Part Three - The process of evaluation

Introduction

The aim of this part is to look at the process of evaluation.

Objectives

When you have finished this part you will be able to:

- describe a process for evaluating a project
- evaluate a crime reduction project using the process.

Overview

In '**The Process of Evaluation**' you will be looking at a system for evaluating a crime reduction initiative. There are seven sections to this part and they are covered on the next page.

Part Three Introduction

Overview (continued)

Throughout this part of the book you will be given examples to illustrate the points made and at the end you will get the chance to apply the techniques you have learned to the **case study**.

Before we look at the individual sections, the evaluation model on the next page looks at a method for evaluating projects and introduces its main stages.

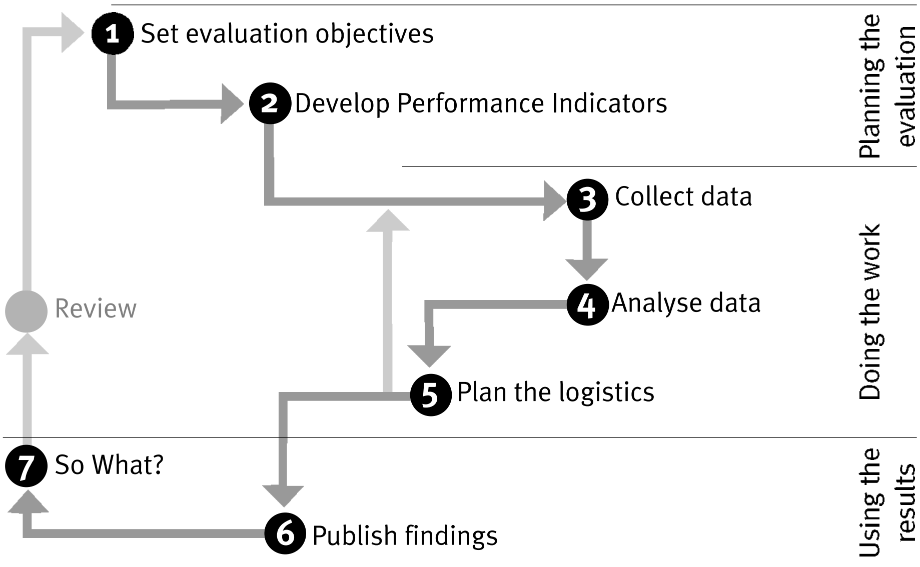
A **summary** of the key points in this part can be found on page 90.

The evaluation model

When you carry out an evaluation of a project you should approach it as a project in its own right. You must make sure that it:

- is planned
- is organised
- has clear objectives and methods for achieving them.

Using this seven stage evaluation model will help you.



Reviewing each evaluation will help you to plan for the next one.

For each step there are several questions you will need to answer to get the right results. These will be covered in the rest of this part.

We will now look at each of these steps in turn.

Setting objectives

1 Objectives are the key to every successful project and evaluation. Before you start work on an evaluation you need to ask:

- What are the **objectives** and **targets** of the project you are evaluating?
- What **baseline** are you going to measure against?
- What are the **objectives** and **targets** of your evaluation?

The objectives and targets of the project you are evaluating

Every evaluation is about measuring to what extent a project's objectives have been achieved. Before you start your evaluation you must be clear about the objectives of the project.

Unless you have a clear idea about what the project is trying to achieve, how can you measure whether or not it has been achieved?

Check to see if:

- there is an **aim** for the whole project
- **SMART objectives** have been written to show what the project is trying to achieve
- **targets** are in place to show what reduction in crime is intended.

What do you think would happen if a project didn't have aims, targets and objectives? Write your answer down in the space below and compare it with our answer on the next page.

what gets measured gets done

Here are some consequences of not having clear aims, targets and objectives for a project.

- The people working on the project will be confused about what it is they are trying to achieve.
- The activities that your project team are involved in will lack focus.
- Time, money and other resources could be wasted.
- There will be poor control and management of the project.
- You won't be able to monitor and evaluate the project efficiently.

As you can see, there are very good reasons why it is important to have good aims, targets and objectives for a project.

Another very important reason for setting **objectives** for a project is that,

"what gets measured gets done"

When people are given targets and know that their performance will be measured, they will work towards achieving the targets to the exception of most (if not all) other things.

So it's important to make sure that the targets reflect what the project is trying to achieve, otherwise a lot of effort might be wasted.

For example if you are working in a partnership whose aim is to reduce burglary in an area, it's no use setting targets for reducing vehicle crime. If you did, most of the effort would be focused on achieving the targets, rather than the real priority.

Also, where there are multiple aims, be careful not to establish conflicting objectives and targets. This can happen in multi-agency projects where the priorities of one partner may conflict with another. All partners should have a clear idea of where their project is heading before they start work on drawing up the objectives.

What baseline are you going to measure against?

When you are planning your evaluation, you should also check to see whether the project has established a baseline.

Why do you think a project needs a baseline? Write your answer in space below. You'll find a definition on page 8 if you need a reminder. Our answer is on the next page.

The baseline is the situation at the start of a project, before any preventive work has been done.

For any objective or target, you need to know what the current situation is because this is what you measure progress against. For example, if your objective is to reduce burglary by 5%, you need to know how many burglaries are taking place now.

A baseline shows that the project team has researched the problem thoroughly and knows exactly the nature and extent of the problem they are facing.

The objectives and targets of your evaluation

Evaluation is a process you don't undertake just for its own sake: it should have a clearly thought out purpose. In any evaluation, one of your first tasks is to gain a clear understanding of the purpose of the evaluation including:

- why are you carrying out the evaluation?
- what is the evaluation for?
- who is the evaluation for?
- when do you have to complete the evaluation by?

Why are you carrying out the evaluation?

This is the first question you should answer. Evaluating a project takes time and resources, and you should be able to justify why you are using them.

Your reasons may include:

- the project is a high cost one and you have to justify the expenditure
- there is a demand internally within your organisation or from an external source to evaluate a project
- there is a legislative requirement, such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, that means you have to evaluate a programme or strategy
- a project is being funded from a particular programme that requires projects to be evaluated
- you want to monitor the effectiveness of your own work
- evaluation reports are a way of sharing good practice.

It is generally good practice to evaluate projects, even if there is no set requirement to do so.

What is the evaluation for?

