

HANDBOOK

# ASSESSING **SOCIAL IMPACT**

A source of insight for those funding an activity of social utility



# FOREWORD

In recent years, social impact assessment has become part of the terminology and practices of social and solidarity economy (SSE) organisations and funders. While there is consensus regarding the need to assess social impact, the associated concept covers a plethora of different meanings depending on the stakeholders and practices.

For a manager of a social utility organisation, assessing its social impact provides a means of showing that its activity is useful for the society as a whole affirming its identity, improving its performance or its practices. For a funder, social impact assessment can provide a basis for choosing actions gauging their effects and above all establishing new forms of dialogue with the managers of the organisations funded.

However, irrespective of the underlying reasons or the form, the purpose of the assessment remains the same: to assess the "social value" generated by the organisation. It has therefore become vital to share a common language and objectives regarding social impact assessment, and in particular between managers of SSE organisations and funders—who have an important motivational role to play in developing these approaches.

Avise's intention behind this Handbook is to provide the keys to understanding and implementing social utility activities. It addresses a host of different funders (national and local government, foundations, philanthropists, impact investors, solidarity lenders, corporate CSR policymakers etc.) encouraging them to join forces with the managers of social utility organisations to adopt a tailored shared assessment approach meeting their respective needs.

*"Co-construction is a strong value upheld by the SSE. Assessment should not be a tool for scrutiny, selection, exclusion or standardisation. It is possible to turn this practice into a process for change, promoting innovation and dialogue between all stakeholders (managers, employees, public funders, private funders, beneficiaries, etc.), joined together to support the same social purpose, despite the fact that the challenges may be different."*

— Jérôme Saddier

President of Avise

# THE CHALLENGES

## **A major concern for social utility organisations...**

Placing social, societal and environmental issues at the heart of their actions, social utility organisations need to put together appropriate coordination systems. They are required to demonstrate their social added value when it comes to securing funding, maintaining partnerships or supporting their development. It will also provide valuable input for organisations which have adopted a continuous improvement approach.

## **... but also for private funders...**

Those working in solidarity lending and sponsorship, in particular, seek to qualify the actual or potential "social value" of the activities before considering funding. They also wish to establish new partnership arrangements, by becoming more strongly involved with the organisations financed in order to help them consolidate and/or secure their economic model over the long term, in their development strategy, beyond the funding period, and also in the very process of assessing their social impact.

## **Assessing social impact**

### **...for public authorities...**

At a time when budgets are being increasingly tightened and new social needs are emerging, national and local government and public bodies are taking a strong interest in the efficiency of their policies, namely the results and the effects on beneficiaries in terms of the resources allocated. They seek to support the development of activities that best meet the needs of the local area.

### **...against the backdrop of the emergence of new forms of funding**

New funding methods are emerging, such as impact investing and venture philanthropy. The notion of social impact is crucial to decision-making and the relationship with the beneficiary of the funding. These funders are committed to demonstrating their "social return". This requires the implementation of assessment procedures.

# WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

## Assessing the "social value" of an organisation

The concept of social impact has been adopted in recent years by the SSE ecosystem to designate different assessment subjects for estimating the "social value" of activities.

Even if there is no consensus as to the actual meaning of social impact which corresponds to multiple different realities, all of the interpretations converge upon the need to take a broad view of the social impact of ESS organisations, not limited to economic indicators and the identity of the beneficiaries.

Here, we will use the definition of the French Council for the Social and Solidarity Economy (CSESS) (*see opposite*).



