Sussex Learning and Skills Council

Co-financed Projects

A Guide to Evaluation

Prepared by Aspire Learning Limited
June 2003
Updated – August 2004

Contents

Introduction

This guide was originally developed by Aspire Learning Limited, a research and development consultancy, on behalf of The Learning and Skills Council for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. It has subsequently been updated to be used by providers working with Sussex Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The guide is designed to support the teams working on co-financed projects to prepare for project evaluation.

The benefits of good evaluation are that:

- you can clearly evidence what your project has achieved, for whom, and at what cost.
- great value is gained by your own organisation and projects by providing a framework for continuous improvement through review.
- you can show that you have a track record. Useful when you are making other applications for funding.
- you will have information that will help you expand, develop or change the direction of a project or your organisation.

Evaluation need not be a difficult or arduous task, especially if it is seen as ongoing rather than something that prompts a flurry of activity at the end of a project. Projects will continually be gathering a range of information to support evaluation including, in many cases, completed copies of the Individual Learner Record (ILR).

It will be important for you to think about why you are evaluating your project. Consider what the evaluation report will be used for, who is going to use it and the format you want for the report. A common mistake is to provide lots of information whereas a focused evaluation report is preferable. It is quality rather than quantity that is important. So it is important be realistic, collect only what will be needed and used.

About this guide

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for project managers and those involved in the planning, delivery and/or co-ordination of co-financed projects to understand what evaluation is and how to carry out an evaluation effectively. It has been designed to meet the needs of projects irrespective of their size or focus.

How does it work?
Co-financed projects vary enormously and therefore require quite different approaches to evaluation. This guide will take the reader through the evaluation process and provide suggestions along the way to help those responsible for evaluation decide what and how they will evaluate. The emphasis throughout is on choice. There is no right way to evaluate and many topics about evaluation are still widely debated. For this reason this guide has been designed to be used as a “pick and mix” rather than a prescriptive framework, to ensure the evaluation process remains focused on the individual needs of the project.

The guide looks at evaluation from the beginning of the project, clearly some of the stages will have taken place already however, the information has been left in to support future project evaluation exercises.

About evaluation

What is evaluation?
In essence evaluation is about assessing the degree to which your project has met its aims. It does this by measuring the difference the project has made to beneficiaries over a period of time and in so doing assessing the impact this has had on:

- them
- their local community, and
- meeting local LSC targets.

Whilst there will always be an element of judging the success and justifying the cost of your project, in the context of co-financed projects the emphasis also needs to be on finding out what lessons can be learnt. It is important that you are able to say what has **not** worked as well as what has worked, what has helped and what has hindered you along the way. This provides invaluable information for other projects with similar target groups and activities, not just those funded by LSC discretionary funds.

For this reason it is useful to consider how the evaluation report could be used to share good practice and the lessons you have learnt in order to support the development of these other projects.

When to evaluate?
You should start thinking about evaluation right at the start of the project. Many make the mistake of only thinking about it at, or near to, the end of a project. It is essential to plan, ideally as part of your bid application, what information you will need and how you will gather, analyse and store it.

What method of evaluation?
All evaluation activities undertaken need to be proportionate to the size of the project being evaluated. The following is suggested as a guide to help you choose the method of evaluation:

> For smaller projects (< £50K) you should use a simple, cost-effective method such as adding questions to existing beneficiary/evaluation forms and / or use existing systems such as individual learning plans, to determine the changes to an individual over a period of time. This would not necessarily create a lot of additional work. If the focus of the questions were to be on the difference the project has had on the individual or business behaviour, it will provide an opportunity to find out what difference the project made.
>
> For medium sized projects (>£50K) you will need a more formal approach to evaluation. Systems will need to be in place to make sure that all relevant information is collected to support the final evaluation.
>
> For large projects (£250,000k +) you should consider the use of an independent, external evaluator to carry out a formal evaluation. The LSC may be able to provide you with suggestions of organisations that may be able to help.

Reporting the evaluation of co-financed projects
An evaluation of progress report for each project must be sent to your contract manager at the end of each year.

