

The advantages and disadvantages of different reporting formats

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1: No form	<p>Can be easy – no restrictions. Funded organisation can tell own story.</p>	<p>Funder gets a lot more (or less) than they want.</p> <p>Difficult for funder to compare or aggregate one report with another.</p> <p>Funded organisation doesn't know what the funder needs or how much information to provide.</p>
2: No form – but guidance or headings on what should be covered	<p>Funded organisation can tell its own story.</p> <p>Makes clear the information the funder needs without restricting how the information is presented.</p> <p>Funded organisation can copy and paste from other reports (saves time).</p>	<p>Funded organisation may not be sure how much detail to include under the headings.</p> <p>Difficult for funder to compare or aggregate one report with another (although easier than</p>
3: A form with expandable boxes and some flexibility	<p>A structure can help projects who are not used to writing reports or who have not reported to this funder before.</p> <p>Can allow funder to say how much information is needed.</p>	<p>Can be a bit more restrictive than option 2. Learning or explanations might get missed.</p> <p>(A box for 'anything else you want to tell us' can help but projects may not fill this in).</p>
4: Non expandable boxes / fixed questions or boxes to tick	<p>Makes clear what the funder wants.</p> <p>Might be good for very small grants if the focus of reporting is on activity rather than outcome.</p> <p>Might be easier for the funder to feed the information into an electronic database.</p>	<p>No chance to tell the real story of the project or of change.</p> <p>Frustrating for funded organisation to complete if it wants to say more than the box allows or the question is not exactly relevant. This in turn might tempt the funded organisation to supplement the report with other information or reports.</p> <p>Can be difficult for the funder to understand the context or meaning of the work.</p> <p>Questions may not relate to what the funding was given for so the funded organisation does not have information.</p>