

Scotland Funders' Forum Evaluation Declaration

Self Assessment Tool

What this tool is about: The Scotland Funders' Forum is a group of public and independent funders who are working together to try to make funding better in Scotland. One part of that is monitoring and evaluation. In December 2006 the Forum published the **Evaluation Declaration** which sets out 5 statements that describe why evaluation, monitoring and reporting are important and what they should achieve. This tool is the next step to help Funders work out to what extent the Declaration reflects reality.

Who the tool is for: The tool is for you as a member of the Scotland Funders' Forum. Filling it in will help you think about the way you undertake monitoring and evaluation in your role as a funder and your relationship with funded organisations.

Why should you fill it in: The tool will help you reflect on your monitoring and evaluation. It will help you identify what you do well and what you might do even better. Once you've filled in the tool you'll send it to Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS). ESS will prepare a personalised evaluation health report which will include relevant and achievable actions that you might want to take to improve your monitoring and evaluation and in turn deliver better and more effective funding.

This is meant to help you: So you need to be **honest!** Your answers are **confidential**. There are no current plans for information collected through the tool to be made public. Any decision to do so will only be taken with your agreement. ESS will share general lessons and good practice with the Funders' Forum as a whole. There will NOT be a league table of funders.

Please read the separate guidance before you complete the tool.

Contacts: Steven Marwick, Evaluation Support Scotland on 0870 850 1378 or steven@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk
Carolyn Sawers, Big Lottery Fund 0141 242 1400 or Carolyn.Sawers@biglotteryfund.org.uk

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SECTION 1 – ABOUT YOU

Organisation name:

Main contact person:

Main person's contact details (including phone number and email):

Are you filling in this tool in relation to your whole organisation or to one funding stream (if so which one)?

Please use the box below to provide a few broad facts about you as a funder. If you are filling in this tool in relation to one scheme please ALSO answer the same questions in relation to that stream.

- Roughly how much funding do you give out in a year?
- How many awards do you make?
- What type of organisation do you fund (for example voluntary organisation, charity, public bodies)?

SECTION 2 – SETTING THE CONTEXT

1. When the tool uses the phrase 'monitoring and evaluation' we mean your systems and processes for collecting information and analysing, reflecting and learning what has happened with your funding, what difference it has made and what you can learn as a result. If you want to work to a different definition please write your definition below and say why it's better for you.

2. Please think about the main **purpose(s)** of monitoring and evaluation in your organisation and decide how strongly you agree with the statements below. Put a mark in the box that most applies to you as a funder. There is **not** a correct answer!

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
Monitoring and evaluation is about accountability. In other words checking what was achieved with the funding and whether it was spent wisely and in line with the original plans.					
Monitoring and evaluation is about learning. In other words finding out what worked for whom in what circumstances and why and using that learning for decision-making.					
We sometimes struggle with striking a balance between monitoring and evaluation for accountability and monitoring and evaluation for learning.					
We give out funding because it's a good thing to do.					
We give out funding in order to make a difference to people's lives.					
We give out funding in order to achieve particular aims or priorities.					

3. Few funders have a completely free hand when setting monitoring and evaluation requirements. You may have your own requirements for example set by law, Audit Scotland, Scottish Ministers or a Trust Deed. Please very briefly describe any **external** considerations that you have to take account of when planning monitoring and evaluation.

4. How do funded groups report to you on what they've done with the funding they receive? Put a cross against any statement that applies to you:

	For all or nearly all awards	For some awards (such as bigger or more complex)
We give them a monitoring or evaluation form that they have to complete		
We ask them to provide a written report		
They send us their organisation's annual report and accounts		
We send someone to undertake a review in person		
We commission an external evaluation of the piece of work we've funded		

Other:

5. In general how frequently do funded organisations have to report to you?

If your answer to question 5 is 'it depends' then please briefly say why. (This might be something like: 'awards of less than £X report annually but larger awards report quarterly'.)

