

SOCIAL VALUE HANDBOOK: HOW TO MANAGE & BUDGET YOUR SOCIAL VALUE

From strategy to action: delivering additional value to our society through cross-sector partnerships

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Foreword

Companies and other service providers must deliver social value as a part of their contract work for central government and local authorities. This is due to procurement policy PPN 06/20, enhanced by Procurement Act 2023. The UK Government has an ambitious intention to harness its buying power for good and for the benefit of people and the environment. All organisations bidding for government tenders will need to apply new sustainability strategies and operational activities to meet social value requirements.

Social value in government procurement is a complex and vast concept. It entails providing value to local areas and nationwide communities through community engagement, environmentally sustainable practices, employment and supply chain decisions. These social value contributions should derive from the inherent strengths of tender bidders and be additional to general CSR/ESG practices.

We at **whatimpact.com** have worked closely with a large number of councils, government procurement agencies and central government organisations to learn how companies who take social value seriously and are actively avoiding tick-box approaches, can demonstrate their commitment to delivering added value to society through the contract period.

Organisations, companies and others are commercially dependent on the profitability of their contracts with government bodies. It is therefore essential that social value is managed efficiently using the best resources,

practices and tools to make sure SROI is turned into ROI. From society's perspective, it is important that this profitability does not come from raising the costs of the bids for the sake of social value. In terms of efficiency of the impact, we must ensure that the administration costs of social value do not exceed the benefits of these investments.

Ensuring social value is efficiently managed means there are more resources available to allocate to making a difference. This again helps companies win more tenders and maximises societal benefit.

This social value management and budgeting handbook is a practical guide based on our experience and research on how companies can plan, deliver and report on social value for their own business and wider society. The focus of this handbook is on the value delivered through partnerships between organisations, harnessing resources and capabilities in an innovative and effective manner.

Read more about Social
Value management
requirements in our widely
recognised white paper
published in 2023.

CLICK HERE

Social Value Act Guide
CLICK HERE

3 principles of social value for a sustainable legacy

Through our extensive work with local authorities, government organisations, SMEs, large corporates and VCSEs we have derived these three key philosophies to follow in your PPN 06/20 aligned social value for a sustainable future.

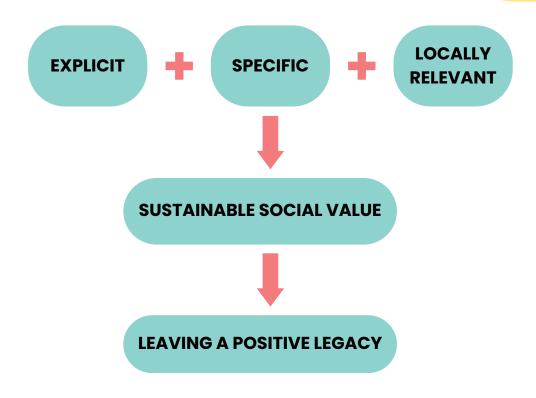
(1) Explicit

Social value activities should be explicit to the specific tender. These are investments in community, employment and supply chain partnerships and projects, where there is a proven additional benefit to society during the contract period.

(2) Specific

Authorities have seen too many vague, highlevel social value plans in bids, which lack realism and are eventually left unfilled. Tangible, specific activities with named partners, defined collaboration models and budgets with specific impact goals are the way to convince and impress. Read more about our research in our widely recognised white paper published earlier in 2022 all about public, third and private sector collaboration.

