



Part One - The context of evaluation

Introduction

The aim of this part is to set the scene for learning about evaluation. Evaluation is really about measuring what a project has achieved. So, before we can do that we need to know how projects work. This part concentrates on projects.

Objectives

By the end of this part you will be able to:

-  Describe the key stages in the life of a project
-  Describe one system for project management
-  Explain why evaluation is a vital part of project management.



Overview

Section 1 **The life of a project**

Looks at the key stages in the life of any project and introduces the key terms and phrases used in project management.

Section 2 **Project management and evaluation**

Looks at one system for managing crime reduction projects effectively.




A **summary** of key points in this part can be found on page 25.



The life of a project

For any project, it is essential that you measure what you have achieved and compare it with what you set out to achieve.

You measure your project's achievements by:

-  Carrying out an evaluation to assess the project's achievements or impact at particular points or 'milestones' during the life of a project and when it has finished. This is sometimes called an impact evaluation.
-  Carrying out an evaluation to assess whether the processes used in a project are working properly. This is sometimes called a process evaluation.
-  Continually monitoring the work of the project to assess whether work is being completed at the right times.

Evaluation is therefore an essential part of any project. It should be part of all project management systems and be built into every project.

Key stages

Before we look at evaluation in detail, it is important that you are clear about the key stages in the life of a project and the key terms and phrases used in project management.

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.

For example, an initial analysis of violent disorders in Allertown town centre shows that 12 offences are committed each week. A project is set up to tackle this problem. An impact evaluation at the end of the project shows that the number of violent disorders has reduced, by a third, to eight each week.

Having the baseline information meant that the impact evaluation could assess the effects of the work carried out during the project.



Why do you think a project needs a baseline? Write your answer in the space below. You'll find our answer on the next page.



For any project you need to know what the current situation is. This is what you measure progress against. A baseline shows that the project team has researched the problem thoroughly and knows the full nature and extent of the problem it is facing.

When you are clear about the problem you are going to address, you must set clear aims and objectives for your project.

It is important not to confuse aims and objectives. An **aim** is a simple statement, which sets out the purpose of the project.

For example, “The aim of this project is to reduce the number of violent disorders in Allertown town centre.”

Objectives are specific statements that can be measured and state exactly what you want to achieve. Objectives are a key tool for project management and they often cause problems for people who have to write and use them.

Put simply, an objective is a statement that describes something you want to achieve - the desired outcome of a project.

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

- S**pecific - all objectives should have specific outcomes.
- M**easurable - the outcome of an objective should be capable of being 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.

Sometimes you may hear the acronym **SMARTER**. The additional points are **E**valuated and **R**eviewed.



Below is an example of a SMART objective. Which part of the objective do you think is specific, which part measurable and so on for all five SMART elements.

Write your answers in the space below.

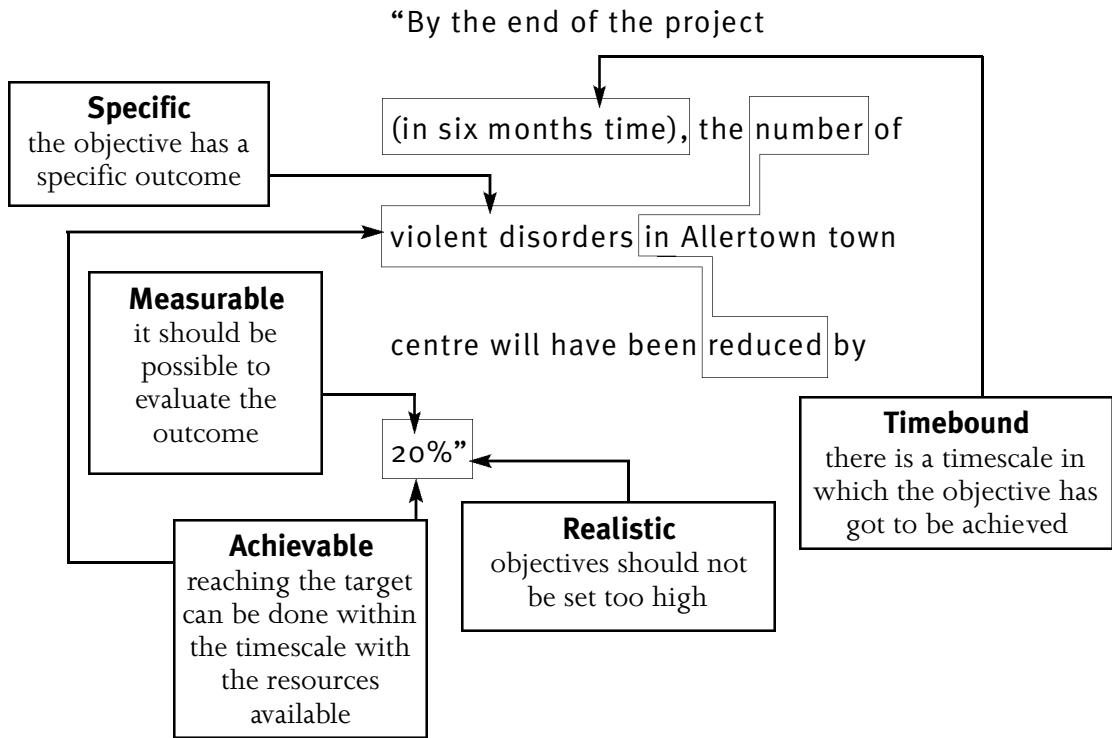
The objective is:

