Effectiveness Toolkit

Updated edition 2021

Scotland's International
Development Alliance

EFFECTIVENESS TOOLKIT

purpose • governance • impact • sustainability • development

Contents

Background

Following a pilot in 2010 and consultation with members, Scotland's International Development Alliance launched the Effectiveness Toolkit in 2014. The Toolkit aligns with other international development effectiveness principles and programmes including:

- The Istanbul Principles for Civil Society Organisation Development Effectiveness
- Bond's Effectiveness Programme.

This updated edition of the Effectiveness Toolkit builds on learning since its launch and reflects key international development policy and practice developments. At the time of writing the world continues to experience the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. NGOs have played a significant and critical role in innovative, fast-paced responses globally, whilst international development budgets have been drastically reduced.

Organisational effectiveness will be increasingly important to ensure the sustainability of the critical work carried out by Scottish NGOs to ensure a fairer world, free from poverty, injustice and environmental threats.

About the Effectiveness Toolkit

The Effectiveness Toolkit is a straightforward development tool that supports organisations to review their work against a set of international development and organisational good practice principles.

This updated edition was developed with the support of key stakeholders who generously shared their experiences of using the Toolkit (listed on the Credits page). Stakeholders told us they wanted a shorter, sharper, focussed Toolkit, that would help organisations easily assess priority areas for action and plan for continuous improvement, with useful tips, resources and signposting. It aims to be as relevant, accessible and practical as possible, ensuring the long-term effectiveness of international development organisations in Scotland.

Who is the Effectiveness Toolkit for?

The Toolkit is aimed at small to medium-sized non-profit organisations (NGOs) based in Scotland who are working in the field of international development. It is particularly suitable for board members and managers, but it will be useful for others, such as volunteers or project workers. You may also find it useful to use with your partner organisations in other countries, but spend time together first to make it relevant and accessible to that country, culture and language.

Note on language and terminology

As you work through the toolkit, there are some key words that you should interpret in the most appropriate way for your project or organisation. For example, you may have 'committee members' not 'trustees'. Similarly, we use the word 'team' to encompass trustees, staff members and volunteers. 'Stakeholders' are those who can affect or be affected by your work, which could include people, communities, staff and volunteers, donors and funders, partners and policy makers.

Principles that underpin the Effectiveness Toolkit

There are core principles and values that underpin the Effectiveness Toolkit. These should be actively considered and embedded across all activities and ways of working within organisations:

- **Equality and inclusion.** Supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, with particular attention on those who face additional barriers to equal access to power.

- **Partnership.** Promoting the principle of working in genuine partnerships with the organisations and people in the communities you support through your work.

- **Accountability and transparency.** Valuing openness, transparency, ongoing learning and accountability to your partners at home and overseas and to your supporters and donors.

- **Human rights.** Promoting and protecting individual and collective human rights, including the right to development, dignity, fair work, social justice and equity for all.

- **Safeguarding.** Building a healthy safeguarding culture that protects all those involved in your work from harm, including all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment.

- **Environmental sustainability.** Protecting and promoting environmental sustainability and ecological integrity and justice for current and future generations.

Why use the Effectiveness Toolkit?

The toolkit will support organisations to assess their work against best practice in the sector and develop action plans to strengthen their effectiveness. It identifies five core capabilities (aligned to the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness) against which organisations can assess their effectiveness:

1. **Purpose.** Defining your core purpose and mission. Ensuring accountability to the people and communities you support.

2. **Governance.** Developing board leadership and robust processes to ensure you meet legal duties and build good practice.

3. **Impact.** Using evaluation to evidence of the impact of your work. Collaborating with partners to extend your reach and impact.

4. **Sustainability.** Using your financial and team resources in a sustainable and effective way.

5. **Development.** Continuously improving your practice through reflection, learning and benchmarking. Developing and reviewing strategic, organisational and project plans.

For each capability, the Toolkit provides:

- A clear set of principles and practices
- Indicators and self-assessment templates
- Visual scoring guide
- Action planning templates
- Signposting to helpful resources and websites

What the Effectiveness Toolkit helps you to do

- **Review and assess:** Methodically review your practice across the five capabilities.

- **Engage and collaborate**: Compare your results with colleagues and build a rounded picture of how well you are doing.

- **Prioritise issues:** Identify where you need to focus your attention.

- **Take action:** Learn about your organisational effectiveness, draw conclusions and take action on them.

