

## About Comparing Proving and Improving Approaches

The chart contains information to help guide you in thinking through the major considerations when deciding what you want to achieve and which tools can be of use. As you read through this chart, be aware that the information presented is indicative. It cannot provide precise information about the exact costs and benefits that your unique organisation will find along the way – there are many variables involved in using any of the methods. For example, our indication of 'costs' takes into account the relative costs of using the method to its completion, but cannot tell you how much it will cost if your organisation engages a consultant, or what it will cost to implement measures that your organisation may take to improve its quality and impact as a result!

The chart can be used as a wall poster, providing a straightforward reference point for choosing and using methods to help organisations to prove and improve. Ultimately it is intended to serve you, and can be used in whatever way you find most practical and fruitful.

The tools are grouped by their primary purpose:

- Holistic Accounting and Reporting Tools
- Measuring Impact(s) and Performance
- Quality Systems
- Business Strategy

Each column in the chart provides information on some of the characteristics of each tool. They are arranged as follows:

### Description

This sums up the essence of the tool in one sentence. It is only a brief glimpse – you can consult the full summary for a more thorough description.

### Potential benefits

This lists three potential benefits of the tool, in terms of its characteristics and the outcomes that can result from its use. Other potential benefits – and limitations – are featured in the **summaries booklet**.

### Resources needed

Icons in this column give you an indication of the resources that are needed to implement the tool. There will naturally be some variation in resource needs depending upon the size of your organisation and the way in which the tool is used. The key on the front of the chart tells you what each icon represents.

### Complexity

This provides a general indication of how complex or complicated the approach is to use. We've used icons to represent low, medium or high complexity. Much like the resources needed to use a tool, whether you find the tool complex or not depends upon your organisation, its background and its awareness in various areas.

### Types of support available

This column gives you a sense of what types of support and further information are out there. This complements the complexity column – in some cases, a complex method may be made easier with support available.

### External approval/verification

As well as telling you whether the tool involves external verification, this column provides an indication of whether the tool is used primarily for self-assessment, whether it involves a prescriptive set of standards to follow and whether adhering to these can result in an award or 'mark'.

## The Key

Symbol	Definition	Additional information What it means
<b>Resources needed</b> Flexible/variable Free Cost Time horizon Demand on staff time Prior knowledge/background reading		Refers to significant flexibility or variation.  Approximation of costs related to purchasing publications and materials and external evaluation – if required.  Time scale in implementing the entire tool is signified by one, two or three symbols.
<b>External validation</b> Required  Available Not available		In order to be complete, the tool requires verification that results in a 'mark' or 'award'. However, an organisation may be able to adapt the tool and use it without the verification if desired.  Optional.  Not part of the system, although consultants or others may be able to provide an external view on the organisation's undertaking of the tool.
<b>Complexity</b> Low Medium High		
<b>Support available*</b> Online resources  Consultants Software Peer network Training courses Handbook Publications		There are websites for all tools, identified in the second book, <b>Tools</b> , through which you can find out more. This icon signifies the availability of more substantial online and interactive content, including downloadable reports and support networks.  For example, a CD or software package is available.  A substantial range of wider literature related to the tool is available.  * Lists support that is readily available. To the best of our knowledge, new resources for support are subject to change and are being added all the time. Check with the organisations listed in the summary information in <b>Tools</b> for updates and further information.

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**comparing proving & improving approaches**

## Comparing proving and improving approaches

This chart offers an overview of the approaches to 'proving and improving' found in the **Tools** section of **Proving and Improving: a quality and impact toolkit for social enterprise**. Here, you'll be able to see the key features of more than 20 methods. The chart has three purposes:

1. To help you to identify a tool to either use off-the-shelf or to adapt to meet your needs in measuring impact, reporting on performance, demonstrating quality, or developing business strategy. You can use the chart as an overview to compare the tools in analysing their merits and decide which tool is most appropriate.
2. To give you the general information you need in order to respond to others' suggestions or requirements that you take up a particular method or tool.
3. To enable those providing support and advice to social enterprises and other organisations to understand a range of approaches, and signpost

their clients to places for further assistance, based on their needs and situation.

This chart may be most beneficial after reading the first book, **Knowledge**, which will help you work through the motivations for choosing and using an approach to 'proving and improving', and explore the basics of measuring your organisation's impact and demonstrating its quality.

The second book, **Tools**, is designed to use in conjunction with this chart. These can help you to learn more about a variety of methods and choose tools that can help meet your organisation's needs.

