THE DIGITAL INCLUSION EVALUATION TOOLKIT:

AN OVERVIEW

Just Economics
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INTRODUCTION

The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit is a step-by-step process that will help you to evaluate the impact of your digital inclusion project. It will enable you to prove to others how successful your project has been at creating change. It will also show you where your project could be improved so it has an even greater impact. This overview introduces the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit process, explains why it has been developed, who it is for and how it can help you to prove and improve your service.

WHY HAS THE DIGITAL INCLUSION EVALUATION TOOLKIT BEEN DEVELOPED?

Digital inclusion is increasingly important to enable everyone to access digital services, products and networks. It can have significant economic, social and health benefits. There are many organisations across the UK delivering digital inclusion services to successfully meet local needs. However, activities are often measured by volume, rather than effectiveness. This makes it harder to understand what works and share best practice.

The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit is a simple four-stage process for measuring the effectiveness of digital inclusion projects. It includes a single, but flexible, set of outcomes and indicators. If these are used consistently, and the results shared, we can build a strong evidence base for this field of work. This in turn can be used to develop our approach to digital inclusion and create a business case for further investment.

The Toolkit has been developed by the Digital Inclusion Team in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in partnership with organisations from the academic, private and voluntary sectors. For more information about the work of the Digital Inclusion Team, and our partner organisations, please visit our blog or contact us via the email address below.

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR?

We have created the following list of FAQs to help you decide if the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit is right for your project, and at this time.

1. Is it right for my project?

The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit is aimed at groups or individuals that want to carry out evaluations of digital inclusion projects. Evaluation is a type of research that assesses whether a project is effective at achieving its stated aims. The guide is not suitable for those that would like, instead, to do wider research in their field.

2. What level of skill do I need?

If you are doing an evaluation for the first time, this guide is for you. However, it should also be useful to you if you have a background in measurement, evaluation or research. In fact, having some previous experience should be beneficial and enable you to take the evaluation further. For first time evaluators, we recommend keeping the process as simple as possible by narrowing the scope or keeping data collection simple. We suggest ways that you can do this throughout the guide. For more experienced evaluators, we also suggest ways to build in more complexity, which should result in a more sophisticated analysis (for example, using formal statistical tests or analysing your data in more complex ways). We also signpost throughout to more resources where your own skills supersede the guide.

3. What type of evaluation am I undertaking?

There are many different types of evaluation, but the most common distinction is between 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' evaluation, based on the methods used to collect the data. The first (qualitative method) includes things like interviews and focus groups, where the focus is on discussing the project informally with those who are affected by it. The second (quantitative method) uses tools such as surveys to collect numerical information which you can then analyse to give summary statistics such as averages. We believe both methods are valuable, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. So we have incorporated both into the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit process. This is known as a 'mixed-methods' approach.

However, there is an emphasis within our process of using surveys to collect numerical data because this enables simple, direct comparisons between multiple projects, which is one of our aims. If you are keen to only include qualitative methods in your evaluation then this guide is not for you. In this case, you may find the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit Guide to Stakeholder Engagement helpful as this covers interviews and focus groups. You can also find additional resources online, for example this qualitative evaluation checklist.

4. What do I do if I find it confusing?

Don't panic if you get stuck. Evaluation can be a complex task to carry out. Research and evaluation specialists will typically have had years of academic training to enable them to do their jobs. You should not expect to replicate this on your first attempt. Nonetheless, we hope that you can produce an evaluation that serves your needs without investing huge resource. We recommend taking a break from the evaluation and coming back to it again, perhaps starting from where you last felt comfortable and having another go. Think about what other colleagues you can involve to troubleshoot problems with.

5. Where can I go for additional help?

Throughout our series of Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit guides, we signpost to additional resources. However, these are only a starting point. The internet is a rich source of guidance, training and advice on how to do evaluations. This includes everything from forums where you can ask specific questions to online courses, or YouTube clips. You may also want to consider approaching your local university for help from social science Masters students.

6. What do I need to do?

Use the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit: to assess the outcomes of your activities - pick and choose from the menu of outcomes and indicators, and add your own as relevant.

Promote and embed: Share with your projects, build into your procurement processes, and include in your digital inclusion strategy, policy and planning documents.

Share learning: Share results and learning with your own key stakeholders - and with us - to help build a clearer picture of what works, in different places and with different groups of people.

Feedback: Give us your feedback on the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit, and this series of guides, to help us develop and improve them.

Keep in touch: Identify a point of contact to be kept up to date by us. You can contact us at digital-inclusion@culture.gov.uk

WHAT IS THE DIGITAL INCLUSION EVALUATION TOOLKIT PROCESS?