“By the end of the project (in six months time), the number of violent disorders in Allertown town centre will have reduced by 20%”

There is a suggested answer on the next page.



Here is the objective with all five **SMART** elements identified.



It's important that project teams set a realistic number of objectives. For most crime reduction initiatives three or four objectives are enough, any more can make a project difficult to manage and very difficult to evaluate.

Measurable **objectives** will always contain a **target**, which is the measurable part of an objective. For example in this objective: “By the end of the project (in six months time), the number of violent disorders in Allertown town centre will have reduced by 20%” - the target is a 20% reduction in six months time.

When you have decided 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. You also need to think about the project's **inputs**, which are the resources that are available to carry out the work.






The **outputs** are not necessarily the final purpose of the project. Outputs are usually things that need to be done in order to produce the desired result.

For example, the installation of closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) in Allertown town centre, the establishment of a monitoring centre and the production and distribution of leaflets are all outputs.

During the life of a project, the outputs should be monitored to make sure they are being delivered on time and within the resources available.

The **inputs** or resources used to produce the outputs can be financial, material or human.

For example, in a project to reduce the number of violent disorders in Allertown town centre by installing a CCTV system, some of the inputs would be:




-  money to buy equipment
-  the CCTV equipment
-  staff time to install it
-  staff time to monitor the system
-  publicity material to launch the start of the system.

In project management it is important to be aware of exactly what resources are available to carry out the work. When resources are limited the objectives of a project and the scope of the work carried out can be affected.




Being aware of the inputs used on a project is vital for evaluation. As well as measuring the success of a project, you could also be measuring the cost effectiveness of any input and whether any specific methods were particularly useful. You may find that a project or method was effective because of the level of resources available.

The overall result of applying the 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.

For example, in the Allertown town centre CCTV project:

-  the inputs were equipment, money and staff time
-  the outputs were the installation of equipment, the monitoring centre and the publicity material
-  the outcome was a 15% reduction in violent disorder offences.

In this example, the evaluation could:

-  measure the outcome by comparing the 15% reduction achieved with the target reduction included in the objective
-  establish whether the outcome was a direct result of the outputs - the installation of CCTV
-  assess whether the scheme was cost effective by measuring the inputs or costs of the project against any savings made.

An essential part of any project is to measure what you have achieved and compare it with what you set out to achieve.

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 in other organisations against which your organisation's performance can be compared. Benchmarks can be used to measure how successful you are in dealing with a particular aspect of work and also to set standards for performance within your own organisation.

For example, if an organisation was looking at how effectively it dealt with telephone enquiries, it might compare its performance with other organisations doing similar work.

The benefit of benchmarking for evaluation is that you can measure the success of a particular project by comparing it to other similar projects. You should be cautious with benchmarks and only use them as an indicator. It is important to remember that the benchmarks must be taken from similar work in similar areas to the one you are evaluating. It's not helpful to use a benchmark if you can't copy the conditions under which it was achieved.

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.

The two examples below illustrate this point.

A project to tackle theft from cars in a car park has an objective to reduce the number of thefts by 20% over a six-month period.

One of the performance indicators would be whether there had been a rise or fall in the number of reported incidents.

In this example, the number of recorded crimes is a direct indicator of whether the initiative has worked or not.