- **Celebrate!** There will undoubtedly be areas of strength you can build on and share with your stakeholders, including funders.

Tips for using the Effectiveness Toolkit

The Toolkit is not a form filling exercise. Use it actively. Involve as many others as possible in the self-assessment. Facilitate conversations about effectiveness with people in different roles and with different perspectives. For example, if you are a board member you could involve a manager or other team members. If you are a manager, involve your board, volunteers or key partner organisation.

- Use it as part of a whole-organisational review or strategic planning process.

- Break it down and identify one or two people who will work on different areas for development identified in your self-assessment.

- Use it to inform funding applications and / or conversations with donors and funders, aligned to your core purpose and strategy.

- Carry out the self-assessment as a team, or complete it individually then bring your results together for discussion.

- Identify training and development needs for your trustees, staff or volunteers.

- Spread effectiveness discussions over a series of meetings with your board and / or team e.g. using each capability to theme your discussions and identify areas of action.

- Engage someone from outside your organisation to help facilitate the process e.g. a facilitation swap with another organisation, an external facilitator, or if you are an Alliance member find out if a mentor could help.

How long will it take?

1 – 2 hours	Read the Toolkit and complete the self-assessment.
1 – 2 hours	Develop an action plan for at least one of the capabilities (e.g. Purpose or Governance).
Half day	A three-hour effectiveness session during a board or team meeting should be enough to discuss two of the capabilities in some detail.
Full day	An effectiveness 'away day' can be designed to cover all the capabilities as well as action planning.

Part two: Effectiveness capabilities

The Effectiveness Toolkit identifies five core effectiveness capabilities and principles. Each of the capabilities has two elements and twelve associated indicators, see below.

Capability	Principle	Elements	Indicators	Istanbul Principles
1. Our purpose	Our mission and values guide our decision-making. We are accountable to the communities and people we work with and support.	Mission People and communities	Each element is made up of six indicators.	3 & 5
2. Our governance	Our board leads the work of our organisation. We have robust and transparent processes to ensure we meet our legal duties and are well run.	Leadership Processes		5
3. Our impact	We gather evidence of the impact of our work. We collaborate with partners who share our values to ensure we contribute to long-term positive improvements in people's lives.	Evaluation Partnerships		6 & 7
4. Our sustainability	We are committed to using our resources in an effective, efficient and sustainable way.	Income generation Team		5
5. Our development	We are committed to continuously improving our policies and practice. We have strategic and organisational plans that focus our attention, activities and resources.	Learning and improvement Planning		7 & 8

The sections of the toolkit that follow break each of the five capabilities down in more detail to allow self-assessment and action planning. There are three levels of effectiveness contained in the self-assessments, colour coded to help an ongoing cycle of benchmarking and development:

Essentials:	The minimum good practice and legal requirements for all organisations
Good practice:	Taking the next steps to organisational effectiveness
Excellence:	Organisational effectiveness gold standards

The self-assessment encourages you to assign a score to each of the indicators using the suggested scoring guide:

3 = We have good consistent evidence that this is in place
2 = Our evidence is mixed or this is not fully in place
1 = We cannot evidence this or do not have this in place.

There is also space for you to make comments and notes. These comments will sometimes be more meaningful than the basic score, for example when discussing results with colleagues. And don't worry - different 'scores' are likely across your team, as people will have different views and perspectives! It helpful to explore and acknowledge these different perspectives, but then to move on to developing action plans for your next steps. If your time is stretched, set achievable parameters to work towards e.g. to score a 3 on all the 'Essentials'.

OUR PURPOSE

Mission • People and communities

1. Our purpose

This section contains two elements:

Mission: Our mission and values guide our organisation's work and decision-making.

People and communities: We are accountable to the people and communities we support and keep them at the heart of all we do.

Principles

- A clear mission helps focus attention, resources, and guides decision-making.

- The people, communities or issues your organisation supports are central to your mission.

- Openness and transparent working help you be accountable to the communities you support and the partners you work with.

- Meaningful involvement requires an investment of time and resources. It also takes honesty, trust, patience and respect.

- Involving people and communities and understanding what is important to them is a core international development principle, and fundamental to overall effectiveness.

- Barriers to engagement and involvement exist. These need to be explored, understood and proactively tackled.

Practices – ideas for action

- Check your mission statement, aims, objectives and activities – do they align with each other?

- Check your mission statement aligns with your governing document and charitable objectives (e.g. constitution, articles of association) and update where necessary.

