Spark ideas

IMPACT GUIDE

SASK SPORT

FUNDED BY

SASK LOTTERIES

Introduction

Congratulations! Your organization is a successful recipient of the Spark Ideas Grant. The purpose of the Spark Ideas Grant is to support the Saskatchewan amateur sport system in enhancing and increasing the capacity to support Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility.

The objectives of the grant are to:

- Increase opportunities to participate in quality sport activities for all those in Saskatchewan including equity-deserving and under-represented groups.
- Increase the ability of the Saskatchewan amateur sport system to achieve meaningful, lasting change by supporting member-led initiatives.
- Increase inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility within the Saskatchewan amateur sport system.

Outcomes

The Spark Ideas Grant has four specific outcomes that help to ensure equity-deserving groups benefit from this funding.

- **Outcome 1: Participants (athletes, coaches, officials, leaders and administrators) of sport opportunities report greater feelings of inclusion and belonging in environments where all aspects of sport happen (Ex. on the field of play, in the locker rooms, at the board table, at the office, etc.).**
- **Outcome 2: Organizations are more aware of and better able to serve the unique needs of Saskatchewan residents in equity-deserving and under-represented groups.**
- **Outcome 3: Opportunities to participate in sport (for athletes, coaches, officials, leaders and administrators) are more accessible to an increased number of Saskatchewan residents.**
- **Outcome 4: Membership demographics are more representative of the Saskatchewan population.**

To achieve these outcomes, you must consider the impact you intend to have and how you will determine whether you've achieved the intended results. Therefore, you need to plan for impact and then plan how you will evaluate that impact.

What is Impact?

Impact is the change from a current situation or the influence or effect on something. It's the intended and unintended consequences (both positive and negative, short-term and long-term) of a program.

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is a process used to review, assess and analyze the workings of a program, service, initiative or its components.

The Spark Ideas Grant is meant to facilitate long-term, sustainable change in the Saskatchewan amateur sport system. To achieve this within your project, you must plan for the end in mind by:

- Defining your vision
- Determining your outcomes and your anticipated impact
- Deciding how you will evaluate
- Creating the plan to execute your project
- Executing your plan
- Sharing your impact

This guide will walk you through each step to help you define and evaluate your impact.

Consultation

Funding was distributed to member groups who have committed to implementing the following principles as they execute their projects:

- Nothing about us without us: This principle recognizes that individuals with lived experiences know what is best for themselves and their community and that their participation is integral to the success of the project. When the principle is used, the organization's work is guided by the needs and aspirations of the people being served. Those people served are provided meaningful opportunities for participation in project planning, leadership, evaluation and promotion.
- An equity lens: Using an equity lens means recognizing diversity in experience and needs and creating frameworks that respond to diversity. An equity lens requires a set of informed policies and practices intentionally designed to promote opportunity and rectify disparities, as well as informed people positioned to implement them effectively.

Due to your work and volunteering in the amateur sport space, you often have a wealth of knowledge about the sport organization and its environment. You think you understand people's experiences and motivations and the community you are trying to positively impact. But if you don't ask and hear from people themselves, you cannot actually know. If you do not have lived experienced in this area or are not an expert, you need to consult the individuals you want to work with in order to achieve meaningful, lasting change. Consultation is key to ensuring the project will benefit your community. You should incorporate the perspectives of the target equity-deserving or under-represented group in every step of the project.

Step 1 – Define Your Vision

The funding application asked you to answer questions that describe:

- The challenge(s) that your organization would address and the equity group(s) you would target with this funding.
- The project(s) or initiative(s) your organization would engage in to address the challenges you've identified.
- Whether you have consulted with your members and/or the community to ensure inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility initiative(s) are needed and desired.
- The potential outcomes of impact.

You already have a picture in your mind about the project and its potential impact. Imagine that the project is successful beyond your biggest dreams. What does the result look like? Gather everyone engaged on the project and host a brainstorming session.

Write a vision statement that captures the essence of what success would look like for this project. A vision statement should be:

- Short, concise and therefore, easy to understand
- Inspiring and positive – a north star that people want to use to guide their way
- Enduring, powerful and unlikely to change

Ask everyone to identify the elements of what success would look like. Do not edit anyone's ideas during the initial brainstorming. It's about getting all of the ideas out into the world, no matter how wild or unattainable they seem.

