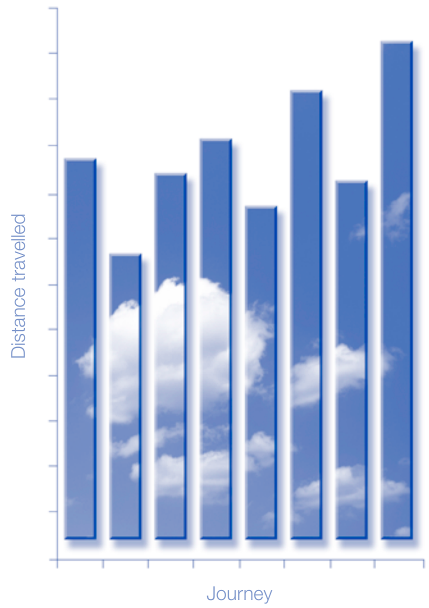

Distance Travelled

The experience of outcome monitoring within NCVO's Sustainable Funding Project

Sara Burns, *Triangle Consulting*

Deborah Turton, *NCVO*

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Foreword

Sustainable Funding Project, NCVO

In September 2003 NCVO's Sustainable Funding Project began a new phase in its programme of work to encourage and enable voluntary and community organisations to explore and exploit a full range of funding and financing options. The project's approach has always been holistic, recognising that the skills and resources organisations need to manage new income streams are just as necessary as their ability to access those income streams.

Outcome monitoring is a topic we regularly promote to the voluntary and community sector as part of our holistic approach to sustainability, as a basis for ongoing organisational planning, development and performance improvement in addition to providing data for reporting to funders. Given our commitment to outcomes, we believed that this was an approach we should also adopt ourselves. This would provide us with an evolving evidence base for assessing and improving our work – as well as allowing us to 'walk the talk'.

At the same time, we recognised that outcome monitoring is potentially more difficult to do within infrastructure agencies than in some front-line service providers.[1] This is because such agencies typically work in areas, such as lobbying, policy work, or providing support services to a diverse range of members, in which it can be difficult to measure change or to reliably attribute success to a single course of action or intervention.

With this in mind, we commissioned Triangle Consulting to help us implement an outcomes approach. This collaboration took place between April 2004 and December 2005 and included:

- Clarifying the Sustainable Funding Project's outcomes
- Developing systems to monitor the extent to which those outcomes were achieved
- Analysing and interpreting the data collected using those systems through an evaluation towards the end of the collaboration

We recorded our process and results by capturing the lessons we learned as we went along and through a formal evaluation by Triangle Consulting. We know from experience within our own work that 'real life' case studies can have enormous value. We have therefore decided to offer our own learning and experience with outcomes, as a case study. Our intention is to provide a user-friendly introduction to the benefits, challenges and potential for outcome monitoring from which other infrastructure agencies can learn.

This document covers our steps and outcome monitoring methods, including the actual tools used. It highlights what worked well and what we would do differently with the benefit of hindsight. This is supplemented by an overview of outcomes monitoring and numerous 'good practice tips' supplied by Triangle Consulting to provide generic guidance for organisations in implementing an outcomes approach. The tools provided in the appendices are offered as examples that other organisations can adapt to suit their own needs.

[1] The term 'infrastructure agencies' is used throughout this document as a generic term for both second and third-tier organisations, including sector-specific agencies, Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs), umbrella bodies etc.

The Authors

Sara Burns – Triangle Consulting

Sara pioneered a practical outcomes approach for voluntary organisations in the early 1990s. This work provided a valuable alternative to the USA outcome-funding model, showed how outcomes could benefit service providers and their clients and developed accessible ways forward with outcomes. She has focused on outcomes ever since, supporting an extensive range of voluntary, community and statutory organisations and funders to implement an outcomes approach and is author of a number of publications. Her work to develop an outcomes approach within the Alcohol Concern grants programme and to disseminate the learning from that process won the Charity Award 2000.

In 2003, Sara joined forces with Joy MacKeith and Kate Graham to form Triangle Consulting. Triangle specialises in outcome management in the Third Sector, to help organisations to be more effective by measuring and learning from their achievements. Triangle offer consultancy, training and coaching to:

- Enable organisations to clarify and articulate what they aim to achieve, so they can measure the outcomes that really matter
- Develop tools to measure progress on the journey of change and integrate these tools into their ways of working
- Use outcomes information to gain insights into how services can be improved and to demonstrate service effectiveness
- Support organisations to implement these changes

Triangle has designed services, tools and processes that genuinely break new ground with outcomes. Within this, the partners have developed tools that are being widely picked up and used within different sectors, including the Outcomes Star, The Employability Map, the Alcohol Outcomes Spider and the Outcomes dashboard and have contributed to debate and learning about the role that outcomes can – and cannot – play in enabling funders and commissioners of services to ensure and demonstrate that their money is making a difference.

Deborah Turton – NCVO’s Sustainable Funding Project

Deborah’s background is in research. She has a doctorate in eighteenth-century literature and political philosophy from Oxford University and previously worked for market research company AC Nielsen. Deborah joined NCVO in May 2002 as a Policy and Research Assistant working on NCVO’s Rural Project. In April 2004 she took up her current post as Sustainable Funding Officer within the Sustainable Funding Team.

NCVO’s Sustainable Funding Project is a one-stop shop encouraging and enabling voluntary and community organisations to explore and exploit a full range of funding and financing options to develop a sustainable funding mix. The project was founded in 2000 in partnership with Centrica plc and is now supported by Centrica plc, the Big Lottery Fund and Charity Bank. The Sustainable Funding Project also works in partnership with Futurebuilders England. Primary work areas are providing information to front-line voluntary and community sector organisations via outreach events, a monthly newsletter, website, and publications, and lobbying funders and policy-makers on the sector’s behalf.

Contents

Introduction

Outcomes monitoring in context

Outcomes provide a framework for doing things better. Being clear about what is being achieved is a process that helps voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) assess and improve the work they do. Clarifying, monitoring and learning from what outcomes are achieved is also a way of thinking, of focusing on the continual assessment of the difference being made by your work, in addition to what work is being done. An organisation attuned to this way of thinking is more likely to identify what works well and to understand what learning should be integrated into forward planning and new service design. On-going outcome monitoring and learning from outcomes information helps your organisation keep an eye on what is happening and respond to it, rather than retrospectively looking back at what has happened at the end of a project.

Taking an outcomes approach can directly improve the effectiveness of your organisation. An organisation that is clear about the difference they exist to make and ensures they maintain this focus in planning, monitoring and evaluation is likely to be well-planned, user-focused and accountable to all stakeholders. It will be aware of new need and priorities in its field, and will be able to react intelligently in its future plans. The staff, volunteers and service users will be fully aware of what they are aiming for and how much is being achieved, making them more focused, motivated and therefore effective.

Outcome monitoring also relates to funding. Increasingly, grant makers are no longer solely concerned with short-term outputs but with the wider impact of funding as a way of bringing about social benefit. As a result, funders are increasingly taking an ‘outcomes approach’. The term ‘outcome funding’ refers to the process whereby funders identify the outcomes they aim to achieve and fund organisations contributing to those outcomes, rather than funding certain types of activity. It is useful for organisations applying to such funders to understand the outcomes approach when discussing or presenting the results of their work. This is because it makes it more likely that the funders will understand the intended outcomes of their grant and how it fits with their own priorities.

Outcomes and infrastructure organisations

Outcomes monitoring is equally important to voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructure support agencies as a way of helping them to understand and explain the benefits of their work.