The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit process consists of four stages:

01 **PLAN YOUR EVALUATION**	Decide what information you need and how you are going to collect it
02 **COLLECT THE DATA**	Gather information on your project's success using surveys and other data collection tools. (Note that you need to collect baseline data before your project starts)
03 **ANALYSE THE DATA**	Find out what the data can tell you about how successful your project is and where you may need to improve
04 **USE THE DATA**	Prove and improve your project's success

The diagram on the next page shows the full process in more detail and highlights where there is an optional additional guidance or step you can use to help you.

This guide takes you through a four-stage process to carry out your evaluation. The four-stages are:

STAGE 1:
PLAN YOUR EVALUATION
Decide what information to collect

Complete when...
You have identified all the information you need to measure to show the success of your project

You can use Stakeholder Engagement to identify the right areas to measure

You can use our bank of outputs, outcomes and indicators as a guide

STAGE 2:
COLLECT THE DATA
Design your survey and decide who should complete it

Complete when...
Your survey has been completed by the right number and type of respondents

You can use our survey template as a guide

Remember to collect baseline data before your project starts!

STAGE 3:
ANALYSE THE DATA
Find out what the data tells you about the success of your project

Complete when...
You know how successful your project has been

STAGE 4:
USE THE RESULTS
Decide on any changes you will make to your project & share the findings

Complete when...
You have used the results to prove and improve your project's success

You can use our report template as a guide

STAGE 1: PLAN YOUR EVALUATION

Planning your evaluation before you begin will help you to make sure that you collect the right information. This stage includes:

1. Forming a steering group to oversee the project
2. Planning the evaluation process
3. Stakeholder engagement*
4. Developing a Theory of Change
5. Setting indicators

*We recommend that you carry out Stakeholder Engagement to get a full picture of the change your project is likely to be having. However, you can omit this step if you already have a detailed knowledge of the views of your key stakeholders, or very specific questions that you are seeking to answer.

Once you have completed this stage you will have a clear idea about:

- The scope and scale of your evaluation, and who is overseeing it,
- What changes or outcomes your project is likely to be achieving,
- What information you need to collect to find out how effective your project is at bringing about these changes

STAGE 2: COLLECT THE DATA

You will, by now, have developed a rich description of the main ways in which your project creates change. In this stage, you will begin to collect the evidence to put numbers besides these changes.

There are many ways to collect data. We will introduce you to the most common method in evaluation – the survey. This stage covers:

1. Designing your survey
2. Getting the right sample
3. Measuring degree of change
4. Confidentiality and ethics

Once you have completed this stage you will have designed a survey, piloted it, and then conducted it with an appropriate number and type of respondent. You will have run your survey at least twice, before and after your intervention, to capture the degree of change your project is creating. Note that this includes running your survey before your project starts (so you can compare this with the survey results afterwards).

STAGE 3: ANALYSE THE DATA

In this stage, you will:

1. Convert all responses on the survey to numerical values
2. Understand the degree of change seen
3. Assess the proportion of participants who experienced these changes
4. Understand what proportion of this change is attributable to your project
5. Draw all summary statistics together

Once you have completed this stage you will have a detailed understanding of how successful your project has been at creating change.

STAGE 4: USE THE DATA

The final stage is to complete an evaluation report, which you can use to record the whole process as well as the findings. You can then share the findings with others to demonstrate the success of your project. Perhaps the most important step, though, is to use the findings to further refine and develop your services, so they are having an even greater impact.

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE INCLUDED?

Outcomes are the changes or benefits that your project aims to bring about. We have developed a set of outcomes for digital inclusion projects, divided into three areas:

1. Digital outcomes:

These include access, use, skills, and motivation, and are the 'intermediate outcomes' (or steps along the way) needed to achieve wider economic and health/social outcomes.