SECTION 3 – THE EVALUATION DECLARATION

1. Evaluation is valuable

Does evaluation add value to your work and the work of funded organisations? The table below has statements that relate to making evaluation valuable. Please put a cross in the box that best describes what each statement means to you.

Key to the table:

- 4: This **definitely** applies to us **and** everyone in our organisation would agree
- 3: This **generally** this applies to us
- 2: This applies to us **a little bit** but we have some way to go
- 1: This doesn't apply to us – and maybe it should
- 0: We are confident this is not appropriate for us. [If possible say why]

	4	3	2	1	0
1. We know why we monitor and evaluate our funding.					
2. We have a strategy or plan for how we monitor and evaluate our funding.					
3. We get a report from funded organisations that helps us understand what difference our funding makes.					
4. We take time to read the monitoring and evaluation reports we receive.					
5. Our monitoring and evaluation is not just for us. It is also useful for funded organisations.					
6. Our monitoring and evaluation helps us make decisions for the future.					
7. We share with others what we learn through monitoring and evaluation.					
8. It's not necessarily a problem if we find that things we have funded have not worked so long as there is learning for the future.					
9. We can think of specific times when we make use of monitoring and evaluation information even when we find it threatening.					
10. Monitoring and evaluation helps us celebrate success.					
11. Monitoring and evaluation tells us things that we wouldn't otherwise know.					

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

2. Evaluation is relevant

Is evaluation something that you and your funded organisations can use, share and act on? The table below has statements that relate to making evaluation relevant. Please put a cross in the box that best describes what each statement means to you.

Key to the table:

- 4: This **definitely** applies to us **and** everyone in our organisation would agree
 3: This **generally** applies to us
 2: This applies to us **a little bit** but we have some way to go
 1: This doesn't apply to us – and maybe it should
 0: We are confident this is not appropriate for us. [If possible say why]

	4	3	2	1	0
1. We know the difference we hope our funding will make.					
2. Our funded organisations know the difference they hope to make with the funding we give them.					
3. When we undertake monitoring and evaluation we ask for information about outputs such as attendance and activities.					
4. When we undertake monitoring and evaluation we ask for information on outcomes – the differences that happen as a result of activities.					
5. Our funded organisations are actually able to report on outcomes.					
6. We make use of the monitoring and evaluation information we receive.					
7. Our monitoring and evaluation gives us information about how well we are doing as a funder.					
8. We report to our decision makers (our Board, Ministers, Councillors) on how well we are doing as a funder.					
9. Our monitoring and evaluation allows real stories of people's lives to come through.					

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

3. Evaluation is proportionate

Are your monitoring and evaluation requirements the right fit for your funded organisations and for you? The table below has statements that relate to making evaluation proportionate. Please put a cross in the box that best describes what each statement means to you.

Key to the table:

- 4: This **definitely** applies to us **and** everyone in our organisation would agree
- 3: This **generally** this applies to us
- 2: This applies to us **a little bit** but we have some way to go
- 1: This doesn't apply to us – and maybe it should
- 0: We are confident this is not appropriate for us. [If possible say why]

	4	3	2	1	0
1. We tell funded organisations why monitoring and evaluation is important and what it involves for them.					
2. We explain our monitoring and evaluation requirements to funded organisations at the start of funding.					
3. We have different requirements for different sizes or complexity of awards.					
4. We don't add to our monitoring and evaluation requirements once the funded piece of work is underway.					
5. We have some flexibility on how funded organisations report to us.					
6. We visit or meet funded organisations during the life of an award.					
7. Funded organisations tell us as soon as things go wrong or if they don't understand our requirements.					
8. We have systems in place to allow us easily to monitor and evaluate ourselves and report externally.					
9. We regularly review that our monitoring and evaluation is fit for purpose.					
10. We share monitoring and evaluation information with other funders so funded organisations don't have to report the same thing twice.					

Is there anything you'd like to say?

4. Evaluation is supported

Do you provide support and guidance to funded organisations on evaluation? Do you support and train your staff? The table below has statements that relate to supporting evaluation. Please put a cross in the box that best describes what each statement means to you.

