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## **SROI**project

### Establishing how long outcomes last

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The effect of some outcomes will last longer than others. Some outcomes depend on the activity continuing and some do not. For example, in helping someone to start a business it is reasonable to expect the business to last for some time after your intervention. Conversely, providing a service so that people do not visit their GP so often may depend on the service being available all the time.

Where you believe that the outcome will last after the activity has stopped, then it will also continue to generate value. The timescale used is generally the number of years you expect the benefit to endure after your intervention. This is referred to as the duration of the outcome or the benefit period.

You will need an estimate of the duration of each of your outcomes. Ideally this would be determined by asking people how long an intervention lasted for them – this will give you evidence of the duration. However, if information is not available on the durability of different outcomes, you can use other research for a similar group to predict the benefit period, such as the likelihood that ex-offenders will begin offending again, or that people in employment will lose their jobs. Look for research to support your decision. It is important to use data that is as close as possible to the intervening question so as not to inappropriately generalise. This is an area where there can be a tendency to overstate your case and lose credibility.

Sometimes the duration of the outcome is just one year and it only lasts while the intervention is occurring. In other instances it might be 10 or even 15 years. For example, a parenting intervention with children from deprived areas may potentially have effects that last into adulthood. You will need to have longitudinal data to support the duration of the outcome and should consider how you might start to collect this (if you are not already doing so). If you don't have this information you will need to make a case based on other research. The longer the duration, the more likely it is that the outcome will be affected by other factors, and the less credible your claim that the outcome is down to you. This is addressed by looking at the rate at which the outcome drops off and is considered in Step 4.4.

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Participants on a year-long IT training programme that go on to get related employment	4–5 years	The move into successful employment could set participants on a career path. Although they might stay on this for some time (eg 15 years), the period is kept to 4-5 years as increasingly the effect

		of the training will wear off and their work experience will become more important
Carers that get brief respite (1 week)	Up to 1 year	Respite care needs to be regular in order to sustain the benefits
Children that get a preschool intervention.	10–15 years	Evidence from some other early interventions with children suggests that the benefit can be long lasting, setting children on a different path
Businesses that get support with cheap workspace	3–4 years	The support could set up businesses that last for much longer than 3-4 years. However, it is likely that after the initial set up other factors (eg the general economic climate) will become more important
Participants that get better quality wheelchairs	2 years	The benefit of the new wheelchair will depreciate much like other assets

### **Duration and life expectancy are different**

In the case of capital projects it is important to recognise the difference between the duration of the benefit and the life expectancy of the asset. For example, a new building may last 20 years and in each year create benefits which last several years. There is a note in the Resources section on using SROI with capital projects.

Keep a record of the rationale you used for determining the benefit period for each outcome. This will need to go into your SROI report.

To date, the convention in SROI has been to account for outcomes from the time period after the activity, even if they occur during the activity.<sup>1</sup>

## The worked example – duration

Look at the Impact Map for Wheels-to-Meals on this site – the blue section shows you how the column for the duration of the outcome has been completed.

For Wheels-to-Meals, most of the benefit occurs during the activity and would not be sustained if the luncheon club ceased to operate. However, in line with convention, this is accounted for as if it happened in the period after the activity. We will consider two examples: fewer falls as a result of the mild exercise and fewer GP visits as a result of the practice nurse sessions.

- Fewer falls

The activities were designed to maintain and improve general wellbeing in older and less mobile people. We have assumed that residents would not have mild exercise sessions without coming to the luncheon club and so, for our impact map, residents will stop having these sessions at the end of the year and the benefit will not endure. The duration is one year.

- Fewer GP visits

Here, the change is due to increased awareness of health issues and contributing factors. Residents are given knowledge. When they stop having the practice nurse sessions at the luncheon club they do not lose the knowledge. They might use it less as time goes on (the effect of which on our analysis is picked up later in “drop-off”), but the change is not reversed. So the benefit endures beyond the activity. We have estimated the duration to be 5 years.

<sup>1</sup> This is a simplification of the approach used in HM Treasury's *Green Book*, where the outcomes are accounted for in the time period they arise. There is a risk that the simplification used in SROI will distort the calculation of social value in some situations. Although SROI uses this simplification, it is perfectly possible to calculate the SROI based on the time periods in which the outcomes occur, in which case it is important to state that this is what has been done.

