

# Guidance Note 1

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Here we provide general advice and guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation and signpost you to more in-depth guidance contained in the 'How To' guides held in the **Monitoring & Evaluation** section on Plymouth Informed [www.plymouth-informed.org.uk](http://www.plymouth-informed.org.uk).

There is a growing desire amongst funding providers that recipients of their funding demonstrate the **impact** of a supported project upon the problem or issue at hand, and to go beyond the simple recording of activities and goods / services delivered (often referred to as the 'outputs' of the project).

There is also a growing desire that project promoters demonstrate that their project and / or its impact is **sustainable** beyond the immediate financial support offered by the funding provider.

Evaluation is the process by which you will gauge this impact and sustainability whilst monitoring plays a crucial role in providing the evidence.

For any given project in receipt of external funding it is wise to assume that you must monitor the following aspects of your project:

- ⌘ Inputs: financial income, staff employed etc
- ⌘ Outputs: financial expenditure, key deliverables
- ⌘ Targets in relation to the outputs
- ⌘ Results expected in relation to the targets

They are all aspects of **Performance Monitoring** which provides you with the information that you'll need to effectively manage the project and to convince others that you are effectively doing so. It informs the management and delivery of your project and is usually done continuously, from start to finish of the project.

Even if you didn't receive funding from an external agency you should monitor and evaluate the performance of your project as good practice demands that.....

- ⌘ You need to know whether everything is "going to plan"
- ⌘ You need to know why things went wrong, if they did.
- ⌘ You need to know where to make changes if things went going wrong
- ⌘ You need to know what things worked well – good practice
- ⌘ You need to know what impact or potential impact has been made
- ⌘ You need to know how this was achieved - process

## Performance monitoring for evaluation

**Monitoring** for evaluation provides valuable information to help inform the evaluation exercise and is a special element of your Performance Monitoring. It provides information with regard to your aspiration to change the situation of a place or the lives of individuals and is supplemented by information created by evaluation research. It therefore goes beyond the monitoring of outputs and supplies information in relation to the effects upon people or places as your project progresses.

**Evaluation** occurs at the time when you look back at the project's performance; this is normally done when the effects of the project's activities are becoming noticeable, or are due to, and is gleaned from an examination of monitoring information and additional research that looks into the current situation (which may also be the 'end' situation). In short, it's a 'snap shot'.

It is these 'effects' that you need to monitor and then to research in an evaluation exercise carried out at some suitable time in the life of the project.

### **Outputs and added value**

'Effects' is interpreted here as the essential **added value** of your project that is felt by the people and/or places affected by your project. Your project generates Outputs (the goods and services delivered through your activities) but the added value lies within the Outcomes of your project (the direct effects generated by these outputs upon people or places).

Outcomes is therefore the measured expression (added value) of the difference that your project made to the lives of people and places that can be linked to the creation of its outputs.

The sustainable element of your project will often lie within this added value and reflects your desire to see the effects of your project continue after the cessation of the project delivery activities that created them.

### **Aspirations**

At the beginning of your project you don't yet know the Outcomes but it is likely that you will have already anticipated the added value that recipients of your project are likely to experience and these aspirations may have been used as part of the justification for funding support.

Conventionally, you express these aspirations in a bidding document as '**targets**' in relation to some key aspect of the problem or issue in question, and these targets are often interpreted as *anticipated outcomes*.

The evaluation exercise will later tell you whether you achieved these anticipated outcomes because it takes stock of the performance of your project and examines what actually occurred (the *actual outcomes* of your project).

### **Outcomes and additionality**

Beyond the actual outcomes of your project lies the actual impact of your project and funding providers are becoming increasingly interested in the **Impact** that your project had upon the problem or issue in question.

If the funding provider can demonstrate that it has played a key role (through supporting your and similar projects) in tackling a problem or issue, it can justify its original decision to financially support your project. If it can't, it runs the risk of a tarnished reputation with potentially undesirable implications for your organisation which designed and delivered the project(s) in question.

Again, at the inception of your project you will likely have formed expectations of the impact that you anticipate your project would have and these aspirations may have been woven into your case for funding support.

Conventionally, you express this aspiration within a bidding document as '**results**' in relation to some key aspect of the problem or issue in question, and these results are often interpreted as *anticipated impact*.

The evaluation exercise will tell you whether you achieved these anticipated impacts because it takes stock of the performance of your project and examines the *actual impacts* of your project.

Once you know the impact of your project you will know the contribution that your project made to the solution to the problem or issue in question, especially in relation to other projects that may be undertaking similar activities.

### **Proving added value and additionality**

To measure *added value* and *additionality* you need information and your organisation must provide this information from its Performance Monitoring (Annex 1) and from its Evaluation exercise (Annex 2), held in the **Funding Guidance** section on Plymouth Informed [www.plymouth-informed.org.uk](http://www.plymouth-informed.org.uk).

## Building Monitoring and Evaluation into your Project

Monitoring and Evaluation is thus an integral part of your project and needs to be given as much thought as the mainstream activities that you intend to deliver. Your objectives, outputs, targets (anticipated outcomes) and results (anticipated impacts) will suggest the information that you'll need.

In the accompanying 'How To' guides we examine how you can design a system that generates such information but for now it suffices that you should recognise that you need to create a **Monitoring System** and identify this as a managerial objective of your Project with a view to ensuring the supply of data and information that you'll need for your normal managerial reports and for the later evaluation exercise.

Likewise, you should also identify **Evaluation** as a managerial objective of your project with a view to assuring the external funding provider that you are fully cognisant of the likely effects of your project.

Your thoughts on how and when you will demonstrate the 'impact' of your project will guide you in this respect and will provide you with a target date for the supply of information for the evaluation exercise.

You'll achieve this by creating an **evaluation plan** in which you specify the nature of the evaluation that you intend to undertake, the information that you'll require, when you intend to do the exercise, and the resources required.

In the Funding Guidance notes pages we go into more detail about Monitoring and Evaluation before referring you to the 'How To' guides within the **Monitoring & Evaluation** section on Plymouth Informed [www.plymouth-informed.org.uk/html/MonitoringEvaluation.htm](http://www.plymouth-informed.org.uk/html/MonitoringEvaluation.htm). Furthermore, you will find other useful information in the **Statistics** section of these Guidance documents.

Guidance contact: Alan Orbison, Neighbourhood Renewal Team, Plymouth City Council. Guidance page last updated: 16<sup>th</sup> November 2004.