving long-term (end) outcomes; or
- long-term outcomes, such as
  - impact,
  - consequences,
  - conditions,
  - status,
  - sustainable improvements, or
  - address the capacity-building goals in the work plan.