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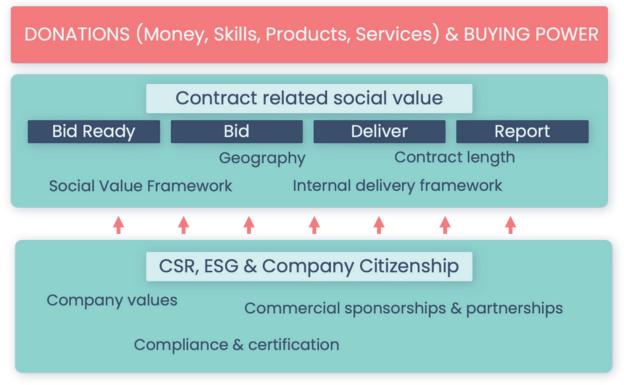
Social value strategy

Social value begins with strategy. Creating a strategy is not an easy task, as social value is a complex and relatively new concept in the business structure. That being said, setting a social value strategy should not keep your company from being able to commit to tangible action today, as you will never be 'ready', only better equipped.

We propose an agile approach to interactively strategise and make real-life commitments as social value is, and should be, integrated into everything your company does. Instead of waiting to act and perfecting your strategy, we advise that you implement your strategy as soon as possible in order to then understand its real-life impact. This learning process will inform your future social value activities, thus taking you towards a suitable strategy. Therefore, measuring and reporting on impact is a crucial part of strategic decision making.

Your social value strategy - tender related

Although your company may already have independent sustainability practices in place, or a chosen framework to follow such as CSR, ESG, or UN SDGs, it is integral that procurement related social value also stems from your overall sustainability strategy.9 With this in mind, each tender is going to be different. For example, the Government generated Social Value Model defines societal challenges in the UK needing attention, called e.g. focus areas, themes, award criteria and/or outcomes. Each tender is going to be focusing on different targets, and a successful social value strategy is one where you match these targets to your company's social mission, capabilities and areas of operation. This is how the marriage of your overall social value strategy and procurement related additional activities can thrive - all building a coherent social value approach.



The figure above highlights the connection of social value strategy and tender related social value contributions. The different aspects are building the overall social value strategy and relate to both your brand and public stakeholder relations. Note how the foundations are built on your CSR / ESG / Company Citizenship.

Harnessing company resources with contract profitability in mind

The key questions to answer:

- In order to achieve tangible goals and make a difference, what are the resources and allocation methods you will use?
- What is the budget frame for tender related social value?
- When you partner with local community organisations tackling social and environmental issues, employment and training challenges, or find socially relevant suppliers, how and with what resources will you approach them?

Resources are not only your external contributions like donations (money, service, product), volunteering (non-skilled, skilled-based), and harnessing buying power for good (commercial partnerships with social value organisations), but how you manage social value internally and what kind of labour and system costs they entail. Tender related budgets are provisional. Contributions are only activated if your company wins a particular bid, which again defines the geographical location of social value delivery.

Necessary certificates and standards to become bid-ready

Make sure you have industry related and basic certifications and standards in check, which create the starting point to building up added value practices and activities.

Impact, legacy & continuity

What is the impact you wish to leave behind after the contract has ended? How can you make sure your resources do not only improve the conditions while you are working in the local area but continue to impact positively after the contract has finished? Partnership models and making local area initiatives stronger through strategic and financial help are powerful ways to build a strong legacy.

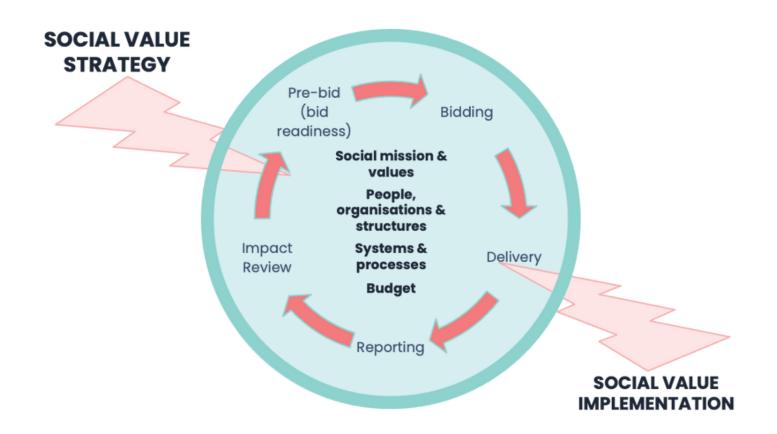


Coordination & responsibilities in the cycle of social value

Social value is particularly challenging as it requires wide cross-department collaboration. The usual social value cycle contains different phases, ranging from bid readiness, to bidding, to actual delivery and finally to impact reporting and reviewing. These different phases are often completed by different parts of the business and, therefore, coordination is key.