WORK SCHEDULED BY THE ORGANISATION		EXPECTED RESULTS / WHAT CAN BE ASSESSED		
	What are we doing?	What are we producing?		To what are we contributing?
<b>INPUTS</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>OUTPUTS</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPACTS</b>
Resources (human, financial) making it possible to implement activities	Action taken to deliver goals	Direct results of the action taken	Effect of the action on the beneficiaries	Longer-term social, economic or environmental consequences of the action

**Example** An environmental education non-profit is conducting an awareness-raising project on waste sorting

€50k raised and 3 people working on the project.	Awareness-raising objectives regarding waste sorting put in place	80 participants – 1 awareness-raising handbook created.	23% increase in the number of households sorting waste.	11% increase in the tonnage of sorted waste through the awareness-raising plan.
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© Avise - adapted from "Un guide pratique pour la mesure et la gestion de l'impact". EVPA (2015)

Social impact is one of the factors, together with outputs and outcomes, that make it possible to analyse the value of an activity. It should be noted that processes, the "how do we produce?", are often poorly observed; however, they also contribute to creating value.

# Definition

"**SOCIAL IMPACT** refers to all the consequences (trends, inflections, changes, disruptions) resulting from an organisation's actions both on the direct or indirect external stakeholders (beneficiaries, users, customers) in its locality and its internal stakeholders (employees, volunteers) as well as on society in general."

— French Council for the Social and Solidarity Economy

In reality, social impact assessment often refers to different assessment targets, responding to particular issues, which, in fact, involve different methods.

## Different assessment targets and methodology types

### RELEVANCE

of the organisation's objectives in relation to the needs of a given local area or population. Are the objectives of the action always adapted to the needs?

Example: theory of change.

### EFFICIENCY

in terms of the ratio of resources to results. For every euro invested, how is the value created for the various stakeholders in the project distributed?

Example: SROI analysis.

### EFFECTIVENESS

with results/target ratios. Have the targets been met?

Example: method based on the use of indicators.

### IMPACT

Observed changes due to action. Does the project make a significant difference?

Example: Randomised controlled trial.

*Adaptation Emeline Stievenart, Anne-Claire Pache, "Évaluer l'impact social d'une entreprise sociale : points de repère", Recma, n° 331, 2014.*

# Social impact or social utility?

Conducting a social impact assessment, in the strict sense of the term, involves observing and analysing the changes produced by an organisation and determining the effects that are directly and solely attributable to the action of that organisation. Conducting such an approach is sometimes complicated, even impossible, without significant resources and a scientific research protocol. As such, the social impact, in the strict sense of the term, is rarely assessed.

In practice, the assessment approaches cover a broader scope than the social impact. We will focus on social utility, without necessarily using this term. Social utility is defined by stakeholders and is assessed in terms of outputs, outcomes, processes and, last but not least, social impacts. As such, social impact is a component that contributes to assessing social utility.

↳ Social utility is a relative notion related to a given context.

Social needs may be more or less acute depending on the geographic context. The same is true for time, for example the increasing need for access to digital tools. The values held by organisation managers, funders and other stakeholders also determine their vision of the social utility of the activity.

↳ Social utility is defined by exchange / dialogue between stakeholders.

This dialogue often takes place between the managers of an organisation and its funders. However, a discussion extended to other stakeholders (employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, etc.) will be richer.