From there, theme the ideas into related concepts. Take the themes and draft a number of statements (three - five) that tie the themes together. Ask people you know (both familiar and unfamiliar to the project) to read each option, then ask, what does this communicate to you? Do you feel like it's something you want to be a part of? Does it trigger any negative emotions? Note the feedback and consider it as you edit or make adjustments. Narrow your statements down and choose one vision statement. This will be the north star to guide your way throughout the project.

Next, have a discussion with your team.

Discuss: why are you pursuing this? Why is this a priority?

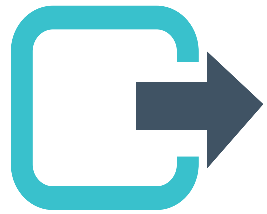
Come up with a few reasons that explain why you are engaging in this project. These reasons will add supporting statements to the vision and can also be used as talking points for marketing and communications.

Step 1 – Define Your Vision

Step 2 – Determine Your Outcomes

Now that you have set out your vision statement for the project, it's time to get more specific about some of the goals for your project. Goals should be based around outputs and outcomes.

What are Outputs?



Outputs are what happens in the short-term as a direct result of the project, program, service, initiative or activities. Outputs are often quantifiable and easier to report. Think of them as indicators that the outcome is on track to being achieved.

What are Outcomes?

Outcomes show a change in knowledge (Ex. what people know about a topic), skills (Ex. the development of new skill sets or the improvement of skill sets over time), attitude (Ex. how people feel about a topic) or behavior (Ex. change in participants' behaviour or actions due to re-education or training).

Outcomes are less tangible and demonstrate what happens indirectly, as a medium-term or longer-term result of those activities. Outcomes often answer the question 'so what?' or 'why does this matter?'. Outcomes relate back to the vision.

Outputs	Outcomes
Indicate program efficiency	Indicate program effectiveness
Program units of service produced	Change in knowledge, skills, attitude or behaviour
Tangible value produced as a result of the program	Stakeholders' experiences/benefits as a result of the program
Example: number of people who attend clinics, number of workshops held, number of volunteer hours served	Example: skills/competencies gained from attending a clinic, changes in participant behaviour, changes in attitude

To help identify your project's outcomes, consider:

- Your vision statement - what are you ultimately trying to accomplish?
- What does success look like? In what ways would you like your organization, sport, etc. to change?
- What would demonstrate this success?

While outputs are important, outcomes tend to better showcase a project's impact. However, measuring impact is harder to do. What outcomes can be attributed directly to your project? What is the causal connection? You should be able to show statistical evidence of the observed outcomes.

Step 2 – Determine Your Outcomes

Step 3 – Deciding How You Will Evaluate

After defining the anticipated outcomes, you must now decide on the metrics that will help you to evaluate whether or not you achieve success. Then you'll work to identify the methods needed to produce those results.

What are Metrics?

Metrics are the measures used to assess performance and effectiveness. Metrics provide insight into how well the project is performing.

What are Methods?

Methods are the procedures and protocols that ensure evaluation is completed consistently and systematically throughout the collection or analysis of information and data.

Include the stakeholders and community members you are working with in developing the evaluation metrics and methods. Those who are closest to the groups you are trying to impact can provide the most insightful perspectives, which drive a more purposeful and better executed evaluation.

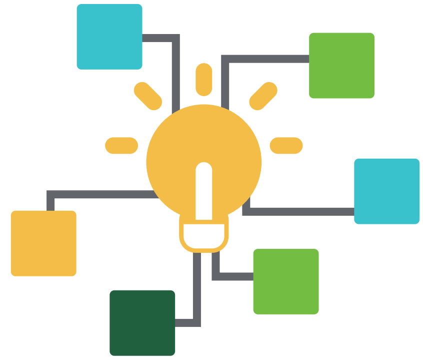
Begin by reviewing the vision statement. What does success look like to your organization? What does success look like for the participants? What do you need to know to decide whether to continue this initiative into the future?