A project has an objective to reduce the fear of crime on a housing estate. The fear has been caused by several incidents of youth disorder and residents are too frightened to leave their homes.

Several indicators could be used here:



has there been a rise in income for traders in local shops?



are local facilities such as libraries or a community centre being used more often?



have there been fewer calls to the police to attend potentially problematic situations?



do local residents, when interviewed, feel safer and more confident?

In this example, the first three indicators are indirect indicators. On their own none of them are conclusive proof that the initiative has worked, but taken together they would indicate whether the initiative had worked.

PIs can be **quantitative**, which means they use statistical information to measure the effects of a piece of action or **qualitative**, which measure feelings and perceptions.

You can also use PIs to measure whether a project's inputs and outputs are working.

For example, if a project uses public meetings as one of its inputs, a PI could be used to measure the number of meetings held and the number of people who attended each meeting. This kind of PI is called a Process PI.

Performance indicators are only pointers towards success or failure, not conclusive proof. In both examples there are a number of other things that could happen to ease the problem, which may have nothing to do with crime reduction measures.

The answer is to choose indicators that support each other. For instance, in the second example none of those indicators alone would provide sufficient evidence, but taken together as a "basket" of indicators they will provide good evidence of the project's success or failure.

To help you to get to grips with PIs, on the next page we've set out an example of how they can work.

Passport to Evaluation

The context of evaluation

Part One section 1

In our example of a project to install a CCTV scheme in Allertown town centre, the following objectives were set for a 6 month period:



to reduce street crime, robbery and incidents of disorder in Allertown town centre by 20%



to reduce the fear of crime among businesses and the public and improve the perception of Allertown town centre as a safe place to work and visit.

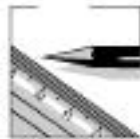
Here are some of the indicators you could use to measure these objectives.

Objective	Indicator
To reduce street crime, robbery and incidents of violent disorder in Allertown town centre by 20%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in crime levels • Drop in incident levels reported to the police.
To reduce the fear of crime among businesses and the public and improve the perception of Allertown Town centre as a safe place to work and visit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased business confidence and investment • Increased levels of trade • Increased use of public transport into the town centre • Increased use of pubs, clubs and other facilities • Feedback from the public and businesses about their perception of crime in the town centre • Positive press items about the town centre.

As you can see from the example, coming up with a list of PIs is simple as long as the project has clear objectives and targets. Specific objectives will state very clearly what needs to be measured.

We've now looked at the key stages in the life of a project and the key terms used in project management.

Before we go on to look at one particular project management system, on the next page you will find a table with information about a crime reduction project.



It has been found that there has been an increase in the number of burglaries being committed on elderly people by bogus officials. The offenders appear to be from outside the area and claim to be working for utility companies. Using what you have learned so far, and the definitions in **Glossary of terms**, decide what term applies to each group of statements and write your answer in the blank box next to the item. For example, if you think that item one is an output for a project, write 'output' next to it.

Item	Answer
To reduce bogus official burglaries on Meadowvale.	
By the end of this project (in nine months time) bogus official burglaries will have been reduced.	
Numbers of bogus official burglaries reduced by 40%.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police community officer • Home helps • Housing department • Sponsorship from local business • Residents give time to project 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaign • Advice and guidance • Door viewers fitted • Increased Neighbourhood Watch schemes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of incidents referred to the police • Number of door viewers fitted 	
Projects in similar council estates in Lyddshire have achieved a 45% reduction in bogus official burglaries. Police are called out to 15 incidents a year which involve burglaries by people posing as bogus officials.	
Incidents dropped by 50% initially and then rose slightly so that an overall reduction of 42% was achieved.	

When you have filled in the table, please go to the next two pages where you will find the answers.



Item	Answer
To reduce bogus official burglaries on Meadowvale.	This is an example of an aim. An aim is a simple statement, which sets out the purpose of the project or evaluation.
By the end of this project (in nine months time) bogus official burglaries will have been reduced by 40%.	This is a SMART objective . It is specific (burglaries will be reduced), measurable (the reduction will be 40%), achievable (when compared with the baseline figure for the project), realistic (the target is realistic given the timescale and resources available), and timebound (the reduction will be achieved in nine months time).
Numbers of bogus official burglaries reduced by 40%	This is an example of a target . The target is also included in the objective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police community officer • Home helps • Housing department • Sponsorship from local business • Residents give time to project 	These are all the inputs needed to run the project. The police community officer will work with the local community to raise awareness and visit potential victims. Home helps will be trained to provide guidance and advice. The housing department will fit door viewers and chains to the homes of potential victims. The sponsorship will provide funds to buy security products, and local residents will help by increased vigilance and general support for the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaign • Advice and guidance • Door viewers fitted • Increased Neighbourhood Watch schemes 	These are the outputs of the project. An output is a piece of work produced for the project.