An evaluation should be designed for a specific purpose, because this affects what you have to measure and what data you collect. You need to know whether you are measuring:

- The impact of a particular project. This measures the outcomes of a project, for example:

  "The objective of this evaluation is to measure the overall reduction in crime following the introduction of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Allertown town centre."

- The processes, systems and structure of a project. This kind of evaluation measures whether the inputs and outputs of a project are working, for example:

  "The objective of this evaluation is to establish whether the CCTV system in Allertown town centre meets the specification set out in the operational requirement."

- The cost and effectiveness of a project. This measures whether the cost of the project was worthwhile in relation to the costs of the crime problem. The costs can be social as well as financial. For example:

  "The objective of this evaluation is to establish whether the cost of introducing CCTV in Allertown town centre has been offset by the reduction in costs to the community and police caused by street violence."

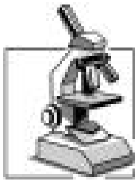
Who is the evaluation for?

You should have a clear view of who you are doing the evaluation for. Your clients can be internal, for example your colleagues or a manager, or they can be external, for example financial sponsors or the public. Different groups of people will want different things from an evaluation, so knowing your audience will help you plan and structure your evaluation.

When is the evaluation due?

Finally, you need to be clear about when the evaluation needs to be completed. This will help you structure your work. Agree with your clients:

- when the final report needs to be completed
- whether you only need to evaluate at the end of the project or whether ongoing monitoring or evaluation at pre-planned points is needed during the project.



Case study

On pages 34 and 35 you read about the **YouthShop** project, which aims to reduce youth related disorder in Meadowood. So far you have read about:

- the crime problems in Meadowlands, where the pilot programme is going to be run
- the aim for the project.

On the next few pages you will find:

- objectives and targets for the project
- an outline of what the project sponsor wants evaluating
- more detailed crime figures.

As you read through these extracts you'll find some tasks for you to do. When you have completed all the tasks, compare your answers with ours.

Objectives and targets

The project team has already written some targets and objectives for the project. Read through them and decide whether:

- the objectives are **SMART**
- the targets are related to the aims and objectives of the project.

If you want to make any changes to the objectives and targets, use the space on the next page to write your notes.

The objectives of the YouthShop project are:

1) To erect a youth shelter on Meadowood and promote its use amongst local youths.
2) To reduce the amount of criminal damage and graffiti in the Meadowood shopping area by 95% within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.
3) To reduce shoplifting from the Meadowood shopping area by 30% within 3-6 months from the erection of the youth shelter.
4) To reduce youth nuisance related calls by 60% within 3 weeks from the start of the project.
5) To distribute 150 posters about the YouthShop in Meadowood by the end of the first week of the project.
6) To reduce the fear of crime by 30% amongst the residents of Allertown.

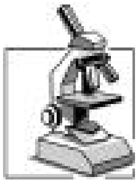
Objectives and Targets

Evaluation Objectives

Below is a list showing what the project team want from the evaluation.

For this evaluation, the project team wants to know if:

- they have met their reduction targets
- the youth shelter, rather than the area outside the shops, is being used by youths
- the shelter is cost effective in relation to the cost of call outs and repairs by the police and local authority
- the fear of crime has been reduced.



Read through the list on the previous page carefully and decide:

- what kind(s) of evaluation are required (impact, process or cost)?
- what monitoring is required?
- when will the evaluation be carried out?
- what is the timescale?

When you have decided these issues, try and write some objectives for the evaluation in the box below.

Evaluation Objectives

Baselines

The next two pages show extracts from the research and analysis carried out before the project started. Look carefully at this information and try to decide what the baseline figures are for:

- fear of crime
- recorded crime figures
- Local authority (LA) and police costs of dealing with the problem.

When you think you have worked out what the baselines are, make some notes in the box on page 51.

Extract from a fear of crime survey carried out in the past 6 weeks.

250 questionnaires were sent out to households in the area surrounding the shops. There were 180 completed questionnaires returned. Here are the collated responses from two of the questions.

Question 5 *How worried are you about youth crime and disorder in Meadowood?*

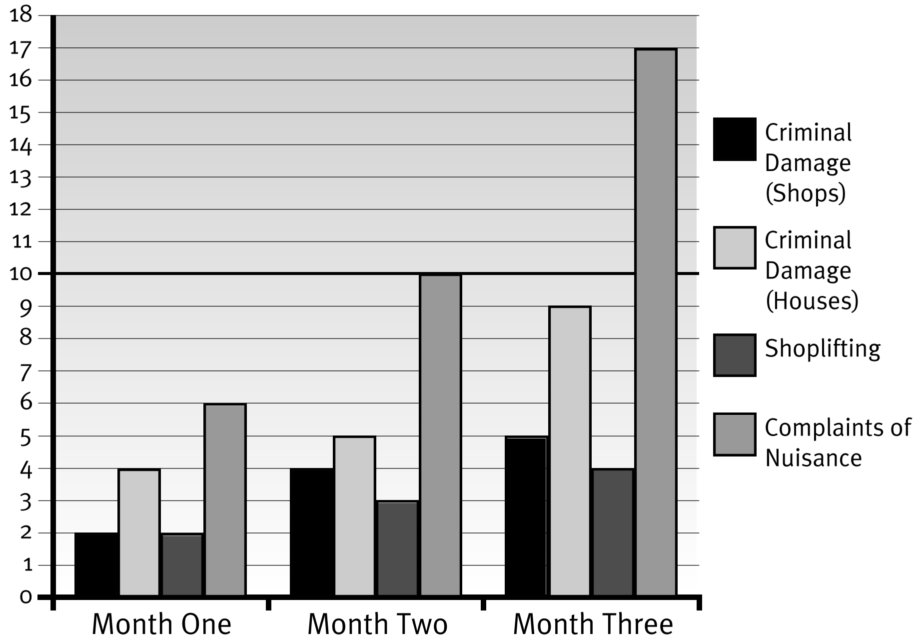
Very worried 67 worried 43 Slightly worried 19 Not worried at all 51

Question 6 *How likely are you to use the Meadowood shops after dark?*

Very unlikely 32 Unlikely 28 Likely 76 Highly likely 44

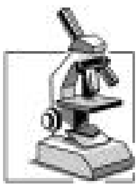
Recorded Crime Figures

Figures recorded are for the three months prior to the start of the project.