The third book, **Resources**, helps you to further define and measure your organisation's impact and looks at some practical ways to demonstrate or measure it in conjunction with the frameworks set out in the first two books.

This Toolkit can help you start to think about the ways in which your organisation can continually prove and improve!

### Knowledge

The first, most important steps in proving and improving.

Gives you the rationale and motivations for choosing and using an approach to proving and improving including:

- A basic guide to defining and measuring your organisation's impact and demonstrating quality.
- Ten essential steps to prove and improve
- Glossary of key terms
- Further resources

### Tools

A handy reference book with more than 20 well known approaches to proving and improving. Once you've got **Knowledge** and **Resources** under your belt, use this in conjunction with the Comparing Tools chart to learn more about ways to:

- Measure impact
- Demonstrate quality
- Report on social/ environmental/ economic performance

### Comparing Proving and Improving Approaches

At a glance, you'll see more than 20 proving and improving tools compared. A quick reference, useful for starting the proving and improving conversation.

### Resources

A look at defining and measuring your organisation's impact. Use as a next step after reading **Knowledge** to inform your approaches to many of the **Tools** outlined in the chart and handbook. This section covers:

- Choosing indicators – ways of knowing
- Ways to measure your organisation's effects – A DIY social research primer
- Indicators bank: ways to measure social, environmental and economic impacts
- A DIY storyboard and impact map exercise to try for yourself

### The SROI Primer

A CD-ROM that helps you to understand your impacts and express them as a 'social return' on the financial investment in your organisation. Includes:

