

Look Back Move Forward

Primary purpose

Look Back Move Forward (LBMF) is a simple participative project evaluation and learning tool. The tool guides a two-hour self-facilitated workshop that focuses on an interactive poster. The poster comes with instructions to guide participants through a series of stages, giving them the opportunity to reflect on a project they have worked on together from a number of different perspectives, as well as to compare and learn from each other's experiences. The finished poster provides a visual record of the participant's views on the project, which can be used for discussion and learning.

Summary

LBMF uses a poster, self-adhesive notes (e.g. "Post It") and instructions. The first step involves putting the poster on a wall or large table so everyone can see it.

Participants are divided into four equally sized groups. These may be obvious groups such as volunteers, or project managers, but can be random. If there are four people or fewer, each 'group' will be an individual. A group of people (stakeholders) 'who are not here' is also identified as people who are not present but have an interest in the project.

Running through the middle of the poster is a timeline. The next step is to date the timeline labelling an agreed start date for the project at the start of the timeline and the date of the meeting at the other end. Each group then comes up with two high points and two low points from the project. They discuss what made them high or low and write each high or low on a self-adhesive note. Each group in turn sticks its notes on the poster, putting them roughly where they occurred along the time line, each placing the note higher above or lower below the centre line indicating how extreme the high or low was. Collectively, the whole group tries to approximate the highs and lows of those who are not present.

The group as a whole then discusses the highs and lows looking for any connections, similarities or differences among what the different groups came up with. Next the whole group considers what difference the project has made and any unintended effects. They then think through what they would have done differently on reflection. All of this information is recorded on the poster.

Finally the whole group is encouraged to think about the future and what the participants want to achieve next. The poster allows information, findings and learning points to be turned into a report that can be distributed among other individuals and partners. An evaluation form is also included to enable the tool to improve as more groups use it.

Potential benefits

- LBMF is quick, inexpensive and simple to use.
- It allows everybody involved in a project that attends the meeting to have a say on what worked, what went wrong and what could be improved.
- It allows participants to discuss some of the project's economic, social and environmental impacts.
- It provides a simple method for engaging with stakeholders and improving accountability and learning.

Potential limitations

- It could be perceived as not being formal or serious enough.
- One of the benefits – its simplicity – can also be one of its potential limitations. For some organisations it may not be comprehensive or vigorous enough.
- Whilst it can effectively engage stakeholders, the process itself may not be recognised by funders, service users or customers.
- Like other processes of this type, it doesn't involve external evaluation, certification or a mark.²⁷

Who can use LBMF?

LBMF is designed to be used by any organisation or project of any size without a facilitator or trained expert.

What resources are needed?

Leadership

Anyone at an organisation who has read through the tool's instructions can lead the group. Whoever is involved in the project can take part. Groups may want to invite a wider range of people than normally come to their meetings to discuss the project.

Proficiencies or skills

The organiser will need to make sure that everyone gets a fair chance to speak at the discussion and should be comfortable with doing this.

Staff time

The LBMF workshop takes two to three hours, though this may vary slightly depending upon the size of the group. It can be used over one or several meetings.

Courses, support, and information

The tool is designed to be used 'off-the-shelf' with no support required.

More information can be found at:

www.neweconomics.org/gen/newways_lookback.aspx

Development, ownership and support

Look Back Move Forward is developed in a partnership between **nef** and the Shell Better Britain Campaign.

Details on obtaining the poster and related material can be acquired by contacting **nef** at 020 7820 6300. A fee of £5–£10 per kit (depending on postage and packaging) is charged to cover costs.

Social enterprise examples

Social enterprises that have used **Look Back Move Forward**:

- Forest Schools
- Groundwork West London
- British Waterways

Further sources of information

www.neweconomics.org/gen/newways_lookback.aspx

References

- 1 The AA1000 AS (2003: 5) defines assurance as, “an evaluation method that uses a specified set of principles and standards to assess the quality of a Reporting Organisation’s subject matter, such as reports, an the organisation’s related systems, processes and competencies that underpin its performance. Assurance includes the communication of the results of this evaluation to provide credibility to the subject matter for its users”.
- 2 AccountAbility defines stakeholders as “those individuals and groups that affect and/or are affected by the organisation and its activities”. The AA1000 Framework details how an organisation can map its stakeholders, and build a systematic process of stakeholder engagement. At time of publication, AccountAbility had begun work with the UNEP on a stakeholder handbook and the next module in the AA1000 series, which will focus on stakeholder engagement.
- 3 The AA1000 Series defines ‘accountability’ as consisting of: “Transparency: to account to ones stakeholders. Responsiveness: to respond to stakeholder concerns. Compliance: to comply with standards to which one is voluntarily committed, and rules and regulations that one must comply with for statutory reasons. These aspects of accountability may in practice have very different drivers, including legal compliance, stated policy commitments, reputation and risk management, and the company’s sense of moral and ethical duty.” (AA1000 AS, 2003:33).
- 4 Organisations adopting the AA1000 AS commit themselves to the practice of ‘inclusivity’. In brief, this means an organisation’s commitment to identify and understand its performance and impact and associated views of its stakeholders, its commitment to consider and coherently respond to the aspirations and needs of its stakeholders, and its commitment to provide and account to its stakeholders. For more information see www.accountability.org.uk.
- 5 This list does not represent a hierarchy of assurance.
- 6 The Big Picture suggests that non-prescriptive changes should relate to the needs of an organisation not an external set of rules laid down by others.
- 7 Some of the indicators, e.g. those measuring environmental impact, are widely-used standard measures.
- 8 www.emas.org.uk/
- 9 The Excellence Model defines ‘customer’ as “Anyone outside the organisation who receives products, services, or some other benefit form it, such as service users, clients, beneficiaries, members, funders, the general public, other services, stakeholders, and targeted groups.”
- 10 Those results, not covered by Customer, People and Society that it is imperative for the organisation to achieve.
- 11 EFQM describes this as “managers and leaders set up ways of working that get everyone involved in never-ending improvement in the meeting of internal and external customers’ needs”.
- 12 www.bqf.org.uk
- 13 www.bqf.org.uk/pi_introworkshop.htm
- 14 www.efqmforum.org/
- 15 More information about beta™ can be found at: www.cforc.org/organisationalreview/beta.htm