It should be clear throughout the process who is responsible for which parts and that decisions and strategies are effectively

communicated between the different players. This is best achieved by centralising communication about the different aspects of social value. That way, when bid writers draft social value plans for bids, they are able to collaborate with those responsible for delivery and have access to information on the success and failures of past plans. The teams collaborating usually consist of HR coordinating volunteers, Social Value Managers managing grants and other donation programmes, and sales departments with bid writers and commercial objectives of tenders.



Systems

To achieve centralisation, effective communication and cohesive strategy technological support is essential. Using strategic systems enables organisations to centrally manage data and coordinate, whilst saving on hiring burdens and costs.

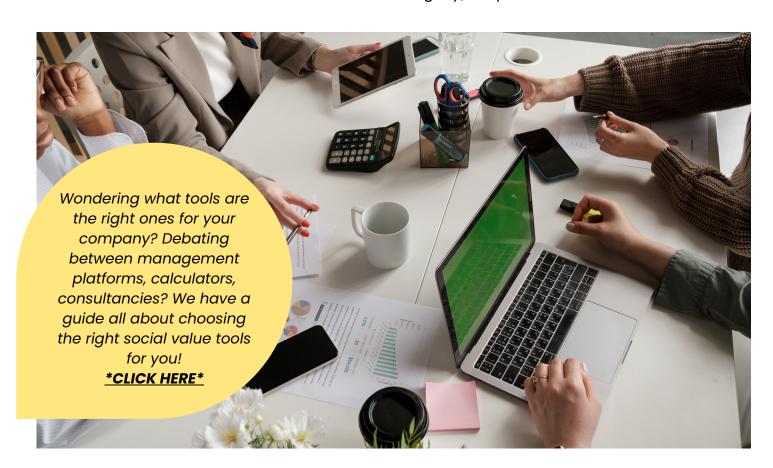
According to our recent surveys, less than half of companies bidding are currently utilising software or platforms to plan, manage and monitor social value.³

The common misconception is that social value calculation tools cater to all aspects of social value and are therefore a systems solution. Any investments into social value need to ultimately support action, and calculations only provide supporting data. Social value is about 'doing'. Therefore, most of the systems investment should make the management of social value efficient and support decision-making based on real-life data.

A combination of technology solutions is the key to:

- 1. support the profitability of your contracts
- 2. save you time in the process of bidding, delivering and reporting on social value
- provide agility to your teams to adapt and respond to an ever-changing social value climate
- 4. build resilient networks with subcontractors, VCSEs, and government bodies
- 5.engage with various stakeholders both internal and external
- 6.utilise social value data and achievements in reporting beyond social value requirements, e.g in stakeholder communications and annual reporting

The optimum combination of systems looks different to each company. You need to invest in solutions that will best support the social value cycle in your company and the actions that will help you with your social value legacy/story.



The challenge of multiple social value frameworks - choose your approach

There are various social value frameworks related to government and local authority procurement in the UK. The Central Government originated Social Value Model linked to PPN 06/20 is most widely used in local areas. The National TOMS precedes the government's goals set in 2021 and is heavily linked to proxy value measures and less to collaboration models. Some local authorities have created their own frameworks, which define more specific impact goals relevant to local procurement and also overall levellingup targets aiming to build more powerful environmental, social and economic ecosystems. Good examples of these ambitious frameworks are those created for the Greater Manchester Area and Liverpool City Region.^{6,7}

For companies bidding for tenders with social value plans, the framework is not the deciding factor for winning or losing a contract. Social value is about the actions, contributions and evidence that prove the intended impact can be delivered as additional value to the specific contract. Regardless of the local authority's requested plan format or chosen framework, your company's ability to effectively budget, manage and report on the impact of your social value will be the deciding factor in the bidding process.