Generally, a good evaluation:

- Answers the question, how are you doing?
- Answers the question, what could you do better?
- Assesses how well you are using program resources (efficiency)
- Assesses the impact of the program on the community (effectiveness)
- Justifies the existence of your program
- Supports the argument for increased resources (for budget, staffing, etc.)
- Highlights the impact of your program on the community in terms of strong outcomes

Answering these questions will help you determine what metrics to include. Include as many or as few metrics as you need to evaluate the project's success. Metrics can be high-level or can be quite specific. Consider a mix of both. As well, you should gather both qualitative and qualitative metrics to answer these questions. This provides a richer, well-rounded picture of your project.

What is Qualitative Data?

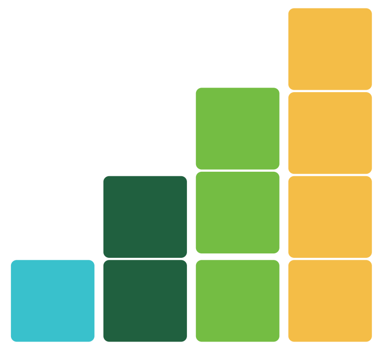


Qualitative data describes qualities and characteristics. It may be difficult to precisely measure and analyze. Qualitative data may be in the form of descriptive words that can be examined for patterns or meaning. Data of this nature is collected using questionnaires, interviews, observation, etc.

Examples of qualitative data that you might collect is:

- Attitudes toward the sport
- Perceptions of the experience
- How the sport or activity as positively impacted lives
- Personal feelings of inclusion or belonging

What is Quantitative Data?



Quantitative data can be counted or compared on a numeric scale. Data of this nature is collected with rating scales, measurements, etc.

Examples of quantitative data that you might aim to collect is:

- Number of participants who sign up for ongoing programming
- Percentage of clients who achieve their goals
- Number of volunteers
- Volunteer hours
- Number of donors
- Total amount of donations
- Program expenses
- Administrative expenses
- Net income
- Social media engagement
- Member acquisition rate
- Member retention rate

Formative Evaluation vs Summative Evaluation

You will also want to consider when you conduct your evaluation. Formative evaluation is the assessment of a project during the implementation, before the project is complete. Formative evaluation increases the likelihood your project will achieve its goals because you reflect and respond in live time. This is different from summative evaluation, which occurs at the conclusion of the project.

Formative evaluation may answer questions such as:

- Is the project, program or initiative adjusting to the needs of the community?
- What is the project's status in reaching its goals?
- Are resources allocated appropriately to ensure goals are met?

Summative evaluation may answer questions such as:

- Did the project, program or initiative meet its goals?
- What were the project's successes?
- Where did the project fall short? What could be done to improve?

With all of this in mind, select the evaluation methods that best suit the metrics you want to collect:

- Observation
- Surveys with open-ended questions (such as opinion questions)
- Surveys with close-ended questions (such as true/false, multiple choice and 5-point scale questions)
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Case studies
- Quantitative data-gathering methodologies
- Feedback forms
- Checklists
- Organizational statistics
- Documentation
- Informal methods (like one-on-one check-ins before, during and after the program)
- Sharing circles

Again, you may use as many or as few evaluation methods as you need to capture the data for the metrics you've selected. As you select your evaluation methods, consider the nature of the group you're working with (Ex. Their age, their access to technological resources like phones, computers or email addresses, their reading levels, etc.) and the nature of the project (Ex. Is it a one-time event or is it ongoing where you get to build strong relationships with participants). These factors will inform the methods you select.

Step 3 – Deciding How You Will Evaluate

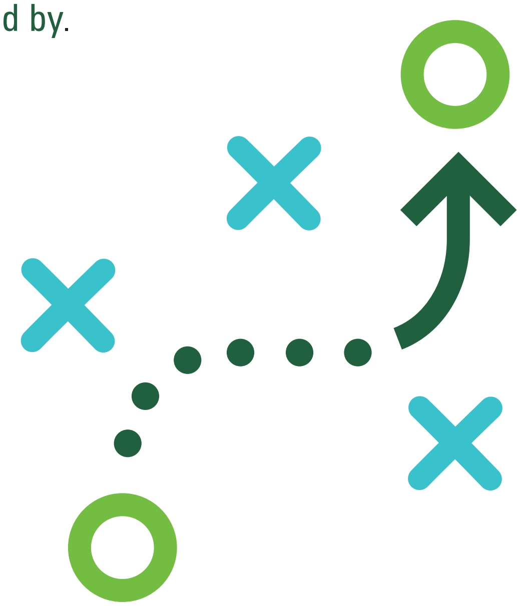
Step 4 – Creating Your Plan to Execute the Project

