BRITISH COUNCIL

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CULTURAL PROTECTION FUND
INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is to help you think about the evaluation report that will be required as part of your Cultural Protection Fund project. Evaluation is an important part of planning your project, and this guide will:

- Help you understand how to evaluate your Cultural Protection Fund project
- Provide you with inspiration
- Make you feel more confident about evaluation
- Help you understand common evaluation terminology

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is a process that enables you to gather evidence in order to understand the impact your project or work has had, and why. It is useful because this reflection can help you make good decisions about what to do next, during and after your project. Evaluation is about both proving and improving what you do or have done.

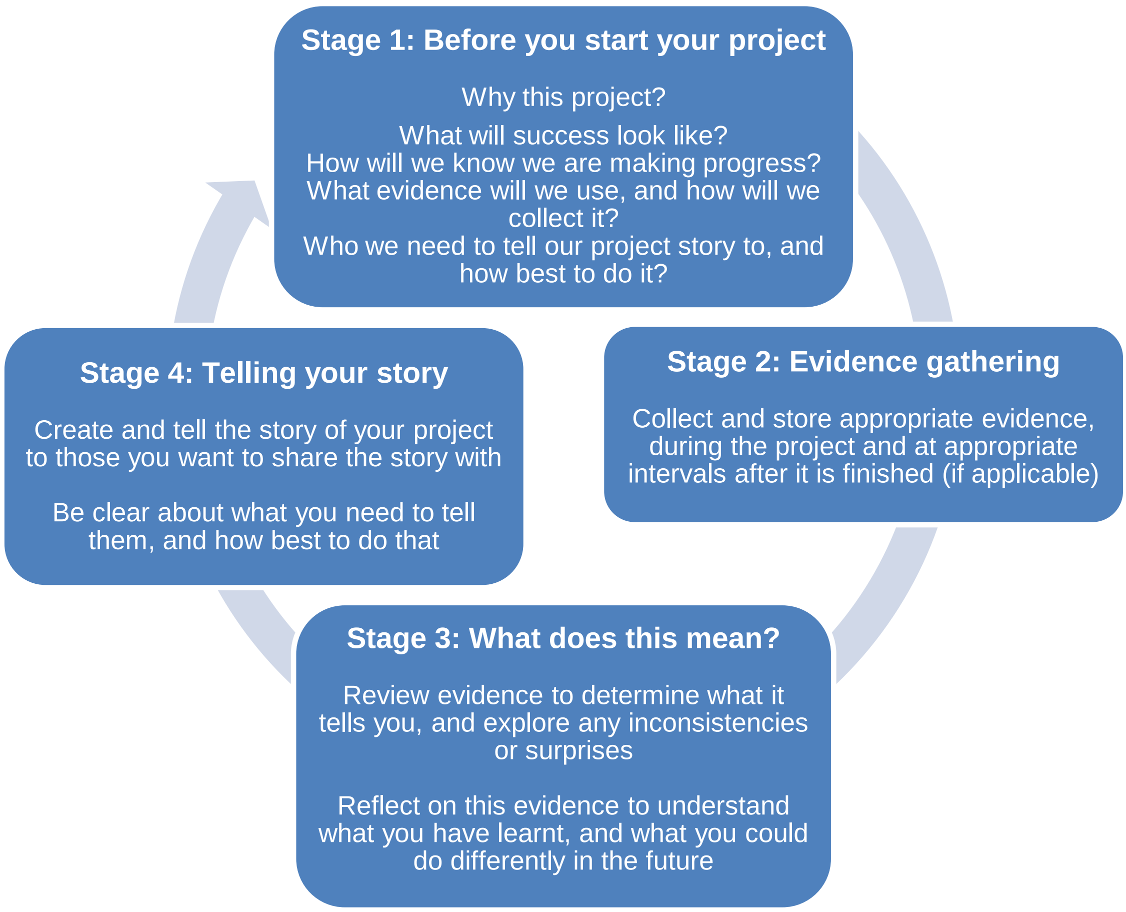
Evaluation isn't just something you do at the end of the project, in order to write a final report. It is a review process that should be integral to your project planning and management, so that you capture at regular points what is working (or not) and why, and what changes you might need to make moving forward.