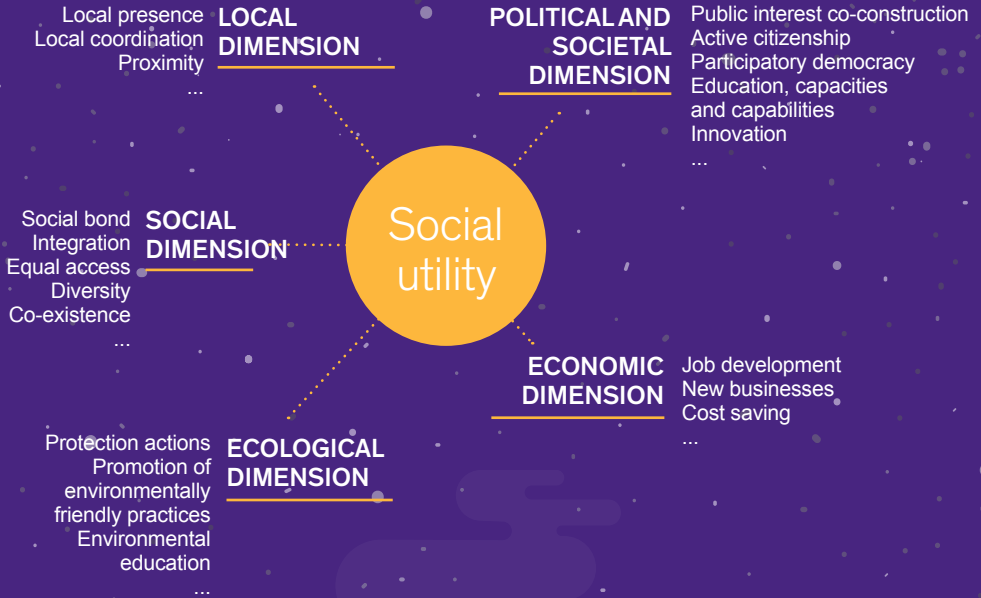
*"Assessment responds to a real expectation on the part of sponsors, because it is one of the responses to the search for increasing social impact. Against the backdrop of a proliferation of methodologies and approaches, Admical's role is to help them set up or structure their approach. Informing, looking at the subject from different angles - the role of trust between sponsors and sponsorees, the importance of qualitative assessment - these are two of our priorities."*

— Sylvaine Parriaux

Executive Director of Admical

# Multidimensional approach to social utility

Social utility is multidimensional. It cannot be reduced to a single field.



©Avisé - adapted from *Évaluer l'utilité sociale de son activité*. Avisé, Culture et promotion (2007) and *Inscrire l'utilité sociale au coeur des politiques publiques*. Avisé, Régions de France, RTES, Caisse des Dépôts (2012)

These dimensions and the examples given to illustrate them such as social bond or equal access are not exclusive. They are provided for information purposes only.

## Focus

### SOCIAL UTILITY WITH REGARD TO ESUS STATUS

The French Social and Solidarity Economy Act of 31 July 2014 accredits solidarity companies of social utility (ESUS). This provides official recognition for eligible companies which can claim specific financing for example solidarity-based employee savings plans and tax relief. To justify this status, companies need to prove their quest for social utility which has a three-fold definition under French legislation: support for vulnerable people, territorial cohesion and sustainable development.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL UTILITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Questioning the social utility and the assessment thereof can help funders at different key moments in their approach to support actions.

## ↳ Before

a funding decision is made, when a programme is launched  
or when developing an investment strategy



**Determine or refine fields of intervention** E.g.: the scope of intervention of a foundation determined on the basis of criteria of social utility.

**Select actions to be funded:  
characterise the social utility of the actions,  
choose between several actions**

E.g.: an analysis grid for activities of social utility



**Formalise: reach an agreement  
on social utility, objectives  
and how to assess it**

E.g.: a reference framework that defines social utility through shared criteria and indicators that can be specified in a partner or associate's agreement.

**Qualify an organisation  
with regard to its social utility  
and have it recognized by funders**

E.g.: a qualifying reference system.



*"When we created the fund, we defined our scope of intervention. This was the result of putting our heads together with our shareholders, but also external stakeholders. We wanted to be in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals while remaining faithful to our identity: our history, the values we hold, our areas of expertise.*

*To select the organisations we finance, we have developed an analysis tool. The mandatory criterion is the alignment between the expected or actual societal impact of the organisation and our scope of intervention. We ask the organisation to provide us with evidence."*

— Philippe de Moustier

Chairman of the Colam Impact Investment Committee

## ↳ During

the funding of an action



### **Establish a close relationship with the managers of the funded organisation**

E.g. co-construction and monitoring of criteria and indicators of social utility.

### **Monitor and support the actions funded as part of a continuous improvement process**

E.g.: monitoring of criteria and indicators of social utility via reporting tools and/or within the framework of a steering committee.