- 16 EMAS objectives are overall goals; targets are a series of stepping-stones toward these goals. Both elements should be measurable wherever possible.
- 17 Every Member State has designated a Competent Body that is responsible for registering organisations and for maintaining the list of registered organisations in their country. This is the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) in the UK. www.emas.org.uk
- 18 This evaluation is based on a survey of 125 Belgian companies in the year 2000. Source: www.inem.org/new_toolkit/comm/environment/emas/toolkit
- 19 The GRI Guidelines organise 'sustainability reporting' in terms of economic, environmental, and social performance (also known as the triple bottom line). They reflect what the members of the initiative think is currently the most widely accepted approach to defining sustainability. GRI recognises that the definition has its limitations but sees the definition as a starting point that is comprehensible to many and has achieved a degree of consensus as a reasonable entry point into a complex issue. More information on sustainable development can be found in the Guidelines.
- 20 In the Guidelines, indicators are defined as "a measure of performance, either qualitative or quantitative".
- 21 For Investors in People, this is anyone who helps the organisation to achieve its objectives – whatever role they play, including part-time workers and voluntary workers. It would also include self-employed people who do a lot of work for the organisation or people on renewable short-term contracts and regular casual employees.
- 22 An Adviser helps organisations put in place the practices and processes they need in order to gain the maximum benefit from the Standard in a cost-effective way. The Adviser provides client-focused feedback on an on-going basis and works with the Assessor to help customers plan their assessments and reviews. Advisers are licensed practitioners and have to keep up to date with good practice. They must follow a programme of continuous professional development.
- 23 For further details visit www.investorsinpeoplechampions.co.uk
- 24 For ISO, 'Management system' refers to the organisation's structure for managing its processes – or activities – that transform inputs of resources into a product or service which meet the organisation's objectives, such as satisfying the customer's quality requirements, complying to regulations, or meeting environmental objectives.
- 25 The British Standards Institution website also features training information in the UK: British Standards Institution, Tel: 020 8996 9001 www.bsi-global.com
- 26 When ISO began to develop a set of generic quality management standards for worldwide application, it drew upon existing national standards and military quality assurance specifications. The ISO 9000 'core series' was first published in 1987 and revised, improved editions published in 1994 and 2000.
- 27 See the Resources book in this toolkit for chart on other consultation methods
- 28 *All quotes taken from, '*Prove It!: Its development and its potential for evaluating community-based regeneration projects*', **nef**, to be published 2005.
- 29 For SIGMA, sustainability may best be defined as the "capacity for continuance into the long-term future". Anything that can go on being done indefinitely is sustainable; anything that cannot is unsustainable.
- 30 SIGMA identifies a 'business case' for sustainable development: "A body of evidence and arguments highlighting how improved sustainability performance can maximise opportunities and minimise potential risks for an organisation. The SIGMA Guidelines focus on making a business case within a specific organisation."

- 31 The SIGMA brochure gives a definition of a management system, as “a means by which organisations can formalise, document and improve their management practices. A management system usually incorporates consideration or development of organisational policies, programmes, procedures, structure and resourcing; staff roles, responsibilities and training programmes; operational controls; planning (strategic and operational); internal audits, management reviews, etc. The management system is intended to facilitate the delivery of continual improvement in overall business performance.”
- 32 www.projectsigma.com/default.asp
- 33 www.bsi-global.com/Seminars/SIGMA/index.xalter for more details.
- 34 The SIGMA brochure lists a variety of perspectives on ‘sustainable development’ including: The UK Government’s definition in the Sustainable Development Strategy, published in May 1999, that defines sustainable development in terms of four objectives: social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 35 The Social Audit Network is a collaboration of individuals that works with many social enterprises and other organisations in the social economy/ third sector.
- 36 Cost-Benefit Analysis: A method of reaching economic decisions by comparing the costs of doing something with its benefits. The calculation of a benefit to customers accruing from a particular cost; for example, how much extra will consumers pay to get a special service? Is the benefit to be gained from buying that service at a premium price higher than the cost of purchasing the enhanced service? The concept is relatively simple, but difficulty often arises in decisions about which costs to include in the analysis and which benefits to include. CBA also becomes complex when the benefits being measured do not have a price. SROI is one form of cost benefit analysis that tries to address this difficulty by associating some impacts of social enterprises, offerings with monetary values and in the **nef** model values costs and benefits to multiple stakeholders.
- 37 Discounted Value of Money: a ‘£’ today is worth more than a ‘£’ tomorrow, because its value will have decreased by a certain percentage, known as the discount rate.