



Using Think | **BIG** to Develop a Strategy

What are Behavior Integration and Think | **BIG**?

Behavior Integration is a way to design and implement development programs that defines outcomes as specific behaviors required to achieve the development goal. Ultimately, it means that strategy, project, and activity design are **behavior-led, not intervention-driven**. Think | **BIG** (Behavior Integration Guidance) is the process for doing this.

The Need: Why use Think | **BIG** to create a strategy?

As USAID and its global partners enter into an era of development focused on greater partnership, country ownership, and explicit economic and social return on investment, it is critical to reconceptualize development from a more charitable model, with beneficiaries of one-way aid, to a model in which country stakeholders at all levels deeply engage with their development challenges and ultimately transform their own lives. As the President of Ghana recently noted in his preface to the charter document for Ghana Beyond Aid, the best way to facilitate this paradigm shift is to begin to measure development results as behavior change, rather than as the completion of a list of projects. Think | **BIG** provides structure, steps, and guidance to support this shift.

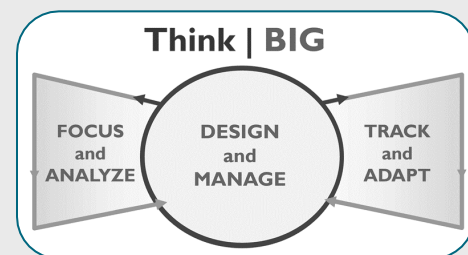
The Response: What is the Think | **BIG** process?

Think | **BIG** creates logical, purposeful pathways between results framed as priority behaviors, through the factors inhibiting or motivating practice of those behaviors, the key supporting actors required to sustain change, and ultimately the interventions that will be implemented to address the factors and leverage supporting actors. Priority behaviors are selected as those most critical to change in order to achieve and sustain a development goal. They are identified through rigorous causal analysis of the impediments to achieving the goal. The causal analysis includes application of learning from the various assessments and studies conducted regarding the behavior.

The priority behaviors are then bundled into intermediate results and development objectives using the appropriate theory of change to identify the intermediate and ultimate impact of changing those behaviors. The priority behaviors define the strategy and guide activity design.

The Impact: What is the Think | **BIG** difference?

The biggest difference in using Think | **BIG** to craft a strategy is that the entire strategy is built on identifying and driving towards meaningful, sustainable development results. Success is riskier, but far more powerful, because it is no longer defined simply by executing a set of interventions, but by making sure those interventions lead to meaningful results. Further, because the strategy uses behavioral outcomes (rather than interventions) as results, using Think | **BIG** allows a program to easily identify opportunities for integration across technical areas, thereby maximizing resources and impact.



Think | **BIG** for Strategy Development



Identify Goal

Define themes, parameters and desired impact.



Analyze Causes

Identify impediments to achieving the goal.



Prioritize Behaviors

Focus on those behaviors most critical to change to address causes. Identify appropriate phasing of priorities given available resources and other considerations.



Create Pathways

Identify critical factors inhibiting or motivating practice of priority behaviors, key supporting actors and necessary interventions.



Apply and Manage

Create synergies and efficiencies across behaviors by identifying common factors, actors and interventions.



Track and Adapt

Craft appropriate targets, track key behavioral metrics, and adapt programming as the data indicate.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How does Think | BIG support the Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR)?

Think | BIG (Behavior Integration Guidance) provides structure, steps, and guidance to meaningfully operationalize the J2SR policy. Defining results as priority behaviors most critical to achieve self-reliance across a program promotes the creation and funding of strategies and programming designed explicitly to sustain change, ensuring a country moves forward on its Journey.

As USAID reorients its approach to development to foster self-reliance—empowering host-country governments to achieve and sustain results, mobilize their own resources, and leverage enterprise-driven solutions—it also requires a reorientation of what is defined as a result. In all countries, no matter the current J2SR status, increasing capacity and commitment starts by helping countries transition to thinking of success as changing “the ‘software’ underpinnings of development – values, mindset, attitudes, and behaviour,” as Ghana’s President Nana Akufo-Addo recently stated in the Ghana Beyond Aid Charter Document, instead of marking successful development as the completion of a list of projects.

Seldom do we start by working with our partners to articulate the change we want to see at the end of our effort, analyze the barriers to that change along with opportunities to facilitate it, and only then determine the right interventions to resolve those particular barriers and leverage the opportunities. More often, development has been focused on interventions from the start—training teachers or health providers, installing power grids, improving logistics and supply chains, writing policy, and increasing exposure to key messages. Frequently we fail to align and integrate these interventions, no matter how well conceived, to ensure that they take place at the same time in the same place with the same people, which then dilutes their effectiveness. Further, because we start with a pre-defined “solution”, we miss opportunities to meaningfully engage other stakeholders and sectors, including the private sector, in defining and solving the problem. Think | BIG starts with the change required and charts a logical pathway to the people, actions, and interventions needed to achieve that change.

How does Think | BIG facilitate Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)?

Think | BIG lends itself to effective CLA because it creates clearly delineated pathways between a desired development goal and the interventions ultimately funded to achieve that goal. Think | BIG also fosters ongoing collaborating, learning, and adapting as part of the process.

CLA is a set of tools, resources, guidance and thinking within USAID designed to systematize CLA within Missions to improve development effectiveness. Think | BIG pathways include identifying and articulating priority behavior outcomes most critical to change to achieve the goal, the factors inhibiting or motivating practice of those behaviors, key supporting actors required to support change, and, ultimately, the interventions required to address the factors and leverage the supporting actors. Including key metrics at each stage in the pathway allows progress to be tracked continuously and adaptations to be made over time. These metrics ensure that all CLA decisions are informed with as much real data as possible. Think | BIG also creates an interface for meaningful dialogue with implementing partners on successes and challenges, ensuring that reporting pressures do not mask or inhibit achieving real progress.

How does Think | BIG align with the other Agency Initiatives?

Think | BIG facilitates Missions’ examination of obstacles and opportunities to achieving broad Agency objectives—such as sustaining a vibrant economy and trade partner, sustainably improving food security and nutrition, and ensuring access to power—as part of self-reliance in a particular context. These objectives are key outcomes of various Agency initiatives, including **Global Food Security Strategy**, **Prosper Africa**, and **Power Africa**. For each, Think | BIG asks the question, “To deliver on these objectives, who needs to do what?”, rather than asking “What activities should we fund?” Think | BIG offers a systematic approach that matches a behavior with the right solution, ensuring these initiatives are integrated with other work within the Mission and reach their full potential impact.

How does Think | BIG align with the Clear Choice Framework?

Think | BIG gives meaning and structure to the implications and impact of a country’s choice to partner with the United States.

The Clear Choice Framework is intended to ensure that, as we work to foster overall self-reliance in a partner country, we are building the capacity of governments, civil society, and the private sector to make informed decisions about their choice of development partners. Development solutions cannot be one-size-fits-all, and Think | BIG offers host countries a systematic approach to thinking about its partners that matches the right solution to the country’s goals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Think | BIG website at thinkbigonline.org
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