> End of Year 1 report
> End of Year 2 report
> Final report

Please use the headings set out in Section 7 as an outline format for your report.

Summary of key points

Remember……………………………

- **Evaluation is assessing whether you have met your aims and to do this measuring the difference a project has made over a period of time.**
- **Planning the evaluation needs to be built in right at the start of the project.**
- **It is important to be focused about what information you need to gather to support evaluation. Consider quality not quantity of information.**
- **There is no one correct way to evaluate, it is important to consider each project individually and to agree what areas will be the most important to evaluate and how best to carry this out.**

Key stages in evaluation

An overview of the stages of evaluation

Plan
Set out what you plan to evaluate, the questions you want evaluation to answer and how you will get the information you need to answer these questions.

Define roles and responsibilities
Consider the roles and responsibilities of the project manager, the evaluator, the project team and delivery partners, stakeholders/beneficiaries/project participants and LSC/funding bodies.

Set project objectives
In setting these make sure they are SMART (S = specific, M = measurable, A = achievable, R = realistic and T = time bound) and have a combination of hard and soft targets where possible.

Set baselines
What was the situation at the start of the project? If you don’t know this is will be hard to measure the difference the project made.

Set input, output and impact measures
Break your evaluation down into bite-sized chunks, which consider what you put into the project, what you got out of it and the difference this has made to beneficiaries.

Pull the information together
Pull together a record that can be used to ensure that each stage of evaluation activity is recorded and can be monitored.

Produce evaluation reports
Ensure this includes key findings, analysis and conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt.

Disseminate project findings
Consider who would benefit from the results of the evaluation, what you want to tell them, how you will tell them and when you will tell them.

1. Planning

Introduction

Throughout the planning stage you need to be realistic about the information you will collect. Only gather that which you will need and use.

Consider whether the project will be evaluated internally by members of the project team or externally by using an independent external evaluator. If you decide to use an external evaluator ensure that they are commissioned soon after the start of the project to enable them to support evaluation planning.

Set out what you plan to evaluate

Starting point
In your bid you will have justified why your project was needed and your project aims. Clear project aims will provide a good starting point to help you decide what it will be important to evaluate. The evaluation will determine the degree to which these aims have been met.

Evaluation Specification
Whether you plan to evaluate internally or externally you need to specify exactly what will be required of the evaluation i.e. what you want to get out of the evaluation and how you will do this. This is called an evaluation specification and can specify the information you will gather in order to get the answers you require. This may include information that:

- you have already got (or are already gathering through project monitoring) such as the ILR, monthly and quarterly reports
- you will need to collect as you are not already doing so.

The following section in this guide on gathering information will give some ideas on the types of information that you may need. Once you are clear about this you may wish to think about:

- How you will collect, analyse and store the information
- Who will do this
- To what timescales
- What results you require

Of utmost importance is the need to measure the difference the project has made. It is important to think about collecting information at the beginning of the project (see section 5 on baselines) and at the end in order to compare the results, i.e. the distance travelled during the life of the project.

What questions do you want your evaluation to answer?

Whilst drawing up the evaluation specification it is worth considering whether you would like answers to any of the following questions. The list is not exhaustive, nor is it prescriptive. It is merely designed to help you think about what information you may need to collect to support evaluation.

Financial information

- How well did the project keep within its budget?
- What was the cost per beneficiary?
- Do you think the project could have achieved the same results more cheaply? If so how?
- What could you have achieved if more funding had been available?
- Were any resources wasted?
- What is the cost per successful outcome?

Management information

- How many learners or businesses participated?
- Did you recruit the right number of beneficiaries?
- To what degree were they recruited according to the profile of need in the original application?
- How many completed their programmes?
- How many did not complete their programmes and why?
- What could have been done to prevent them leaving early?
- How well did they meet their targets?
- How many went on to other learning, employment, other options?
- What specifically did beneficiaries progress to?
- To what degree were project aims and objectives met?
- What administrative lessons were learnt? How can these be used to help run projects more effectively in the future?