- Share your mission statement clearly and accessibly with your key stakeholders, including people and communities, partners and funders.

- Set time aside with your team and partners to review your mission and aims. Use tools such as a Problem Tree and / or Weavers' Triangle. Perhaps seek help from a facilitator or Alliance mentor.

- Assess new areas of work or funding using your mission statement to ensure you are the most appropriate organisation to take this forward.

- Be clear on your parameters for accountability and involvement – who are you involving, why and what do you plan to do with stakeholder feedback? And always let people know what happens as a result of their involvement.

- Join the movement for transparency by publishing details of your spending to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), where it can be viewed by anyone, including partners.

- Make it easy for people to get involved. Use different methods, times and approaches that are appropriate for the community you are engaging with e.g. think about differences in culture, accessibility, language, and any barriers that may need to be addressed.

Self-assessment: Our purpose

	MISSION	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essential	1. We have an up-to-date mission statement that defines our **core purpose** and aligns to our **charitable aims and objectives**.		
	2. We use our mission statement when **making important decisions** about our organisation's development and future (e.g. new funding opportunities, partnerships).		
Good practice	3. Our whole team (trustees; staff; volunteers) has a shared understanding our **vision and purpose**.		
	4. Our **everyday activities** are **aligned to our core purpose, values and mission**.		
Excellence	5. Our key **partners and communities** we support **understand our core purpose and mission**.		
	6. We **review our mission statement** with our key stakeholders (e.g. staff and volunteers, communities, partners).		

	PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essential	1. We shape our work in response to the **needs and aspirations** of the people and communities we work with, ensuring we promote their safety and wellbeing.		
	2. We (or our partners) **involve people and engage communities** to ensure they are at the heart of our work and decision-making.		
Good practice	3. We **value diversity** and take steps to **reduce barriers to engagement** with our organisation and its work.		
	4. We regularly **share information** about our work in accessible formats to meet different needs (e.g. social media, different languages; infographics).		
Excellence	5. We **involve people and communities in regular monitoring** of our work to ensure we are meeting their needs.		
	6. We **support people and communities** to develop their skills for gathering and using feedback.		

Action planning: Our purpose

DESIRED OUTCOME What needs to be achieved?	ACTION What needs to be done?	OWNERSHIP Who will do it?	TIMESCALE When will it be done by?	REVIEW When and how will progress be reviewed?

Helpful resources and websites

Bond's resources on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles: core principles which guide the works and practices of civil society organisations. The Effectiveness Toolkit is aligned to these principles.

National Standards for Community Engagement: produced by the Scottish Community Development Centre, these seven standards provide a set of good practice principles.

Oxfam GB's Accountability Starter Pack: tool including straightforward guidelines on transparency and feedback.

Progressio's Capacity Building Manual: comprehensive capacity building guide for local NGOs, offering advice from strategic planning to office admin systems.

Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability: improving communication, engagement and accountability in everything you do. There's also an associated toolkit to support implementation.

Scotland's International Development Alliance's Resource List - IATI Publishing: resources to help you get started with publishing to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

Translators Without Borders: plain language glossaries for emergency and development situations across the world.

Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment: a 'how-to' guide showing how vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA) can help improve your understanding of the needs of people at greatest risk, and thus prepare more appropriate actions to assist.

OUR GOVERNANCE

Leadership ● Processes

2. Our governance

This section contains two elements:

Leadership: We have a strong, effective and representative board that leads our organisation.

Processes: Our organisational process and systems ensure our effectiveness and accountability.

Principles
- Effective organisations require the hard work and commitment of a board or management committee who have oversight and leadership responsibility for the organisation.

- It is easy to get pulled off course. Effective leaders understand the organisation's core purpose and use this to support decision-making.

- Leadership is supported by effective organisational processes and systems which ensure your organisation is not only compliant but operating in ways that supports good governance and best practice.

- Safeguarding underpins your work. Promote the safety and welfare of all involved, protecting them from harm, including all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment.

- Processes and systems should be proportionate to the size and capacity of your organisation.

- Straightforward processes that are easily understood by everyone in the organisation are most likely to support your governance and effectiveness.

Practices – ideas for action
- Assess your governing documents (e.g. constitution; strategic plan) to ensure they are up to date and reflect your current mission and activities.

- Ensure the board puts appropriate attention on both *strategy* (looking outwards and to the future) and *scrutiny* (reflecting on your organisation's past work and learning).