Our wide-ranging engagement with local authorities and their dedicated procurement agencies has revealed that their focus now, when social value policies are maturing, is on tangible, realistic plans when finding the most suitable contractors.

The good news is that all framework criteria can be innovatively, and flexibly met with a wide variety of activities.



Harnessing company resources for local community activities

Every company has resources that are inherently valuable and can be harnessed to produce social value. Resources will vary depending on the industry and the nature of the work you do. Social value is an opportunity to utilise the skills, knowledge and buying power unique to your company to deliver additional value.

How can you support the communities you work with?

Your resources consist of money (donations, partnership fees and commercial collaboration), skills, non-skilled volunteering, product and service contributions. Often it is not a matter of choosing a single resource, but rather an effective bundle to maximise impact. Procurement related, additional social value consists of four pillars.

Partnership models with local VCSEs can contribute to all pillars and thus companies do not necessarily need to build extensive internal organisations for delivery. Through partnerships, you can be locally relevant and efficient in an agile way.

whatimpact.com gives a voice to the VCSE sector & helps companies to connect with them in a meaningful manner. Listen to our extensive podcast series to find out more.

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Money

Setting up a grant or money donation scheme can be the most effective way of supporting new or existing local initiatives with proven impact. This requires access to suitable initiatives, easy due diligence and active communication to coordinate and understand the progress and impact being made. Effectiveness comes from matchmaking and reporting technology which makes sure the coordination and administration costs stay as low as possible in order to guarantee the anticipated social return on investment. If supporting causes with money, adding other elements of support, e.g. volunteering, is easier due to existing relationships and being a larger contributor.

SOCIAL VALUE DELIVERY: 4 PILLARS

Community Engagement

Volunteering, service, product & money donations - local level

Supply Chain

Your subcontractors, suppliers, and their social value activities

Employment & Training

How you help create jobs, training and supporting education locally

Sustainable Practices

Environmental activities, security, and governance







Skills & volunteering

Too often volunteering stems from 'selfinterested' motivations from the company to engage staff, without consideration for the genuine needs and benefits of the organisations receiving this time. When creating a measurable impact, volunteering should be conducted in larger quantities of hours, combined with other resource donations and running these programmes for a longer period of time. Each employee randomly volunteering with different local organisations, with low-skilled tasks, does not allow the measurement of impact. Skillsbased volunteering is best when sustained over a long period of time, consistently, and fulfilling a specific need of the charitable organisation.

Skills-based volunteering is difficult to get right. The volunteering offered needs to be matched to the requirements of the beneficiary organisation, in terms of skill set and time. However, when done correctly, offering these skills can be incredibly valuable.

Whether the skills given are IT, construction related, or training and employment driven mentoring, small expense budgets are always handy to add on. Often valuable advice

Want to delve deeper into your social value strategy?

whatimpact.com members have access to our comprehensive 'Creating a Meaningful CSR Strategy' guide!

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cannot be implemented, or good practices continued, as the VCSEs lack the budget to implement (e.g. paying for a recommended software, investing in marketing or paying rent for an extra location).

Service donations

The nature of service donation is different from skills-based volunteering. Service is a service your company would deliver and charge for to clients, only now delivered with a £0 contract. The quality and liability requirements apply. Service donations can have a transformative effect on a local charity or community groups, saving tens of thousands of pounds from set-up, tech or renovation costs. These donations can be highly rewarding for your staff to deliver, and depending on the industry you work in, they do not necessarily require local presence, as many services can be delivered from a distance.

Product donations

There is high demand for almost all kinds of used and new products – it is simply a matter of finding the right partners with a timely need for the resources you have available. New raw materials, the products your company produces, or office equipment, can be radically helpful, and thus the value of these donations should not be undermined.