Notes

1. Criminal Damage on shops has increased by 6 cases compared to the previous 3 months
2. Criminal Damage on homes has increased by 13 cases compared to the previous 3 months
3. Shoplifting has increased by 4 offences compared to the previous 3 months
4. Complaints have increased by 21 cases compared to the previous 3 months.



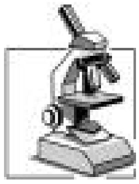
LA Repair Costs for Damage to Property

Item	Shops	Houses
Staff Days	14	21
Materials	£2,500	£3,500

Note: Average cost per LA staff day = £65

Policing Costs

An estimated 80 staff days have been taken up attending incidents and investigating offences in the past 3 months. Average cost of each police staff day is £100.00.



Miscellaneous

- On average 25-30 youths gather around the shops each evening. This can increase to 40 at weekends.
- Local shops have reported a 5-10% reduction in profits over the last three months.

Baselines

When you think you have worked out what the baselines are, make some notes in the box below.

On the next few pages are our sample answers. Check yours with them.

Objectives

Here are our suggested answers about the objectives for the project. To help you we have also rewritten some of them so you can compare your answers.

1) 'To erect a youth shelter on Meadowood and promote its use amongst local youths.'

For this objective the target is that a youth shelter will be built, and this relates to the aims of the project. However, this objective needs a timescale so that it can be measured accurately. Our revised objective is:

> To complete the erection of a youth shelter on Meadowood within 6 weeks of the start of the project and promote its use amongst local youths.

The timescale is important because this is the point from which you can start to measure whether there is any reduction in crime and disorder in the area round the shops.

2) 'To reduce the amount of criminal damage and graffiti in the Meadowood shops by 95% within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.'

This objective is specific, measurable and has a timescale. The only problem is whether the target is achievable and realistic. A target of 95% is very high. The target for Allertown as a whole is to reduce criminal damage by 25%. You could use this as a benchmark, but, because you are putting extra resources in to Meadowood, you can set your target a bit higher. In this case we would rewrite it and make the target 40%.

3) 'To reduce shoplifting from the Meadowood shopping area by 30% within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.'

There are no real problems with this objective. It is **SMART** and the target is relevant to the aims of the project.

4) 'To reduce youth nuisance related calls by 60% within 3 weeks of the start of the project.'

The problem with this objective is the timescale. It will take some time for the shelter to have an effect, so measuring this objective within three weeks is a bit ambitious. It would be better to say:

'To reduce youth nuisance related calls by 60% within 3-6 months of the start of the project.'

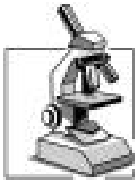
5) 'To distribute 150 posters about the YouthShop in Meadowood by the end of the first week of the project.'

This is a **SMART** objective, but does it have anything to do with what the project team wants to achieve? The team might want to put up some posters to publicise the project, but this is really an input to the project and doesn't need an objective of its own.

6) 'To reduce the fear of crime by 30% amongst the residents of Allertown within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.'

Running a project in Meadowood will only have local effects on the fear of crime, so this objective needs to be more specific, like this:

'To reduce the fear of crime by 30% amongst the residents of Meadowood within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.'



Evaluation Objectives

The project team has already been quite specific about what they want from the project. All you need to do is make the objectives SMART. Here are our suggestions.

1) To establish whether the reduction targets for criminal damage, shoplifting and residents complaints of youth nuisance have been met within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.

2) To measure the awareness and usage of the shelter and the reduction in the number of youths gathering outside the Meadowood shopping centre in the 6 months after the erection of the shelter.

3) To compare the cost of the youth shelter for the police and Allertown Borough Council against the cost of policing and repairs in the six months after the erection of the shelter.

4) To measure whether there has been a reduction in the fear of crime in the 3 - 6 months after the establishment of the shelter.

Objectives one, two and four measure the impact of the project - has the shelter reduced the youth crime problem? Objective three measures the cost effectiveness of the proposed method.

As far as the timescale is concerned, the evaluation will have to take place over several months so that the effects of the shelter can be measured at several points. It is likely that you would have to be involved from the start of the project, until six months after the shelter had been erected.

Baselines

There are several baseline figures you need to take account of:

Fear of Crime

- 110 residents out of 180 who responded were either very worried or worried about youth crime and disorder in Meadowood.
- 60 out of 180 who responded were either very unlikely or unlikely to use the shops after dark.

Of the two figures, the first is probably a better guide to fear of crime in the area, as people might not visit the shops at night for a variety of other reasons. We would use the figure of 110 as the baseline for fear of crime.

Recorded Crime

In the three months before the start of the project, there were:

- 11 reports of criminal damage on the shops
- 18 reports of criminal damage on homes in the area
- 9 offences of shoplifting
- 33 complaints about youth nuisance.

As part of the evaluation you are being asked to measure the reduction of crime in a three month period following the establishment of the youth shelter, so you need to take all three months figures as your baseline. Remember, when you carry out an evaluation you should always measure ‘like for like.’

LA Repair Costs

There are two ways you can calculate a baseline for repairs. One is to count staff days and the other is to measure actual costs. In this case it may be easier to combine the cost of materials with the cost of staff days and use this as the baseline.

Policing Costs

You can treat this in the same way as the LA costs, either as staff days or actual costs of the days. So that you can compare ‘like for like’ with LA costs, it is better to calculate the actual cost of staff days.

Miscellaneous

The figures for the numbers of youths who gather round the shops are a useful baseline against which to measure the reduction. Although it is useful background information, you don’t really need to know the loss in profits from the shops. This is because it is not one of the things you are going to evaluate.

That ends this section on objectives. We hope you found it useful and are ready to move on to the next section on **performance indicators**.

Planning the evaluation

Develop Performance Indicators

2

When you are clear about the objectives and targets of the project, the next step is to think about how you will measure the extent to which they have been achieved. To do this you will need to think about answers to these questions:

- How will you measure whether or not the **objectives** have been achieved?
- What are you going to measure: what **inputs**, **outputs** and **outcomes**?
- Is there a **benchmark** in another organisation you can measure against?
- What **performance indicators** are you going to use: will they be **quantitative** or **qualitative**?

