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# Glossary of terms

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## Introduction

There is often a bewildering range of terms and phrases used in the process of evaluation. This part of the book should help clarify them. The definitions are arranged alphabetically so that as well as helping you to understand what they mean, this part can also be used as a reference.

For each word or phrase, there is a definition and, in most cases, an example. Where phrases or words are linked to each other these links have been underlined.

## **Aim**

An **aim** is a simple statement which sets out the **purpose** of the project or evaluation.

An example of an Aim is:

“The aim of this evaluation is to measure the effects of the Kilbeck Burglary Reduction Initiative.”

It's important not to confuse aims with objectives. An objective is a specific statement that can be measured. It states exactly what you want to achieve in your evaluation.

## **Baseline**

The baseline is the situation at the start of a project, before any preventive work has been carried out: the information that helps to define the nature and extent of the problem.

If you look back to the 10 Steps Method on page 22 of this book, you will see that the first step is to define the nature and extent of the problem.

This is an important part of all projects and vital to any evaluation.

For example, an initial analysis of theft from cars in a town centre car park might show 12 offences a week. An evaluation of the situation at the end of the project shows that the number of thefts has reduced by a third, to 8 a week. Having the baseline information available during the evaluation helps to measure the effects of any work carried out.

Whether you are involved in a project from the start, or just in the evaluation stages, you should make sure that there is enough baseline information to help you measure the achievement of any action.

## **Benchmark**

A **benchmark** is a measure of performance in similar organisations against which the performance of your organisation can be compared.

Benchmarks can be used to measure how successful you are in dealing with a particular aspect of work and to set standards for performance in your own organisation.

For example, if an organisation was looking at how effectively it dealt with telephone enquiries, it might compare its performance with other organisations doing similar work.

The benefit of benchmarking for evaluation is that you can **measure** the success of a particular project by **comparing** it with other, similar, projects. The important thing to remember is that the benchmarks you use must be for **similar work in similar areas**.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation is the process of **assessing**, at a particular point in time, whether or not particular projects are **achieving** or **have achieved their objectives**.

We have already looked at a definition of evaluation in some depth in part one of this book. Evaluation is about **measuring the outcomes of a particular project**. An outcome is the overall result of a project.

Evaluation can also be used to measure whether the processes used in a project are working properly. This is called **process evaluation** and it measures the **inputs** and **outputs** of a project.

## **Goal**

Another term sometimes used for **target**.

## **Initiative**

An alternative term often used to describe a **project**.

## Input

The inputs to a project are the **resources** used to carry out the work. Resources can be **financial, material or human**.

For example, in a project to reduce the incidence of crime in a town centre by installing a closed-circuit television system (CCTV) some of the inputs would be:

- <PASSPORT> money to buy equipment
- <PASSPORT> the CCTV equipment
- <PASSPORT> staff time to install it
- <PASSPORT> staff time to monitor the system
- <PASSPORT> publicity material to launch the start of the system.

From a project management point of view it is important to be aware of exactly what resources are available to carry out the work. When resources are limited, it can affect the objectives of a project and the scope of the work carried out.

Being aware of the inputs used on a project is vital to its evaluation. As well as measuring the success of a project, you could be measuring the cost effectiveness of any input and whether any specific methods were particularly useful. It could be that a project or method was effective because of the level of resources available.

Deciding on the level of input to a project is carried out at step four of the 10 Steps Method.

## Milestone

Milestones are **key points** during the life of a project. They are decided at the planning stage and can be **time-based** or **event-based**.

## Mission

The mission is the over-arching **reason** why an organisation exists. These are often described in **mission statements**, which describe the overall aims of the organisation.




It's useful to be aware of any mission or aims that an organisation has set itself. Part of the process of evaluation might be to measure the success of a project, programme, or strategy by measuring it against the organisation's mission.

Another term often used for mission is **vision**.

## Monitoring

Monitoring is the process of **continually assessing** whether or not particular projects are **achieving** or **have achieved their objectives**. Monitoring is also used to check whether the processes being used are working effectively.

Monitoring is carried out throughout the life of a project, while evaluation is only carried out at specific points in time. Monitoring is used to check:

-  whether specific targets have been met
-  how inputs are being used
-  whether specific outputs have been achieved.

## Objectives

**Objectives** are a key tool for evaluation and project management and they often cause problems for people who have to write them and use them.

Put simply, an objective is a **statement** that **describes something you want to achieve** - the desired outcome of a project or an evaluation study.

A good evaluation should be able to compare the actual results of a project against the desired results. For this to take place it is important that objectives are written so that they can be measured. In order for this to take place objectives should be **SMART**. This stands for:

- S**pecific - all objectives should have specific outcomes.
- M**easurable - the outcome of an objective should be capable of being measured. Measurable objectives will always contain a target.
- A**chievable - the objective should describe something that can be achieved within the timescale and resources set for the preventive action
- R**ealistic - objectives describe something that can actually be done.
- T**imebound - a timescale should be set for when the objective is to be achieved.

There is an exercise for setting SMART objectives on page 10.

