



Scotland Funders' Forum

Good practice for funded organisations What makes a good report?

The **Scotland Funders' Forum** is a gathering of funders in Scotland, including the Scottish Government, who are committed to best practice in funding and to maximising the impact of funding for the benefit of Scotland.

They come together to share information, to identify and address areas of common interest and to share best practice and learning.

The Forum seeks to make reporting more effective and less burdensome for all parties. The Forum convened a working group of people from different funders and voluntary organisations. The working group was supported and facilitated by Evaluation Support Scotland. They have identified practical solutions to address barriers to effective reporting.

A good report:

1. Tells a story – of what you did **and** what difference you made.
2. Is well structured, concise and easy to read. No fancy phrases or specialist language. Longer doesn't always mean better – brevity can be good.
3. Makes a clear link to what you planned to do (or said you'd do when you got the funding). That might include explaining that things have not quite happened as you expected – and why.
4. Uses numbers clearly. Funders want to know how many people you worked with and what you did. Don't bewilder them or try to pretend that two sets of numbers relate to different people when they don't.
5. Provides qualitative information – not just numbers. Qualitative information provides depth and detail about attitudes, feelings and behaviour and gives a better sense of 'why' and 'how'.
6. Is clear about what you know and do not know from the evidence you have collected.
7. Gives a flavour of individuals' experiences of your organisation or project (case studies or quotes). Do this once you've told the general story of the organisation or project. A quote or short case study should be used to illustrate your numbers and qualitative information. Make clear whether this

is a typical or exceptional experience. Be aware that some funders won't want too much.

8. Is honest. Funders know things sometimes go wrong. If you say it was all perfect they might be suspicious and ask questions.
9. Sets out what you have learned, what you might do differently in future.
10. Is submitted by the agreed deadline in the agreed format.

Some funders like [but check first before you provide this]

- Information about the broader context of the work or partnerships – such as who else you work with, the policy context
- Supporting evidence such as newspaper clippings. A few but not many funders like DVDs.
- Visuals such as photos or pie charts and diagrams for numbers

And finally...

Follow the principle of **no surprises**. If things are going wrong, don't wait until the report is due to tell the funder about the problem. The funder is more likely to be supportive if you give them notice of variations, challenges or changes.

Members of the Scotland Funders' Forum:

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| BBC Children in Need | Coalfields Regeneration Trust |
| Comic Relief | Convention of Scottish Local Authorities |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | Faith in Community (Scotland) |
| Forestry Commission Scotland | Forward Scotland |
| Heritage Lottery Fund | Highlands & Islands Enterprise |
| Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland | Museums & Galleries Scotland |
| NHS Health Scotland | People's Postcode Trust |
| Rank Foundation | Scottish Arts Council |
| Scottish Community Foundation | Scottish Government |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | Scottish Council for Voluntary Service |
| Social Investment Scotland | SOLACE |
| Sportscotland | The Robertson Trust |
| Voluntary Action Fund | Wood Family Trust |
| Scottish Local Authority External Funding Officers Group | |

For more information on the work of the Scotland Funders Forum and a copy of the full report of the Harmonising Reporting Working Group, please email scotlandfundersforum@biglotteryfund.org.uk