# Evaluating change and project exit

The kind of projects and activities you will be evaluating usually aim to achieve some kind of change in the participants, groups or publics they are working with. Tracking this during the progress of a project means you are more likely to achieve those targets, as opposed to waiting until the end to 'check' they have been met. But this should not just be about assessing to what extent this positive change has been achieved - there may also be unintended negative changes to deal with too. Projects can often be helpfully and creatively disruptive in communities, but the reality is that most projects have an end date, and so the exit must be considered, when the communities are left with the change. Do they simply return to their prior position, or is there some positive legacy to build on?

The following table can be used to track this. At the proposal stage you should be able to identify the Change Objectives for project partners, participants (e.g. artists, project delivery people, researchers), community groups and the general public or audiences. What would you hope is developed in them by the end of the project, in terms of working practices, perceptions, knowledge, skills and experience?

Some additional work may be required to set the baseline Starting Point to identify their current position before project start, relating to those Change Objectives.

Then as the project progresses, regularly evaluate any evidencable change, either positive or negative, for each group. This allows you to build on your successes towards the goal, but also deal with any negative consequences. The Project End boxes should then hopefully match the initial Change Objectives.

Finally, what will happen to those people the project leaves behind - what is the plan for sustaining the change, and building on it? Can those people or groups achieve this themselves or will they require further support, from you, or others, or each other?

| | | | Project partners / delivery team | Participants | Community Groups | General public / audiences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Starting point | | | | | | |
| Change objective | | | | | | |
| Evaluate change | 1/4 waypoint | Positive | | | | |
| | | Negative | | | | |
| | 1/2 waypoint | Positive | | | | |
| | | Negative | | | | |
| | 3/4 waypoint | Positive | | | | |
| | | Negative | | | | |
| | Project end | Positive | | | | |
| | | Negative | | | | |
| Plan for sustaining change | | | | | | |