### **Promote sustained action**

E.g.: highlighting the results of the action throughout the financial support, with some key indicators.



### **Coordinate public policies in the local area**

E.g.: factoring in of social utility criteria in the allocation of public subsidies.

## After

### Be aware of the impact of the funding

E.g.: an impact study on sustained action or on a project portfolio.



### Consider continued funding

E.g.: a social impact study to analyse the effects of the action, ex-post assessment to identify new perspectives for action.

### Make the use of funding more transparent

E.g.: communication tools targeting the general public, partners, investors, etc., based on the results of the assessment.



### Prepare for a change of scale

E.g.: a social impact study with a qualitative assessment of the processes put in place.

## POSITIVE EXTERNALITIES OF AN ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- **Shared vision:** the dialogue initiated around social utility with the various stakeholders improves internal cohesion, project-related communication and the involvement of all of the stakeholders.
- **Consolidation:** the adoption of indicators and the implementation of reporting bolster operational management and professional practices.
- **Sustainability:** assessment and promotion of its social utility means that organisations will find it easier to find funding and partners, a guarantee of sustainability.

# HOW TO LEAD A SOCIAL UTILITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Social utility assessment can be implemented at different phases of the project and caters to various challenges. This type of approach is a real opportunity to foster dialogue between funders and managers of social utility organisations.

Here is a typical, simplified approach based on three main steps.

## A PARTNERSHIP-BASED AND DYNAMIC PROCESS



Promise



Proof



Consultation/Discussion

**Defining  
what  
matters**

**Measuring**

**Building  
a shared  
point of  
view**

# Defining what matters

Defining what matters is a fundamental step in assessing activities of social utility. The aim is to define social utility, in particular by agreeing on how it will be assessed. For this purpose, a reference system will be defined.

↳ With whom and how to define what matters?

At the very centre of this dialogue is the funder and the organisation's managers. Depending on individual challenges and expectations, it may be useful to involve other stakeholders (beneficiaries, employees, local authorities, other partners - financial or otherwise, etc.). Together they will identify the role the organisation plays in its environment as well as the benefits it brings for different categories of stakeholder, the local community and society as a whole.

↳ The deliverable: a shared social utility reference system

Criteria are defined. They are not neutral, they reflect values which will be referred to. These criteria will then be specified by indicators in the Measuring step (*see next page*). It is important that they are adapted to the context and that the aims and objectives of the action are considered.

**Some examples:** a sports club will probably be interested in the "equal access to sports activities" and "diversification of relational networks" criteria; a work integration organisation will focus on the "social ties and diversity", "work integration" and "citizenship" criteria.

*"One of the assessment tools developed takes the form of a progression radar with "Markers" of sustainable and solidarity-based local development determined by the people involved in a local project, with the scientific support of the Institut Godin. The purpose is to collectively define the desired areas of progress on the basis of a projected ideal. The "Markers" aim to foster consultation and consensus. They are a tool for dialogue between stakeholders. They make it possible to share a vision and to assess the progress of the project in relation to it. Now we are here, this is where we want to be."*

— Emmanuelle Besançon

Institut Godin

↳ Example

## From criteria to indicators

<b>CRITERIA FOR SOCIAL UTILITY</b>	<b>Context indicators</b>	<b>Output indicators</b>	<b>Outcome indicators</b>	<b>Impact indicators</b>
<b>Social ties and diversity</b>	Increased tensions between communities in local areas	Diversity of employees' cultural backgrounds  Provision of time and place for socialising	Effective mix of employees in all activities	Exchanges outside work between people from different cultures
	Staff attitude at work (motivation, absenteeism, etc.)	Teamwork  Encounters between families of employees as part of the organisation's activities	Frequent and friendly exchanges between employees	Sustainability of the relations between employees outside of work
<b>Work integration</b>	Unemployment rates in the local area and trends  Degree of autonomy in the performance of tasks	Number of people hired and supported  Number of training courses undertaken	Number of employees who have developed a realistic career plan at the end of their time in the organisation / total number of employees	Number of work integration employees who have obtained an employment contract lasting more than three months in the six months following their departure  Number of work integration employees starting training leading to qualifications upon departure
	<b>Participatory citizenship</b>	Taking part in the functioning of the organisation	Number of employees taking part in bodies and decision-making process	Number of employees since involved in other organisations

Example of an integration reference system in: *Évaluer l'utilité sociale de son activité. Avise, Culture et promotion (2007)*.