The next step is to create the action plan to execute the project. Often, you tell yourself that you will figure out how to move forward as you dive in and "get a feel for things". However, creating an action plan before implementation has several benefits:

- It creates efficiencies by ensuring a project is executed in a linear fashion and efforts aren't duplicated or steps aren't skipped.
- It optimizes the use of resources by understanding what's available and where it can be deployed. Example: if t-shirts need to be ordered for three different camps happening over a six-month period, one order will be more cost-effective than three separate orders.
- It clarifies roles. When team members clearly understand the role they play within a project, it creates buy-in. As well, it reduces duplication of efforts and/or skipped steps.
- It aids in timely execution by understanding deadlines.

An effective action plan should have four components:

- **Activities**: The actions to execute the project. The activities are must what be done to achieve the aims of the project.
- **Resources:** The inputs required to implement a project, including human resources (volunteer, paid or contract personnel), financial capital (budget, grant, revenues), equipment or machinery, templates, etc.
- **Action Lead:** The person or people who will lead or do each activity, as well as the person or people that will support each activity, must be consulted or must be informed.
- **Timeline:** When must the activity be completed by.



Step 4 – Creating Your Plan to Execute the Project

Action planning generates a plan for who is going to do what, by when and in what order for an organization to meet the project's goals. The more detailed the action plan, the more effective it will be. A chart like the one below may be helpful for visually plotting this information out.

What steps or activities will you take?`	What resources do you need (Ex. budget/ funding, templates, education, etc.)	Who will do the activity?	When will it be completed?

Step 5 – Executing Your Project

Congratulations! You're now ready to execute your project and you'll need to prepare your evaluation methods.

Creating the Evaluation

As you write your evaluation questions, keep the following things in mind:

- Be sensitive with demographic questions. Ask for only what you need to know. For example: do you need to collect birth dates? If you don't have a good reason for collecting information, simply don't.
- Use gender neutral language – refrain from using "he/she and him/her" and instead use "their and them". This removes the gender binary and is a more inclusive option.
- Do not collect data that doesn't have a clear intended use.
- Each question should have a clear purpose and focus. Avoid ambiguity by using concrete language and clear terms.
- Each question should be only about one topic so it doesn't muddy results.
- Create a safe space for participants to provide honest, candid feedback. Consider using methods that maintain anonymity. This may include paying a third-party to conduct an external evaluation.
- Choose the right format to be efficient for the sake of data analysis. Rather than many open-ended questions, offer a list of the most likely answers and then provide a comment box for other suggestions.

Sharing the Evaluation

Here are some best practices to consider as you circulate your evaluation:

- Respect your participants' time. Provide an estimated amount of time that it will take to complete the evaluation.
- Respect your participants' energy. Inform them of how the information they provide will be used.
- Define a timeline – seven to 14 days may be optimal, with 10 days being a sweet spot.
- Clearly indicate whether their responses will be anonymous and/or confidential. This will impact the level of honesty in the responses.
- Most responses will come through targeted communications, so send multiple reminders!

Analyzing the Evaluation

Analyzing data can be onerous! Keep things simple.