Feedback

- What did the beneficiaries or businesses think of the programme?
- How closely did the project recognise and meet local needs?
- What did they get out of it?
- How could it have been improved?
- What difference has participation made to them?
- What did project partners think of the programme?
- How well did partners contribute? Were they all aware of their roles?
- To what degree were expectations met? Were there any mismatches of expectation?

Other information

- What steps have been taken to encourage beneficiaries to continue using your services?
- How has IT been used to support the project and what were the benefits?
- How has the project promoted equal opportunities?
- How has the project supported the regional approaches to sustainable development?
- How has the project contributed to the protection of the environment and careful use of natural resources?
- What local partnerships have you created, how effective are these?
- How far has the project contributed to maintaining economic growth?

Consider how you will gather the information to help answer these questions

In determining from whom and how you will gather information you may wish to consider:

Talking to employers or individual beneficiaries

Define carefully who these are. For example, a project may be training advisers to encourage others in their local community to take up learning opportunities. In this case you will need to gather information and feedback from both the adviser and the person in receipt of their advice.

A learner representative project may need to assess the difference made to the company, the learning advocate and the employees of the company in their evaluation.

You could also consider gathering views from people who have had an opportunity to participate but chose not to. Their views may prove useful in terms of determining what stops individuals from taking part and thus could support project development in the future.

Information from employers, beneficiaries or others may be gathered by:

- offering one to one interviews
- questionnaires
- holding focus groups which discuss issues in a small group environment
- meeting with them informally during their programme
- telephoning them (it is a good idea to ask participants at the outset whether they would mind a call at home for evaluation purposes)
- holding question and answer sessions.

Hints on talking to participants

Consider asking:
Whether the programme was what they expected?
What they liked most and least about the programme and what they found useful and least useful?
Whether they would recommend the programme to a friend or other business?
What they were doing before they joined the programme?
What they are doing now?
What their expectations were, whether these were met and whether the programme has made a difference to them and if so, how?
What effect has the programme has had on the organisation and employees?

Observe activities

Carry out planned observations of various project activities, perhaps at the start and at the end of a project to see what changes have been made. Include observations of employers, those offering learning support, staff and participants themselves (make sure you brief staff/beneficiaries before using this method).

Hints on observation as an evaluation method

Make this as informal as possible to avoid creating an artificial environment.

Consider a mystery shopper exercise. For example, an independent researcher presenting as a client gathers information about a service (make sure you inform staff about this method first).

Examine documentation

Consider how reviews by trainers or assessors can be used to support evaluation. Use evidence produced by the beneficiaries such as the portfolio of evidence. The review process, as recorded in the Individual Training Plan, could also offer valuable information that would support evaluation.

In addition to the ILR information, administration/management systems, procedures, minutes, event evaluation sheets or any other written record of activity can be very useful.

Develop feedback processes

You may consider developing feedback sheets that can be completed by the participants themselves or by an interviewer collecting responses from participants via the telephone.

Hints on developing processes for gathering feedback

Evaluation sheets, otherwise known as “happy sheets”, are a good way of finding out what participants thought of an activity.

Consider using pre activity and post activity feedback questionnaires to help judge the distance travelled due to the activity.

Use some scoring and ranking in the questions. This is a useful way of gathering feedback as results can easily be analysed and summarised.

Structure any forms or feedback sheets so that you get a consistency in the way in which results are collected. This makes it easier to analyse the results.

Make sure the language is appropriate for the group.

Test the completion of the forms to iron out any problems before you use them.

Consider whether beneficiaries are able to help develop and contribute to feedback processes by carrying out information gathering themselves or supporting questionnaire design.

2. Define and agree key roles & responsibilities

To support the planning of your evaluation you need to decide who will do what to support the process. We list a number of people who may have a role. Of course, smaller projects might only have one person responsible for evaluation. It will be important to ensure any definitions of roles and responsibilities are included in job descriptions.

Who is likely to be involved?

In most cases there will be key responsibilities undertaken by named project representatives. In some small projects all roles may fall to one or two individuals. In larger projects whole teams may be involved.

Some key roles and responsibilities are likely to include:

The project manager

- Day-to-day activities of the project.
- Ensuring activities are carried out in line with delivery plans.
- Monitoring the achievement of outcomes.
- Ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation of the project.

