

Evaluation

It is important to think about how you will measure the success of your interpretation whilst you are in the planning stages of your project. The earlier you think about evaluation the easier it is to collect baseline data, which is crucial when demonstrating the impact a project has had when applying for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for example.

Why evaluate?

- You can assess the impact of your interpretation which can help you when planning new schemes. You can establish what works about your interpretation and what you can do to make it better.
- Evidencing this kind of thinking can also be helpful when applying for funding. If you are able to prove that your interpretation has been successful through demonstrating community buy in and the educational/leisure benefits then this can assist in future funding applications.
- It can be rewarding to see the impact your work has had.

Questions to consider when planning your evaluation

- Has the interpretation achieved what you wanted it to - if not, why do you think this is - and what can you do to put this right?
- Did the people involved in creating and running the project learn new skills?
- You will find that people visit you for a range of reasons and they will have expectations. How well did you meet with visitor expectations?
- What impacts have been made through the interpretation project?

How to evaluate

General points to consider

Evaluating through numbers is a valuable evaluation method, however the number of people involved in an activity do not indicate how well people are learning or enjoying the interpretation. Measuring learning requires engaging with your audience to get their feedback. There are lots of different ways to do this and you will need to decide which way is best suited to your interpretation and the resources you have. Some examples are:

- Simply ask people what they think or run surveys on site. This can be a quick way of getting some instant feedback.
- You could hand out questionnaires. It is important that if you give people a short questionnaire they have enough time to answer. An email or online survey can provide an answer to this. Survey Monkey is one site through which you can run surveys.
- If you have school groups visiting the site then the evaluation will serve you better if it is quick and simple - like a hand count - where supervisors can record answers to questions such as: 'who enjoyed today?'

For information on the different methods of evaluation **Click here.**

Click here to view the HLF guide to evaluation.