# Measuring

Measuring can be complex. This is why, at this stage, it is particularly important to be ambitious and to allocate the necessary resources to carry out this measurement in the light of the stakes of what is at stake but without ignoring operational feasibility.

## ↳ Indicators adapted to the challenges, context and resources

Concrete and observable measuring instruments to assess a resource, an opinion, a change, an action, indicators are all the more relevant when they are developed and decided jointly to adapt to the context.

Two questions can be of assistance when it comes to selecting indicators: do they reliably and accurately reflect the criterion? Is it possible to collect the data easily?

Before building new collection tools, priority should be given to pre-existing sources of information in the funded organisation, as well as available external data (INSEE statistics, employment, etc.).

## ↳ Quantitative and qualitative indicators

Quantitative indicators often seem easier to share. While they make it possible to estimate the importance of a trend, they deserve to be supplemented by qualitative analyses, which are essential to understand **how** value is created.

To meet monitoring requirements, the funder and the organisation may jointly choose three or four relevant indicators to be monitored on a regular basis during the duration of the funding, and possibly with objectives to be achieved. They will serve above all as a pretext for dialogue, rather than as instruments of scrutiny.

*"We combine both quantitative and qualitative assessment elements. First of all, because there are not always quantitative indicators that are sufficiently reliable or universal to measure this social impact, but above all because it often seems to us that measuring social impact cannot be reduced to a succession of figures."*

—Lombard Odier private bank

Annual Social Impact Report, 2015

# Building a shared point of view

Building a shared point of view is the crucial step in ensuring ownership of the outcome of the assessment and making it useful and usable for all.

↳ Spending time sharing around the outcome of the assessment and follow-up actions

Discussions and debates can be organised with those in charge of the organisation, based on a clear, accessible and complete presentation of the outcomes. The objective is not necessarily to reach a consensus, but to discuss and understand the outcomes together and to learn from them. It is at this stage that hypotheses or outcomes will be identified that require further investigation and therefore an *ad hoc* assessment.

↳ Harnessing the assessment results in an instructive way

Finally, at this stage, it is generally expected to be able to communicate on the results, in order to highlight the "contributions" of an activity, a fund or a public policy. The more attractive and instructive the methods of reporting the outcomes, the easier it will be to understand them. Where possible it is preferable to avoid simply restating a set of figures. More qualitative feedback, with testimonials, can say a lot more.

*"Mid-way and at the end of the investment period, we carry out a review of all the impact indicators initially identified with the organisation's managers. This allows us to monitor the evolution of the impact and to assess it. We also carry out an annual follow-up of four or five key indicators, for which we had set objectives with the organisation. The interpretation of the results provides a basis for dialogue. This roadmap is evolving. Finally, because we also seek to question and highlight our overall performance, we aggregate cross-sectional data at the fund level."*

— Jean-Michel Lécuyer  
Executive Director of Inco

*Inco co-designed the Mesis tool with Caisse des Dépôts and BNP Paribas (with Kimso's methodological support).*

## THE CASE OF PROGRAMMES WITH SEVERAL ACTIONS

If the challenge is to enhance the value of a programme with several actions, the case is more complex, as the actions funded are generally very varied. Some funders, in addition to the indicators specific to the actions funded, will choose some indicators common to the same social issue addressed in order to aggregate them. However, to better gauge the social utility of a fund or public policy, it is preferable to conduct a dedicated study around a specific assessment factor.