The evaluator

- Making sure that evaluation is considered from the start of the project.
- Setting up systems and procedures to capture appropriate management information and feedback from beneficiaries throughout the life of the project.
- Developing and agreeing the evaluation plan with the project manager and the key partners.
- Understanding LSC requirements for evaluation.

The project team and delivery partners

- Understanding the importance of data capture and its role in supporting evaluation.
- Collecting Management and Financial Information.
- Collecting feedback from beneficiaries, employers and partners.
- Feeding back to the evaluator on aspects of the project with which they are involved.

Stakeholders / beneficiaries / project participants

- Providing information about how well they feel the project is progressing.
- Feeding back to project managers and project teams to enable them to assess whether the original objectives were appropriate, whether progress is in line with their needs and whether changes are required.

LSC / Funding bodies

- Receiving and analysing the results of evaluation over and above the monthly and quarterly progress reports.
- Ensuring that projects understand the need for evaluation.
- Providing projects with the opportunity to learn from the success or otherwise of other projects.
- Evaluating activities jointly undertaken by the project and the funding body such as contracting, performance reviews and joint events.
- Evaluating the collective achievements of all Co-financed projects across the region.

3. Setting Project Objectives

You have now planned your evaluation and agreed roles and responsibilities. The next step is to re-visit your project aims and objectives to see how these can be used to support your evaluation. They will have been stated in the overview and rationale you described in your bid, and/or in your delivery plan.

If you did not describe project objectives now is the time to do so. If you did then check that they are SMART. The more specific the objectives the easier they will be to use. By SMART we mean that the objectives are:

S	Specific – concise and definite about what is being attempted.
M	Measurable – to enable an assessment to be made.
A	Achievable – ambitious but not unachievable.
R	Realistic – can be achieved within the scope of the project.
T	Time bound – what is to be achieved by what precise date.

Hard and soft targets
You should include a combination of both hard and soft targets. These can be described as:

Hard targets
Targets that can usually be counted, such as number of learners, number of certificates, new courses developed, number of meetings held, etc. They do not necessarily show the success of the project as a whole as there is no evidence of the difference that achievement of these has made. Hard targets **must include** but may not be restricted to those set out in your Delivery Plan in terms of your outcome, output and milestone targets (Appendix 3 of the contract).

Soft targets
Which include other issues that, whilst they cannot be counted with the same degree of accuracy tend to be more subjective than hard targets, are good indicators of a project's success in achieving its aims. Examples of soft indicators include customer awareness, improved partnership working, increased motivation, improved interpersonal skills, organisational skills, levels of confidence, time management, taking on new work tasks, improved quality, etc. These show how the project achieved learning and the development of skills.

Soft targets give a good indication of the impact that the project has had and may describe some of the steps that have been taken in order that more tangible, hard targets can be achieved. This is of particular relevance for those with multiple barriers to learning at the outset of participation or in the case of beneficiaries who are new to learning. For them the achievement of, say a qualification may be too great a step in the lifetime of the project.

The following example illustrates what is meant by a SMART objective and hard and soft targets.

An example of a SMART objective which includes hard and soft targets:

Aim: To improve the ability of volunteer advisers to assess the likelihood of their client having basic skills needs.

The objective:
By November 20XX, the project team will have delivered a minimum of 4 basic skills awareness sessions to 20 Advisers per session from the voluntary sector (Hard target).

This will result in Advisers being more aware of basic skills issues, how to identify basic skills needs in clients and the action to take to support clients with basic skills needs (Soft targets).

4. Setting a baseline

By this stage you have planned your evaluation, agreed roles and responsibilities and have a series of SMART objectives.

Now in order to see what difference your project has made i.e. what your project has achieved in moving towards, or actually meeting its aims and objectives, you need to be clear as to the situation at the start of the project (this can be defined as the baseline). The baseline provides the starting point from which you can judge the success of the project as you can now measure the distance travelled during the lifetime of the project.