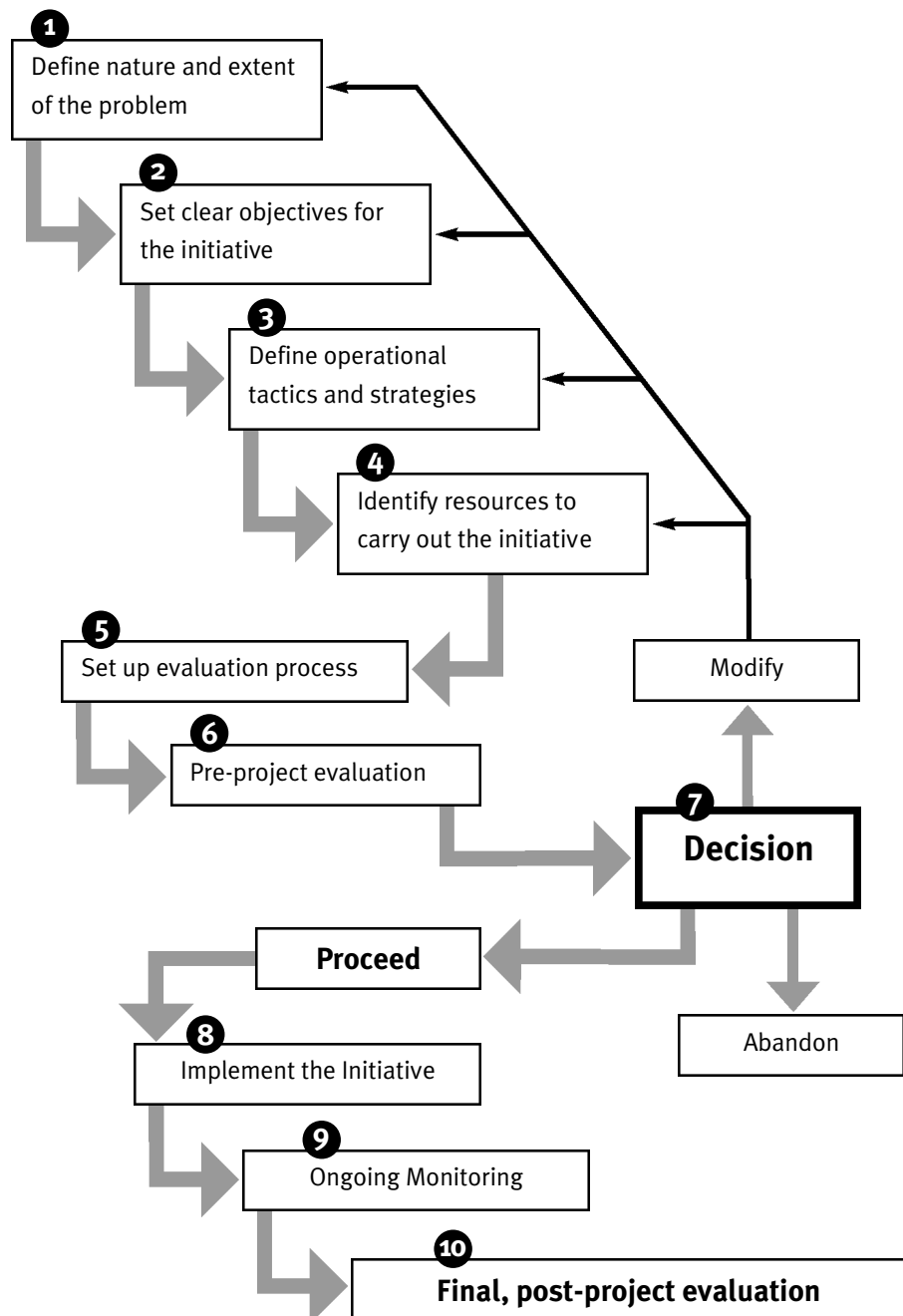


Item	Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of incidents referred to the police • Number of door viewers fitted 	<p>These are all performance indicators. A performance indicator is the means by which you know whether or not you have achieved your targets and objectives. By measuring all these things you would be able to judge whether the project has been successful. They might also include the numbers of Home helps trained, the amount of sponsorship raised, numbers of new members of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes or the number of arrests and convictions.</p>
<p>Projects in similar council estates in Lyddshire have achieved a 45% reduction in bogus official burglaries.</p>	<p>This is a benchmark. A benchmark is performance in a similar project which can be compared to your project performance.</p>
<p>Police are called out to 15 incidents a year which involve burglaries by people posing as bogus officials.</p>	<p>These are the baseline figures for bogus official burglary in Meadowvale. The baseline shows the extent of the problem, before any preventive work has been carried out.</p>
<p>Incidents dropped by 50% initially and then rose slightly so that an overall reduction of 42% was achieved.</p>	<p>This is the outcome of the project. The outcome is the overall result of applying the inputs - police, local authority and resident's time and the sponsorship - and achieving the outputs. The outcome can be measured against the baseline figure by collecting information about the performance indicators.</p>

Hopefully you managed to get most of these right and have a clear understanding about the life of a project and the language used in project management. Don't worry if you didn't get them all. You'll have a chance to practice throughout the rest of this book.

Project management and evaluation

Before we go on to look at evaluation in detail, we'll take a brief look at a system for managing projects to show you how evaluation can be built into a project. There are many different systems for project management, but the system we will look at is 'The 10 Steps Method', which was specifically designed for the planning, implementation and evaluation of crime reduction initiatives. Geoff Berry and Mike Carter devised it for the Home Office using a study of different police-led projects.



There are many different systems for project management, and your organisation may have its own, but whichever system you use the principles will be the same.

If you want to find out more about the 10 Steps Method the Further Reference section at the end of the book has details of where to look.

As you can see from the diagram, the first five steps of the 10 Steps Method are about identifying the problem and defining the project.

Steps 6 and 7 cover making sure the project will work and getting the go-ahead.

Steps 8 and 9 are about implementing the project.

The last step covers the final post-project evaluation.