- Undertake the self-assessment on annual basis involving all your board members.

- Carry out a board skills audit to assess the current skills, knowledge, experience and diversity of your trustees and identify any gaps.

- Ensure your organisation reflects the issues and communities you work with by actively promoting and supporting inclusion and diversity. Cast the net wide when recruiting new trustees (beyond family, friends and familiar faces).

- Consider the sustainability of your board. Have terms of office and discuss succession planning to ensure board continuity *and* renewal.

- Regularly review your organisational policies, ensuring they are aligned and consistent (e.g. have policies as a standing item on board agendas; involve those who have the relevant skills to share the drafting and reviewing).

- Seek support and advice from Scotland's International Development Alliance, other infrastructure organisations (e.g. SCVO) or specialist agencies (e.g. OSCR).

Self-assessment: Our governance

	LEADERSHIP	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essential	1. Our trustees **understand and exercise their legal duties and responsibilities** in line with charity legislation and OCSR Guidance and promote the principles of a safe organisation.		
Essential	2. Our trustees have **clearly defined roles and responsibilities** and **meet regularly** to oversee the work of our organisation and ensure best practice (e.g. safeguarding; donor compliance).		
Good practice	3. We carry out board skills audits to ensure we have the right **knowledge and experience** to guide our organisation and its work (e.g. lived experience; charity governance; fundraising).		
Good practice	4. We seek external **expert guidance and support** when required to support our governance (e.g. financial; legal; HR).		
Excellence	5. We have board **sub-committees** which oversee specific areas of governance (e.g. finance; safeguarding; project management).		
Excellence	6. We have **terms of office** for our trustees to ensure we manage board continuity and renewal.		

	PROCESSES	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essential	1. We have an up-to-date **governing document** (e.g. constitution) and supporting policies that set out and guide our governance processes (e.g. AGMs; board meetings; financial reporting).		
Essential	2. We comply with charity accounting and governance regulations and reporting in the UK and other countries we work in.		
Good practice	3. We maintain an up-to-date **risk register,** regularly reviewing risk assessments/compliance (e.g. safeguarding; data protection).		
Good practice	4. We have **organisational policies** on key areas of governance and compliance (e.g. whistle blowing; fraud prevention & detection).		
Excellence	5. Our board and team have a **training and development plan** to ensure we work within legal duties and charity best practice.		
Excellence	6. We **involve our team in developing and implementing** policies that support a healthy and respectful workplace culture (e.g. safeguarding; equality and diversity; mediation).		

Action planning: Our governance

DESIRED OUTCOME What needs to be achieved?	ACTION What needs to be done?	OWNERSHIP Who will do it?	TIMESCALE When will it be done by?	REVIEW When and how will progress be reviewed?

Helpful resources and websites

Humentum's Health Check: financial systems self-assessment and accompanying tools for small-medium international development NGOs.

Scotland's International Development Alliance: member services including mentoring, funding, training, legal support. Relevant governance resources include:

- Governance Support Package: finance, people and organisational management.
- Risk management resources and templates
- 'Safer for All' – Safeguarding Package

Safeguarding resources and training: Bond's webpage with resources and training to support the development of safeguarding practices in organisations, including:

- Understanding effective safeguarding culture tool: Indicators and behaviours associated with safeguarding culture.

Safeguarding summary for trustees: a summary of trustees' responsibilities for safeguarding.

Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR): guidance, support and useful templates on all aspects of good governance and charity accounting.

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations: guidance and support for running your organisation, including finances, good governance and organisational policies.

Scotland's Third Sector Governance Forum: information, resources, events and the Scottish Governance Code.

OUR IMPACT

Evaluation • Partnerships

3. Our impact

This section contains two elements:

Evaluation: We have effective monitoring and evaluation processes that ensure we achieve our intended outcomes.

Partnerships: Effective partnerships built on shared social justice values help us achieve sustainable long-term impact.

Principles
- Organisations should be able to show the need for their work, with compelling stories about their impact.

- Monitoring and evaluation can sometimes feel daunting or an add-on to the 'real' work. However, understanding impact is key to improving the effectiveness of your work.

- Getting feedback from a range of people, including communities, your partners and your team helps to build a picture of the difference your work makes, including any unintended additional benefits, and / or harm.

- Sharing evidence and reports with communities, partners and your team helps strengthen your accountability and transparency.