Hints on setting a baseline

If your project will be introducing something new, for example a new learning programme, the baseline will be zero. In other cases there may be current activity on which your project aims to build for example increasing the circulation of a directory to specific target groups. In this case the baseline might be the circulation of 400 and your objective is to increase this to 800 within a set timeframe.

5. Setting inputs, outputs and impact measures

With your evaluation specification (what you want out of the evaluation), your clearly defined roles and responsibilities, your SMART objectives and your baseline information you now have the tools needed to move forward your evaluation.

At this stage it is useful to break evaluation down into bite-sized chunks to keep the process simple, and then to consider how you will use your tools to evaluate against each of these “chunks”, as follows:

1. Evaluation of inputs
2. Evaluation of outputs
3. Evaluation of impact

Don’t worry how you will record this information, as we will cover this later. This section is aimed at helping you understand what these measures are.

Inputs

Inputs are the resources put into the project, are closely aligned to hard targets and may include:

- money
- the number of staff involved/their time commitment
- the number of learners involved
- project meetings or briefing time
- review meetings
- systems and procedures implemented

Outputs

These are what you get out of the project and are generally quantifiable (things that you can count). They are the short-term effects from the project activity and again link closely to hard targets. They may include:

- the number of learners completing learning programmes
- the number of NVQs (or units achieved)
- the number of work placements
- staff development activities undertaken
- materials created
- websites developed
- how often facilities are made available
- how often facilities are used.

Impact
This is perhaps the most important element of any evaluation and the most difficult to measure. Most people are relatively comfortable with collecting information about the actual number of people attending training programmes and the qualifications they achieved. It is more difficult to assess the difference this has made to the person who has received the support, their family, the local community and to achieving the local LSC objectives. It is also likely that some of the impact can only be measured after the initial action, when the full effect of the change or implementation has had time to establish itself.

Impact measurement could be referred to as the **'so what'** factor. So the project achieved all the required outputs at the right price within the right time frame. **So what** does this really mean to the individual beneficiary and the wider community? What impact did the project have on people, on systems, on procedures? How far has the programme contributed to the Learning and Skills Council's goals? Did the programme make a difference?

Impact measures may include:
- learners enrolling on further learning opportunities
- reduction in benefit claimants
- increased staff skills which may result in increased profitability of the company
- increased skill base for the region which may tackle skill shortage areas
- increased customer base
- improved motivation and confidence
- enhanced partnership relationships
- improved personal relationships and relationships with colleagues
- relationships built with other agencies
- cultural changes within companies
- attitudinal changes
- increased understanding of cultural issues.

To further help understand the definition of input, output and impact measures an example follows that shows how they can be recorded against project objectives.

Example of recording inputs, outputs and impact measures

Objective	Inputs	Outputs	Impact
By Sept 20XX to carry out a learning needs analysis with 20 practitioners, resulting in a full gap analysis and recommendations for action.	Development of a learning needs analysis questionnaire Circulation to practitioner network/s Collection and analysis of responses	20 practitioners complete and return questionnaire Reponses analysed, gaps identified and report written	Final report with recommendations enabled a full learning plan to be developed that covers identified needs
By Sept 20XX, evaluate the success of the new learning plan in equipping the practitioners with the skills needed.	Focus groups to establish practitioner and manager views on the effectiveness of learning undertaken	4 focus groups Feedback on learning delivered Feedback on the difference the learning has made to practitioner knowledge, skills and confidence	Practitioners more confident in their role Individual learning plans achieved Managers satisfied with the success of their teams

6. Pulling the information together

The table overleaf builds on all of the above stages of evaluation. It provides a suggested template that may be used to make sure all necessary information is collected and recorded easily. This template should support the project evaluation and ensure that evaluation is rooted in all project activities. A blank template is provided at annex A, should you wish to use it.

Hint for pulling the information together

By working with a template such as this you will have a framework for helping you reflect on the progress of the whole project and have a method of ensuring that each activity has contributed to the overall project success.

Remember, this table should be planned, and decisions made as to how the information will be recorded and gathered right at the start of the project. This way systems can be set up to ensure all relevant information is collected as easily as possible.