THE EVALUATION PLANNING CYCLE

There are four stages involved in evaluation:

- **Stage 1: Before you start your project**
- **Stage 2: Evidence gathering**
- **Stage 3: What does this mean?**
- **Stage 4: Telling the story**

The following diagram outlines the four stages and how evaluation might fit into your overall project planning and delivery work plan. These stages may happen more than once during a project. It is likely that you will want to build regular review points into your project, particularly if your project is large, or will run over several years. This will help you to improve things as you go. You might go through Stages 1-4 several times during the lifetime of your project, as well as at the end.



STAGE 1: BEFORE YOU START YOUR PROJECT

As part of your project planning you will need to think about how you are going to evaluate your project. Things to consider at this stage of your evaluation process are:

What are your project objectives, or goals? What will success look like if your project has the impact you want it to?
Think about what success will look like at various stages in your project, at the end of it, and also in the longer term. You should consider the Cultural Protection Fund outcomes and how these relate to your project objectives.

- Cultural heritage protection
- Training and capacity building
- Advocacy and education

What do you want your evaluation to do? Why are you doing it?
Some of the reasons for undertaking your evaluation might include:

- To prove the impact of your project
- To share your success with other people
- To understand how successful you have been, and what has contributed to that
- To understand what has worked, and what hasn't, and why that is
- To enable you to improve what you do

How will you know you are making progress?
Think about how will you track progress? And at what point(s) does it make sense to review it? A combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators is likely to best measure the full impact your project is having. For ideas of different types of evidence that you might collect, depending on the kind of project you are delivering, read Stage 2: Evidence gathering (p.4).

You will also need to think practically about how you will collect your evidence, and what impact that will have on roles and budgets. What will need to be done, and when? What will be down to you, and what will you need project partners to do? Do you have the resources (eg. time/skills) to do it in house, or do you need to appoint an external evaluator? How much will the evaluation cost? You should include the cost of evaluation and any relevant expertise in your project budget (the cost for this should be approximately 3% of your total budget costs).

How will you use the evidence collected to reflect on progress and what you will do in the future?
You will need to think about what you're going to do with the evidence as you collect it. How will you build in review moments for you, your colleagues and partners? How frequently will you need to have those review moments? Do you need to tie these into the Cultural Protection Fund reporting requirements, or those of any other funders who might also be supporting your project? Also, how will you store this evidence, so that you know it is safe and easily accessible?

Who will you need to tell the story of your project to, and what will the best way to do it?
Think about the different people you will need to communicate your story to and the best ways of doing this. For ideas, read Stage 4: Telling your story (p.6).

STAGE 2: EVIDENCE GATHERING

Having identified the best ways to measure change for your project, you will need to start collecting relevant evidence that proves you are making that progress.

It is likely that you have already gathered some relevant evidence in the process of putting together your application. For example, in demonstrating a need for your project, you are likely to have collected and provided evidence about what is happening at the moment, which needs are currently not being met, or the challenges that need addressing. In evaluation terms, this would mean you already have 'baseline' evidence that you can use to help measure the progress your project makes.

You will need to collect evidence during the lifetime of your project and at the end of it. You may also wish to carry on collecting evidence after the project ends if you want to understand the longer term impact.

Collecting evidence throughout your project will ensure evaluation is embedded in your project management. It will allow you to review and reflect on what is going well and what is not, and make the necessary changes. Having this kind of review process built into your project management is good practice. It is likely that you will be doing this anyway, without necessarily knowing that it is evaluation.

Evidence you can collect and record can be varied. Some examples include:

- Before and after photographs, video footage, plans or other relevant materials relating to protective or restorative work undertaken
- Resources produced (eg. marketing materials, conservation policies, training/learning materials)
- Visitor/user/volunteer numbers, plus demographic information
- Comments collected via visitor interviews or discussion groups
- Supporting material related to engagement programmes
- Skills and knowledge audit before and after the project
- User/visitor research focused on shifts in attitude, behavior and understanding
- Staff and volunteer feedback about relevant professional development
- Certificates awarded
- Policy documents and action plans, plus evidence of progress made against action plan objectives/timetables
- Risk assessments – changes to your risk profile

STAGE 3: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

When you have collected your evidence, you need to understand what it means for it to be of any use. You will need to analyse and interrogate this to give you the 'intelligence' you need to understand what impact your project is having or has had.

You should review all your evidence and what it tells you about your progress towards the impact you said you wanted to have, and the goals you identified for your project. You may also uncover evidence of unanticipated outcomes: things that have happened that you didn't foresee or predict.