You measure a project's achievements using benchmarks and performance indicators. We looked at these in **The life of a project**. To summarise what you have read about benchmarks and PIs:

- A **benchmark** is the performance in other organisations against which your organisation's performance can be compared. You can use benchmarks in evaluation to measure the achievements of a project by comparing it to other similar projects. Remember, benchmarks are only useful you are comparing similar organisations and similar work in similar areas - if you can't copy the conditions under which the benchmark performance was achieved it will not help you evaluate the achievement of your project.
- **Performance Indicators** are the means by which you know whether or not you have achieved your targets and objectives. PIs can be quantitative, which means they use statistical information to measure the effects of a piece of action, or qualitative, which measure things such as feelings and perceptions.

You'll soon get the chance to decide what PIs could be used for the **YouthShop** project, but before we do that here are a few points you'll need to remember:

Sources to use

PIs use any information, from any source that shows whether objectives are being met. The most obvious are crime figures, but you need to think more widely than that. In the example, several different types of information have been used. In the next section of this book you will get the chance to look where you can collect data from.

Quantitative and Qualitative

Crime figures are quantitative PIs. They are a direct measure of the level of particular crimes. The other PIs, such as those that measure the fear of crime, are qualitative.

Any project you are involved in that has an objective to reduce the fear of crime must use qualitative PIs to measure this. Relying on quantitative PIs can be misleading, because although they can show that crime has reduced, a reduction in crime doesn't automatically mean that people's feelings and perceptions have changed.

Baskets of Indicators

It's important to have a basket of indicators. By basket, we mean a range of indicators from different sources that support each other. In most projects, there will be no one single indicator that directly proves that the objectives have been met. Most of the time you will have to use a range of indicators that indirectly show what has been achieved.

For example, an increase in the use of public transport in Allertown town centre is not direct proof that the CCTV scheme has worked but, viewed with other PIs, it might be an indirect indication.

The basket of indicators needs to be a mix from different sources. Using indicators from only one source can cause problems if there is any uncertainty about how accurate and reliable they are.

Be clear what you are measuring

Before you decide what PIs to collect you must be sure about what you need to measure. We have already stressed the importance of knowing the purpose of the evaluation. Having a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve will help you to select the right indicators. It's also important to be clear about the inputs and outputs of the project. Some of your PIs will measure the impact of the outputs, so you need to know what they are and whether they have been completed according to plan.

Think about context

PIs may need to take account of underlying trends or the environment in which the project is operating. For example, rather than measuring the number of elderly people who are victims of crime it might be better to look at the ratio of elderly victims per 1000 population and then compare it to the ratio of victims of all ages per 1000 head of population. This is a more specific PI and gives a better idea of how well the project has worked.

PIs are not conclusive proof

PIs can never be conclusive proof that a project is successful: they can only ever be indicators. This is because external factors, which you haven't measured, can have an impact on a project without you being aware of them. However, well chosen indicators that come from a wide range of sources and illustrate different aspects of a project can provide good evidence of its success.

That's all we want to mention about Performance Indicators for the moment. On the next few pages you'll get a chance to choose some for the **YouthShop** project.

Below you will find the objectives and targets from page 52 and 53 of this book and a list of the inputs and outputs that are being used to try and achieve them. Read through them carefully and then make a list of the PIs that could be used to measure whether they have been achieved. There is space for your list on pages 60 and 61

Objectives

1. To complete the erection of a youth shelter on Meadowood within 6 weeks of the start of the project and promote its use amongst local youths
2. To reduce the amount of criminal damage and graffiti in the Meadowood shopping area by 40% within 3-6 months from the erection of the youth shelter.
3. To reduce shoplifting from the Meadowood shops by 30% within 3-6 months from the erection of the youth shelter.
4. To reduce youth nuisance-related calls by 60% within 3-6 months of the start of the project.
5. To reduce the fear of crime by 30% among the residents of Meadowood within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.

Inputs and outputs

An input is ...the resources used to carry out the work. Resources can be financial, material or human.
An output is...a piece of work produced for a project.

In the first column of the table below you'll see a list of outputs for the YouthShop project, the second column shows the inputs needed for each output.

Outputs	Inputs
Setting up the Youth Shelter	• Sponsorship money for shelter • Police/LA money for shelter • LA staff time to erect shelter
Intensive repair exercise to vandalised properties	• LA staff time to repair properties • Cost of materials
High visibility police patrols once the shelter has been set up	• Staff time for patrols
Publicity of the shelter in schools	• Costs of printing and distributing leaflets and posters • Community police officer and Youth worker visits to schools • Press articles

On the next two pages there is space for you to write down what PIs you might use.

Performance Indicators

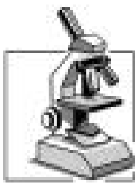
Performance Indicators

Now your list is complete compare your answer with ours on the next page. Don't worry if your lists aren't identical, you will probably have thought of some that we missed.

Here is a list of performance indicators you could collect to evaluate the project. Some of them are direct and measure the effects of the youth shelter, some of them measure whether the outputs have been used at the right times. We've grouped the indicators together to show which of the evaluation objectives they measure.

1) To establish whether the reduction targets for criminal damage, shoplifting and residents complaints of youth nuisance have been met within 3-6 months of the erection of the youth shelter.

- number of offences
- telephone calls to police
- numbers of repairs carried out by LA
- number of offences and complaints about youths using the shelter
- number of patrols to the area round the shops (a reduction would indicate fewer problems)
- number of positive and negative press articles about Meadowood.



2) To measure the awareness and usage of the shelter and the reduction in the number of youths gathering outside the Meadowood shops in the 6 months after the erection of the shelter.

- number of young people using the shelter
- numbers of youths gathering outside the shops
- numbers of visits to schools
- numbers of posters and leaflets distributed
- number of press articles about the shelter.

3) To compare the cost of the youth shelter for the police and Allertown Borough Council against the cost of policing and repairs in the six months after the erection of the shelter.

- cost to the LA and police of buying and erecting the shelter
- amount of sponsorship raised
  (can be offset against the cost to the LA and police)
- cost of police patrols before and after the shelter has been built
- cost of LA repairs before and after the shelter has been erected.

4) To measure whether there has been a reduction in the fear of crime in the 3 - 6 months after the erection of the shelter.

- fear of crime survey before and after the shelter has been erected
- number of people using the shops at night
- increase in profits from the shops.

As you can see, there are lots of different PIs you can use to measure the success of a project, and some of them are more obvious than others. Your list probably contains some that we hadn't thought of.

That's all about PIs for the moment. You'll get a chance to work with them later, but now we're going to move on to the next section which looks at gathering data.