Evaluation planning template to capture information

Objective	Inputs	Outputs	Impact measures	Level at start (baseline)	Target level to be achieved	When to be achieved	Who is responsible	Method of monitoring
To form a partnership of key stakeholders to steer the project and actively participate in progressing activities	Partner time Venue costs Agenda and minutes of meetings	Partner commitment agreements Agendas Minutes	All partners actively participate by attending quarterly meetings and supporting the project by steering its progress.	No steering group in place	6 partners engaged 1 meeting in 20XX Schedule of meetings for 20XX	Dec 20XX	Project Manager	Participation in meetings Annual review to establish if partners are fulfilling their commitments Agendas and minutes of meetings.
To provide home based ICT training to people who have restricted mobility	Purchase of 6 laptops Tutor training development Beneficiary training package development Cost of marketing	Tutors trained Beneficiaries receive training Full and part qualifications achieved Beneficiaries enrol on further learning Marketing materials	Improved confidence and motivation of beneficiaries 6 enrolments on further learning The marketing materials supported the recruitment of beneficiaries	1 laptop Notes from similar college based training	5 laptops 500 marketing flyers sent out 5 trained tutors 20 trained beneficiaries 10 full / 10 part qualifications	Dec 20XX	Project Manager	Tutor and beneficiary qualification certificates Course enrolment forms Completed evaluation questionnaires by tutors / beneficiaries / staff

7. Producing interim and final evaluation reports

The information you have gathered will be used to produce evaluation reports. A progress report for each project must be sent to your contract manager at the end of each year. Report dates are as follows:

End of Year 1 report
End of Year 2 report
Final report

Interim evaluation report

The earlier report could be described as interim reports. These should describe whether things are working out as planned and make practical recommendations for getting things back on track if they are not. These reports should be considered as an opportunity that supports and eases the process of undertaking the final evaluation. The better the interim evaluation reports, the easier the final evaluation will be as gaps in the systems you use to evaluate your project will be evident and can therefore be filled before the project finishes.

Final evaluation report

The final evaluation will be an extension of the interim evaluation in terms of activities that have taken place after the interim evaluations were written and any changes that occurred as a result of interim recommendations. The final evaluation will culminate in a Final Evaluation Report.

Writing the evaluation report

We now consider the structure you could use to write your evaluation report. Please use the following headings as an outline format for your evaluation reports.

Report sections should include:

Introduction
This should include a summary of your project, the original aims and objectives and an overview of key partners and their input or role/s in the project.

Executive Summary of the overall report
This will include the key points from the full report. (If the reader of the report were to read nothing else they need to be able to get a good understanding of the project from this summary.)

Methodology
Outline the methods that you have used to collect the information to write this report. Include:

- Partner roles and responsibilities,
- How you ensured that the project was in line with quality standards,
- Steps taken to safeguard against health and safety risks
- Your methodology for evaluating this project.

Project findings and outcomes
This should offer an overview of what has happened in terms of progress to date on the project and should include some of the following as a minimum:

- Inputs to the project – expenditure to date, how this may have differed from budget what measures were taken to ensure expenditure was on target. How ICT is being used by the project and any other resources required to ensure project success.
- Outcomes from the project - what has the project achieved compared to objectives and targets for this time, any unexpected additional outcomes? Were there any other outcomes that would have been useful for the target group? Any new links or networks created?
- Impact - what impact did these achievements have, what difference did the project make to those who took part, the wider community and to the achievement of local LSC aims?

It is important that this section draws out examples of how your project supported the following areas:

Sustainable development – how did your project contribute towards one or more of the following:

- o Protecting the environment
- o Careful use of natural resources
- o Progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- o Maintaining high and steady levels of economic growth and employment

Equal Opportunities – how did your project support and promote equal opportunities?

Information and Communication Technology – what was used, how and what results benefits were obtained?

Involvement of Local Partnerships – how far these were involved and how flexible the project was to meeting local needs?

Analysis of findings and outcomes
What do the findings really tell us?

- Is / was the rationale for the project right? Are/were the targets right? Are/were the methods used appropriate? Are/were the partner roles and responsibilities appropriate?
- Does the project rationale remain valid?
- What went well in the project? What were the project's strengths?
- What did not go well in the project? What were the project's weaknesses?