How you review the evidence depends on how your project is set up, and how you are approaching your evaluation. You may want to review it as a group, and arrive at joint conclusions. Alternatively, you may ask whoever is leading your evaluation to do an initial review and draw some initial conclusions, which can then be shared and discussed with other colleagues.

Once you have started reviewing your evidence you will start to reflect on it too. Reflecting on the evidence, to see what trends there are or where there are inconsistences will lead you to a good understanding of your project. Often in evaluation and research, it is the inconsistencies that reveal an interesting side of the story, the elements that give real insight into why things are and aren't working, and for whom.

> For example, your evidence may suggest that the training you have been doing has gone down really well with some trainees, but not so well with others. What can the evidence you have tell you about why this might be? Perhaps the positive feedback relates to a particular aspect of your training, or to a particular trainer. Or perhaps it is a particular type of trainee who has responded well to your training? Perhaps external factors, such as what is happening locally, will have affected people's feedback.

If gathering the evidence is all about *proving* things, then reflecting on what it tells you is all about *improving* things. Some questions that may help:

Why?	Why did this happen? Why didn't it happen all the time? Why are the impacts different across different types of participants? Why was it un/successful?
How?	How could we improve things? How might we work together differently? How might we evaluate differently in the future?
What?	What were the critical success factors, the things that were key to our success? What does this tell us we need to do differently in the future? What do any inconsistencies suggest to us?
Who?	Who has the project most/least benefitted, and why? Who might help us improve what we are doing? Who might we partner with in the future?
When?	When were our interventions most useful, and why?

Using these questions to reflect on how and why your project was successful or not enables you not only to understand the impact your project has had, it also gives you the intelligence to improve things as you move forward.

If you reflect part way through your project then it will enable you to improve and adapt what you do on an on-going basis. You will have the opportunity to share this with funders and stakeholders when reporting periodically throughout the lifespan of your project.

Reflection at the end of the project can help you to think about what you want to do in the future, what you will do differently, and what you should keep as it is. Your reflections might for instance, feed into your organisation's business plan, into new or revised policies. More practically, they might also feed into how you deliver projects in the future, who you work with, how you budget projects.

Either way, the basic premise is that your evaluation about what you have done *in the past* should feed into what you might do *in the future*. This is why the evaluation process is described as a cycle.

STAGE 4: TELLING THE STORY

Having reviewed the evidence and reflected on what it tells you, you should be able to tell the story of your project, what impact it has had and what has caused that impact.

You will need to refer back to your thoughts about who you need to tell your story to, and how best you might do that, and possibly update those ideas in light of how the project has unfolded or how your relationships with key stakeholders have evolved.

There are things you may need to consider when telling your story:

- Tell the story of what the evidence tells you
- Make sure you explain how you interpreted your evidence and what it tells you
- Highlight your key points of learning, and the thoughts you are feeding into your future planning

You will need to consider who you might need to tell, and how you can best do that. There will be a range of people you want to tell your story to, and you will need to do that in a number of different ways. Here are some examples of people you may need to tell your story to, and how you might choose to do that:

Who you might need to tell	How you might do that
Visitors or users	• Displays showing the progress of your work to protect the cultural heritage in your care • A video showing this progress • Articles in magazines, journals or newspapers, or blogs and features online • A feature in your in-house magazine, season brochure or annual report • Relevant content on your website or other social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube etc (eg. videos, interview footage, photos, report summaries) • Invitation to celebration event(s)
Trustees or governors	• Special presentation at relevant meetings • Invitation to celebration event(s) • Links to video and other online content • Send them any funder reports (or the exec summaries)
Funders or investors	• Formal report (which could link to any of the online content

	you have about the project) • Invitation to celebration event(s) • Send them a copy of your in-house magazine, season brochure or annual report
Media	• Press release (which could link to any of the online content you have about the project)
Your peers in the cultural heritage sector	• Relevant content on your website or other social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube etc (eg. videos, interview footage, photos, report summaries) • Sector-focused event to share the learning
Your wider staff team and volunteers	• Include presentation about the event in staff meeting • Show video and point them to other online content • Include info about the project in your staff magazine/e-news
Yourselves	• Share and go through any final reports you write up so that the learning really gets embedded into team thinking • Have a final reflective session, where you reflect on your final conclusions – and celebrate your success! • Remember to bring this learning into your future planning

WRITING YOUR PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

If you have embedded evaluation into you project management and working processes then writing an evaluation report will have real value to you.