- Partners help extend your impact and achieve things you couldn't alone. They have local knowledge and expertise and should be consulted at every stage of your work.

- Partnerships with organisations who share your goals and values can help you achieve your longer-term ambitions in a sustainable way.

Practices – ideas for action
- Be clear on the difference you want to make so that you know what to measure. Clear outcomes (the difference or change you'd like to see) and indicators (what this change 'looks like') can help to avoid most evaluation pitfalls.

- Identify the story you want to tell about your work and the people and communities you support. What is the starting point or context? What happened along the way (including any challenges)? What difference did your work make? What was learned?

- Use a simple structure for telling the story of your impact (e.g. on your website or in funding reports). Ask yourself: *What* (what did you set out to do)? *So what* (what difference did your work make to people's lives)? *What then* (how did you use this to develop your work further)?

- Collaborate with your key partners at all stages of the evaluations process. Discuss and agree your shared outcomes, indicators and evaluation methods.

- Partnerships can sometimes be challenging, so it's important to set out your shared aims and collective goals for working together and revisit these regularly.

- Be clear on what you are bringing to the partnership and how you add value. Ask partners how you can help them meet their priorities. How can you increase your impact together?

Self-assessment: Our impact

	EVALUATION	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essential	1. We **gather feedback** from a range of sources to understand and demonstrate the impact of our work.		
Essential	2. We **communicate our evaluation findings** with key stakeholders.		
Good practice	3. We **collaborate with our partners at all stages of our evaluation process** (e.g. agreeing outcomes, indicators, data collection methods and analysis).		
Good practice	4. Evaluation **informs our decision-making and future planning**. We learn from our work before developing new projects or services.		
Excellence	5. We have a **monitoring and evaluation plan** that shows the outcomes we want to achieve and how we will monitor these.		
Excellence	6. We use our evaluation findings to **influence policy and decision-makers** in the UK and / or countries we operate.		

	PARTNERSHIPS	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essentials	1. We have **partnership agreements** which clarify our shared goals and responsibilities for delivering our work together (e.g. managing finances; lines of accountability).		
Essentials	2. We develop partnerships with those who **share our social justice values** and work in a **participatory and accountable** way with communities.		
Good practice	3. We and our partners have good **up-to-date knowledge** of each other's key priorities and what we can achieve together.		
Good practice	4. We **collaborate with our partners in all aspects of our project development** (including funding applications) to ensure these reflect community needs and feedback.		
Excellence	5. We jointly **evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership working** by regularly seeking partners' views on our work together.		
Excellence	6. We have **stakeholder engagement strategy** aligned to our strategic plan identifying key partners and collaboration priorities.		

Action planning: Our impact

DESIRED OUTCOME What needs to be achieved?	ACTION What needs to be done?	OWNERSHIP Who will do it?	TIMESCALE When will it be done by?	REVIEW When and how will progress be reviewed?

Helpful resources and websites

Bond: Evaluation and partnership resources:

- MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) tools & resources
- Partnership resources and tools

Evaluation Support Scotland: support and resources to help with impact measurement.

The Good Enough Guide: produced by The Emergency Capacity Building Project to support organisations understand what difference they are making.

Scotland's International Development Alliance: Evaluation and partnership resources:

- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Beginners (2017) Aimed at complete beginners, a summary of the essentials you need to know, including terminology.
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Guide (2016). More in-depth than the above, taking you through some of the processes to get started.
- Partnerships Guide (2016) Practical approaches for developing and sustaining good partnerships in international development.

Theory of change guide for practitioners: Outlines some practical advantages of developing a Theory of Change within your organisation, community and partners.

Theory of change thinking and practice: Guides you through the process of developing a Theory of Change for different purposes.

OUR SUSTAINABILITY

Funding • Team

4. Our sustainability

This section contains two elements:

Funding: We have effective funding and income generation processes and systems that help us meet funding obligations and plan for longer-term financial sustainability.

Team: Our whole team are key to our success. Their wellbeing, experience and ideas are valued.

Principles

- Funders and donors are partners in your success. Positive and productive relationships help you meet your shared goals and ambitions.

- Trusting relationships with your funders and donors make it easier to share the learning and challenges you face.

- Income generation means taking a holistic view of all sources of income (including grants, donations, sponsorship, events, contracts, self-generated funds). Most organisations are strong in one or two areas but increasingly need to learn about others.