Planning and assessing outcomes can sometimes be harder for infrastructure agencies than it is for frontline organisations not least because infrastructure agencies typically work in areas in which it can be difficult to measure change. Some activities may be one or two steps removed from those the agency exists to support – such as lobbying, policy work, training or support services. This can make it harder to gather and attribute information on the change that has occurred.

This publication

This publication aims to address these issues. It provides a ‘real life’ case study of outcomes monitoring in practice within a particular infrastructure organisation; NCVO’s Sustainable Funding Project (SFP). It offers an overview of the processes involved, to highlight the issues that may be encountered along the way, and to share good practice tips for organisations that may be considering developing an outcomes approach. It is not intended to be used as a step-by-step guide to outcomes monitoring, nor is it a framework. We believe that case study examples illustrating the reality of implementing a new approach are often a powerful learning resource and we hope that this publication serves that purpose and will enable your organisation to better understand and use an outcomes approach.

The period during which SFP set up and implemented its outcomes monitoring system (April 2004 – December 2005) coincides with the PERFORM project funded by ChangeUp. The aims of both projects are similar, if different in scale. The PERFORM project is working towards a generic framework for planning and assessing outcomes in all infrastructure organisations. This guide, by contrast, offers a particular 'real life' case study of outcomes monitoring in practice within a particular infrastructure organisation (NCVO's Sustainable Funding Project). If you are an infrastructure organisation considering developing an outcomes approach we recommended you visit the PERFORM website and consider utilising the tools provided there (many of which mirror those used by SFP). For contact details see the resources section at the end of this guide.

Outcome monitoring is something that all organisations have to tailor to suit their own particular circumstances. Taking an outcomes approach is extremely valuable in itself and is a process that will highlight different things for different organisations. As the final section of this document concludes, outcomes data does not give final answers, but helps us to ask better questions. This in turn helps us to better plan our services and activities and to meet beneficiary needs more effectively.

Chapter 1: Understanding outcomes

1.1 Definition of outcomes

Outcomes are changes in a service user or target group. The key word is change; what changes over time. For frontline organisations working with individual clients, outcomes may include increased stability, improved health, reduced isolation, better parenting skills or someone moving into employment. Outcomes also occur for families and communities if those are the target group. For example, outcomes for communities could include reduced fear of crime, improved services and more active participation in local community groups.

Infrastructure organisations are likely to aim to achieve outcomes at a number of levels, including:

- Policy makers and areas of policy
- Public opinion
- Frontline organisations
- Their members (individuals or organisations)

For example, desired outcomes for the membership aspect of an organisation could include increased awareness or skills among members. For infrastructure agencies working with frontline organisations in a particular area (e.g. a CVS) or a particular sector (e.g. an umbrella or membership body) their outcomes will include organisational outcomes for the organisations they support, for example:

- Increased financial stability/sustainability
- Greater user involvement
- Stronger governance/more skilled people on the management committee
- Improved human resources procedures
- More appropriate premises

Outcomes can include maintenance of a status quo or prevention of deterioration. This might be the case, for example, where local services are threatened by policy or funding changes, or by having to go through a difficult period of transition. In such instances, the most positive outcome achievable might be to minimise the number of services closing or suffering during the transition period.

Outcomes are not:

- How many or what type of people or organisations are involved with a project, who is reached in lobbying work or the number of campaign leaflets distributed (these are all outputs)
- The quality with which a service is delivered, including the clarity of written material
- Member or user satisfaction with a service or organisation

All these are important sources of information for planning and service delivery and should be monitored in addition to outcomes. However, they are not outcomes or a substitute for finding out what outcomes have been achieved.

Exercise – Defining your outcomes

Think of one of your target groups, whether that be an agency you have worked with, or still work with, an area of policy, or a member of your organisation. Think about:

- How the organisation/policy/member was when you first had contact (maybe in terms of the needs or difficulties they had)
- What the situation is like now, or was when you stopped the work
- What changed from that first contact to now or when you last had contact.

The changes you identify are your outcomes for that organisation, area of policy, member, or other target group you chose.

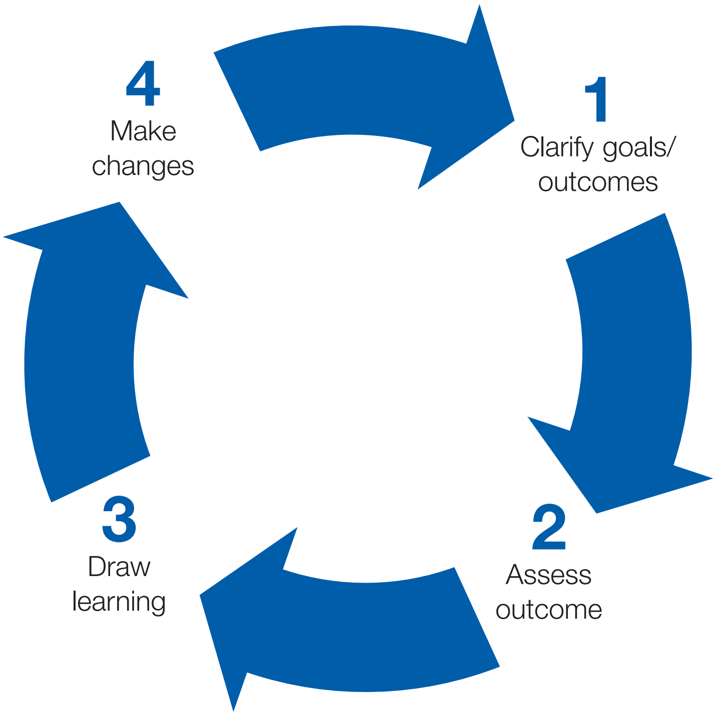
1.2 Benefits of taking an outcomes approach

The benefits of adopting an outcomes approach to monitoring your work can include:

- Clarity about what the organisation exists to achieve, and sharing this clarity among managers, staff and the target group, so that all are clear about what they are, and are not, there for
- Focus on the fact that the organisation exists in order to bring about change, and maintaining that focus within the work to avoid becoming inappropriately sidetracked or continuing for too long with work that is not leading to positive outcomes
- Motivation for staff, managers, service users and other stakeholders when seeing evidence that progress is being made. This can be especially valuable in areas where change happens slowly and may not be perceptible if not measured
- Measuring what really counts. Without a focus on outcomes, there has long been a widespread frustration within the VCS that by focusing on outputs, funders and others were missing the key picture – the real change that happens through the work of an organisation
- Learning about what is and is not working. As will be seen in Chapter 4, outcomes data helps organisations ask better and better questions – is change happening for certain target groups and not others? If so, why? What is changing and what is not and why is this the case?

1.3 An outcomes approach: four stages

There are four stages involved in taking an outcomes approach. These are the same whether you are in a direct service delivery agency, funder or infrastructure organisation. They are:



In practice, this means organisations:

- Clarifying what their outcomes will be
- Monitoring these outcomes
- Learning from outcome data
- Acting on the learning

NCVO's SFP team went through these four stages with Triangle Consulting. This publication draws on that experience, with each chapter describing the key elements of each stage and offering good practice tips along the way.

Chapter 2: Clarifying outcomes

In order to identify the outcomes you will measure, it is necessary to clarify:

- Who or what is your target group(s)
- Overall, what change you are trying to achieve for that target group (overall aim)
- Specifically, what changes need to happen in order to make progress towards that overall aim (specific aims)
- Whether there is a journey involved, and if so, the steps along the way

This section unpicks each of these areas in turn and illustrates them with reference to the process the SFP team went through to define their audiences, outcomes and the steps along the way to achieving those outcomes.

2.1 Identifying the target group(s)

The target groups organisations work with will vary according to the nature of the work they undertake. In the case of infrastructure organisations target audiences can be wide and varied. In thinking about outcomes it is important to think about the different people your organisation works with and what it is you are trying to achieve with each of them. This will help with clarifying what it is you need to do to make progress towards that end and help focus attention on any differences in what you hope to achieve with each group.

The primary target group identified by SFP was VCOs in England. However, SFP also identified as target audiences local infrastructure agencies (such as CVSs), funders, and policy makers. This was because of these organisations' role in supporting or enabling VCOs to achieve their desired outcomes. Hence, the SFP team realised that changes were also needed in those three groups in order to facilitate and support change for VCOs.

Good Practice Tip: Front-line organisations may be a key target group for infrastructure organisations, either in a particular geographical area (e.g. for a CVS) or organisations in a specific sector (e.g. for an umbrella body). However, be aware that there may be other target groups for broader campaigning or policy work, for example, the local Council, the public or policy makers.

2.2 Defining the overall aim

The overall aim is broad and may be visionary. It needs to clarify the target group and can describe a general change. The overall aim for SFP was expressed as: 'that VCOs become more financially sustainable – so that they are better able to deliver and sustain their mission'.

Good Practice Tip: The overall aim may be enshrined in an organisation's mission statement, but it may not. Many mission statements describe the values and activities of an organisation but do not clearly specify the intended changes.

For infrastructure organisations the overall aim could be, for example:

- More effective front-line services within a given sector
- A stronger voluntary and community sector in a local area or
- Strengthened capacity of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations

2.3 Specific aims

While the overall aim is 'visionary', the specific aims break down this vision into the specific work areas that an organisation will focus on to help it achieve its overall aim.

The specific aims are also the desired outcomes or outcome areas for an organisation. They are the key areas in which an organisation aims to enable change within its target group.

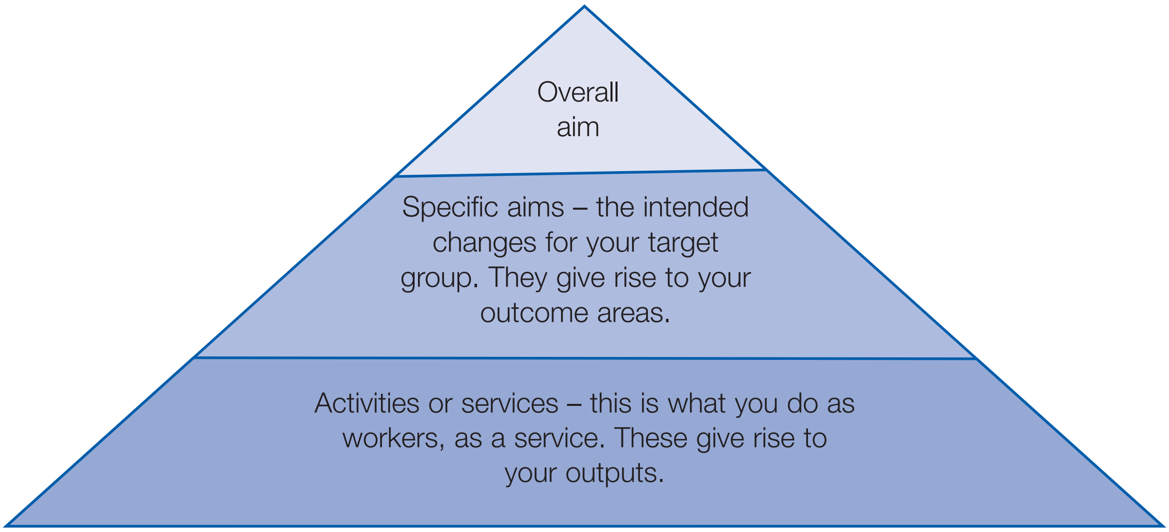
The specific aims of SFP were clarified as:

- That VCOs exploit a full range of funding opportunities, beyond short-term grant dependency
- That intermediary agencies support VCOs to exploit a full range of funding opportunities
- That funders support VCOs to exploit a full range of funding opportunities
- That the policy environment supports VCOs to exploit a full range of funding opportunities

Good Practice Tip: For each target group you have, it is necessary to identify the specific aims, expressed as the change(s) you wish to bring about. These are your desired outcomes and will become your outcome areas.

2.3.1 The Outcomes Triangle

Completing an 'Outcomes Triangle' is a simple and effective tool for clarifying the overall aim and the specific aims of an organisation, and for distinguishing between them and what the organisation does - the activities or services.[2] You can complete a triangle for your organisation as a whole, or for a specific project or target group.



What you put in the middle of the Triangle needs to include words of change – such as increase, decrease, enable, empower, prevent or maintain. The bottom of the Triangle is likely to include doing words such as 'to provide' or 'to run'. It can also be helpful to think of everything in the middle of the Triangle describing your clients or target group and everything in the bottom of the triangle describing what you or (other) workers in your organisation do in working with your target group. Services and activities may include one-to-one advice sessions, training and dissemination of information.

A completed Outcomes Triangle for SFP is included in Appendix 1.

Good Practice Tip: Clarification of intended outcomes and use of the Outcomes Triangle is a useful process to go through, whether or not the outcomes identified are then measured. The process helps provide a shared, explicit understanding among management and workers of what the organisation exists to achieve in the way of change.

Exercise – Developing an Outcomes Triangle

Using the Outcomes Triangle template given above and Appendix 1 for reference, map out the overall aim, specific aims and associated activities and services for your organisation or project.

[2] The Outcomes Triangle was developed by Charities Evaluation services (CES) and is also know as Weavers Triangle.

2.4 The journey of change

Achieving intended outcomes can involve a long journey with a number of steps along the way. This is because an organisation's target groups can include people and organisations at very different starting points.

For example, the SFP team were aware that it might be a long journey for many VCOs with a strong tradition of short-term grant dependency to get to the point where they were generating a proportion of income through trading, charging for services delivered under contract, or other earning activity. SFP therefore set out to identify some steps along the way as a focus both for planning services and for measuring success.

Within SFP, the journey of change identified for VCOs, intermediary organisations, funders and policy makers included:

- Increased awareness of sustainable funding opportunities
- Increased understanding of what each entailed
- A more positive and open attitude towards pursuing those opportunities
- Taking action in pursuit of those opportunities

SFP drew up a 'Mission Map' as a way of helping the team to understand and focus on the changes they were trying to initiate with their target audiences.

SFP's Mission Map, including the team's overall aim, specific aims and associated journey of change for their key audiences is included in Appendix 2.

Good Practice Tip: Clarifying the journey of change/key steps along the way is a key part of taking an outcomes approach, especially where change will take time to achieve. Measurement of outcomes can then focus on measuring progress along that journey.

2.5 Use of consultancy to clarify outcomes

Involving a consultant at an early stage can enable the joint development of monitoring tools which both encapsulate what an organisation wants to achieve while also benefiting from the extensive experience and knowledge a consultant can bring.

The SFP team identified their outcomes and drew up a Mission Map before involving Triangle Consulting, then asked Triangle to check that it was an appropriate basis for their monitoring and evaluation. This process had the advantage of ensuring ownership of the outcomes by the team. However, on reflection at the end of the project, the SFP team and Triangle both felt that it would have helped if Triangle had been involved at an earlier stage. This could usefully have been after an outline of what the team wanted to achieve had been drafted, but before any outcomes or aims were finalised.

Good Practice Tip: If you plan to work with consultants, it is generally good practice to involve the consultants early on, ideally with the clarification of outcomes. Someone external to the organisation can ask helpful questions to clarify the outcome areas and journey of change. This then provides a firm foundation on which the later stages of the work can build.

Additional benefits of involving consultants in developing an outcomes approach and analysing the resulting data include:

- Research expertise, advice on selecting the appropriate methodology
- Assistance with developing monitoring methods and tools
- External validation of collected data
- Resulting credibility with stakeholders and funders, supporting organisational accountability

Chapter 3: Monitoring outcomes

In order to monitor your outcomes you will need to decide:

- What changes or actions will demonstrate that your outcomes are being achieved
- What information or evidence will show this change or action is occurring; and
- What 'tools' you will use to collect this information

The methods used to gather information on outcomes are often referred to as 'outcome monitoring tools'. This wording can create the impression of the need for specialised mechanisms or processes, yet the 'tools' used for outcome monitoring are simply ways of collecting information that are often already used by, or familiar to, organisations in the work they do. Such 'tools' include feedback forms, questionnaires or monitoring hits to a website.

This section describes the monitoring tools developed and used by SFP. It highlights the extent to which these constitute good practice that can be replicated, but also what else could be considered by an infrastructure organisation wanting to take an outcomes approach.

3.1 Identifying outcome indicators

Having drawn up the Mission Map of desired outcomes, SFP then embarked on the task of monitoring the extent to which the organisations and individuals they were working with demonstrated these outcomes:

- Increased awareness
- Increased understanding
- More positive attitudes and
- Taking action (towards sustainable funding)

Outcomes for VCOs and infrastructure agencies were mainly assessed through the same tools, because contact with both target groups was primarily through the same channels: outreach events, a newsletter and a website. Outcomes for funders and policy makers were assessed via a different method because of the need to take into account the different kinds of working involved in reaching and influencing this target group.

To develop tools to monitor each of the desired outcomes – increased awareness and understanding, changed attitudes and actions – SFP had to ask themselves what information would indicate that change had taken place and then how to actually gather that information. This process is identifying outcome indicators – the smaller changes that can be observed, heard or otherwise measured and which indicate that an outcome has been achieved, or that progress is being made towards the outcome. They then had to decide how to gather the information on the outcome indicators.

SFP developed eight ways to measure their outcomes, detailed below. These methods are all commonly used in outcome monitoring and can be replicated by others.

Good Practice Tip: It is good practice to gather information on an outcome from more that one source if at all possible. For example, self-reporting by an organisation or individual combined with observable evidence of their actions or progress.

3.2 Tool – recording levels of enquires

The SFP team decided that a key indicator of increased awareness was hits to their website and changes in the level of enquiries received by the team. Hence it was decided to keep a running total of both. This information was also useful for funder reports and, towards the end of funding timescales, for supporting new funding bids.

Good Practice Tip: Levels of awareness can be difficult to assess without substantial additional work such as a survey. Unless a survey is a valuable part of service delivery, it is best to focus on more readily accessible data that can be a proxy measure or indicator of awareness.

3.3 Tool – 'before and after' monitoring forms

The SFP team drew up a 2-sided A4 monitoring form to use at their outreach training events. These were used to measure changes in understanding and attitude amongst participants between the start and the end of the event.

A copy of the SFP monitoring form is included in Appendix 3.

Assessing increased understanding

To assess increased understanding of the range of topics covered within outreach training events, participants were asked to rate their understanding of each the topics covered on a scale of 1-10, before the event started and again at the end. The same questions, worded in the same way, were included on both forms. This gave robust and useful data on increased understanding. Responses given in this way by participants are subjective, since they place themselves on the scale, and so two people with similar levels of understanding could give different scores. However, the change for each individual is a robust measure, because it is obtained by comparing the before and after scores given by the same individuals. This information was then collated to determine the average increase in understanding overall.

Good Practice Tip: When monitoring change over time, it is often best practice to use a scale and to gather information using the scale at least twice - preferably at the start and end of any intervention.

Assessing positive attitude

The SFP team originally decided that the most appropriate measure of a positive attitude to sustainable funding was whether participants left events planning to take action. The 'after' form therefore asked about what action people planned to take towards sustainable funding. This did provide an indicator of positive intention to act, but subsequent follow-up calls to participants showed that it proved to be an unreliable indicator of what action they actually took. A revised version of the monitoring form added a series of attitude statements with which participants were asked to agree or disagree, also on a scale, so that change in attitude could be measured in a similar way to change in understanding.

Good Practice Tip: Making statements attributed to someone else (e.g. 'Some young people say', 'some participants feel') and asking people whether or not they agree can be a good way to tackle sensitive question areas. It is less direct and can make it easier for people to acknowledge less positive attitudes or behaviours.

Incorporating outcomes with other data gathering

In addition to outcome monitoring information, the SFP forms also collected essential information on the type of organisations attending events (size, income etc.) plus feedback on what participants found useful or thought could be improved. In this way the SFP monitoring form also doubled-up as a data-gathering and evaluation sheet which meant that all the essential information could be gathered all at once and event participants were only asked to fill in one short form.

Good Practice Tip: When drawing up monitoring forms for training/events, dedicate a substantial proportion of the limited space available to well worded outcomes monitoring questions. Questions about the quality or usefulness of the venue, individual sessions, topics or activities, the trainer, catering etc. tend to give limited data and can probably be condensed. For example, using 2-3 open questions such as: 'Have you got any comments about the venue, catering or administration of the event?' may save space.

Decisions on sampling

Originally a relatively modest number of SFP training events was planned. However, after the outcome monitoring had been set in place, the team received funding to extend the events substantially. As a result, the number of forms being completed grew to over 10 times that anticipated at the start. This led to a large quantity of similar data and an expansion in the time needed to input the data. At this point, Triangle Consulting suggested sampling the forms to save time and resources whilst still ensuring outcomes were monitored.

Good Practice Tip: If outcome monitoring is too time/resource intensive, consider sampling rather than gathering outcome information from everyone or continuously. This could be by monitoring a sample of individuals or activities, or by monitoring during specified periods only (e.g. a random week in the quarter or year).

3.4 Tool – follow-up interviews with a random sample

SFP used follow-up telephone interviews with a random sample of 50 people who had attended outreach events as the primary tool to assess the extent to which people attending events went on to take some form of action towards sustainable funding. The interviews were also used to ask to what extent people attributed taking action to the input of the SFP and to gather views on attitudes towards sustainable funding options.

Triangle Consulting drew up an interview guide and sampling framework. The sample of 50 was taken from all those attending events who had completed a monitoring form. They had attended an event at least three months prior to the follow-up interview, but not more than a year before, on the grounds that this gave them time to have taken some action but was not so long afterwards that they would have forgotten all about the event.

This was potentially a large undertaking and the time to do the interviews had to be built into work plans and allowed for. In practice, a temp employed by the SFP team carried out most of the interviews, which in turn had a cost implication. There is an argument for using external researchers, on the grounds that people are freer to talk to someone external. However, this would have added substantially to the overall cost of the monitoring and evaluation and, in practice, people did seem able to be open about their experience and what they had, or had not, done.

Good Practice Tip: Outcome monitoring of training or educational events can effectively be carried out as SFP have done, through this combination of:

- Brief forms completed by participants just before the training starts and at the end of the day, for short-term outcomes
- Follow up with a random sample by telephone 3-6 months later to explore medium term outcomes – what was done with the training. Depending on the numbers trained, 20-30 people would probably be a minimum sample size

The fact that the sample is random and follow up is by telephone is important and means that the sample does not need to be very large to give a reasonable indication of what has happened since an event. A postal questionnaire would not serve the same function or give such reliable data, even if it covered more people. Response rates to postal questionnaires tend to be low and from a skewed sample – typically those who have taken action they are pleased to report, those wanting to complain, or people who tend to fill in questionnaires. This method would leave a big question about what the others had thought or done.

3.5 Tool – an internet-based or email questionnaire

In addition, SFP decided to gather information from users of their website through a questionnaire that could be completed on-line (this type of questionnaire could also be sent in the body of an email and completed by respondents replying to the email, adding in answers below the questions). The format and type of questions asked were similar to those used for the telephone interviews. It covered the key areas of understanding, attitude and action and asked respondents what involvement they had had with SFP.

Unfortunately, a disappointingly small number of responses were received – 75 out of just over 2000. Although these questionnaires were analysed and the findings drawn upon alongside other information, the data was treated with caution on the grounds that a small, self-selecting sample is likely to be skewed and therefore unreliable.

Good Practice Tip: Self-selecting samples are best used alongside other research methods. However, where they are used, it may be worth considering methods to increase response rates, such as incentives or individual emails to ask people to respond and explain how their response will contribute to improvements – for them personally or in a wider context.

3.6 Tool – questionnaire distributed with book

SFP produced a book, aimed at funders. This was distributed to approximately 400 funders and each copy contained a very short evaluation form. Only 2 were returned. The findings from those questionnaires were not used on the ground that the sample was too small.

Good Practice Tip: It is not recommended to insert a questionnaire in a newsletter, magazine or book in this way. It is likely to get lost or to seem unimportant. Postal questionnaires often produce small samples. Over 20% would generally be considered a good response rate and that would be achieved when the people sent the questionnaire are members of an organisation or have some other interest, giving a motivation to share their views. Where the target audience has little involvement with the organisation – as in this case – response is likely to be even lower and it is probably not appropriate to send out a questionnaire.

Where a questionnaire is considered appropriate, there are techniques to increase response rates, including sending out a questionnaire on its own, with a simple response mechanism (such as freepost envelope) and good explanation of why it should be completed and/or consider incentives such as a prize draw for those responding.

3.7 Tool – policy outcomes grid

Triangle drew up a simple grid to be used to assess the success of SFP's policy work (e.g. meetings with opinion formers, lobbying, roundtable discussions). This was designed to keep a record of the policy work undertaken and some indication of the extent to which the outcomes of policy work were achieved. This form worked well because the individual using it found it was a useful tool that encouraged him to clarify the desired outcome of all the policy and lobbying work he undertook - including having lunch with people - and then to make an assessment of the extent to which the desired outcomes were achieved.

Good Practice Tip: Tools integrated into ways of working and providing useful on-going information are most likely to be completed regularly and conscientiously.

The policy grid included a simple system for scoring on a scale of 1-10 the extent to which the desired outcomes were achieved. Although this scoring is subjective, as it is the view of the person carry out the policy work, it did provide a useful indicator of the outcomes of policy work, particularly when backed by external verification interviews. In addition, information on the relative success of different aspects of policy work is reasonably robust, since the same subjectivity was used throughout the scoring.

A sample section of SFP's policy grid is included in Appendix 4.

3.8 Tool – organisational capacity grid

One area of SFP's work was a pilot project working directly with a number of VCOs to provide support over time while they developed a trading activity. This appeared to be an opportunity to monitor outcomes over time. Triangle worked with SFP to draw up a grid to monitor the capacity of participating organisations at the beginning, middle and end of the pilot project, to assess outcomes.

The capacity grid is included in Appendix 5.

Good Practice Tip: It is effective to integrate outcome monitoring into assessments, action plans or reviews carried out with those individuals or organisations you support or work with over a period of time. If the monitoring is integral to the work carried out, it is likely to be carried out consistently, thoroughly and honestly. For example, if data for monitoring outcomes is also an assessment on the basis of which support need is determined, that can be an incentive for individuals to provide accurate data.

The 'scores' given when people complete a grid such as that in Appendix 5 can be used as a basis for deciding on priorities for work. For example, those aspects with low scores at an initial assessment could then be the first aspects to be tackled within support offered or work being planned. Repeating the tool at a review session would show progress made and continuing needs.

3.9 Tool – independent interviews for external verification

Triangle was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of SFP approximately 18 months after the outcome monitoring tools were put in place. Since the monitoring was carried out internally, SFP asked Triangle to carry out independent interviews within the evaluation, to provide some external verification of the findings. This was done with a sample of people from all the key target groups for SFP, plus members of staff, and individuals on the SFP advisory board. These were conducted as 'open' interviews[3] and topics varied between different target groups. However, all interviews focused on achievement of the outcomes of awareness, understanding, attitude and action for the four target groups.

These interviews were particularly valuable for providing a more in-depth, qualitative understanding of the extent to which the outcomes were achieved. In particular, they filled in the relative gaps in terms of awareness and attitude, which were less effectively measured by the other tools than were levels of understanding and action. They also provided an opportunity to gather some information about the extent to which the outcomes achieved could be attributed to the activities of SFP – simply by asking people for their own experience of what had made a difference for them.

[3] A list of question areas was drawn up in advance, but the questions were unstructured and the exact topics covered varied from interview to interview, depending on the respondent's relationship to the project and individual experience.

Good Practice Tip: It is recommended to use more than one source of outcomes monitoring information wherever possible. Most sources of outcome information are likely to have a degree of subjectivity. Combining two or more sources means they can help validate each other and increase the reliability of the findings.

3.10 Summary of monitoring methods used

The table below gives a summary of how information was gathered on SFP's outcomes:

	Awareness	Understanding	Attitude	Action
VCOs	Enquiries, Website hits, independent interviews	Before & after forms, follow-up interviews, independent interviews, internet q're	Before & after forms, follow-up interviews, independent interviews, internet q're	Follow-up interviews, independent interviews, internet q're
Infrastructure Agencies	Enquiries Website hits, independent interviews	Before & after forms, follow-up interviews, independent interviews, internet q're	Before & after forms, follow-up interviews, independent interviews, internet q're	Follow-up interviews, independent interviews, internet q're
Funders	Independent interviews	Independent interviews	Independent interviews	Independent interviews
Policy makers	Policy grid, independent interviews	Policy grid, independent interviews	Policy grid, independent interviews	Policy grid, independent interviews

Good Practice Tip: Monitoring must be proportionate to time and capability. It is important to be rigorous in deciding what it is essential to know and focus on that, rather than monitor everything.

Good Practice Tip: Be consistent – don't change tools halfway through if at all possible, because it means that the findings will not be comparable. If making changes, be clear why (e.g. In response to user feedback or to meet funder requirements) and think about how you maintain as much continuity as possible.

Chapter 4: Analysis of outcomes data

In order to analyse your outcome data you will need to consider:

- How you will store and collate any data you collect
- How you will translate your data into useful information from which your organisation can learn and take action
- How outcomes analysis can be integrated into ongoing work processes

This section describes the analysis processes used by SFP, highlights some of the challenges associated with them, and offers suggestions on how these can be avoided or overcome.

4.1 Collating large amounts of data

Because of the large amount of data gathered from outreach events, the SFP team developed a database in MS Access to input all the data from the ‘before and after’ forms. A database was essential because of the quantity of monitoring forms completed by participants at the events and the need to collate the responses and analyse the findings for both learning and reporting. The team was delivering around 50 events per year, each event having an average of 30 participants. Consequently, it made sense to develop a system that could collate this data and help the team, and external consultants evaluating the team’s work, to analyse it effectively.

MS Access was chosen due to its ready availability and user-friendly design. Adopting this approach did, however, mean that new skills – in database set up and management – needed to be developed within the SFP team. This in turn had an impact on budget, resources and timescale. The decision to create and use a database meant that SFP had to dedicate a proportion of staff time towards outcome monitoring and evaluation of the project. Further, SFP could not start developing the database until the team member responsible had developed the necessary skills.

In practice, the decision to use a database proved ambitious. Provision for training in this area was initially under-estimated, as was the time required to set up and maintain the system. As a consequence, further time and training were needed to ensure effective analysis of the data collected.

Good Practice Tip: Potential training needs associated with outcome monitoring activity should be identified as early as possible. Provision for this also needs to be taken into account in funding bids, work planning and staff resourcing. Sometimes training needs only arise as monitoring develops so planning for such eventualities should also be made.

4.2 Calculating change over time

One example of the shortcomings of the original set up of the Access database was that it did not allow for the ‘before’ and ‘after’ forms for an individual participant at one of the events to be compared with each other, to calculate change (outcome) per participant. Instead, the data used was the average of all the ‘before’ scores on understanding compared to the average of all the ‘after’ scores. This gave some information on the relative levels of before and after understanding and therefore change, but it lost vital information such as the overall percentage of participants who did increase their understanding, the relative percentages increasing understanding of different aspects of sustainable funding and the relative change for those with higher or lower starting levels of understanding.

Good Practice Tip: It is essential to ensure that any system used to analyse outcomes can compare the records for an individual (person, organisation or other ‘client’) at different points in time, to compare and collate individual outcomes and show the proportion with positive, negative or no outcomes. It should also be possible to then compare the individual outcomes with other information about the individual, to analyse in more detail what individuals achieve.

4.3 Developing coding frames for open-ended questions

The SFP’s event monitoring forms contained a number of open-ended questions, where people were asked to write in their answers in free text rather than tick a box. These questions were included because they gave essential feedback on, for example, how organisations generate income through trading or why particular parts of the day were useful or how they could be improved. It would not have been viable to list all possible answers for these questions and ask people to tick a box. SFP therefore developed coding frames for each of these questions so that the data could be input on the database and analysed. This was done by taking the responses given by participants at the first couple of events, listing all the responses for each question and grouping them into similar categories. The categories were then used as a coding framework for inputting responses into the database. This meant that all subsequent responses could be coded with a number on the database. Written responses were also input verbatim.

The team were then able to extract from the database information about the proportion of people giving each category of response to the open ended questions and to indicate trends. For example, understanding what percentage of those who said they would take action aimed to do so in what ways. These statistics could then be illustrated by some of the verbatim responses. This helped bring reports to life and make them more interesting and accessible to read.

Good Practice Tip: Even with much smaller numbers of questionnaires, it is important to group and categorise open-ended responses so that the information can be collated, reported and used.

4.4 On-going analysis and use of outcome information

The Access database system meant that the SFP team could extract key data whenever they needed it for reporting to the project’s main funders on a regular basis. Once someone in the team had the skills to use the database more effectively, they set up standard reports that could be run every month or every quarter, as required. This meant that SFP could, for example, generate a three-page monthly update report of key statistics for a funder. Once set up, this process would only take about an hour, or less, each month.

SFP also used the event monitoring forms for on-going learning and development of the events. The team read through all the comments on the forms after each event and these, combined with anecdotal feedback at the events, helped to shape the content and structure of the events themselves.

Good Practice Tip: Outcome monitoring should be primarily for learning about what works and improving effectiveness. It is therefore essential to be able to extract key data from a system regularly and also to be able to ask further questions and interrogate the data. Analysis of the findings should not be left to the end of the year, project or funding cycle.

Good Practice Tip: Keep a record of changes made and actions taken in response to on-going monitoring information and to evaluation feedback. This is important evidence of learning from outcomes and can show stakeholders and funders that an organisation is responsive. Since this information is likely to be sporadic and varied, a simple system may be best, such as a folder or file in which to write the changes made in response to learning.

4.5 Drawing together monitoring information

Information from the various monitoring and research methods used (listed and described in Chapter 3) was combined by Triangle when carrying out the evaluation. This meant that information about the extent to which each outcome was achieved was drawn from every available source. For example:

- Information on increased awareness was primarily through independent interviews, follow-up interviews and website hits
- Information on increased understanding was well covered by the analysis of monitoring forms on the Access database, but supplemented by commentary in the interviews
- Findings on attitudes were harder to draw together. Findings from the event monitoring forms on intention to take action towards sustainable funding were used as a proxy measure, combined with interview feedback from the follow-up and independent interviews
- Information on policy outcomes was from a combination of the policy grid, interview with the SFP team leaders and interviews with a few policy targets

Good Practice Tip: When presenting and reporting evaluation findings it is important to do so under the headings of the desired outcomes, not by research method used.

Chapter 5: Learning from outcomes data

Learning from outcomes data is an ongoing process. It works best when outcomes monitoring and the subsequent learning is integrated within ongoing organisational work programmes and processes. This way outcomes monitoring becomes an integral part of the way organisations work rather than a form of assessment tacked onto the end of individual projects.

Information gained from outcomes monitoring can provide a picture of areas of success to date and the challenges ahead, against which to plan. It also provides invaluable headline statistics, quotes and in-depth analysis to draw on in funding applications and reports.

5.1 Examples of learning for SFP

The following key findings for SFP in relation to their outcomes are included to give a flavour of the type of information gathered, analysed and considered by SFP, drawn from the tools and processes described in this document:

Increased awareness – key learning:

- Awareness of sustainable funding had increased considerably since the start of SFP, within the VCS, among infrastructure organisations, some funders and policy makers
- Some of this increased awareness was attributed to the timing, focus and activities of SFP
- However, there was an on-going need to keep the issues high on the agenda and to further increase awareness, particularly in some regions and sectors.

Increased understanding – key learning:

Findings included information on need and also the extent to which the events contributed to increased understanding. For example:

- Participants already had a reasonable understanding of strategic planning (in their view), but not of loan finance; low levels of understanding of issues prior to events is a good indication of need
- A very high proportion of respondents increased their understanding of all aspects of sustainable funding during the events; most (89%) in relation to loans and loan finance and a slightly lower proportion about full-cost recovery
- There was a wide range of people and needs in the room at the events

Change in attitude – key learning:

- 69% of participants leaving events planned to take action towards sustainable funding once they returned to their organisations, a useful indication of a positive attitude to sustainable funding
- This information also raised questions about who were the remaining 31% and why they did not intend to take action, which was analysed in more depth within the evaluation by Triangle
- It was easier for people to shift attitudes in relation to some aspects of sustainable funding than others

Taking action – key learning:

- 80% of participants at SFP events had since taken action towards sustainable funding; further analysis showed how the events contributed
- A high proportion of CVS involved with SFP were giving out advice on sustainable funding in their local areas and a number were involved in innovative and potentially very effective initiatives.

5.2 Using the learning from outcomes

All this information gave SFP a picture of the relative areas of success to date and the challenges ahead, against which to plan. Outcomes data from the monitoring and evaluation also provided invaluable headline statistics, quotes and in-depth analysis to draw on in funding applications and reports.