2. Economic outcomes:

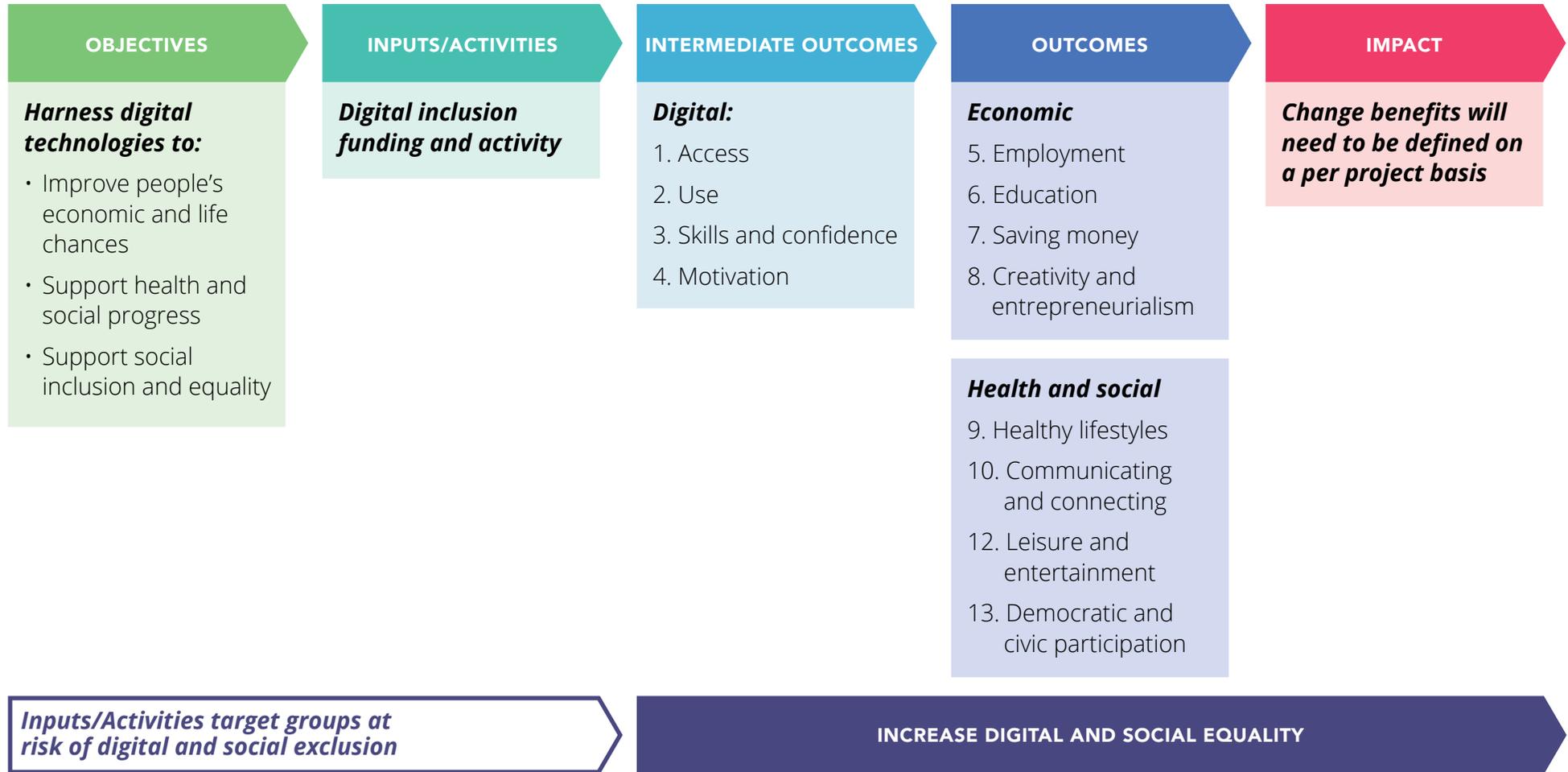These relate to employment, education, managing money, and creativity/entrepreneurialism.

3. Health and social outcomes:

These relate to health, communicating and connecting, leisure and entertainment, public services, and democratic and civic participation.

We have also included a final, cross-cutting category of 'digital and social equality outcomes'. This ensures there is a focus on reaching those who are most in need.

These outcomes, and their relationship with one another, are mapped out in the diagram below. This simple diagram tracks the flow from setting clear objectives through to measuring programme impact. See the Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit Bank of Indicators, Outcomes and Survey Questions for more detail (including the full set of indicators and survey questions for evaluating the outcomes).

BENEFITS REALISATION ROADMAP

OBJECTIVES

Harness digital technologies to:

- Improve people's economic and life chances
- Support health and social progress
- Support social inclusion and equality

INPUTS/ACTIVITIES

Digital inclusion funding and activity

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Digital:

1. Access
2. Use
3. Skills and confidence
4. Motivation

OUTCOMES

Economic

5. Employment
6. Education
7. Saving money
8. Creativity and entrepreneurialism

Health and social

9. Healthy lifestyles
10. Communicating and connecting
12. Leisure and entertainment
13. Democratic and civic participation

IMPACT

Change benefits will need to be defined on a per project basis

Inputs/Activities target groups at risk of digital and social exclusion

INCREASE DIGITAL AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

THE DIGITAL INCLUSION DASHBOARD

We have also developed a simple, online digital inclusion dashboard, which visualises and reports on UK-wide progress towards outcomes.

Data is presented for the whole population, and, where available, for key groups to allow for a segmented picture of progress.

It is updated regularly to reflect any statistically significant changes, as new data become available. We will also update the indicators as needed.

Further resources in this series:

1. **Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit: A Step-by-Step Guide to Demonstrating Social Impact of Digital Inclusion Projects**

2. **The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit Bank of Outcomes, Indicators and Survey Questions**

3. **The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit Guide to Stakeholder Engagement**

4. **The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit Report Template**

5. **The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit Survey Template**