A common problem with many projects is that evaluation is included as an afterthought, with the result that it is rushed and not very effective in identifying how well the project worked. In this system evaluation is built into the project at a very early stage, before any work is carried out.

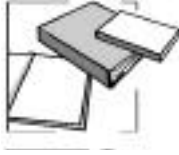
By building evaluation into the early stages of project planning, it can be used as a tool to measure the project throughout its life.

The exercise on the next page will give you a chance to think about the project management system used in your organisation.

Passport to
Evaluation

The context of evaluation

Part One section 2






What kind of project management system does your organisation use?

If you don't know try to find out. Use the space below to write down some details.

Summary - Part One







It is essential to measure what a project has achieved and compare it with what you set out to achieve.

You measure a project's achievements by:

-  Carrying out an evaluation to assess the project's achievements or impact at particular points or 'milestones' during the life of a project and when it has finished. This is sometimes called an impact evaluation.
-  Carrying out an evaluation to assess whether the processes used in a project are working properly. This is sometimes called a process evaluation.
-  Continually monitoring the work of the project to assess whether work is being completed at the right times.

Evaluation is therefore an essential part of any project. It should be part of all project management systems and be built into every project.

The key stages in the life of a project:

-  Define the nature and extent of the problem - **baseline** information will help you do this. The baseline is the situation at the start of the project before any work has been carried out.
-  Set clear **aims** and **objectives** for the project. An aim is a simple statement that sets out the purpose of the project. Objectives are specific statements that can be measured. Objectives must be **SMART**.
-  Identify the project's **outputs**. These are the pieces of work that will need to be done during the project.
-  Identify the project's **inputs**. These are the resources that are available to carry out the work. Resources may be financial, material or human.
-  Applying the inputs to achieve the outputs will result in the **outcome** of the project.
-  Measure what the project has achieved through **benchmarks** and **Performance Indicators (PIs)**. A benchmark is the performance in other organisations against which your organisation's performance can be compared. PIs are any information that indicates whether a particular objective has been met. They can be quantitative, which means they use statistical information to measure the effects of a piece of work, or qualitative, which measure feelings and perceptions.

Summary - Part One (continued)

There are many different systems for managing projects and your organisation may have its own, but whichever system you use the principles will be the same.

One example of a project management system is the 10 Steps Method devised for the Home Office by Geoff Berry and Mike Carter.