- Be really clear on what you offer – and what you don't. Use your mission and values to screen new funding opportunities so you don't get pulled off course (see the Purpose section above).

- Staff and volunteers are key to your success. Opportunities to learn about people's knowledge and experience can help make the most of their skills and expertise.

- People working in international development are motivated to do the best, and sometimes the *most* they can. Recognise that burnout can be an issue and support team health and wellbeing.

- Take time to share business-critical knowledge and information for running your organisation across the team to ensure the organisation and its work are sustainable.

Practices – ideas for action

- If a new funding opportunity arises, check you are the best organisation to deliver this work. Does it align with your mission? Are there other organisations who are a better fit? Are you duplicating the efforts of others?

- Cultivate relationships with your existing funders and donors. Keep them updated about your successes. Let them know as early as possible if you are facing any challenges - they might be able to help.

- Create opportunities to involve your team and partners in future developments. Team sessions or development days are great ways to hear different perspectives and ideas.

- Check in with your team regularly to see how they are doing. Do they have enough capacity, time and energy to undertake their work? Do they need any additional support?

- Talk about any development needs with team members in regular support and supervision sessions. What do your staff or volunteers need to help support their development?

- If you don't have paid staff or a hierarchical structure, pair your team up to offer formal support to each other - everyone needs someone to listen and help clarify their plans.

Self-assessment: Our sustainability

	FUNDING	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essentials	1. We **understand and regularly review our costs** (including direct and indirect running costs), making sure funding covers these.		
	2. We understand and follow **fundraising guidance and requirements** (e.g. the Code of Fundraising Practice and Chartered Institute of Fundraising) for our fundraising activities.		
Good practice	3. We have a **finance and reserves policy** that helps us **plan for future financial risks**.		
	4. We **build relationships** with our funders, including individual donors, and regularly keep them informed of our achievements and/or challenges (e.g. meetings, newsletters, website).		
Excellence	5. We have a **holistic fundraising strategy** (aligned to our strategic plan) that identifies funding from appropriate **range of sources** (e.g. grants; donations; self-generated funds).		
	6. We support **our partners** to develop their long-term **financial sustainability**.		

	TEAM	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essentials	1. We have **legally compliant HR policies, processes and practices** (e.g. recruitment; health and safety; safeguarding).		
	2. Our team have **regular support and supervision** to support safe, effective delivery and identify development needs.		
Good practice	3. The **health and wellbeing** of our team is a priority. We review this regularly, and have policies in place that ensure a safe, healthy and happy workplace (e.g. safeguarding).		
	4. We value our team's knowledge and experience and meet regularly to **reflect on work and share ideas** for future developments.		
Excellence	5. We have achieved or are working towards **workplace best practice awards and standards** (such as Investors in People; Investing in Volunteers; Volunteer Code of Good Practice).		
	6. We regularly undertake a **knowledge audit** to identify and share key **information about running our organisation,** including key relationships, policies and processes.		

Action planning: Our sustainability

DESIRED OUTCOME What needs to be achieved?	ACTION What needs to be done?	OWNERSHIP Who will do it?	TIMESCALE When will it be done by?	REVIEW When and how will progress be reviewed?

Helpful resources and websites

Chartered Institute of Fundraising in Scotland: best practice information and networking events.

Code of Good Practice for International Volunteering: principles and standards.

Code of Fundraising Practice: produced by the Fundraising Regulator.

International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising: statement of principles, values and that promote excellence in professional fundraising globally.

Humentum's Guide to Financial Management: Financial Sustainability: financial management resources aimed at small-medium NGOs working in international development.

The Lasting Difference Toolkit: helps assess, plan and take action on all aspects of organisational sustainability.

The Lasting Leadership Guide: builds sustainable leadership capacity, including succession planning, knowledge management, wellbeing, empowerment and equality and diversity.

Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel: promoting fundraising standards and dealing with fundraising complaints in Scotland.

Scotland's International Development Alliance: a range of fundraising guides including:
- Fundraising Guide: help build your financial success and strengthen good practice.
- Handy Hints: these are four quick guides to Corporate Support; Crowdfunding; In-Kind and Pro Bono and Individual Donors.

OUR DEVELOPMENT

Learning and improvement • Planning

5. Our development

This section contains two elements:

Learning and improvement: We use feedback and learning from our key stakeholders and networks to improve and develop best practice and effectiveness.

Planning: We have strategic, business and project plans that help focus our attention, activities and resources and we review these on a regular basis.