Supply chain

When working with charities and social enterprises, there is also the option to buy their services and products. Through buying their services, your company can include these organisations as part of your supply chain. The offer can vary from mental health training for your staff, to catering services employing a disabled workforce, from consulting on environmentally sustainable practices, to providing ecological office products.

Finding local partners

Strategically match

There are many incredible VCSE organisations and community initiatives out there that could vastly benefit from the resources you have to offer and who are experts in the needs of the local community. Choosing partners is often location-restricted when it comes to a tender, and the registered address of the partner organisation does not always correlate with the geographical area of their beneficiaries and impact.

Harnessing technology

Coordination of all resource donations and being location-specific is therefore crucial. Companies struggle to find recipients or beneficiary partners and chasing these organisations manually, is labour intensive and eats up the budget and impact of your donation. Building internal processes and harnessing technology for the management of donations will support your returns and ensure you maximise the social value you can produce in any given local area.

Using technology also allows companies to deliver local social value without needing to be local. The key factor in successful partnerships and impact is the right match. This involves shared values, an alignment of resources, and diligent coordination. Therefore, not having a local presence in some geographical areas should not be a hindrance when bidding or winning a tender – as technology can connect you with partners and beneficiaries across the country.

Technology is a great help here, but there also has to be a willingness to coordinate these programmes. For example, someone has to take responsibility for the use of these systems in order to make the most of volunteering programmes. Too often, we see companies resorting to expensive external consultants to coordinate the volunteering of busy internal teams.



Examining: employment & training

Delivering social value through employment and training is one of the key outcome criteria in most tenders. There exists a big misconception that achieving goals related to employment and training has to rely on a company's internal resources - hiring apprentices or providing training with internal skills. According to our recent surveys, 80% of companies are currently pursuing employment objectives through internal HR practices.3 SMEs especially struggle to add on these activities, on top of their own internal needs, with limited HR capacity. In addition, for some sectors where work may be delivered from different geographical locations, e.g. IT and consultancy, internal employment practices such as apprenticeships are not suitable for delivering local social value.

Recent statistics show that approximately 50% of apprenticeships are not completed. Given that many apprentices are from disadvantaged groups, they may face challenges unknown to employers.

To better support individuals through their apprenticeships and to relieve internal HR capacity, we recommend collaboration with VCSE organisations. Through working with VCSE organisations, apprentices can receive robust and holistic pastoral support. Through these partnerships with VCSEs, your company can benefit from the expertise and local knowledge of these organisations to maximise completed apprenticeships and thus impact.

In partnership models, all that companies need to do is offer skills, free services and monetary support to these training and employment organisations – and in some cases, offer placements. But the overall responsibility of the path apprentices take is on the organisations that have more holistic support for these candidates. Support also continues after the initial contract, and the programmes are generally tailored to meet the needs of people with, e.g. mental health challenges, disabilities, difficulties due to criminal records and additions.



Internal commitment to social value

Each department and hierarchical level of your organisation plays a part in social value.

Board / C-Level Commitment

When the tender-related social value strategy and budget framework are in place, the board and company directors can focus on monitoring the impact and profitability of their contract work. It also helps set targets for future bids and allocation of resources. Too many companies do this in hindsight, almost surprised by the social value delivery requirements after a tender has been won. This creates additional costs and confusion in various departments as well as undelivered or delayed social value.

Social Value Management Level

The biggest problem, according to our conversations, is that bid-writing is too separate from those responsible for the social value delivery. This leaves bid-writers alone in drafting up plans, usually at a very high level, as they have no authority for resource allocation or implementation. The key for winning bid-writing, actioning social value and reporting on impact, comes down to seamless communication and collaboration between the different actors involved. Centralising social value systems and databases for the entire team to access and use is key. This also tackles the time strain when putting together a social value plan for a bid. In order to create something tangible and actionable, collaboration between departments and utilising technology is the key.

