

Guidance for Boundary Analysis

Some questions to consider:

1. What is the essence of this program? (activities and outcomes) What is not?
2. Who are the participants? Who are not?
3. How is the program being delivered, and is that an essential part of the program? (For example, is this an After-School Science education program, or a Science education program that at the moment happens to be offered in an after-school setting but might be offered in different settings equally well? Is this a program that could be delivered in lecture format, or is the “hands-on learning” a key aspect?)
4. How much of the possible span of activities have to be included in order to have a full view of this program? (For example, is it important for this program to include things that might be considered prep work, recruitment, training, etc., or can those be assumed or taken as given, or inherently separate from the working of your program?)
5. How much of the possible span of outcomes have to be included in order to get a full view of this program? (For example, would you ever want to make statements about your program’s relevance to community well-being, or national resource issues? Having those within the vision of your program does NOT mean you will be evaluating those kinds of outcomes, but if they are an important part of what shapes or motivates the work of the program then the connections matter.)

Tip: Think about who (individuals, or broad stakeholder groups) might have different views on these questions, or who might raise different questions.

Tip: Try to be broad enough to make this a complete picture of your program, and yet accurate enough so that the pieces in there are essential to the view of the program. Keep in mind some practical considerations:

- What kinds of statements or claims will you want to be able to say at some point? (We do NOT expect or want you to evaluate everything within your program. But we do want your program view and your program model to be comprehensive enough so that you can make good choices within the program boundaries about what to evaluate.)
- Who are your audiences for program discussions? (Are key stakeholders interested in a broad and extensive view of your program, or are they focused on what might be considered sub-pieces?)

Tip: Things that seem relevant to your program but in the end do not “belong” inside the boundaries of your program definition may have a place in the Assumptions or Context sections of your Logic Model. That is, if they help paint a picture of your program and offer important information about what makes it work, then there is still a place for this information even if it isn’t central enough to merit being in the heart of the program model.