Gathering data

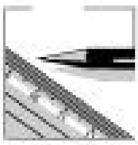
3 The next stage in evaluation is to decide what data you need to collect to measure the project's success against the PIs. It is important to collect the right information, at the right time and in the right format. As with everything in evaluation, you need to have a clear idea of the information you will need, where you will get it from and how you are going to collect it before you start.

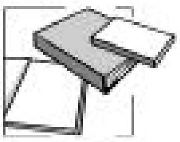
You will need to think about answers to these questions:

- What data do I need?
- How much detail do I need?
- When and how often is data needed?
- Where does the data come from?
- Is the data available, accurate and reliable?
- How are you going to collect the data?
- Will there be any problems collecting the data?
- Will the deadlines be met?

What data do I need?

You might be faced with a wide range of data, but what is available depends on who is involved in the project. You should ask:
What data do I need to calculate the performance measures?





What data is available in your organisation, from organisations you work with and from external sources? Make a list of all the data that might be used in evaluating crime reduction projects and write your answers down in the box on the next page.

What data do I need?

When you've written down all the data you can think of, compare your answer with ours on the next page.

Here's a list of data that might be available. This list is not exhaustive, and you might have thought of some that we've missed.

- Recorded crime data.
- Recorded incidents.
- Detected crimes.
- Numbers of arrests/convictions and cautions.
- Numbers of drug referrals.
- Numbers of empty properties.
- Numbers of repairs carried out by housing authorities.
- Amount of graffiti in an area.
- Public perceptions.
- Business investment.
- Views of partners.
- Amount of school absenteeism.
- Numbers of public enquiries about a project.
- Local press articles written about a project.
- Price increases in drugs.
- Number of drugs outlets available.
- Reduced litter/minor damage.
- Increased pedestrian traffic in an area.
- Reduction in complaints to police/local authorities.
- Reduction in activity in casualty departments.
- Increase in membership of Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups.

Of course, not all of this data will be relevant to every project, but by now you should have the idea that:

- data can come from a wide variety of sources
- it's not always the obvious data that is the most useful.

The first stage in deciding on your data requirements is to make a list of all the data you would ideally like to measure the PIs. At this stage don't worry about whether it's available, how it's going to be collected or the format. What you are looking for is an idealised list of data. The next stages of the process will help you define what you need more precisely.

How much detail do you need?

Next you must think about how much detail you need. For example, you may need:

- broad crime data about trends on all crimes
- data about individual crime types
- borough or town-wide information
- information about tightly defined geographical areas, such as individual streets, locations or properties
- data about specific times and dates.

The level of detail you need depends on what you want to use the data for. Generally speaking:

- detailed data helps to pinpoint problems and gives an accurate picture of what has happened, but the general picture might get lost in all the detail
- higher level data is useful for showing general trends but is not as useful for detailed analysis.

Collecting and analysing detailed data can be expensive and time consuming, so you should plan ahead and only collect as much detail as you will need.

When and how often is data needed?

It is important that you have the data when you need it, but try and avoid being bombarded with data when it's not required.

You will need:

- data at the start of a project for comparison purposes later
- data after the project has ended, so that its long term effects can be measured.

When and how often you need other data depends on several factors, for example:

- are there particular times during the life of a project when data needs to be collected?
- is the data going to be used at regular intervals for monitoring the project?
- is some data only available at certain times during the life of a project?
- do you need to produce reports at set intervals or when particular project milestones are reached?

Knowing when you need the data will help you decide whether you can rely on existing data, or whether you need to commission special data collection exercises.

What format is the data required in?

When you know what data is required, how much detail you need and when you need it, the next decision to make is what format you need it in.

You might have particular IT system requirements, or might need the data in a format that is readily accessible to partners without doing too much work to it. This might require extra work to get it in the right format.

When you have found a particular data source, look at it and decide:

- can the data be used in its current format?
- does the format need to be changed?
- is that format compatible with the other sources of data you have?
- how much work is involved in changing the format and is it cost effective to carry out the work?

If you are using data from different partners you may find that the formats are not always compatible. Some work may need to be done before data from different sources can be used together and you need to bear this in mind and allow time for additional work to be done.

Where does the data come from?

Data can come from many sources and you need to be aware of who holds it.

Can you think of some of the places where you can get data? Make a list of possible sources in the box below and compare it with ours on the next page.

Here are some examples of the places where you can get data. Your list might contain some others.

- Police Force statistics and Local Intelligence officers.
- Existing perception surveys.
- Crime and Disorder audits.
- Partner organisations.
- National crime figures and the British Crime Survey.
- Information gathered by voluntary organisations.
- Census information.

When you have identified the sources available, you need to find out whether the organisations that have the data are prepared to supply it to you. Data held by organisations is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998, so you need to make sure that you can have access to it and under what terms.

Many organisations, including Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, have data sharing protocols and these will tell you what data you can have access to and to what uses you can put it.

When you have identified the sources of your data, the last thing you should check is its quality. We'll look at this next.

Is the data available, accurate and reliable?

When you have identified all the data sources you would like to use to carry out your evaluation, there are three questions you should ask yourself.

Is the data readily available?

Some data might be easy to get hold of in the right format, but this doesn't always happen. It might be that the data isn't collected at all, in which case you'll need to arrange to have it collected. On the other hand the data might be collected, but you can't get access to it.

If you have to make special arrangements to get access to data you will have to decide:

- whether the data is vital to your evaluation?
- what you need to do to get access to it?
- is the time and cost worthwhile?
- will resources be available?

Is the data accurate enough?

Establishing the accuracy of data for an evaluation is vital. Inaccurate data can distort the results of any work you do and give a false picture of the success or failure of a project.

Some of the questions you should ask to establish the accuracy of any data are:

- is the sample of population it was taken from representative of the target population the project is aimed at?
- is the data recorded correctly, for example, are reported offences recorded under the right crime types?
- if any analytical packages were used did they produce an accurate analysis of the raw data?
- has the data been collected objectively or has the collectors' bias affected the quality?

No data source is perfect, but you should make sure that it has been recorded and analysed as accurately as possible before you decide to use it. Talking to the people who collect and collate the data might give you an idea of how accurate it is.

Is the data reliable?

You should make sure that the data is reliable, by which we mean:

- is it going to be available at the times you require it?
- does it measure the same or similar things to those that you are evaluating?
- is it current and up to date?

