



Monitoring and Evaluation - Are you keeping track of your Progress

Most organisations in the Voluntary Sector tend to get bogged down with monitoring and evaluation and avoid doing it unless they are forced to do so as a prerequisite of allocated funding. If you really care about how well you are doing or about what impact you are having, then Monitoring and evaluation will enable you to assess the quality and impact of your work, against your action plans and your strategic plan. In order for monitoring and evaluation to be really valuable, you do need to have planned well.

Monitoring is the collection and analysing information as a project progresses. Monitoring does not have to be mundane and boring, if we find ways to integrate it into our daily routine. It only becomes difficult and challenging, if we don't regularly collect and process valuable monitoring information when it happens, and live things to accrue until its too late. Monitoring Information demonstrate what has been achieved and shows progress towards your aims.

The purpose of monitoring is to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of a project or organisation. By setting SMART Milestones at the very start, it is helps to ensure that targets set and activities planned are being achieved. From the onset, be realistic when setting targets and estimating numbers. It also helps to keep the work on track, and can let management and key stakeholders know when things are going wrong.

If Ensure the information you collect is reviewed regularly (quarterly if necessary) and address issues affecting milestones that are not being achieved due to external environmental (Social, Economical, Political, Technological) pressures.

done properly, it is an invaluable tool for good management, and it provides a useful base for evaluation. It enables you to determine whether the resources you have available are sufficient and are being well used, whether the capacity you have is sufficient and appropriate, and whether you are doing what you planned to do.

The main ways to collect information are:

- Self-assessment
- Interviews / questionnaires
- Record keeping (attendances registers at events, receipts)



Tools for collecting information

- 1) User panels
- 2) Survey monkey
- 3) Observations
- 4) Focus groups
- 5) Speak outs

Basic principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect only what you need • Keep it simple • Same information at least twice
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot • Use scales where possible • Sampling and / or snapshots • Flexibility to record unexpected outcomes • Multiple methods where possible
People Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User friendly • Who, when, how and why • Give feedback