The Smarter Choice Consultancy

South Essex Partnership

South Essex Active Travel Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

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Experts in travel behaviour change

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1. Introduction

1.1. Preamble

1.1.1. South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) is the Access Fund-sponsored sustainable transport programme being run throughout South Essex between April 2017 and March 2020 by Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council.

1.1.2. This paper outlines the approach to be taken to the monitoring and evaluation of this programme, as well as provides a project plan for the set-up and delivery of monitoring and evaluation tasks and an action plan outlining roles and responsibilities in the delivery of this.

1.2. Purpose of Monitoring & Evaluation

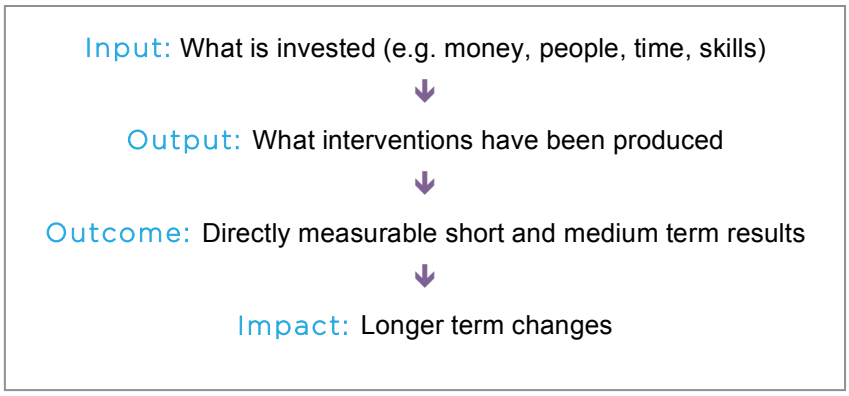
1.2.1. Monitoring and evaluation is an important element of sustainable transport programmes because it enables:

a. **Good programme management** – providing data on outputs and outcomes that allows project managers to assess the efficacy of their delivery models (in particular in relation to different target audiences and different locations within the programme) and make adjustments to improve performance.

b. **Understanding of the effectiveness of the programme** – providing valuable end-of-programme learning of the impact of this £4.15m investment by SEAT partners and the Department for Transport (sponsor of the Access Fund).

c. **Better design and delivery of future sustainable transport projects** – providing an understanding of what works in this specific region and the potential order of magnitude of outcomes and impacts; which can be used to inform the design and delivery of future projects and make the case for funding these to local, regional or national decision makers.

1.2.2. Monitoring and evaluation covers the collection and analysis of data about the *outputs*, *outcomes* and *impacts* of a programme and/or its constituent sub-projects.



1.3. Department for Transport Monitoring & Evaluation Requirements

1.3.1. All Access Fund bids included a commitment to *"…work with the Department to provide a reasonable level of monitoring to enable measurement of outputs and, where appropriate, evaluation of outcomes."* However the Department for Transport (DfT) has yet to finalise its monitoring and evaluation requirements for Access Fund.

1.3.2. With SEAT needing to move ahead with the design and set-up of its constituent projects, including building data collection in to 'business as usual' for these projects and collecting baseline data before interventions begin, it is imperative that SEAT agree a monitoring & evaluation approach and start to implement this without waiting for further guidance from DfT.

2. Monitoring & Evaluation of SEAT

2.1. SEAT's Monitoring & Evaluation Challenges

Data Collection

2.1.1. Data collection may be particularly challenging for SEAT as it is being delivered by a consortium of three local authorities, targeting six specific target audiences in six different Local Growth Areas. With on-the-ground delivery and engagement with the target audiences likely to happen via different organisations, using locally-specific approaches, in each authority area, there is a need to ensure all partners are aware of their monitoring & evaluation responsibilities and to impose some common standards on these activities. This will mean:

a. Opportunities to collect data are not missed.

b. It is as easy as possible for delivery partners to build in monitoring and evaluation practices to the set-up and delivery of their projects.

c. Methodologies used are broadly the same, so data from different projects can be *effectively* compared and aggregated.

d. Data is presented in a standardised format, so data from different projects can be *efficiently* compared and aggregated.

Evidencing Outcomes and Impacts

2.1.2. SEAT will focus on engaging and changing the travel habits of some very specific target audiences, namely:

a. Jobseekers

b. Young people

c. New recruits

d. Employees with a transport issue

e. