

Community energy efficiency toolkit

Monitoring and evaluation part 1:

What are monitoring and evaluation?

Why does evaluation matter?

We want to scale-up community energy

- So we need to know what works

Funding and planning projects

- Evidence of your achievements to support bids
- Enables business planning

Government

- Evidence-based policy
- Community energy alongside 'big' energy

Monitoring and Evaluation: Why do it?

- Accountability/proof of impact for funders
- Inform and improve decision-making processes
- Lessons from successes and challenges can inform new projects
- Support business planning
- Credibility and professionalism
- Better programme/project management
 - Do not see it as an additional burden but a valuable task which you can really learn from and use to:
 - Stay on track and deliver goals
 - Detect problems earlier
 - Stick to allocated time and budget

Monitoring is:

- Real time information
- Ongoing progress
- Regular feedback to stakeholders/management
- Delivered by the programme/project team (e.g. regular key performance Indicators report)
- Valuable but not essential

Evaluation is:

- In-depth assessment of activities
- Assessment of extent to which objectives are being achieved
- Either on-going or after project completion
- Informing decision-making process for future programmes/projects
- Where possible, delivered independently

Cost assessment

Value for money evaluation. Inputs in comparison to outputs and outcomes – what you are getting for your money.

Can often be done without interviews and surveys (e.g. as a desk study/audit of project records).

Process

Aims to describe what is happening in the course of the project.

What worked well and what didn't.

In what circumstances, for whom, and why?

Positives/Negatives.

Useful in determining what to repeat in the future, what to stop etc.

Outcome/impact

Measures the results of a project.

Impact evaluation is a type of outcome evaluation, looking at longer term deeper impacts observed as a result of change caused by the project.

'Attribution of impact' to the project

Types of evaluation

Common types of evaluation

It is important to note that certain types of evaluation are more involved and trickier than others. *True* impact assessment is a tricky business and often involves:

- Independent evaluators for objectives assessments
- Establishing a counterfactual/control group to compare against the project (experimental) group
- Measuring changes over extended (sometimes very long term) periods of time

Often this is not possible with short time lines and budgets so a realistic, project-specific evaluation plan may need to prioritise and compromise.