Engaging with all employees

If a company wishes to use their volunteering programme to meet the needs of a locallyrelevant tender, the causes and organisations employees volunteer for should match with the tenders' related social value goals. This can sometimes conflict with what causes the employees would otherwise choose to support. Communication and effective coordination of employees is the key. Again, harnessing matchmaking technology to combine company social value goals with local volunteering is essential in order for these activities to be relevant and reportable to specific tenders. Reporting only on used hours is not enough as the 'inputs' are different from reaching social value outcomes.



Reporting

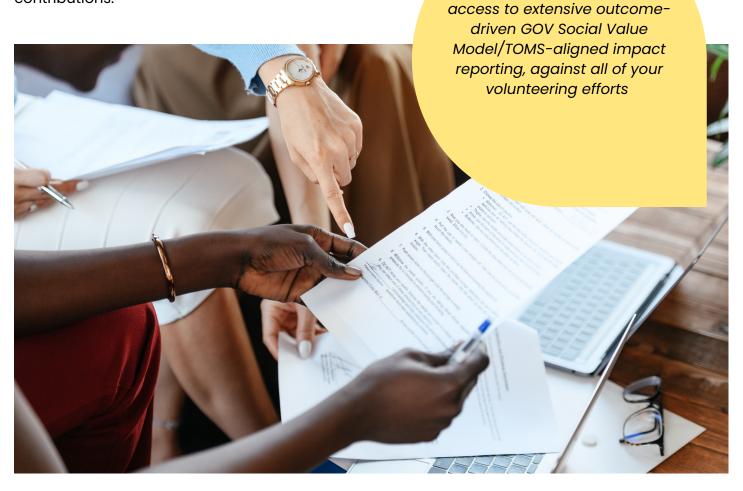
Reporting is the part of the social value cycle that still lacks ambition. According to our recent surveys, nearly ¾ of companies do not currently monitor or report on their ongoing social value activities.³ The point of reporting is to understand whether the social value was delivered in the first place, whether the intended impact was achieved and if the activity would be worth investing in the future.

The current reporting landscape is dominated by monetisation tools that calculate and approximate social value. There is no proof of the difference being made. In order to claim social value results, the principles of social value should be respected. Doing impact reporting properly does not mean huge investments. It again calls for technology which helps companies to match with organisations that have the capability and tools to report back against the donations, volunteering and other partnership contributions.

If monetised social value is requested, that can be delivered once the qualitative impact is known. Good reporting also needs to be beneficiary-led and verified. The motive should be driven by the interest in the impact and evaluating whether the same investment should be made again. This is crucial information for any government or local authority body to see whether their procurement budgets actually were harnessed in the value they were expecting.

In addition, impact is a powerful read. Case studies, observations, testimonials and reports are powerful in all stakeholder communications. Both qualitative and quantitative data is optimum.

By using our platform, you gain



Budgeting social value

Setting budgets for social value continues to be a big problem for many companies. We've found that only 30% monitor the amount spent on social value, and only 20% have a specific budget for social value per tender. In terms of commercial sustainability, social value budgets should be monitored the same way as sales and marketing budgets: cost lines being internal labour, systems and other purchase costs and external investments and contributions.

Corporate Tax benefits on contributions

When planning and budgeting company contributions to charitable organisations, available Corporation Tax reliefs play a huge role in what the contributions actually cost to the company. Companies can claim tax relief by deducting the value of their donations from their total business profits before tax.10 The following donations are eligible: money, equipment or trading stock (items companies make, sell or hire), sponsorship payments and your employees volunteering during their working hours. In order to take advantage of these however, using proper management systems and collecting evidence for reporting is important. For more specific information it is important to consult tax advisors / your finance department.

Budgeting principles

Overall, in these early stages of adopting mandatory PPN, companies are putting a large sum of money and amount of time into managing and coordinating social value internally. This leaves few resources remaining for the actual delivery of social value on the ground. This is seen especially in community engagement activities when considering product, service, skills and money donations.