The next stages

At the start of this section we suggested that you start out with an "ideal" list of data that you need and then refine your requirements.

By this stage you will probably have found that not all the data sources are available at the times, in the format and at the level of detail that you want. From your ideal list you will have got down to a realistic list of data.

You should compare your list of data against your PIs and ask yourself whether you will have sufficient data to evaluate the project properly. If the answer is no, you will need to:

- check whether the objectives of your evaluation are still valid
- check whether your PIs are feasible
- consider commissioning additional data collection exercises to collect your own data.

How are you going to collect the data?

Hopefully most of the data you need will be available and in a form that is easy to follow, but this isn't always going to happen. This section looks at some simple ways of collecting data.

If the data you need is not available, or is not of sufficient quality or relevance, you may need to consider organising the collection of data yourself.

You could collect data in many ways, but in this section we're going to look at:

- postal questionnaires
- telephone surveys
- face to face interviews
- activity sampling
- desk research.

The table on the next page shows when these methods can be used, their advantages and disadvantages.

Method and Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
Postal Questionnaires can be a useful way of collecting information. They need to be well laid out and instructions for completing them have to be clear.	• Useful for collecting data from a large number of people • Can be flexible and can be designed to meet any requirements • Cost effective to produce and administer • Anonymity and confidentiality can be maintained.	• Can be time consuming to collate • If completion is voluntary a high percentage of responses can't be guaranteed • You may not get a representative sample to enable broad conclusions to be drawn.
Telephone surveys are a useful way of gathering quantitative and qualitative information from people. Before you carry out a telephone survey you should pick your sample carefully and make sure you have a structured set of questions to ask.	• Can collect information from a large sample • Can be flexible • Able to ask supplementary questions and clarify what the interviewee means.	• Can be expensive if lots of long interviews are needed • High refusal rate if "cold calling" • Interviewer can influence the responses and distort the data • May not be a representative sample of the target group.
Face to face interviews are an excellent method of gaining people's views and getting qualitative information. Interviews can be structured, with a set of questions, or unstructured, when the interviewer is able to be flexible about what is discussed.	• Useful for exploring people's views and feelings in depth • Interviewer is able to clear up any ambiguities in the interviewee's response • Can be used with individuals or groups.	• Time consuming for the interviewer and interviewee • High costs if interview rooms are needed.
Activity sampling is where a record is kept of people's work activities at set times. For example, people might be asked to record what they are doing at set times each day or on certain days of the week.	• Is useful for monitoring whether project inputs are happening at the right times • Is useful for evaluation at pre-planned points • Can be used to check whether inputs are having an effect on outcomes.	• Can be unreliable if people do not record activity accurately.
Desk research means using existing sources of information, for example published statistics or information from the internet*, to measure the effectiveness of a project.	• Can be useful if a comparison with similar projects is needed • Information can be easily available • Low cost.	• The researcher may not know what resources are available or select the wrong ones • Available data might not be an exact match with the current project.

*Internet information is not always trustworthy.

When you are deciding what data collection method to use, you should ask yourself:

- what can I afford in terms of the time and cost of collecting the data?
- how important is the data to the evaluation, and does its importance justify the method I am using to collect it?

When you plan how you are going to collect your data, you should also plan how you are going to analyse it. The golden rule is that you should **never collect anything you can't analyse**.

never collect anything you can't analyse

Analysing data

4 When you have decided what data you are going to collect and how you are going to collect it, the next question to ask is:
"How should I analyse the data?"

You need to think about answers to the following questions:

- Is the data in the right format to apply to the PIs?
- Are there in-house facilities for analysing the data or do they need to be 'bought in'?
- What methods of analysis are there?

You need to begin by finding out whether the data will be in a form that you can use without further analysis. Some information, such as crime figures, may not need any further work.

If the data does need further analysis, you should find out whether analytical facilities are available within your organisation or in one of your partners'.

If you are going to get information from an organisation involved in the project, you should make sure that it comes to you in a form that you can use straight away.

Problems might occur if there are no analytical facilities you can use, or if you need to analyse data yourself.

Remember, you should **never collect anything you can't analyse**.

If you want to analyse quantitative data the simplest way is to use tables or charts. This is especially useful if you want to make before and after comparisons. Spreadsheet programmes can be used to create tables and charts. They are also useful for recording large amounts of quantitative data, and for performing calculations to show totals and averages.

It's more difficult to analyse qualitative data, especially when the answers are free form, such as those you would get from interviews or comments spaces on questionnaires.

To analyse this information, you need to look for patterns in the comments. When you come to write your evaluation report, you can then describe the patterns and illustrate them with quotes.

How to analyse data is a large subject and there are many different methods you can use. So that you don't get sidetracked from the purpose of this book, which is how to evaluate projects, we won't go in to data analysis here in any more detail.

The Crime Reduction College is producing a book on data collection and analysis methods. If you need any more information, please contact the College on 01347 825060.

The decisions about what data to collect, how to collect it and how you will analyse it will affect the **logistics** of your evaluation. We'll look at planning the logistics in the next section of this package, but for now we want you to look at the **YouthShop** case study on the next two pages.

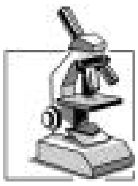
When we last looked at the case study, you decided what PIs you would use to measure the **YouthShop** targets and objectives against. Look at them again (pages 62 & 63) and decide what data you would use to measure them. Also think about:

- where you would find the data?
- how often you would collect it?
- which data you might not be able access.

Write your answers in the box and then compare them with ours on the next page.

Here is our suggested list of data sources. For each one we've suggested how often you could collect them and which ones might be difficult to find.

Data Source	Frequency	Difficult to Collect?
Local authority housing, maintenance and highways departments for information about numbers of repairs carried out and costs.	Should be collected at the start of the project, when the youth shelter is erected and then monthly for six months. This allows a direct comparison to be made with statistics collected before the start of the project.	The LA should have this information recorded for accounting purposes.
Fear of crime survey.	At the start of the project and six months after the shelter has been erected.	This information won't be readily available, so a special survey will have to be commissioned. This should use the same sample and questions as those used in the survey to establish the baseline.
Survey of numbers of youths using the shelter and found outside the shops.	Regular count possibly weekly from the date the shelter is built. This will allow the project team to monitor the success and take remedial action if required.	This won't be readily available and arrangements will have to be made for the data to be collected.
Project accounts will show actual expenditure on project (including publicity costs)and amount of money raised by sponsorship.	Collected six months after the shelter is erected to be compared with repair and policing costs for the same period.	This information should be available from the project team.
Police crime statistics and incident logs. These will give information about number of incidents and amount of time spent on dealing with them. Will also show how many visits to schools for promoting the scheme.	Collected at the start of the project and then monthly afterwards. Can be collected weekly if closer monitoring is needed.	This information should be available from the project team.