Sustainability
Should the project be taken forward, if so how. What steps are you taking to ensure that project can be sustained successfully? (For interim reports this section should look at any major changes required to ensure project success.)
How will you ensure that other projects can benefit from the findings of your project?

Lessons learnt and recommendations
What can we draw from these findings in order to learn, grow and help others to achieve?

- Given the opportunity to deliver a similar project again, what would you recommend be repeated and what recommendations for change would you make?
- What should happen next?

Information available
Please detail any reports or other information that have become available as a result of this project. Where can the information be obtained? Are there any case studies available which illustrate the impact of your project on individuals, groups or organisations?

8. Disseminating project findings

It is very important that the evaluation findings are used to benefit your project and its on-going success. Consider how you will provide interested parties with the findings in your report. Map who you think would benefit from receiving the information and consider how best you can get this information to them. Think about posting the report onto a website. The LSC may be able to advise you which websites might be the most suitable and how best to approach the technical issues of getting the report into a suitable format. Also consider whether a dissemination event would be useful. Perhaps a half day could be taken to present the results of the report and give delegates the chance to talk about the results in smaller groups to see how they might make good use of lessons learnt.

Hints and considerations for information dissemination and feedback

Who would benefit from the results of the project activity and evaluation?
Certainly all of the people connected to the project will be interested in feedback including staff, LSC, beneficiaries and partners. In addition, representatives from other similar projects will have an interest and will wish to learn from it.

Why would the audience benefit?
Considering why the audience will benefit helps ensure that the content is appropriate to meet the audience needs.

What you want to tell them?
What are the key themes and messages of interest (This may vary from audience to audience)? What are your main findings? How did the processes work? What results did you achieve? What recommendations would you make for future action? Where would the project go next? What key lessons can be taken from the project?

How to tell them
Should there be an event, workshop, newsletter, email, report, or combination of these? It is good practice to prepare a summary of the evaluation report. If the report is too lengthy many people will not read it.

When to tell them
Try not to leave all feedback to the end. It may be too late to support or influence others to learn from your findings, recommendations and lessons. It is worth considering the co-financed projects or other bidding cycles and how the report might inform those preparing bid applications. The LSC should be able to advise you about this.

Annexes

Annex A

Evaluation planning template to capture information

Objective	Inputs	Outputs	Impact measures	Level at start (baseline)	Target level to be achieved	When to be achieved	Who is responsible	Method of monitoring

Annex B

Bibliography and further reading

Developing Performance Indicators for Competitiveness Fund Projects – DfEE May 1997

Developing performance indicators for competitiveness fund projects – DfES
ESF Objective 3 – Leavers Survey 1999 - DfES

Evaluation Discussion Papers - Charities Evaluation Services (set of 7)

Practical monitoring and evaluation - CES

Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled – IES

Measuring soft outcomes and distance travelled: a review of current practice – DfES/ESF 2000.

The Good Practice Series - Monitoring, evaluation and research – TECs getting results

The Good Training Provider's Guide to Monitoring and Review – Simon Shaw / Mindset 2000

Annex C

Feedback on this Guide

1. Organisation details:

a. Company name:
b. Project name:
c. Contact name:

d. What experience has your organisation had with running and evaluating co-financed projects?

Extensive experience	☐
Some experience	☐
Little experience	☐
No experience	☐

2. How would you score each of the sections of this booklet?

	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor
Introduction	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gathering information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Defining and agreeing key roles and responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Setting project objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐
Setting a baseline	☐	☐	☐	☐
Setting input, output and impact measures	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pulling the information together	☐	☐	☐	☐
Producing interim and final evaluation reports	☐	☐	☐	☐
Disseminating project findings	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. What information did you find most useful?

4. What information did you find least useful?

5. What would you have liked to have seen in this guide that you feel is missing?

6. How do you feel the guidance booklet could be improved?

Thank you for taking time to complete this form. Please return it to Aspire Learning Limited, Freepost NAT 2587, PO Box 561, Portsmouth PO5 1BR.