We suggest a strategic approach to evaluate the relation of internal and external costs, and their correlation, to the anticipated impact. Many social value calculation tools do not evaluate the social value of community engagement contributions appropriately. In some cases, the value of community engagement activities has been defined as low as 1:1, making e.g. internal apprenticeships tenfold more powerful in comparison to giving services, skills and money contributions to VCSEs. Therefore, qualitative impact data should always be included into this SROI vs. ROI evaluation in order to understand the full picture.

There is no rule of thumb on the ratio between the administration and actual action costs. This is because it is dependent on what kind of social value activities the company is undertaking. Nevertheless, each company should diligently monitor their overall spending and determine whether there is an imbalance between coordination and actual delivery.

The whole intention of the Social Value Act is to harness buying power for good. Therefore the 'social profitability' of the projects should always be kept in focus.

Check out our one-pager with leadership principles for turning SROI into ROI.

CLICK HERE

SMEs vs. large corporates

Having worked with both large organisations and SMEs for many years, there is a misconception that one is better placed than the other when it comes to bidding on locally relevant social value. Where smaller operators often have local knowledge and networks, larger organisations have brand reputation, power and more sophisticated CSR activity advantage. However, ultimately, making a winning social value bid is irrelevant to the size of the company and all company types have value to offer.

Many companies do not record half of the social value activities they do, as they simply have been engaging with their close communities as a norm. Therefore, one could start with a small inventory of partnerships or initiatives already taking place, and build a plan from there.

It is advisable for all social value bids to be more specific, avoid jargon and contain budgets with specific action-plans and named partners.



Manifesto: The Future of Social Value

Executions of the Social Value Model requirements and local frameworks have both failed and succeeded during the transitional period of adopting social value nationwide due to PPN 06/20. It is now time to look to improve the guidelines, operational models and frameworks to make the most of the potential this regulation offers. One thing is clear, tick-box exercises must come to an end in order that society can fully benefit from significant resources needed to increase social and environmental wellbeing in these difficult times.

We propose improvement initiatives to be taken in the following verticals:

(1) Social value beyond calculations

Social value calculations play a role in weighing options and getting estimates of impact. Calculations as such are statistical averages of similar activities, each calculation tool providing different values. However, the real social value for mentoring is totally different based on its context. For example, who took part, when the mentoring was delivered, how long for and with what expertise greatly affects the impact created. Therefore, monetisation bears no real evidence of impact, nor should it be used as a sole source of information when bidding for a tender, evaluating bids or reporting on impact.

Secondly, the separation of the monetisation of internal company ESG calculations and tender-specific social value is important. Various employer responsibilities and sustainable practices are regulated/standardised and should therefore be considered as basic supplier criteria rather than affecting the scoring of a bid. We propose the social value delivery plan, with named partners, budgets, and timeframes to be put into the centre of evaluation.

(2) Diversifying ways of delivering local social value - industry & company size considered

The ways social value is delivered as a part of the contract vary depending on the size, industry and geographical location of the contract winner. Certain industries like construction, care and hospitality services are naturally hiring on a local level and can deliver impressive value through training and employment practices. Consultancies and the IT sector, to name a few, might physically never visit the local area. However, their input through online training, equipment and software, grant programmes and service donations can provide a substantial amount of value to a local community. Small and large companies also have different cultures to be active in communities. Therefore, tender-related social value criteria should give room for a diverse way of delivery. Again, tangible plans, where inherent strengths of organisations are recognised and matched with local needs, will deliver the greatest impact.

