

guidelines for
monitoring and evaluation

cambridgeshire community safety



planning your project

The starting point for any project is to define the nature and extent of the problem you want to address.

The **baseline** is the information that helps you do this. The baseline is the situation at the start of a project before any work has been carried out.

When you are clear about the problem you are going to address, you must set clear aims and objectives for your project. An **aim** is a simple statement, which sets out the purpose of the project.

Objectives are specific statements that can be measured and state exactly what you want to achieve.

Objectives must be written so that they can be measured. For this to take place they should be **SMART**, which means they are:

- S**pecific – all objectives should have specific outcomes
- M**easurable – the outcome of an objective should be able to be measured
- A**chievable – the objective should describe something that can be achieved within the timescale and resources set for the project
- R**ealistic – objectives describe something that can actually be done
- T**imebound – a timescale should be set for when the objective is to be achieved

Once you have decided on your project's aims and objectives, you need to think about the project's **outputs**. These are the pieces of work that will need to be done during the project. They are not necessarily the final purpose of the project. They are usually things that need to be done in order to produce the desired result.

You also need to think about the project's **inputs**, which are the resources that are available to carry out the work. The inputs or resources used to produce the outputs can be financial, material or human.

The overall result of applying inputs to a project and achieving the outputs is known as the **outcome** of a project. In other words, by using the resources available to complete specific pieces of work you'll achieve your results.

To measure a project's achievements through evaluation, you will need to think about the tools that help you do this, which are:

- Benchmarks
- Performance Indicators (PIs)

A **benchmark** is the performance of comparable projects against which your project's performance can be compared. Therefore, it is important to remember that the benchmarks must be taken from similar work in similar areas to the project you are running.

Performance Indicators (PIs) are the most important way of measuring whether or not a project has achieved its targets and objectives. A PI is any information that indicates whether a particular objective has been met. They can be **quantitative**, which means they use statistical information to measure the efforts of a piece of action or **qualitative**, which measure feelings and perceptions.

Term	Example
Baseline	Police are called out to 35 incidents a year which involve burglaries by people posing as bogus officials
Aim	To reduce bogus official burglaries in Meadowvale
SMART objective	By the end of this project (in nine months) 'bogus official' burglaries in Meadowvale will have been reduced by 30%
Outcome target	Numbers of 'bogus official' burglaries reduced by 30%
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Police Community Officer ■ Home Helps ■ Housing Department ■ Sponsorship from local business ■ Residents give time to project
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Awareness campaign ■ Advice and guidance ■ Door viewers fitted ■ Increased Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
Benchmark	Projects in similar council estates in Lyddshire have achieved a 35% reduction in 'bogus official' burglaries
Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of incidents referred to the police ■ Number of door viewers fitted
Outcome	Incidents dropped by 50% initially and then rose slightly so that an overall reduction of 42% was achieved

monitoring your project

Monitoring is the routine collection of information about a service or activity or project. It allows you to keep track of what is going on.

Monitoring is the process of regularly tracking and assessing the implementation and progress of a project. It is done through the systematic collection and review of information on inputs, outputs and milestones. Monitoring as such cannot assess either the quality of a project, or explain why a project works or does not work. This is established through evaluation. Monitoring data provides the initial starting point for an evaluation and to which additional information and data is added and analysed

Why Monitor?

- To enable project delivery to be 'tweaked' if necessary
- To assess whether a project has been successfully implemented in terms of inputs, outputs and timescales
- To help to plan, develop and deliver future projects
- To update funders on the progress of the project
- **Meadowvale monitored the number of 'Bogus Official' burglaries reported to the police and door viewers fitted monthly.**
- **After two months the contractor was behind in fitting the door viewers, so monitoring was increased to weekly to ensure delivery**
- **Following a spate of 'bogus official' burglaries in a small area in Meadowvale the roll-out of neighbourhood watch was changed to prioritise that area.**
- **A brief progress report was written every three months to keep the CDRP and the local sponsors informed.**

evaluating your project

Evaluation identifies whether a project has achieved its objectives by identifying whether there is a link between the effects of the project and its stated outcomes. It can be used to assess individual projects, programmes of projects or entire strategies.

Evaluation goes beyond monitoring a project because it looks at whether or not a project is having the desired outcome. Monitoring data provides the initial starting point to which additional information and data needs to be collected, collated and analysed.