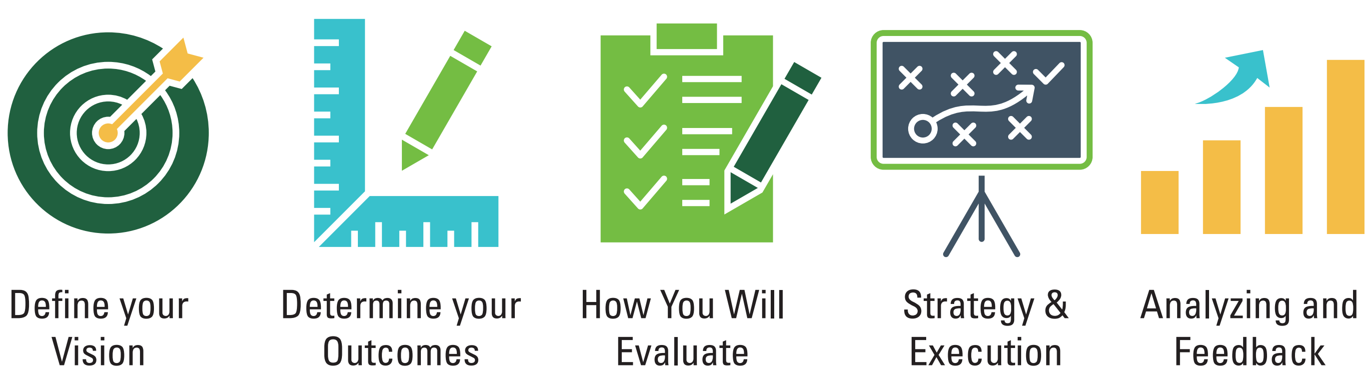
- If you've collected names with the evaluations, the first thing you should do is remove the names and any other identifying information from the data. This will stop you from being tempted to look at who provided the feedback received.
- Aim to present your results as neutrally as possible. You can add colour commentary later.
- Do not report on data that will not lead to action.

For questions that are numeric in nature, present data using percentages, charts and tables. For questions that were comments, consider scanning the total responses and identifying the themes throughout. Copy and paste similar comments into themes and assign theme headings. Select a few statements that reflect the nature of each theme and use them as quotes.

Receiving Negative Feedback

What should you do if you receive negative feedback? How should you respond? Take a moment. It's natural to feel upset or defensive. Step away for as long as it takes to return to being calm so that you can truly receive the feedback. If you know who the comment came from, have a follow-up conversation with that person, preferably when you can see each other. Thank them for their candid feedback. Listen to understand. Ask clarifying questions and take notes. Ask for specific examples or solutions. Don't defend yourself or explain your (or the group's) actions, don't offer rationale and don't offer solutions. Affirm that you'll reflect carefully on what they said and commit to following-up at a later date.

Then, reflect on the conversation with everyone who should be involved. Be honest with yourselves and with each other. Should the feedback be considered seriously? Brainstorm realistic and meaningful solutions and develop action plans to implement those solutions. Report back to that person. Share the process you went through to consider their feedback and the changes you've committed to making. If you cannot make changes, explain that you've considered their perspectives and share the reasons you cannot make changes. Following this process will reflect transparency, demonstrate openness to reflection and accountability.



Once you've analyzed your metrics, it's time to look at the bigger picture to evaluate the project as a whole. Consider using the following to help you analyze:

	If YES, how can you demonstrate with evidence?	If NO, why not and what lessons did you learn?	How will you incorporate these lessons into future planning and action?	What changes will you consider?
Thinking about the activities and outputs you had planned, did you achieve your goals or targets for the project?				
Thinking about the outputs and outcomes you achieved, are you closer to your organization's vision for the project?				
Was the project effective for getting to your vision?				
Think about the relationship between your activities and resources on one end and your outcomes on the other. Have you been efficient in your creation of these outcomes?				
Thinking about the project and how it used your resources (funding, volunteers, etc.), is the project sustainable without funding support?				

Step 5 – Executing Your Project

Step 6 – Sharing Your Impact

It's time to tell your story and share your impact. Communicate the impact of your work to stakeholders, including your members, the community and funders and donors.

Paint the Picture of Your Impact

Consider the reporting methods that best suit the data. In addition, you should strive for reporting which is balanced, credible, comparable and integrated with strategy.

- Balanced: Think about the big picture to give a balanced picture of your project's performance.
- Credible: Impact is believable to stakeholders when it is conveyed in a way that's consistent, representative and error-free.
- Comparable: Comparable impact information is provided in sufficient detail and in a format that enables users to match it to similar information across different organizations in an industry and between years for the same project.
- Integrated with Strategy: Impact information is integrated with strategy when it clearly ties the project's impact goals to the organization's goals. If your impact data collection has been driven by your project vision and your project vision is tied to your organization's vision, mission and strategic goals, it is hard for your impact communication to be anything other than integrated with strategy.