Now we have identified the data required for the **YouthShop** project, you can see that some of it comes from existing sources and some will have to be gathered specially.

Logistics

5 Unfortunately, evaluation doesn't just happen, someone has to do it and you need to decide how the work is going to be done and by whom.

You need to think about:

- who is going to gather the data?
- who will analyse it?
- how they will liaise with you in carrying out the work?
- who is going to write the report?

The first place to look for these resources is within your own organisation, or the partners in the project. The advantages of using internal resources are:

- they are usually more cost effective
- they may have ready access to existing data
- it helps to develop the necessary evaluation skills in-house.

If you use internal resources, it is often helpful if they are not directly involved in the project work. Why do you think this is? Write your answer in the space below and compare it with ours on the next page.

To evaluate a project successfully, you need an objective view of what has been achieved. It is difficult to do this if you are involved in a project because the natural tendency is to become so involved in your work that it can be difficult to take a step back from it.

For this reason it is better if your evaluation can be done independently.

We've put some of the resources you could use in this table, along with their advantages and disadvantages.

Source of Help	Advantages	Disadvantages
Local schools, colleges and universities often have students who are studying research methods and who need projects to work on. Some universities also carry out evaluations using their research departments.	• Relatively cost effective • Helps to improve community involvement.	• You can't always guarantee the level of skill of the students doing the work • Some institutions may not have the facilities to do complex kinds of work • Difficult to ensure confidentiality • Students may not be able to work full time on the evaluation.
External consultants.	• Will have expertise in evaluating projects • Will have access to external data and up to date research methods • Will evaluate objectively.	• Can be quite expensive • May need extensive background briefing on the area.
Local, regional and national research groups.	• Will have expertise in evaluating projects • Will have access to external data and up to date research methods • Will evaluate objectively • Often have experience of similar projects • Can call on extensive resources.	• Can be quite expensive • May need extensive background briefing .

For more complex evaluations you may find that you need the expertise of external consultants or research groups. This book will give you the basic knowledge to deal with them confidently.

Taking the decision about who is going to do the work also depends on:

- your budget
- the size of the project
- the likely impact of the results.

Once you've decided who is going to do the work, the next stage is to decide how you are going to manage and monitor it.

Managing the Work

To make sure that your evaluation runs as smoothly as possible and meets deadlines, you should put together a formal project plan.

As a minimum, a project plan should:

- list all the **key stages** of work
- show the **dates** by which they need to be completed
- show what **resources** are needed for each stage
- show **who** needs to be involved at each stage
- be **updated regularly** to reflect any changes.

A project plan could be as simple as entries on a calendar, wall chart or a table showing the information listed above.

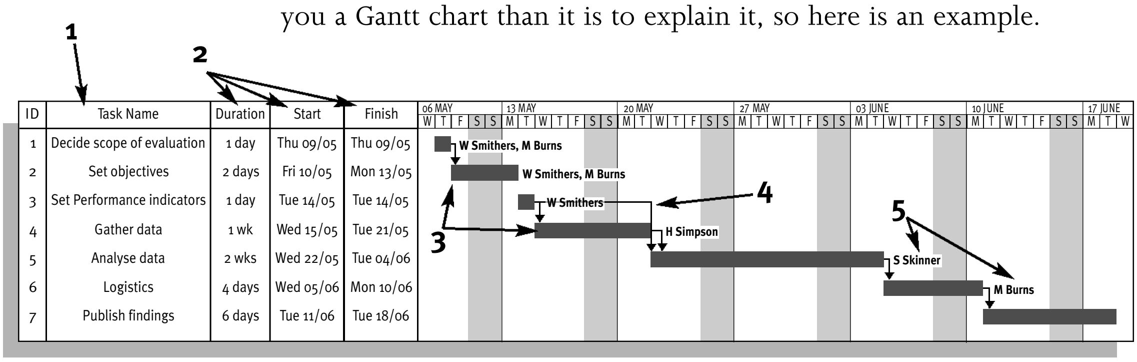
A simple rule is that the more complex and wide ranging the evaluation, the more comprehensive the project planning should be. For complex evaluations you should:

- include a **communications strategy** that sets out who needs to be told about the progress of the work
- carry out a **risk assessment** that shows what action you would take if something causes your plan to slip
- have some mechanism for **tracking** actual progress of the work against planned progress
- identify the **tasks** which are **vital** to the completion of the work, known as the **critical path.**

There are a number of methods that you can use for effectively managing complex projects. One of these methods is called **Prince**, which stands for **PR**ojects **IN** **C**ontrolled **E**nvironments. This method was developed to manage large information technology projects, but over the years has been used for many different types of projects.

The advantage of methods like PRINCE is that it makes it possible to keep tight control over a project and makes sure that all aspects are considered. They are, however, time consuming to set up and maintain so are mainly used for large projects.

Another useful method is to use **Gantt charts**. It's easier to show you a Gantt chart than it is to explain it, so here is an example.



A Gantt chart has several features:

1 all the tasks for the project are shown down the left hand side

2 the duration, start and finish dates for each task are also shown in text down the left hand side

3 the start date for each task and how long each is expected to take is shown by the bars on the calendar

4 the lines linking tasks show which tasks are dependant on each other

5 the names by the side of the tasks show who is responsible for completing them.

As you can see, a Gantt chart is basically a calendar so you could create one manually on a wallchart or in a spreadsheet.

There are many other methods that you can use, and you can also buy special project planning software. It is best to find out what system of project planning your organisation uses and stick to that.

Now that we've looked at the logistics of planning an evaluation, think about how you would plan the evaluation of the **YouthShop** project.

Look back over all the information about the project we have used so far and decide:

- who is going to do the work
- what your project plan is going to be - for this part of the exercise think about:
  - the key stages of work
  - the dates by which they need to be completed.

The table of data sources on page 78 will help you with deciding when to collect the data.