To use the above example, monitoring information may show that the outcome target of a 40% reduction in 'bogus caller' burglaries in Meadowvale has been met. However, that alone does not identify whether the project was having that effect or whether it was another factor, such as the arrest of key nominals.

Why Evaluate?

- Evaluation is an invaluable tool for assessing whether a project is working and how delivery can be improved.
- Evaluation can establish why a project has worked. This means it is possible to assess whether the project is suitable for other areas or client groups.
- Evaluation is a useful mechanism of sharing good practice.
- It is an important tool for establishing whether a project is delivering good value for money.
- A project is being funded from a particular programme that requires projects to be evaluated

When should I plan the evaluation?

An evaluation should be planned at the same time the project itself. This allows you to ensure that the information that would be required for an evaluation is recorded. A common problem with many projects is that evaluation is an afterthought and is consequently not well planned and crucial information is unavailable. It is therefore not very effective at identifying how well a project has worked.

Funding guidance recommends that 10% of the project cost be spent on evaluation.

Meadowvale wanted to conduct an evaluation of a project to improve security in a multi-storey car park, to reduce vehicle crime and fear of crime. Gradually, over five years they had improved the lighting, installed CCTV and introduced pre-pay barriers. Unfortunately, they had not recorded when the changes were made or established a baseline measure of fear of crime. This made a proper evaluation impossible.

What do I include in an evaluation?

The scope of an evaluation depends on what you are trying to find out. An evaluation can cover various things.

- Measuring the outcome – assess whether or not the project has met the outcome target
- Benchmarking – measure the success of a particular project by comparing it to other similar projects.
- Establishing causation – whether the outcome was a direct result of the outputs
- Cost-effectiveness – measuring the input cost against savings

- Additional benefits – were there any expected or unexpected benefits
- Displacement – was there a positive or negative effect on surrounding areas

Who should do the evaluation?

An evaluation needs an objective view of the project which can be difficult to achieve if you are involved in the project. Therefore, ideally an evaluation should be done independently. This does not necessarily mean that it should be contracted out to an external consultant. It can be done internally by someone not directly involved in the project or someone outside the team can be used as a quality control check.

There are various external sources of help, these include: local colleges and universities; external consultants and local, national and regional research groups.

If you are planning to contract out to an external consultant it is important to consider certain things.

- The evaluation is a project itself and therefore it is important to be clear about the outcomes and to obtain regular reports to ensure it is running smoothly.
- The extent to which you manage the evaluation. Taking a strong project management position means that you are more likely to get a product you want but it can be time-consuming. More hands off management means that the end product may not be what you were expecting.
- Who is responsible for what. For example, collecting the data from agencies. Some consultants will include in the contract that the client is responsible for the collection of data.

What data do I need?

When deciding what data to collect it is important to assess how readily available the information is. If it is crucial to the evaluation of a project then it may be worth the time and cost. Furthermore, it is not worth collecting anything you cannot analyse.

- Detailed data helps to pinpoint problems but the general picture can get lost in the detail.
- Higher level data is useful for general trends and patterns but is less useful for detailed analysis.

What next?

All your work will be wasted if the end results cannot be understood, so there are a number of things you should consider:

- Who is your audience?
- What do the audience require from the evaluation?
- Do those receiving the report have the skills and time to interpret it?
- What techniques are you going to use to show your findings? E.g. tables, graphics, written reports, presentations, the internet.

Aspects to Evaluate	Example Evaluation Findings
Measuring the Outcome	Meadowvale included this in the evaluation and during the nine months of the project 'bogus official' burglaries were reduced by 42%. Over the six months following the end of the project, there was a further 10% reduction.
Benchmarking	Projects in similar council estates in Lyddshire achieved only 35%. The evaluation suggested this was because of an existing strong community identity in Meadowvale.
Establishing causation	The evaluation considered trends in 'bogus official' burglaries across Lyddshire, survey responses and qualitative evidence from neighbourhood watch co-ordinators. These suggested that the reduction in burglaries was largely and increase in feelings of safety were principally caused by the project.
Cost-effectiveness	Because many of the benefits of the project related to fear of crime, it was decided not to include cost-effectiveness within the scope of the evaluation.
Additional Benefits	A survey of residents reported that although there was no overall increase in "people feeling safer in their homes" there was a 15% increase in the respondents who were over 65.
Displacement	Areas immediately surrounding Meadowvale saw a 15% reduction in 'bogus caller burglaries' over the nine months. However, neighbouring counties saw substantial increases over the same period.

contacts

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