## FEEDBACK



### City of Brest

Working together to establish social utility  
assessment of digital mediation actions

For more than twenty years, the City of Brest has been helping its residents to get to grips with digital technology. In 2014, it initiated a process to assess the social utility of the local area's digital mediation projects in order to ensure better visibility.

### A multistakeholder city initiative

Five non-profits and two projects in Brest with digital mediation activities were involved, assisted by two experienced consultants.

Initial work to understand social utility was undertaken by building a cross-cutting reference framework for assessing social utility, with output, outcome and impact indicators for each non-profit or project.

### An assessment based on four shared principles

- A voluntary approach from organisations.
- Stakeholder involvement.
- Collective identification of social utility.
- Assisted self-assessment.

### Short- and long-term contributions

*"While most non-profits tended to downplay the impact of their actions, they became aware of their real impact, became more capable of defining their actions and gained kudos in the eyes of their partners.*

*Over and beyond the actual outcomes, the implementation of this reference framework made it possible to bring all the people involved in the project (partners, funders, beneficiaries, etc.) to the table and to build a relationship that facilitates long-term dialogue."*

— Elisabeth Le Faucheur

Head of the Web and multimedia department for the City of Brest.

## A FIVE-STEP SOCIAL UTILITY REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

- Identification of the stakes and identification of the social utility of the projects with the project leaders.
- Selection of criteria for assessing social utility.
- Construction of outcome and impact indicators of social utility.
- Capitalisation and identification of a cross-cutting reference framework for digital mediation.
- Capitalisation of the work and construction of a reference framework for the social utility of digital mediation.





# Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation

Assess the social impact of 20 projects  
and provide tools

The Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation aims to support projects related to food sustainability and community art. In 2014, it launched a call for projects enabling 20 projects in the artistic field to be better equipped to assess their social impact.

## Funding an assessment process

At the centre of the "Art and Territory" call for projects, a question: "How can a demanding artistic approach contribute to living together in harmony in the community?"

The support, spread over two years between collective and individual working time, has made it possible to develop an assessment framework and collection tools (questionnaires, interview kit, etc.) to introduce project leaders to the social impact assessment process.

## Method of constructing the assessment reference system

The approach was co-constructed with the foundation, project leaders and partners, accompanied by the firm Nuova Vista specialised in social commitment.

Prior to the process, stakeholders shared their objectives and expectations for the assessment and agreed on the way they would interact and the work schedule. The work to develop the reference framework was organised in four main stages:

- 1 Mapping of impacted stakeholders;
- 2 Definition of expected impacts;
- 3 Development of indicators to measure impact at three levels:
  - during the project => activity indicators,
  - at the end of the project => outcome indicators,
  - six months to one year after the end of the project => indicators of longer-term effects;
- 4 Selection of data collection methods.

*"Assessment often helps non-profits to ask themselves the right questions. This collective journey has made it possible to give ways to bring impact assessment to life within the organisations we fund and to highlight best practices.*

*As a funder, helping non-profits assess social impact changes our role, we are a partner and not just a donor."*

— Marie-Stéphane Maradeix

Executive Director of the Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation

The process ended with the publication of the guide "Self-assessing the social impact of artistic projects", aimed at preparing the assessment of future projects funded by the foundation. This work will be expanded by the project leaders of a second cohort, still accompanied by Nuova Vista, as part of the assessment of the "Résonnance" call for projects, dedicated to innovative practices in the conservatories and music schools.

# FEEDBACK



## Voisin Malin

A 360° assessment  
for the benefit of the project

Since it was set up in 2010, Voisin Malin ('smart neighbours'), a non-profit whose objective is to improve the daily lives of people living in working class neighbourhoods facing many difficulties, has started to monitor its actions. Its assessment approach covers all aspects of its activity and involves its partners. The impact is estimated from three angles: the residents interviewed, the Voisins Malins and the partner organisations.

