



An Australian Government Initiative



NATIONAL COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Monitoring and evaluating your project

How to measure progress

When implementing a crime prevention project it is important to monitor and evaluate your work. Monitoring the implementation allows you to reflect on the progress of your project and to consider changes to the work plan in an efficient and timely manner if necessary. Evaluating the outcomes of your project is also important and helps to build an evidence base about what works in preventing crime or in promoting community safety.

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How to measure progress and results

There are three crucial steps to be clear about in evaluating a project.

1. State the overall aim clearly (eg, to reduce crime or increase safety) and the objectives that will assist you to achieve your aim.
2. Monitor and document the process (implementing the objectives).
3. Assess whether the project achieved its long term aim (outcome).

These three steps are illustrated in the example below. It shows how a community could create a project plan that aims to reduce burglary.

Example 1: Reducing burglary

Step 1: State the aim and activities

Aim: to reduce the amount of residential burglary in our local area by 25 per cent

To justify choosing this aim you will need to show that your local area has a high burglary rate. Therefore you will need to know how many burglaries occurred over a reasonable period prior to your project taking place—eg, in the past 6 or 12 months. You will need to decide how long after your project's activities commence that it is reasonable to expect a drop in the rate of burglaries to occur. Then you will need to measure the burglary rate for the same time frame after the project as you measured before the project. For example, if there were 100 burglaries in the 12 months prior to your project taking place, then in the 12 months after your activities you would expect 75 or less burglaries to have achieved a reduction of 25 per cent.

Once you have stated your aim you need to work out what your objectives are. Objectives are the things that will help you achieve your aim. Therefore for this example your objective could be to 'increase local household awareness of what is considered a secure house'.

Once you are clear about your objective or objectives you can decide on your activities. To increase household awareness of what is considered a secure house you would first need to research what strategies are most effective in increasing household security. Once you were clear about effective ways of making households more secure you could use this information to design a leaflet about how to do this and distribute it to the local community.

Step 2: Monitoring and documenting implementation

You will need to monitor and document your project implementation so that you can later on assess whether the project achieved its stated aim.

To monitor and document your project you will need a clear plan that outlines the steps you need to undertake to deliver the project plan. You will need to be clear about what these steps are and develop performance measures and indicators to enable you to document and report on the project's progress as a way of being able to evaluate if the overall aim is on track.

The steps that need to be undertaken to achieve the project activities can be broken down into performance measures and performance indicators. The following table illustrates 'performance measures' and 'performance indicators' that would be useful for implementing this example. Setting out your project activities in a table like this will help you to be clear about your project's work-plan. You need to know when activities are meant to happen and who has responsibility for planning and implementing them. Do not be too ambitious. Be realistic and think practically how you would put the project in place.

Objective	Input/action	Performance measure	Dates	Responsibility	Performance indicator	Target
Increase local household awareness of the need to have a secure house	Apply adequate resources to allow project implementation	Project committee employs project officer	By beginning March 2007	Project committee and direct manager of project worker in host organisation	Employment of project officer	Employment of one project officer
	Establish appropriate partnerships	Liaise with police on best practice in reducing burglaries, i.e. secure households	By 3 April 2007	Project worker	Meeting with local area commander or representative of local police	Meeting occurs
	Apply best available knowledge to project	Consult crime prevention literature on burglary reduction	By 3 April 2007	Project worker	Find and read at least recent expert reviews	Read at least three expert reviews
	Develop project intervention	Develop leaflet	By 3 May 2007	Project worker & project committee	Write draft and get project committee and police representative to review drafts	Committee and police review 2 drafts
		Focus test leaflet with community	By 3 June 2007	Project worker	Number of community representatives who comment on draft leaflet.	Get sample of at least 10 community members
		Revise leaflet after focus testing	By 3 July 2007	Project worker and committee	Draft reviewed by stakeholders	Committee, police and 5 community members review draft
	Distribute resources	Get leaflet printed	By 3 August 2007	Project worker	Number of leaflets printed	Number of houses in local area plus 25% for local stalls
		Organise schedule and staffing of local security advice stalls	By 3 August 2007	Project worker & committee	Number of stalls organised and implemented	At least 4 stalls are scheduled over 6 months
		Organise letterbox drop	By 3 September 2007	Project worker	Number of leaflets distributed to households	100% of local area.
		Encourage local media to write articles based on the leaflet	By end of February 2008	Project worker and committee	Number of articles about household security in the local media	5 articles over 6 month

If you construct a table like the one above this will give your project a good structure and enable you to record whether your project was carried out as originally planned. As a first step to evaluating the project it is important to monitor and document the implementation process against your plan.

There are some key sub questions you will also be able to answer along the way:

- Are we making progress?
- Why is a particular process not working?
- Do we need to change what we are doing?

Sometimes activities may not take place in exactly the way that was planned. It is good to be flexible about the planned activities as sometimes they may need to be altered if they do not work the way they were originally planned.

If the project is not going according to plan, then it is important to understand why this might be so. This can also be important as a learning or finding from the project.

Reporting responsibilities

Someone needs to be responsible for keeping an eye on what is happening and reporting back to the funding agency about the project. A project committee or a manager within the organisation can take or share this role and oversee that the project is on track and the budget is being spent as planned.

In following your plan and in documenting any problems or changes to the project you will be able to write up your implementation evaluation report and say:

- Whether you followed the original project plan?
- What was learnt in the process?
- What has been achieved?
- What difference did the project make?
- How can the project's outcomes be disseminated?
- What still needs to be done in this area?

Step 3: Assessing whether the project achieved its long term aim (outcome)

As well as evaluating the implementation process it is also important in the longer term to evaluate whether the project achieved its overall aim.

To be able to measure whether you have achieved your project's aim you will need to know certain things before you begin.

- How many burglaries occurred in the local area in the past 6 or 12 months?
- How many burglaries occurred in the local area in the 6 or 12 months after you implemented the project activities?

Measures of overall project success might include:

- A 25 per cent reduction in the number of burglaries reported to police in local area.
- An overall reduction in the number of burglaries reported to police across the region or in neighbouring areas (to see whether burglary has dropped across the board or whether burglars have decided to target another area).

Two other brief examples are given below.

Example 2: Raising awareness that domestic violence is a crime

Project activities could include workshops, distribution of information to offenders and victims, school and community activities, media articles and interviews etc.

Measures that indicate the activities have had an impact might include:

- more use of local domestic violence services,
- more reporting to police of domestic violence incidents,
- views of local service providers, including police, and
- greater community awareness of the issue and possible responses or sources of assistance.

Measures of overall project success might include:

- surveys of people before and after the project to find out their attitudes towards domestic violence—include for example community members, refuge staff, clients of domestic violence services, police, hospital and emergency department staff.

Example 3: Reducing property damage around the local shopping precinct

Project activities could include measures such as greater formal surveillance of the area by using security guards, employing a youth worker, more night time recreation activities in the precinct, better lighting etc.

Measures that indicate the activities have had an impact include:

- views of shop keepers and shoppers, and
- general appearance of the shopping area.

Measures of overall project success might include:

- recorded property damage in the shopping area.

Reflection and review process

Throughout the implementation of an activity you can try and improve the overall success of your project by reviewing or reflecting on the way the project is running. Circumstances always change, so it is good to constantly reflect on a project's process so you can change it too. One of the ways to do this is to question the way things are going. A good way to do this is to have regular meetings with others involved in implementing the strategy.

Questions to consider when reviewing and monitoring your project