It is important that project teams set a realistic number of objectives. For most crime reduction initiatives three or four objectives are enough. A larger number of objectives makes a project unwieldy to manage and very difficult to evaluate.

## Outcome

The outcome of a project is the overall **result** of applying the inputs and **achieving the outputs**.

In other words, by using resources to complete specific pieces of work you will achieve some results.

To use the town centre CCTV example again:

- <PASSPORT> inputs were equipment, money and staff time
- <PASSPORT> outputs were the installation of equipment, the monitoring centre and the publicity material
- <PASSPORT> the outcomes were a 15% reduction in disorder offences.

In this example the evaluation could:

- <PASSPORT> measure the outcomes by comparing the 15% reduction against the target reduction set out in the objective
- <PASSPORT> establish whether the outcome is a direct result of the outputs - the installation of CCTV
- <PASSPORT> assess whether the scheme has been cost effective by measuring the inputs - the costs of the project - against any savings made.

## Output

An output is a piece of work produced for a project.

For example, the installation of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) in Allertown town centre, the establishment of a monitoring centre and the production and distribution of publicity leaflets are outputs.

It is important to realise that an output is not necessarily the final purpose of a project. Outputs are usually things that need to be done in order to produce the desired result.

During the life of a project outputs are monitored to make sure they are being achieved on time and with the resources available.

## **Performance Indicators (PI)**

A performance indicator is the **means** by which you know **whether or not** you have **achieved your targets** and **objectives**.

A PI is any information that indicates whether a particular objective has been met. The two examples below illustrate this point.



A project to tackle theft from cars in a car park has an objective to reduce the number of thefts by 20% over a six month period. One of the performance indicators would be whether there had been a rise or fall in the number of reported incidents.

In this example, the number of recorded crimes is a **direct indicator** of whether the initiative has worked or not.



A second project has an objective to reduce the fear of crime on a housing estate. The fear has been caused by several incidents of youth disorder and residents are too frightened to leave their homes. Several indicators could be used here:

- has there been a rise in income for traders in local shops?
- are local facilities such as libraries or a community centre being used more often?
- have there been fewer calls to the police to attend potentially problem situations?
- do local residents, when interviewed, feel safer and more confident when living in an area?

In this example, the first three indicators are **indirect indicators**. On their own none of them are conclusive proof that the initiative has worked, but taken together they would indicate whether the initiative had worked.

You can also use PIs that measure whether the inputs and outputs in a project are working. For example, if a project is using public meetings as one of its inputs, a PI could be used to measure the number of meetings held and the number of people who attend each meeting. These kind of PIs are called Process PIs.

Performance indicators are only pointers towards success or failure, they are not conclusive proof. In both examples there are a number of other things that could happen to ease the problem. They may have nothing to do with the crime reduction measures.

The answer is to choose indicators that support each other. For instance, in the second example none of those indicators alone would provide sufficient evidence. But taken together as a “basket” of indicators they provide good evidence of the project’s success or failure.

See also  
Qualitative  
Performance  
Indicators and  
Quantitative  
Performance  
Indicators

## Process evaluation

Process evaluation measures the inputs, and outputs of a project.  
(See evaluation Page 104)

## Programme

A programme is a **group** or **collection** of projects designed to achieve particular objectives. The projects in a programme are usually linked to a particular problem or a particular area and fall under a **common aim**.

## Project

A project is a series of **activities** that need to take place in order to **achieve** specific **objectives**. Projects have:

<PASSPORT> specific objectives they are meant to address

<PASSPORT> a clearly defined timescale

<PASSPORT> a set of linked activities designed to produce specific outputs and outcomes

<PASSPORT> clearly identified resources.

## Qualitative Performance Indicators

Qualitative PIs are those that **measure qualities**, which are usually quite intangible things, such as the **perceptions** and **feelings** of individuals and groups. For example, changes in the level of fear of crime in the elderly would be a qualitative PI.

## Quantitative Performance Indicators

Quantitative PIs **measure tangible things**, such as the **number** of burglaries, or **percentage** of homes burgled, in an area.

See Performance Indicators on page 108.

## Resources

The resources are the **inputs** to a project. (See page 105)

## Target

Targets are the **measurable** parts of objectives. For example in this objective: "By the end of the project (in six months time), the number of violent disorders in Allertown town centre will have been reduced by 20%" the target is a 20% reduction in six months time.

## Vision

The vision is the over-arching **reason** why an organisation exists. You may come across this term or others which mean the same thing, such as **mission statement**.

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# Further references

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## **Assessing Crime Prevention Initiatives: The First Steps**

Geoff Berry and Mike Carter

Home Office Crime Prevention Unit Paper 31

ISBN 0 86252 8253 2

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/fcpu31.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/fcpu31.pdf)

## **Thinking about Crime Prevention Performance Indicators**

Nick Tilley

Home Office Crime Detection & Prevention Series Paper 57

ISBN 1-85893-320-X

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/fcdps57.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/fcdps57.pdf)

## **The Crime Reduction Website**

[www.crimereduction.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk)

[www.crimereduction.gov.uk/informationsharing](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/informationsharing)

## **Crime Reduction Toolkits**

[www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits)

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