Determine Your Audience

Who do you want to share your impact with? You should communicate your impact with the group you've worked with but there are likely others as well. Determine all of the groups you'd like to communicate with and consider:

- What information do your stakeholders need?
- Do you understand what is important to them?
- Why is this information valuable to them?
- How are they going to use the information?
- How soon do they need this information?
- How can you engage your stakeholders?

Reflecting on these questions will help you to select the best formats for sharing your impact.

Ways to Share Impact

Here are some ways that you could use to share your impact:

- Use data visualization tools: Data visualization tools can help to present data in a way that is easy to understand and engaging. Use charts, graphs, tables, ranked comparisons and other visualizations to make your data more accessible.
- Tell stories: Use stories to illustrate the impact of your work. Stories can help to bring your data to life and engage stakeholders on an emotional level. Examples include videos like this one by Volleyball Canada, news articles like this one by Volleyball Canada or case studies.
- Provide context: Provide context for your data by explaining what it means and why it is important. This can help stakeholders to understand the impact of your work and its relevance to their interests. Consider reports, word clouds and infographics to assist in providing context.
- Be transparent: Be transparent about your data collection and analysis methods. This can help to build trust with stakeholders and demonstrate your commitment to accountability. Examples include statistics or geographic information.
- Engage stakeholders: Engage stakeholders in the impact measurement process by soliciting feedback and input. This can help to build support and engagement around your work. Use participant testimonials and photographs (with consent) or panel presentations with participants.

Tell your story in a way that informs, engages and inspires. The goal is to mix qualitative data with quantitative data and tell a story which communicates your organization's impact (intended and actual), speaks to your key stakeholder groups, respectfully represents your targeted community and provides a clear argument for future action. Good impact storytelling brings data to life through visuals and narrative and ensures that stories pack a punch because they are backed up by data.

Complete Grant Follow-Up

The final step is to complete the follow-up for the grant. This is the opportunity to demonstrate your impact to Sask Sport.

Your follow-up report should, at minimum, include:

- Your organization's name/the grant recipient
- Contact information
- The grant period
- The approved grant amount
- The program/project name (if the project was named)
- The type of initiative as described in your application/readiness assessment (refer to the examples provided in the funding guidelines)
- Project budget breakdown

In addition, you should enclose a summary of your project or initiative, including the vision statement, the goals you set at the beginning, a summary of how the project was executed, and share your outputs and outcomes. Utilize the ways you've decided to share your impact and include that in the report.

Fiancial Information	
Revenues	Amount
Total Revenues	$0.00
Expenses	
Total Expenses	$0.00
Total Revenue (Deficit) for Program	$0.00

The project budget should reflect both the revenues utilized for the project, including the grant funds, other grants, sponsorship, donations, program fees, etc., and the expenses, including salaries, administration costs, advertising, program expenses, facility rental, etc.

The follow-up must be substantiated by the organization's audited financial statement when it becomes available or a signed General Ledger Listing which outlines expenses which occurred during this fiscal period. Revenues (External Self-Help revenue) and expenditures (Categorical Grants) for this grant program must be clearly identified either in the body of the statement or in the schedules or notes to the statements.

Your report should conclude with a declaration that states:

- ***On behalf of our organization, I hereby agree that the terms and conditions outlined in the Guidelines have been adhered to and that the information presented in this Follow-up Report is correct and true.***

The declaration should clearly identify the name, title, and date of the individual submitting the grant and include their signature.

Notes

Resources Adapted by:

- Asia Pacific Social Impact Centre, Melbourne Business School – Actionable Impact Management
- Brighter Strategies – Evaluating Performance Outcomes
- Brighter Strategies – Evaluation with a DEI Lens
- Brighter Strategies – Program Evaluation Simplified
- Canadian Women & Sport – Next Play Program
- Donorbox Blog – Measuring Nonprofit Social Impact: A Crash Course
- Mosaic Engagement – 7 Tips for Crafting Precise Survey Questions
- Non Profit Megaphone – Measuring Non Profit Impact: 25 Key Metrics & Other Tools for Success
- Spark Solutions – How to Respond When Your Sport Club Receives Negative Feedback