Principles

- Improvement is a process of getting better all the time. Incremental changes are just as important as large-scale change initiatives.

- Improvement initiatives should be clearly linked to your purpose and mission. This helps focus your attention on priorities for improvement.

- Improvement needs spare capacity, stepping back from day-to-day operations to reflect on your practices and feedback from stakeholders. Once improvements are identified, changes should be tested and implemented.

- Key stakeholders will have a range of different ideas and perspectives on your work, what is going well and what might need to be improved.

- Networks and infrastructure support organisations provide excellent information and resources to help busy organisations improve in line with best practice.

- Strategic, operational and project plans should align with your mission and objectives.

- Your time and capacity are precious. Investing time in formal planning helps prioritise your goals, activities and attention.

Practices – ideas for action

- Using the Effectiveness Toolkit is a great start to improving your organisational effectiveness and practices. Encourage members of your team to undertake the self-assessment and use it to prioritise areas for improvement.

- Discuss your self-assessment results at a team or board meeting to help collectively identify and prioritise your areas for action. Remember to record these in your action plan!

- Screen any new ideas or areas for improvement against your core purpose. Will they help you achieve your organisational mission and goals?

- Identify key networks and support organisations that are important for your organisation to link with. Scotland's International Development Alliance is a very good starting place! There may also be others in your particular area of work or in countries that you have links with.

- Identify peer support or training opportunities. Many support organisations offer regular events and training opportunities where you can meet and learn alongside your peers.

- Develop your strategic, operational and project plans in collaboration with your key partners. Review these together on a regular basis to adapt and respond to emerging needs.

Self-assessment: Our development

	LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essentials	1. We undertake the **Effectiveness Toolkit self-assessment annually** to identify our priorities for development and improvement.		
Essentials	2. Before making improvements, we **check new ideas** against our mission and purpose.		
Good practice	3. We **create time and space** to reflect on our practice and stakeholder feedback, individually and as a team.		
Good practice	4. We identify **key networks and support organisations** that can help us improve our effectiveness.		
Excellence	5. We identify areas for improvement and development and **share these with our networks and support organisations** to influence learning and development opportunities for the sector.		
Excellence	6. We benchmark the quality of our work against other organisations or recognised **quality frameworks** (e.g. EFQM).		

	PLANNING	SCORE	YOUR NOTES
Essentials	1. Our strategic and project plans identify our **key goals, aims and actions** to focus our attention and resources.		
Essentials	2. We work **collaboratively with our partners** to develop, implement and evaluate our project plans.		
Good practice	3. We **strike a balance between planning and responsiveness.** Our strategic and operational plans set goals but leave room for adaptation based on our learning.		
Good practice	4. Our **plans and strategies are well aligned.** Our organisational strategy informs (and is informed by) by our operational and project plans.		
Excellence	5. Our plans are informed by our **evaluations and learning**, ensuring we continue to develop and improve.		
Excellence	6. We develop and run joint **training events with our partners and communities** to improve project planning knowledge and skills.		

Action planning: Our development

DESIRED OUTCOME What needs to be achieved?	ACTION What needs to be done?	OWNERSHIP Who will do it?	TIMESCALE When will it be done by?	REVIEW When and how will progress be reviewed?

Helpful resources and websites

Bond: the UK network for organisations working in international development offers a range of support, training, events and resources.

European Foundation for Quality Management: EFQM is a quality framework that supports organisational improvement.

INTRAC How to do Strategic Planning: A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs: Toolkit to make strategic planning become more meaningful, alive and achievable for small and diaspora NGOs.

Refugee Action and Bond's organisational planning template for the Covid-19 crisis: short planning document to help capture your organisational priorities in response to Covid-19.

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SVCO): Scotland's voluntary sector member organisation provides a range of events, resources, services and training.

Scotland's International Development Alliance: A range of support, training and resources to help organisational improvement, including organisational mentoring.

Final thoughts

Great work on completing the self-assessment! We hope you found the ideas, tools and resources helpful for exploring your organisation's effectiveness – and more importantly for planning your next steps.

Take some time now to reflect on and summarise those steps:

Effectiveness benchmarks		Your notes/reflections
Essentials:	Do you have all the essentials in place? Where might immediate attention and action be required?	
Good practice:	What are your key areas for future discussion and development? What would you like to develop in the next year?	
Excellence:	What are your key areas of strength? Remember to celebrate and share these!	