### The combination of three approaches

It is divided into three concrete approaches, qualitative and quantitative (randomised study, sociological study, self-assessment approach), which combine and complement each other with common objectives:

- Improve the relevance of the actions developed and maximise their impact;
- Assist in the management of the activity and strategic orientations (e.g. missions to be given priority);
- Show the usefulness of Voisin Malin's intervention to encourage partners to work with the non-profit.

*"Assessment is an investigative tool, it allows us to look at all the facets of the project, explore its action and its main impact. We observe what is really happening, if our action produces the change we are aiming for."*

— Anne Charpy

Founder of Voisin Malin

### Involvement of partners at several levels

Each intervention of Voisin Malin is carried out within the framework of a mission established in partnership with local and national players, who co-construct and finance door-to-door information campaigns. This partnership approach allows them to participate directly in value creation by taking part in the strategic, operational and assessment decisions related to missions.

- They help to build the message to go door-to-door and train 'smart neighbours';
- They provide their opinion in the development of assessment monitoring indicators;
- The assessment data are shared at a review meeting bringing together 'smart neighbours', managers, sponsors and partners of the action.

## Focus

# Impact measurement within the framework of a social impact bonds (SIBs)

First introduced in the United Kingdom in 2010 and being tested in France since March 2016, social impact bonds (SIBs) are a new financial tool that aims to raise private funds to finance innovative social actions. Payment is conditional upon the fulfilment of social impact objectives, hence the crucial importance given to its measurement.

## A five-step process

- 1 A social problem is identified.
- 2 A social player proposes to set up an action that will improve the situation of the beneficiaries.
- 3 A private investor provides the funds necessary for the implementation of the programme.
- 4 Impact objectives are set by the contract, which are subject to assessment by an independent body.
- 5 If the objectives are met, the public authority undertakes to repay the capital committed by investors, in addition to the interest rewarding risk-taking.

## Main terms of the assessment

### An independent position

The choice of assessor is a competitive process. Selected by all the parties involved in the contract (social actors, investors, public authorities), it has total independence from each of them.

### A co-constructed

A joint assessment principles, method and indicators are chosen in consultation with the stakeholders. They alone decide upon the expected level of performance of the programme.

### Control negative incentives

The assessor ensures that the social business does not exclude a portion of the intended beneficiaries in order to guarantee its results.

### Presence of a counterfactual

Payouts are conditioned by the outcomes which can be directly attributed to the programme.

The implementation of a control group not benefiting from the action makes it possible to demonstrate the causal links.

### Expansion of the programme

Studying the results via one or two indicators does not make it possible to analyse and identify conditions for the development of the programme.

These conditions can be understood by other more qualitative indicators or by dedicated assessment work.

# A FEW CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE YOU START

## Ensure that funded organisations are not encouraged to turn away from the most vulnerable groups.

The way in which indicators and associated objectives are determined can encourage funded organisations to target beneficiaries for whom positive outcomes can be achieved quickly. This can be done at the expense of more disadvantaged groups. It is recommended, where appropriate, to properly identify the target audiences and select indicators and adapted objectives.

## Use assessment to promote social innovation.

Assessment can be a real tool for social innovation. To do this, we will ensure that we co-construct a collaborative, dynamic and learning approach. The criteria chosen will best reflect the aspirations of the stakeholders. The "right to experimentation" will be the rule.



## Also look at areas where tangible measures are difficult to achieve.

Many organisations seek to address challenges in response to deeply rooted social, societal or environmental issues, where evidence of results may take time to materialise. This may be the case, for example, when seeking to promote social cohesion. The fact that these impacts are not quantifiable to date does not mean that they do not exist. Involving funders in the assessment process can provide a good understanding of the social change taking place.

## Take part and involve others.

This may, for example, be based on the process of assessing the social utility of the activity in order to get to grips with it more effectively and enter into discussions with other stakeholders. Similarly, the involvement of all stakeholders in the process enhances it, when defining what matters or sharing outcomes.

