



An Australian Government Initiative



## NATIONAL COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMME

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### **External and/or internal evaluation**

Deciding what works best  
for your organisation

*Prepared in partnership with the Australian Institute of Criminology*

## Why evaluation is important

The NCCPP asks that you evaluate your project. Other stakeholders will also want to know whether your crime prevention project was successful. It is useful to know if the project achieved its intended outcome of either preventing or reducing crime or increasing the target group's safety. It is also useful to know whether the model you used could be implemented in another community.

Measuring program outcomes is not always straightforward. This tip sheet will outline many of the issues that need to be considered when monitoring and evaluating project activity.

## Evaluation planning

Ideally an evaluation report needs to include:

- The project's aim—i.e. what it was intending to do and what it was aiming to achieve.
- A more detailed description of the project plan and how it was implemented.
- How you measured the impact of your project—what performance measures you used and how you assessed them.
- How crime was prevented or violence reduced as a consequence of this project—i.e. what effect did it have? Were there any unanticipated outcomes.

## Who should do the evaluation?

This tip sheet can assist you to decide whether to plan to evaluate your own project and/or recruit an outside agency to evaluate it for you.

You could do both. Engaging an outside consultant can help you structure your evaluation plan and you could work together over the life of the project to collect evaluation data that the consultant will ultimately work into a report. It can also help to strengthen the 'objective' quality of the findings.

## Internal evaluation

Many organisations believe that they are best placed to evaluate their own project. There are pros and cons to an internal evaluation. For example:

### Positives

- If you are collecting data on your own project as it is implemented you can monitor the process carefully.
- You will be aware of any difficulties that arise in the implementation of your plan.
- If difficulties arise you can work out variations to your plan that may enhance the outcomes of your project.
- You are aware of all aspects of the project which is good as not addressing small issues can impact on the outcomes.

### Negatives

- You will need more resources.
- The task of evaluation may take away from your ability to manage and support the project.
- It may be harder to objectively analyse the problems that arise.

### External evaluation

Engaging an external evaluator may:

- bring in a new perspective,
- have a capacity building benefit for your organisation and staff,
- assist you to build appropriate performance measures and indicators if you work with an outside evaluator from the beginning of your implementation phase, and this will assist in documenting the project implementation,
- add value to the evaluation plan as an external evaluator can draw on their previous experience, and
- be seen to be adding objectivity.

The following should be taken into account before deciding to engage an external evaluator:

- An external evaluator should have specific expertise that can assist with planning and implementing the evaluation.
- If you engage an external evaluation consultant your evaluation report is more likely to be seen by the funding body and other agencies as a more objective measure of success than an evaluation managed by the implementing agency.
- The budget would need to be large enough to cover the costs of an external consultant. Costings may need to include travel and accommodation, and in kind support from project personnel, as well as actual consultancy hours.
- Identifying suitable consultants may be problematic, especially if you are not located in an urban area.
- Detailing the role of the external consultant also needs careful thought, as engaging the consultant will probably involve a contract with details of expected work, timelines, outputs and so on. While there are many valuable reasons for proceeding this way, the costs of doing so need to be assessed against the possible benefits.

### Information on evaluation can be found at the following websites

- Australasian Evaluation Society  
[www.aes.asn.au](http://www.aes.asn.au)
- The Australian Institute of Criminology  
[www.aic.gov.au](http://www.aic.gov.au)
- Guidelines for Evaluating Community Crime Prevention Projects at  
[www.crimeprevention.gov.au](http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au)