Key to the table:

- 4: This **definitely** applies to us **and** everyone in our organisation would agree
- 3: This **generally** this applies to us
- 2: This applies to us **a little bit** but we have some way to go
- 1: This doesn't apply to us – and maybe it should
- 0: We are confident this is not appropriate for us. [If possible say why]

	4	3	2	1	0
1. We give guidance to funded organisations on monitoring and evaluation in relation to our funding.					
2. We deliver or signpost evaluation training for funded organisations.					
3. We can pay for monitoring and evaluation activities as part of our funding to funded organisations.					
4. We assess an organisation's monitoring and evaluation capacity before we make an award.					
5. We train our staff in monitoring and evaluation.					
6. Our staff fully understand our monitoring and evaluation processes.					
7. Our staff have some flexibility when implementing our requirements.					
8. Our staff have opportunities to share good practice or problems.					
9. We ensure monitoring and evaluation is done ethically – that means in a way that follows principles of equality or confidentiality or safety.					
10. We know (roughly) how much we spend on monitoring and evaluation.					

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

5. Evaluation is about looking from inside and outside

Do you support and promote self-evaluation and external evaluation? The table below has statements that relate to evaluating from the inside and outside. Please put a cross in the box that best describes what each statement means to you.

Key to the table:

- 4: This **definitely** applies to us **and** everyone in our organisation would agree
- 3: This **generally** this applies to us
- 2: This applies to us **a little bit** but we have some way to go
- 1: This doesn't apply to us – and maybe it should
- 0: We are confident this is not appropriate for us. [If possible say why]

	4	3	2	1	0
1. We encourage and promote funded organisations to self-evaluate/monitor.					
2. We have guidance on self-evaluation/monitoring for funded organisations.					
3. We have systems to self-evaluate/monitor ourselves as a funder.					
4. We have a strategy or plan for when and how to commission external evaluations of our funding.					
5. We follow a standard tendering process when commissioning external evaluations of our funding.					
6. When we commission external evaluations of our funding we involve funded organisations in the commissioning process.					
7. We provide funding where appropriate for funded organisations to commission external evaluations themselves.					
8. We encourage and support evaluation to be done in a way that involves and makes sense to service users.					
9. We give feedback to funded organisations on what we think about their monitoring and evaluation reports.					
10. We can think of specific times when we've provided opportunities for funded organisations to share learning.					

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

SECTION 4 – OVERALL SELF ASSESSMENT

1. Overall what do **you (and your colleagues)** think about your monitoring and evaluation processes overall:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
Our monitoring and evaluation processes are straightforward.					
Our processes are reasonable for funded organisations (taking into account the level of funding or the priorities of the funding and so on)					
Our monitoring and evaluation gives us what we need.					

2. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the statements below are what funded organisations would say **about you**?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
'Their monitoring and evaluation processes are straightforward.'					
'Their processes are reasonable (we complain but we know why we have to do it)'					
'The monitoring and evaluation we do for them is also useful for us.'					

Comments:

3. Thinking overall about your monitoring and evaluation please write at least one thing you think you do really well.

4. If there were one thing you'd like to see improved in relation to your monitoring and evaluation what would it be?

SECTION 5 – FEEDBACK ON THIS TOOL

1. How many people were involved in completing this tool in your organisation?

2. How did you fill it in? For example did you have a meeting of relevant staff?

3. How easy was it to complete?

4. Was the process of completing the tool useful in helping you to reflect on your monitoring and evaluation?

5. What help if any would you like next?

Please return your completed tool by Friday 19 October 2007.

Please also send any key material that will give ESS more information about your monitoring and evaluation. This might include forms, guidance or a strategy. But please only send the most important documents and don't send application forms. If this material is on your website then please tell ESS where they can find it.

Please send it to Steven Marwick to steven@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk. If you need to post it please phone 0870 850 1378 and they will give you the best address to send it to (they are moving offices shortly).