## Ensure that the funded organisations have sufficient capacity to carry out assessments.

Implementing an evaluation approach requires the use of specific resources and skills. The majority of social utility organisations do not have them. It is important to align the assessment requirements with the assessment issues on the one hand and the capacities of the organisations on the other. Taking part in the funding of ad hoc studies or providing expertise can help the funded organisation to go further.

## Encourage organisations to get involved in assessments

In a dynamic and partnership-based assessment process, questions and assumptions emerge: a possible change of scale, the expansion of activities or a strategic shift in focus of the organisation. More targeted and in-depth assessment studies will make it possible to go even further. Funders have a role to play to encourage this type of practice, which will contribute significantly to the consolidation and to the development of the organisation. As Anne Charpy, founder of Voisin Malin, says: *"To prepare for change of scale, it is very important to be able to dedicate resources to assess social impact in order to identify considerations."*

# 5 THINGS TO DO RIGHT NOW



**SEND** this publication to the stakeholders of the funded organisations. Then start to talk about it.

## FIND OUT

about existing methods and tools on the portal [www.avise.org](http://www.avise.org)



**TALK** to peers and counterparts about their experiences in this area, to learn from others about the mistakes to avoid and the pragmatic solutions applied to specific obstacles.

**CHALLENGE** what you think assessment is, based on the most recent studies and publications. It may be subject to discussion but concrete progress is being made.



**CONTRIBUTE** to the «Évaluation de l'utilité sociale» (assessing social utility) project by Avise, which harnesses the best practices of a large number of funders.

# TO FIND OUT MORE

## GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS

- « Dossier : impact social » 2015 Avise
- « Un guide pratique pour la mesure et la gestion de l'impact social » 2015 EVPA
- « Inscrire l'utilité sociale au cœur des politiques locales » 2012 Avise, RTES, Régions de France
- « Guide du retour social sur investissement » 2011 ESSEC
- « Évaluer l'utilité sociale de son activité : conduire une démarche d'auto-évaluation » 2007 Avise, Culture et promotion

## CASE STUDIES

- Évaluation du Social impact bond de Peterborough 2016 Avise, Impact Invest Lab
- Évaluation de l'utilité sociale de la médiation sociale 2016 Avise
- Le retour social sur investissement de Passeport Avenir 2016 Avise

## SURVEYS

- « L'expérience de l'évaluation d'impact social. Pratiques et représentations dans les structures d'utilité sociale » 2017 Avise, Agence Phare
- Baromètre 2017 de la mesure d'impact social 2017 KPMG

Resources can be downloaded at [avise.org](http://avise.org)

# CONTACT

If you would like more information, access to support and guidance by a qualified advisor or any documentation, please contact Avise:

! [contact@avise.org](mailto:contact@avise.org)

## In the same collection:

- « **MODE D'EMPLOI** : Les achats socialement responsables » Avise 2015
- « **MODE D'EMPLOI** : L'innovation sociale » Avise 2015
- « **MODE D'EMPLOI** : L'économie sociale et solidaire en Région » Avise 2016
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**Assessing social impact** is a growing concern, shared by all SSE actors, first and foremost funders. In this Handbook, Avise provides semantic and methodological guidelines, based on field experience, to make their assessment processes a tool for strategic management and dialogue between stakeholders.

**This Handbook is intended for decision-makers, sponsor or funder of social utility organisations: national and local government, philanthropists, impact investors, solidarity lenders and corporate CSR policymakers. It provides content to help them get to grips with the issues at stake and get started with the most appropriate tools.**



*The role of Avise is to develop the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and social innovation by providing entrepreneurs with support and helping to create a structured ecosystem conducive to their development. Created in 2002, Avise is a collective engineering agency that works with public and private sector organisations committed to public service. [www.avise.org](http://www.avise.org)*



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