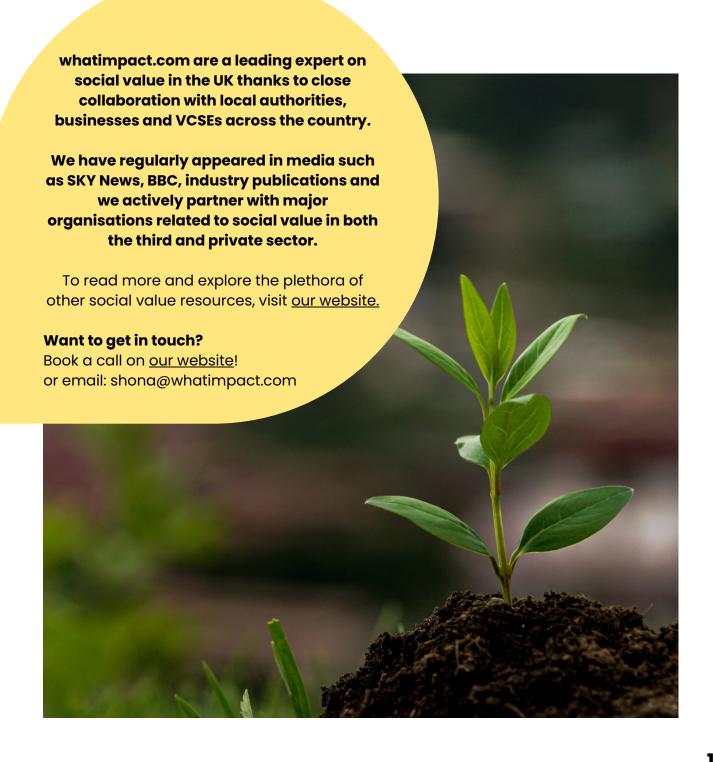
(3) Time to recognise VCSE's expertise and reach

Partnering with local and nationwide VCSE's is the most effective way of delivering social value in various aspects. Their local knowledge, experience, and existing relationships with beneficiaries, will guarantee impact creation and maximise your social value outcomes. In addition, as each tender contract is time-bound, it is essential that your social value has legacy, which is best maintained by local VCSEs. VCSEs continue delivering value after the contractor is gone / has changed, and therefore their role in sustainable social value delivery should be recognised.

(4) Emphasis on explicit social value

Our experience leads us to believe that, in the future, there will be a clear distinction between mandated social and environmental standards and tender specific social value. The trend seems to be that certain actions and processes will be expected from companies as a given in order to even be considered as suppliers.

The additional social value contributions should be then scored with the 10-30% weighting as outlined by the Social Value Act. This way, companies taking advantage of the ethical, transparent and action oriented principles would be the tender winners of the future.



Glossary & Sources

Glossary

UN SDGs = United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

CSR = Corporate Social Responsibility

ESG = Environmental, Social, and Governance

PPN 06/20 = Procurement Policy Note 06/20, this note sets out how to take account of social value in the award of central government contracts by using the Social Value Model VCSE = The voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, includes charities, social enterprises and other voluntary organisations

Sources & further reading

- ¹ <u>A Practical Guide to Public Procurement</u> by Mark Cook and Abby Semple
- ² <u>BS 8950 Social value. Understanding and enhancing. Guide</u> by British Standards Institution
- ³ Findings based on responses from **whatimpact.com's** Surveys 2022
- ⁴ <u>Levelling Up the United Kingdom</u> by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- ⁵ <u>Procurement Policy Note 06/20 taking account of social value in the award of central government contracts</u> by Cabinet Office & Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
- ⁶ <u>Social Value can make Greater Manchester a better place</u> by Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- ⁷ Social Value Framework by Liverpool City Region
- ⁸ Social Value Today by Richard Tomlins
- ⁹ <u>Sustainable Development Goals</u> by the United Nations
- ¹⁰ <u>Tax when your limited company gives to charity</u> by GOV.UK
- ¹¹ <u>The conspicuous absence of the social sector by</u> New Philanthropy Capital (NPC)
- ¹² <u>The procurement bill: what does it mean for charities?</u> by National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
- "We have a responsibility to the people of Liverpool to put them first" Mayor Joanne Anderson on the transformative benefits of embedding social value into council contracts by Liverpool Express
- ¹⁴ What are the principles of social value? by Social Value UK