We'd also recommend you also set a date to review your self-assessment (at least annually) to ensure continuous improvement.

Review date:

Lead person:

We'd love to hear how you found using the Toolkit! Please share your experiences of using the tools and ideas in your organisation – and do let us know if you have any ideas for how future editions of the Toolkit could be improved.

Don't forget that if you are an Alliance member and want further advice or support with any of the ideas in the Effectiveness Toolkit, help is available.

You can contact us at admin@intdevalliance.scot.
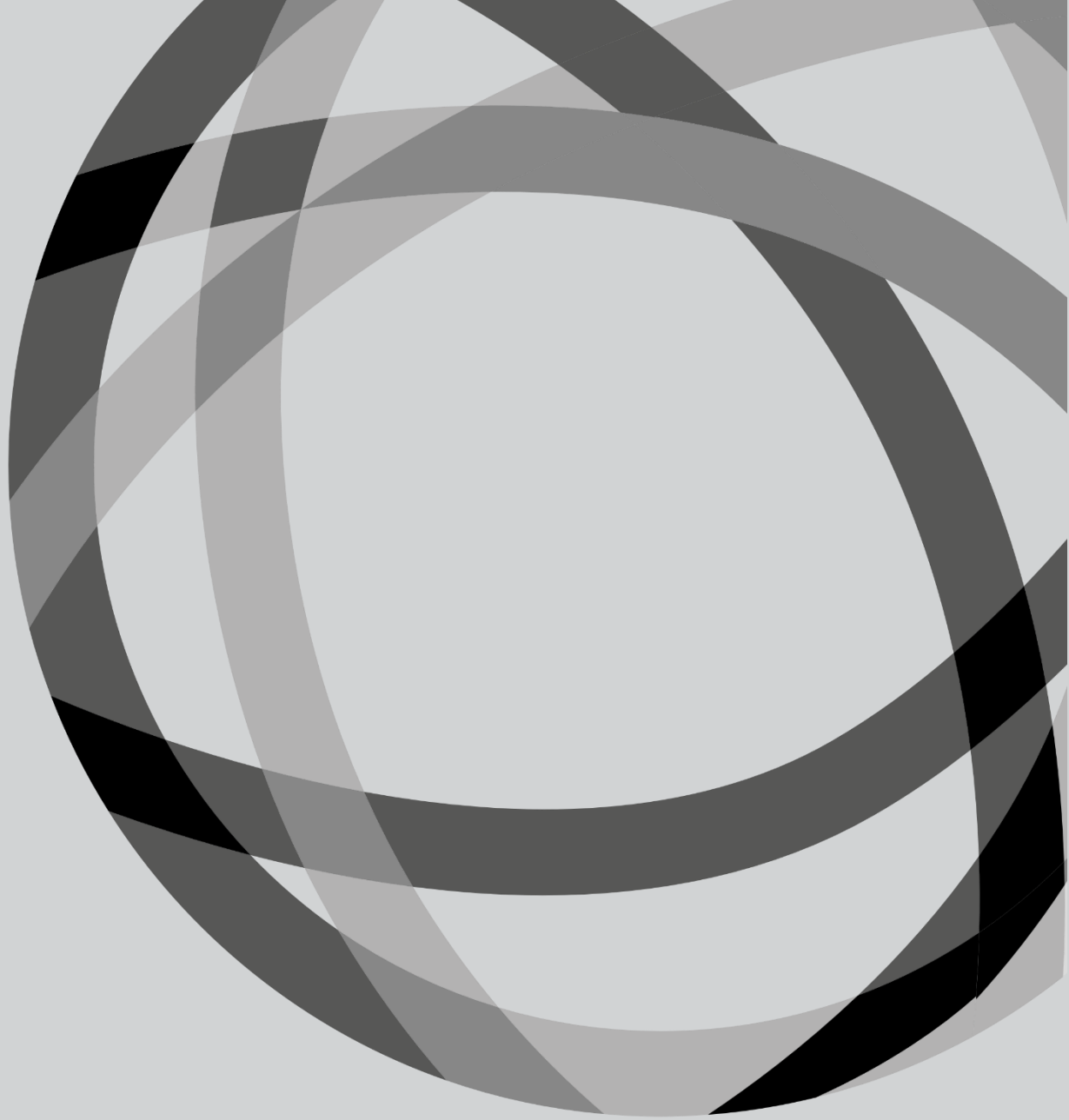
CREDITS

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