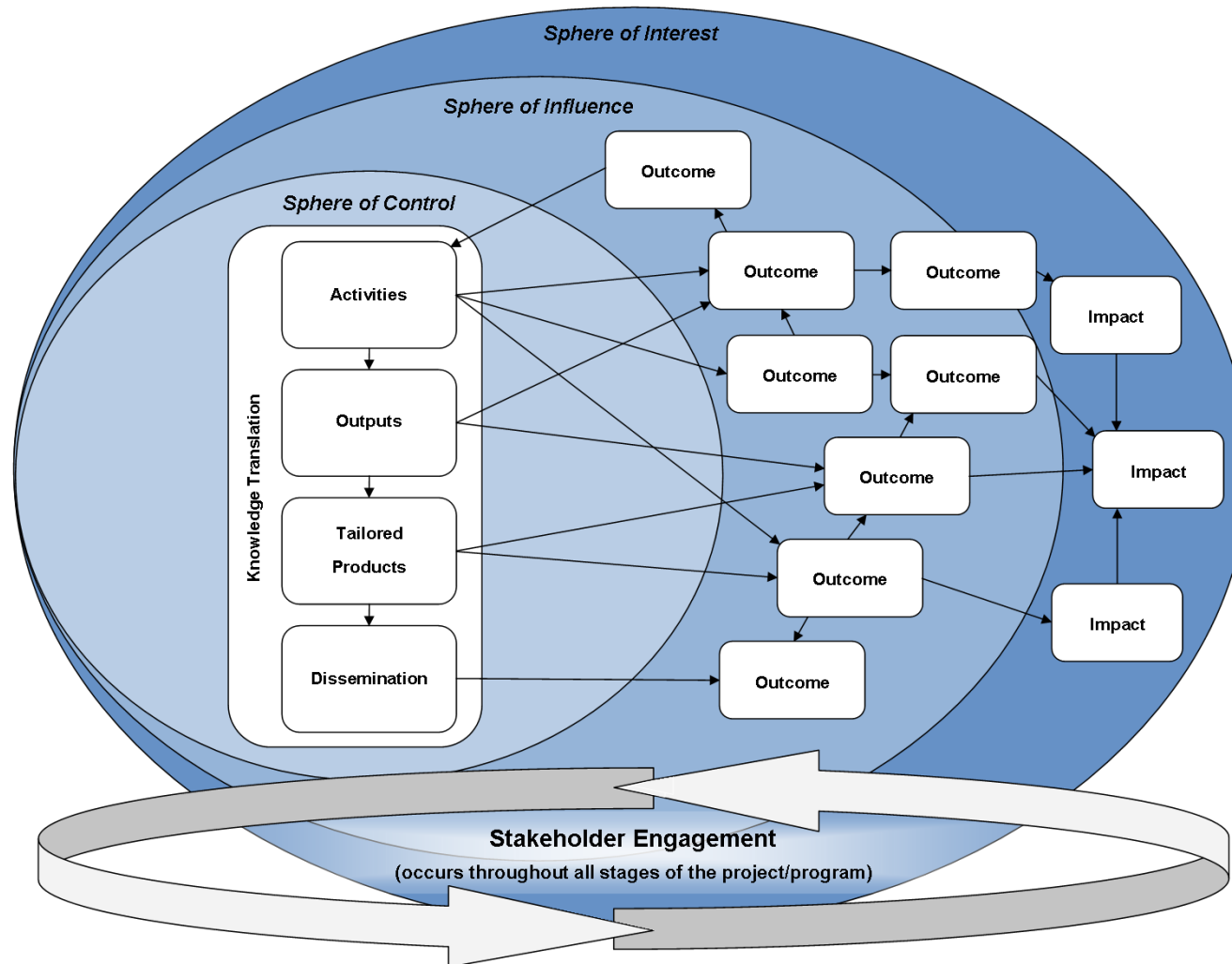


Theory of Change Conceptual Overview

This diagram provides an illustration of interactions between elements of a theory of change¹.



¹ This diagram builds on ideas from Outcome Mapping ([Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001](#)), and conceptualizes the change process with: 1) relatively declining influence of an intervention over time and space, within spheres of control, influence, and interest; and 2) outcomes defined as behaviour change that is influenced by changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and relationships of key actors in the system.

The Sphere of Control includes activities that are conducted by the project.

Activities: Actions undertaken by the project/program; in a research context, this includes background scoping and preparation work, definition and design of the research questions and project, literature review, fieldwork, and planned communication or engagement with relevant stakeholders or boundary partners (i.e., expert consultations, workshops, fieldwork, etc.).

Outputs: Knowledge, fora, and processes generated by the research project/program **activities**.

Tailored products: Resources that package knowledge (**outputs**) for specific audiences (e.g., peer reviewed publications, policy briefs, videos, etc.).

Dissemination: How knowledge produced is communicated to target audiences.

Knowledge translation: A dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethically-sound application of knowledge and mutual learning to improve social, economic, and/or environmental conditions.

The Sphere of Influence is where the project aims to influence or bring about change via the actors the project works with and through.

Outcomes: Changes in knowledge, skills, relationships, and attitudes that manifest as changes in behaviour during and after the project/program. To be effective, a project may need to influence several or many different actors, often in different ways.

The Sphere of Interest models indirect changes that fall outside of the direct influence of the project. These changes result in new uncertainties, which may manifest as outcomes or changes in the social, economic, or environmental conditions. These changes result in new uncertainties, where new research entry points and questions are identified.

Impact: changes in flow (e.g., higher annual income; increased water discharge from a watershed) or state (e.g., socio-economic status; water quality in a reservoir) resulting wholly or in part from a chain of events to which the research has contributed.