- 30-minute video
- Web links
- Further SROI resources

Category	Method/Tool	Description	Potential benefits	Resources needed	Complexity	Support available	External approval/verification
Holistic Accounting and Reporting Tools	AA1000 Assurance Standard	A standard for assessing an organisation's social, environmental and economic reporting process, with stakeholder engagement at its core.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be used by an organisation in preparing its social accounts/reports.</li> <li>Helps those who assess social reports to address performance and impact issues.</li> <li>Emphasises stakeholder engagement.</li> </ul>	(£) * 			
	SIGMA Sustainability Guidelines	Guidelines for measuring and managing the social, environmental and wider economic impacts of an organisation's activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive approach to integrating wide-ranging sustainability issues into strategies.</li> <li>Possible to use the parts that the organisation feels are most relevant.</li> <li>Incorporates a range of other 'proving and improving' tools.</li> </ul>	(£) * 			
	Social Accounting	A framework to help clarify an organisation's values and objectives, report on performance against their objectives, and demonstrate social, environmental and economic outcomes/impacts, emphasising stakeholder engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers a full range of performance and impact issues.</li> <li>Stakeholders' perspectives feed into the organisation's planning and measurement process.</li> <li>Flexible and can be combined with other 'proving and improving' tools.</li> </ul>	£ * 			
	Social Return on Investment (SROI)	A method for comparing the monetised value of social benefit created by an organisation/initiative with the investment needed to create that value. nef's model builds on social accounting and stakeholder engagement principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SROI is also a method for measuring impact, and presents a clear message: every pound invested in an organisation is linked to Ex social return.</li> <li>Can help in showing customers/service-users that they are supporting social, environmental and economic benefit.</li> <li>Builds upon social accounting principles.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
Measuring Impact and Performance	Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD)	A framework for understanding the effects of community development activities/interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks to involve the community in the regeneration process.</li> <li>Is flexible to adapt to different forms of community development and geographical contexts or to be used informally.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Key Social and Co-operative Performance Indicators (KSCPIs)	A group of ten indicators to help co-operatives and other organisations determine how they measure up to co-operative principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can demonstrate to customers some of the benefits of co-operatives.</li> <li>Standardised and straightforward.</li> <li>Provides a first step for demonstrating that a co-operative organisation is living up to its values.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Eco-mapping	A tool for analysing and managing environmental behaviour at an organisation's site(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows an organisation to see where its negative environmental impacts occur.</li> <li>A systematic, straightforward review to guide environmental improvement.</li> <li>Tool is free, and is easy to understand.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Guidelines	A holistic framework that guides an organisation's reporting on social, environmental and economic performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internationally recognised, useful for improving comparability.</li> <li>Supports and integrates with other tools, for example, Social Accounting, AA1000.</li> <li>Flexible: can be adapted and used in different sectors.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Local Multiplier 3 (LM3)	A DIY method that shows the effect of an organisation's spending on its local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates impact on local economy.</li> <li>Clearly highlights where local economic impact can be improved.</li> <li>Quick and relatively easy compared to other forms of economic evaluation.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Look Back Move Forward	A participative evaluation and learning tool for analysing a project or organisation's social, economic, and environmental impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick, inexpensive and simple to use.</li> <li>Engages stakeholders, improving accountability and learning.</li> <li>Allows stakeholders' voices to be heard without using surveys or questionnaires.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Prove It!	A participative method for measuring the effect of community projects (or other projects) on local people, on the relationships between them and on their quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures how communities' and individuals' quality of life is changing as a result of an organisation's endeavours.</li> <li>Measures and documents outcomes.</li> <li>Participative method can help build trust in the community, contributing to 'regeneration'.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
Quality/Performance Improvement Systems	Development Trusts Association (DTA) Healthcheck	A guide to good practice for development trusts and other community and social enterprises allowing them to assess their progress against development trusts' values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to ensure that DTA members hold certain competencies and characteristics in common.</li> <li>Can help new trusts to establish themselves, and established trusts to improve.</li> <li>Provides a backbone for the improvement conversation with DTA support staff.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	EFQM Excellence Model, European Foundation for Quality Management	A framework for identifying the strengths and areas for improvement of an organisation across all of its activities or single issues/projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes links between what an organisation does, the results it achieves, and how the results are reached.</li> <li>Easy to use in 'bite-sized' parts or for whole organisation.</li> <li>Can be used for self-assessment or submitted for external award.</li> </ul>	££ 			
	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)	An environmental management framework that provides the basis for a published environmental report and addresses the whole organisation's environmental performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide ranging and can incorporate tools, such as ISO 14001 and Eco-mapping.</li> <li>EMAS logo can help communicate commitment to environmental issues.</li> <li>Helps organisations reduce waste, energy use and resources that can help to reduce costs.</li> </ul>	£££ 			
	Investors in People Standard	A business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through improving its relationship with its employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A method for improving staff management, employee satisfaction, motivation, and access to training and development.</li> <li>Inclusive: involves paid and unpaid staff.</li> <li>Award 'mark' is widely recognised by staff, funders and customers.</li> </ul>	££ 			
	ISO 14000 Series, International Organisation for Standardisation	An environmental management system concerned with what the organisation does to minimise the harmful effects on the environment caused by its activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can help the organisation to identify and then to reduce energy, raw material and resource use.</li> <li>Can improve internal and external communication of environmental management procedures.</li> <li>Has potential to reduce costs.</li> </ul>	£££ 			
	ISO 9000 Series, International Organisation for Standardisation	A quality management system for the process of production, providing standards and requirements for how production is managed and reviewed for the whole organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well known and recognised internationally.</li> <li>Can improve internal and external communication of management procedures.</li> <li>Covers an extensive range of areas to improve the quality of management.</li> </ul>	£££ 			
	Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO)	A holistic quality management system designed specifically for small voluntary organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step-by-step approach provides a simple way of identifying what an organisation is doing well.</li> <li>Helps to set priorities for the future and to make improvements.</li> <li>Seeks to improve a wide range of quality issues.</li> </ul>	£ 			
	Quality First	A simple quality management framework aimed at very small organisations (for example, run primarily by volunteers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free and simple to use.</li> <li>Systematically addresses quality without requiring an organisation to be familiar with more complex quality assurance systems.</li> <li>Addresses limited capacity.</li> </ul>	£ 			
	The Big Picture	A framework for identifying the strengths and areas for improvement of an organisation across all of its activities or single issues/projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes links between what an organisation does, the results it achieves, and how the results are reached.</li> <li>Easy to use in 'bite-sized' parts or for whole organisation.</li> <li>Works for small organisations.</li> </ul>	£ 			
Strategic Management	Social Firms Performance Dashboard	An internal management tool for business improvement geared towards social firms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps social firms to spell out their objectives and track performance on these over time.</li> <li>Can integrate with existing systems easily.</li> <li>Free for social firms and easy to use.</li> </ul>	(£) 			
	Social Enterprise Balanced Scorecard	An internal management tool and visual representation for social, environmental, economic strategy and financial sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Useful for managing strategic organisational change.</li> <li>Helps to focus on strategic planning and measuring progress.</li> <li>Can facilitate communication of organisation's goals internally and externally.</li> </ul>	££ 			