

# Outcomes



BIG and many other funders use an outcomes-based approach to their funding. This means that we are interested in the difference a project will make as well as the project's activities.

### What are outcomes?

Outcomes are the changes that will come about as a direct result of your work.

### Why are outcomes important?

Our assessment of your application is based on your outcomes – how well your outcomes are meeting an identified need, how likely you are to achieve them and how well they fit with the aims of our funding.

### Identifying your outcomes

Think about goals, aims, results and reasons why, rather than just targets, outputs, and amount spent. What is the difference your project will make, and who will it make a difference to?

You should also think about how you will show the difference your project will make.

Your outcomes should answer the following questions:

- ▶ What is the change you intend to make?
- ▶ Who will it benefit?
- ▶ How will it benefit your target group?

### Smart outcomes

When BIG or other funders consider your application, they need to work out quickly and clearly what changes you want to make, how you will make them and when. To help us to do this, we ask you to make your outcomes SMART – that is, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based. What this means is that your intended project outcomes will need to include such information as dates and numbers, as well as what and who.

SMART outcomes might look like the following:

- ▶ By the end of the project, 300 young people demonstrate improved social skills, self-confidence and motivation as a result of their involvement in the organisation of arts events.
- ▶ The involvement of 100 residents in regular recycling and environmental activities will result in refurbished green spaces and stronger community links by the end of the project's first year.
- ▶ 25 local families with autistic children report reduced stress as a result of respite opportunities by the end of the second year.

Who – people or organisations who will benefit	How – should relate to change or difference	What – what is changing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Young people</li> <li>▶ Lone parents</li> <li>▶ People with mental health difficulties</li> <li>▶ Older people who are experiencing loss of mobility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ improve</li> <li>▶ increase</li> <li>▶ reduce</li> <li>▶ expand</li> <li>▶ develop</li> <li>▶ sustain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ confidence</li> <li>▶ skills</li> <li>▶ environment</li> <li>▶ access to services</li> <li>▶ relationships</li> <li>▶ opportunities</li> </ul>
40 people with mental health difficulties have	increased	confidence by the end of the project.

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# THESE THINGS ARE

Before you send us your outline or full application think about the following points:

- ▶ Are your outcomes relevant to the activity of the project?
- ▶ Do you know how you will measure your outcomes?
- ▶ Are your outcomes specific and realistic?
- ▶ Can you achieve your outcomes within the lifetime of the grant?
- ▶ Is there a clear link between the evidence of need for the project and its outcomes?

Don't write too many outcomes; keep them short. Use plain English – never jargon. Remember, your outcomes must be your power to deliver.

### Measuring outcomes

Make sure that you have robust plans in place to track and measure your outcomes. We ask you to tell us about your milestones. These are the targets that will help you report on the progress of your project.

Your milestones will show us how you will measure the progress of your activities but also how well you are achieving your intended outcomes.

Progress of outcomes can be measured using outcome indicators. BIG will not normally ask you to identify outcome indicators separately, but only as part of your milestones.

When setting your outcome indicators, you should think about how you will know that a change has happened and how you will know that there has been progress towards your outcome.

You can use a variety of tools to measure outcomes, including questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, video diaries and one-to-one interviews. Measuring outcomes should be a continuous process and should be reflected in your milestones.

### Further help

For more help, look at the Explaining the Difference guide on our website [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk), call our Advice Line on 0845 4 10 20 30 or email [enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk)

You can also contact your local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) or local authority funding officer, for advice and guidance on outcomes. Details of these organisations are available from our Advice Line.

Outcome	Milestones - Progress of activities	Milestones - Outcome indicator
▶ 40 people with ongoing mental health difficulties have increased confidence by the end of the project.	▶ 40 service users attended discussion meetings by month 6. ▶ 20 people take part in shopping trips with befriender by month 8.	▶ 40 people able to take part in discussion. ▶ 20 people report feeling less nervous about going out in public.

### Top tips

#### Do

- ▶ remember every outcome must be SMART
- ▶ remember not to get outcomes confused with your project's aims or activities
- ▶ remember outcomes must describe the difference/change you want your project to make.

#### Don't

- ▶ repeat the same outcome using different words
- ▶ list BIG's programme outcomes as your own project's outcomes
- ▶ list your outcomes as your milestones.