Write your answers down in the space below and then turn the page and read through our suggestions for what you could do.

Here are our suggested answers for how you could plan the logistics of the **YouthShop** evaluation. Don't expect them to be exactly like yours, you will have some different ideas. If you've managed to identify some of these issues, that's fine.

- Most of the collection and analysis work can be carried out by the project team and analysed by you.
- The fear of crime survey and numbers of youths using the shelter may need to be collected independently because of the time involved.
- If possible you should use the same organisation that carried out the original survey to carry out the follow up.

- A Gantt chart could be used to show the key stages for the project. It would show the key dates, including when the shelter should be erected, when it will start being used and the dates on which data will be collected.

If you look back to the evaluation model on page 39, you'll see that we've come to the final stages of the evaluation process. You've set your **objectives**, developed your **PIs**, selected your **data** and **data sources**, the data has been **collected** and **analysed**. Now it's time to **publish** your findings and do what you can to make sure they're acted on.

Publish findings

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

Who is your audience? This is normally the people who asked for the evaluation, but you need to think about who else should receive it. The intended audience will have an effect on how you present your information. For example, a report for local councillors will differ from a report for technical experts. Similarly, members of the public may need a different type of report.

Do those receiving the report have the skills and time to interpret it? It's important to get the level of complexity and the length of report right. If your report is a written one you might want to include a summary of your main findings at the beginning so that people can decide how much of the report they need to read.

What techniques are you going to use to show your findings? A written report is the most common way of getting your information across, but there are different techniques you could use.

...How should I present my findings so that people can understand what the data is saying and interpret it clearly?

What techniques for presenting your findings can you think of? Write down as many as you can think of in the space below and compare your answers with ours on the next page.

Here is a list of techniques you could use to show your information. We've also included some thoughts on when they can be used.

Tables are useful for summarising and comparing information. They should be easy to read.

Graphics can also summarise lots of information easily and one good graphic can have more impact than a lot of words.
They can include:

- graphs and charts
- maps and plans
- photographs
- sketches and diagrams.

Graphics are useful to illustrate information quickly. They do have an immediate impact, but may not always present data as fully as words or a table. All graphics should be clear and easily understood with a minimum of explanation.

Written Reports are the most widespread method used.

Presentations with visual aids are useful if you want to make an immediate impact. They have the advantage of being interactive so that your audience can ask questions about the evaluation and get an immediate reply. They are also useful for generating discussions about the project. The presentation and speaker's notes could be copied to the audience as a record, but will not include points that come out of the discussion.

Keep it simple.

The Internet can be useful if you want to reach a large audience quickly. However it is difficult to keep information confidential if you publish it in this way.

You should **also consider**:

- how often you need to report and when?
- who is going to prepare the work? Is it you, in-house partners or someone else?
- what is the most appropriate way to communicate your findings to your audience?

Keep it simple.

All your work will be wasted if the end results can't be easily understood.

So what?...

7 When you have published your findings, how do you make sure that any recommendations you may have made are acted on?

It may be necessary to set up a way of **reviewing** any work carried out as a result of your evaluation. Management teams, community groups or Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships might carry out this role.

If you have been called in as an independent evaluator on a project, you may not have any control over what happens to the results, but you could always **recommend** a review structure in your report.

When you present your findings you should also think about how your evaluation links to the organisation's **existing planning structures**. You can make recommendations about how the organisation could do this.

At this point you have come to the end of your evaluation. You might want to look back at what you've done and review the whole evaluation process. This will help you to decide how to carry out future evaluations more effectively.

So far we have looked at how to carry out an evaluation in an ideal world. But in the real world lots of other factors may affect how it is received. In Part Four of this book we'll look at **Other issues to consider**, but before we do that we'll make a last visit to the **YouthShop** project.

Part Three Case study

The findings of the evaluation need reporting to the local police, council and the residents' association where the evaluation took place.

We want you to:

- consider how you would present the findings to the different groups
- suggest how they should make sure that the recommendations are carried forward.

Write your answers in the space below.

On the next page you'll find our suggested answers to this exercise.

Here are some of the ways you can present the findings of your evaluation and make sure the results are acted on.

- A full written report could be provided for the local authority, police and any partnership organisations. This could include:
  - tables and graphs to show the key data before and after the shelter was erected (crime, fear of crime, number of youths gathering outside the shops and costs)
  - photographs taken of the area before and after
  - quotes from local residents and youths.
- A summary of findings could be written for distribution in the area.
- A presentation could also be designed for the council and local residents. This could be used at public meetings.
- Key findings could also be put in a press release for local papers and radio stations.

To make sure any recommendations are acted on, you can put a **timetable for further action** in your conclusions. This would have to be agreed in advance with all the relevant organisations, but **once it is in writing it is more likely to happen**. The timetable should include regular review dates.

That's it for the Process of Evaluation. On page 91 you'll find Part Four:
Other issues to consider

Summary - Part Three

Carrying out an evaluation is a project in its own right: it must be planned and organised and have clear objectives and methods for achieving them. The table below shows the seven-stage model for carrying out an evaluation. For each stage there are several questions you will need to ask in order to get the right results.

Phase	Stage	Questions
Planning the Evaluation	**1.** Set Objectives for the evaluation	- What is the **aim** of the evaluation? - What are the **objectives** and **targets** for the project we are evaluating? - What are the **objectives** and **targets** for the **evaluation**? - What **baseline** are you going to measure against? - Is there a **benchmark** in another organisation you can measure against?
	2. Develop Performance Indicators	- How will you measure whether or not the **objectives** have been achieved? - What are you going to measure: what **inputs, outputs** and **outcomes** ? - What performance indicators are you going to use: will they be **quantitative** or **qualitative**?
Doing the Work	**3.** Collect the Data	- What data do you need? - When and how often is it needed? - In what format is it required? - Where does the data come from? - Are the deadlines being met? - Are there any problems collecting the data?
	4. Analyse the Data	- Is the data already in the right format for applying to the **PI**? - Are there the facilities for analysing the data available in-house or do they need to be "bought in"? - What methods of analysis are there?
	5. Plan the Logistics of the evaluation	- Who will gather the data? - Who will analyse the data? - What key dates are there in the process?
Using the Results	**6.** Publish Findings	- Who is the audience? - Will your audience have the skills and time to interpret your findings? - How will you present the information?
	7. So what?	- What can you do to make sure that your recommendations are acted on?