For SFP, outcomes information is proving invaluable for:

- Shaping the future of the project – it is being used as the basis for planning ahead for the next three-year business plan
- Informing ongoing work – for example improved layout of information, highlighting topics needing to be covered on the SFP website
- Developing funding applications for the continuation of the project
- Reporting to existing funders

The findings of the on-going monitoring and subsequent evaluation of SFP by Triangle Consulting provided considerable learning about the extent to which progress had been made towards SFP's desired outcomes. It also raised questions about where less progress had been made and enabled the team to focus further on exploring why.

Good Practice Tip: On the whole, outcomes data does not give final answers. It helps us ask better questions.

Resources

Publications

Burns, S. (2005) *Alcohol Outcomes Spider: Scales and guidance notes*. London. Alcohol Concern.
Available from Alcohol Concern (price £11) 020 7928 7377 or details on their website at www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/servlets/wrapper/book_detail.jsp?id=8523

Burns, S. and Cuppitt, S (2004) Managing Outcomes, *A Guide for Homelessness Agencies* (with wider applicability). Available from the London Housing Foundation. Tel: 020 7702 5651.

Burns, S. (1997, second edition 2000) *A DIY Guide to Outcome Monitoring*. London. Alcohol Concern. Also with wider applicability than alcohol misuse.
Available from Alcohol Concern as above.

Cuppitt, S and J. Ellis (2003) *Your Project and its Outcomes*. London. CES.
Available at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/ypf/assets/ypf_outcomes.pdf

Wainwright, S. (2003) *Measuring Impact: A Guide to Resources*, London. NCVO.
Available from NCVO. Tel: 0800 2 798 798.

Advice and support

PERFORM

PERFORM is an outcomes-based performance improvement framework for VCS infrastructure organisations that aims to improve the way that infrastructure services are planned and assessed. The first phases of PERFORM were developed as part of the Government's ChangeUp initiative and the project is currently planning its future.

Further information including tools and resources available at:
www.changeup.org.uk/resources/index.asp

Performance Hub

The national Performance Hub is funded through ChangeUp. It aims to:

- Bring together in one place the wealth of experience and expertise in performance improvement that already exists
- Make this expertise far more accessible to VCOs
- Help local, sub-regional, regional, and national infrastructure improve the quality and quantity of the support they can offer to VCOs
- Work with funders and policy-makers to improve the environment within which VCOs operate

Further information including tools and resources are available at:
www.performancehub.org.uk

Charities Evaluation Services

CES is the UK's leading provider of training and consultancy to the voluntary and community sector on quality and evaluation systems. They work with 100s of organisations each year with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the voluntary sector by providing training, consultancy, advice and information.

Further information available at: www.ces-vol.org.uk

Triangle Consulting

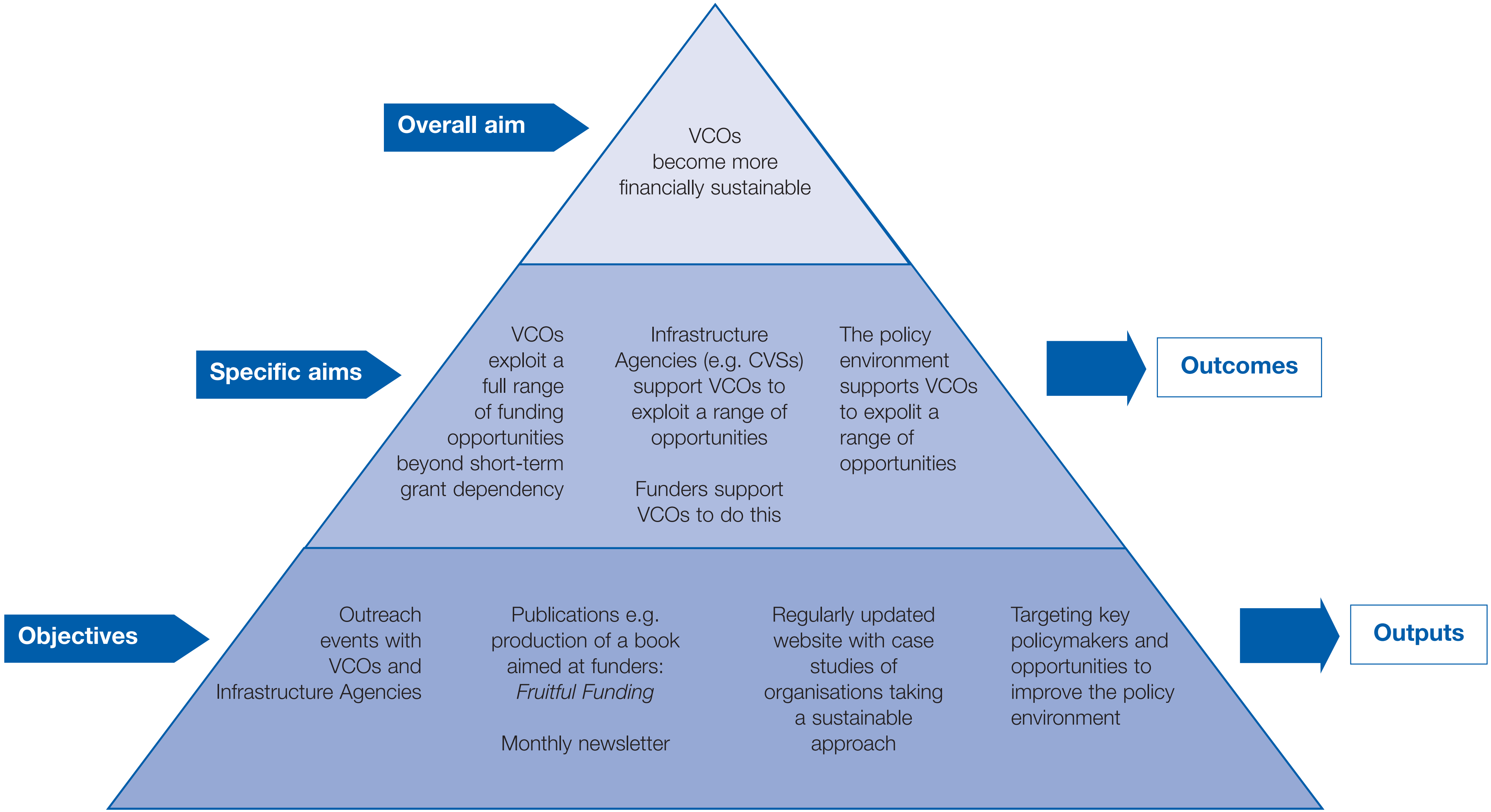
Triangle Consulting specialises in outcome management in the Third Sector, to help organisations to be more effective by measuring and learning from their achievements. Triangle offer consultancy, training and coaching to:

- Enable organisations to clarify and articulate what they aim to achieve, so they can measure the outcomes that really matter
- Develop tools to measure progress on the journey of change
- Integrate these tools into their ways of working
- Use outcomes information to and gain insights into how services can be improved and to demonstrate service effectiveness

Further information available at: www.triangleconsulting.co.uk
Email: info@triangleconsulting.co.uk

Appendix 1

Outcomes Triangle for NCVO's Sustainable Funding Project



Appendix 2

SFP Mission Map

NCVO's Vision is…

- of a fair and open society, which encourages and is supported by voluntary action.