Your evaluation report is a way of documenting in one place all of that reflection you have done; to provides a 'snapshot' of your project that you can refer back to.

Your project evaluation report may be used for your own internal purposes, and to share with funders. Funders use your evaluation in the same way as you do: to understand what worked and what didn't, and why that was. The Cultural Protection Fund will gather intelligence from each project to piece together a 'big picture' understanding of how the funding is making a difference, just as you will do for your individual project. We do this for the same reason: because we want to prove our impact, and improve what we do.

Your evaluation report may include the following headings:

- **Executive summary**: a two page summary of project aims, activity, impact, relevant success/limiting factors and learning

- **Introduction**: short one or two paragraph long introduction to project, what it set out to do, who was involved, and who the funders were

- **Project outline**
  Project aims – what you were aiming to do
  Participants – who took part (partners, participants)
  Activity – what happened and when, who took part
  Project management – how the project was managed

- **Evaluation methodology** – what your evaluation aims were, how you carried out your evaluation

- **Impact**
  Headline info about each area of impact (for each area of impact….)
  Then in turn, for each area:
    - Key observations
    - Critical success factors and/or critical limiting factors
    - Considerations and learning to take forward

- **Appendices** (for example)
  Examples of surveys/interview questions
  Fuller description of key events and fuller audience information
  Press cuttings, links to blogs or other content (a repository of content)
  Participant feedback
  Budget

USEFUL EVALUTATION TERMINOLOGY

Aims *(often linked to objectives)*	Why you are doing it, what your project is *for*. A useful analogy is to think of your project aims as the destination of your project journey (eg. We want our building to be accessible).
Critical success factor	Why your project, or different parts of it, have succeeded.
Evidence	Evidence simply means tangible things that you can use to prove or demonstrate that you've made progress. Evidence is about **proving** you've made progress, have had an impact. The kinds of evidence you want to collect will depend on your aims and objectives, and also the indicators you think will best show you've made progress.
Qualitative evidence	Qualitative evidence tends to relate to, and reflect, different people's thoughts and feelings. For example, shifts in participants' confidence levels, or their views on improvements you've made. It is often viewed as 'anecdotal' rather than 'factual' evidence, because it is based on individuals' feelings and judgements about what has happened as a result of your project.
Quantitative evidence	Often referred to as 'hard' evidence, because it tends to be numbers-related (eg. number of participants, increase in income) and is viewed as being more factual. It includes numbers of people who think a certain thing (eg. 79% of participants viewed our training as excellent).
(Key Performance) Indicators (sometimes known as KPIs or measures of success)	At their simplest, indicators are things that show you've made progress. They are how you will know you're making progress, making a different. For example, if your project aim is to improve access to a heritage building, your indicators might include 'more people visiting' or a 'more diverse range of visitors'.
Limiting factor	A limiting factor is simply something that has limited your progress or impact. It might also be called a 'challenge'. For example, your plans to improve access to your building might be hampered by you not really having understood the access needs of a wide enough range of visitors.
Methodology	Methodology simply means 'how we will do it'. So, in evaluation terms, it means how you will evaluate your project: how and when you will collect the evidence and how you will do it, along with how you will then review that evidence and create and share your story about your project.

Objective	Objectives are **specific** things that you want to achieve through your project. For example, if your aim is to improve access to your building, your objectives might include making the building more physically accessible or adapting your website. You might sometimes hear people refer to 'SMART' objectives. This is an acronym; it means objectives that are: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic & **T**imetabled
Outcome (sometimes known as an 'indicator)	An outcome is another word for what will be different (for everyone involved, including you) if you succeed. It's the 'shift' or change you will see if you have succeeded.
Unanticipated outcome	This is simply a change that has happened, that you didn't predict or expect.
Legacy outcome	This is simply a change that happens further into the future, as opposed to during the lifespan of your project.
Output	Outputs commonly relate to numbers. An output is also a tangible thing which happened during your project. For example, if your project is about making your building more accessible, then outputs might include the physical changes you have made, and the number of training sessions you have provided for staff.
Stakeholder	Stakeholders are the people or organisations who are involved in your project, or who have a 'stake' in it. These might include: your team, volunteers or trustees, your visitors or users and your funders.