NCVO's Mission is to…

- give a shared voice to voluntary organisations.
- cultivate an environment that fosters their development.
- help voluntary organisations to achieve the highest standards of practice and effectiveness .
- provide leadership to the voluntary sector in tackling new issues and unmet needs.

NCVO's Sustainable Funding Project is…

- the part of NCVO driving that vision by helping to build forward planning, mission driven, financially fit for purpose voluntary organisations equipped to meet long-term emerging need, improving quality of life for individuals and communities across England.

Our desired overall outcome is that…

- Voluntary and community organisations become more financially sustainable – so that they are better able to deliver and sustain their mission.

To achieve our desired overall outcome we work across four 'target markets' in four 'work streams' to effect systemic environmental change in the way voluntary organisations are funded. Our key outcomes by work stream are that…

- VCOs exploit a full range of funding opportunities beyond short-term grant dependency.
  - **Awareness** – VCOs are aware of the need to explore a long-term holistic approach to funding including the possibility of generating income (the Project's holistic approach).
  - **Understanding** – VCOs understand the Project's holistic approach.
  - **Attitude** – VCOs actively want to pursue the holistic approach.
  - **Information** – VCOs are aware of support available and relevant policy issues.
  - **Action** – VCOs integrate a holistic approach in to their plans.
  - **Action** – VCOs take practical steps towards better planning.
  - **Action** – VCOs take practical steps towards diversification of their charitable income streams.
  - **Action** – VCOs take practical steps towards trading goods and services.

- IAs[4] support VCOs exploiting a full range of funding opportunities beyond short-term grant dependency.
    - **Awareness** – Infrastructure Agencies are aware of the holistic approach.
    - **Attitude** – IAs embrace this holistic approach.
    - **Information** – IAs have knowledge of support available and policy issues relevant to VCOs wanting to explore the Project's holistic approach.
    - **Information** – IAs have the skills necessary to support VCOs wanting to explore the Project's holistic approach.
    - **Action** – IAs disseminate the Project's holistic approach.
    - **Action** – IAs integrate the Project's holistic approach in their own services.
    - **Action** – IAs innovate, developing new services on the basis of the Project's holistic approach.

- Statutory and independent funders support VCOs exploiting a full range of funding opportunities beyond short-term grant dependency.
    - **Awareness** – Funders are aware of the holistic approach.
    - **Attitude** – Funders agree with the holistic approach.
    - **Action** – Funders promote this holistic approach throughout the sector.
    - **Action** – Funders adopt progressive approaches to grant making.
    - **Action** – Funders provide seed funding to enable VCOs to develop trading initiatives.

- Policy Makers support VCOs exploiting a full range of funding opportunities beyond short-term grant dependency.
    - **Awareness** – Key policy makers are aware of the Project's holistic approach.
    - **Attitude** – SFP is consulted on sustainable funding issues.
    - **Action** – Policy makers account for the long-term funding needs of VCOs when implementing existing and designing new policies.

[4] IAs are Infrastructure Agencies

Appendix 3

SFP Outreach Event Evaluation Form (page one)

Please complete this page BEFORE the workshop. This will help us to evaluate our impact and will help us to continually improve our services. Information will be treated as confidential.

Name ______________________ Email ______________________

Organisation ______________________ Contact Tel ______________________

What was your organisation's income last year? *(Please tick one box)*

☐ £10k ☐ £10k-50k ☐ £50k-100k ☐ £100k-500k

☐ £500k-1m ☐ £1m-5m ☐ £5m

Where are you based? *(Please tick one box)*

☐ East Midlands ☐ North West ☐ Yorkshire & Humberside

☐ Eastern region ☐ South East ☐ other

☐ London ☐ South West

☐ North East ☐ West Midlands

What is your organisation's core purpose?

____

____

Does your organisation currently generate income through:

☐ Trading ☐ Contracting ☐ Other earning

If so how?

____

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? *(1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree)*

	Agree 1	2	3	4	Disagree 5
It is important for my organisation to reduce dependency on short-term grants					
Generating income from trading is something my organisation could consider					
I am open to considering a possible role for loan finance in my organisation					

Please rate your current understanding of the following issues *(where 1 = no knowledge, and 10 = advanced knowledge – please tick one box for each issue)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sustainable funding										
Full cost recovery										
Loan finance available for voluntary sector										
Strategic planning										
Earning income through trading										

SFP Outreach Event Evaluation Form (page two)

Please complete this page AFTER the workshop

Please rate how useful you found the following aspects of the workshop.
(where 1 = not at all useful, and 10 = very useful – please tick one box for each aspect)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Speaker presentations										
Delegate handouts										
Group activity										
Workshop as a whole										

What could have been improved?

What did you find particularly useful?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ***(1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree)***

	Agree 1	2	3	4	Disagree 5
It is important for my organisation to reduce dependency on short-term grants					
Generating income from trading is something my organisation could consider					
I am open to considering a possible role for loan finance in my organisation					

Please rate your current understanding of the following issues ***(where 1 = no knowledge, and 10 = advanced knowledge – please tick one box for each issue)***

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sustainable funding										
Full cost recovery										
Loan finance available for voluntary sector										
Strategic planning										
Earning income through trading										

What action do you intend to take as a result of what you have learnt today?

What information or skills would help you to feel more confident about taking this action?

Would you be happy for us to contact you within the next 6 months to interview you briefly ***(5-10 mins)*** **about the impact of today on your work and understanding?**

☐ Yes ☐ No *(If yes please ensure contact details supplied overleaf)*

This information will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and used for evaluation purposes only.

Appendix 4

SFP Policy Grid for work with Policy Makers and Opinion Formers

Areas of Work

List of the targets for policy work and lobbying

Examples – Department of Trade and Industry
Social enterprise sector etc.

Aims of policy work:

- Policy Makers support VCOs exploiting a full range of funding opportunities beyond short-term grant dependency.
  - **Awareness** – Key policy makers are aware of the Project's holistic approach.
  - **Desire to act** – Key policy makers agree with the Project's holistic approach.
  - **Ability to act** – Key policy makers have the knowledge necessary to support VCOs wanting to explore the Project's holistic approach.
  - **Action** – Key policy makers take account of the Project's holistic approach in their work.
  - **Action** – Key policy makers consult SFP on sustainable funding issues.

Area of Work: One table for each lobbying target or policy area

Overall Desired Outcome for this Area of Work	Relevant Activity – i.e.meeting/written submission/ conversation etc	Desired outcome specific to this activity	Date	Who	How far achieved 1-10 (where 1 = is the least)	Comment/details which demonstrate outcome

Appendix 5

SFP Pilot project – capicity grid

- To be completed by the lead contact from the participating organisation.
- The same person then completes the grid on a quarterly basis.

Level of achievement	1 – not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - completely
You are learning relevant skills and knowledge to generate income.										
Your organisation has the necessary financial skills for income generation										
Your organisation is responding to the needs of your markets										
Your organisation is working to an evolving business plan for income generation										
Your organisation is becoming more financially sustainable										

The Sustainable Funding Project encourages and enables voluntary and community organisations to explore and exploit a full range of funding and financing options to develop a sustainable funding mix.

The Sustainable Funding Project
funding in the round
Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sfp
Tel: 020 7520 2519
Email: sfp@ncvo-vol.org.uk

£10

National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL
Tel: 020 7713 6161
Fax: 020 7713 6300
Textphone: 0800 01 88 111
HelpDesk: 0800 2 798 798
Email: ncvo@ncvo-vol.org.uk
Websites: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
www.askncvo-vol.org.uk

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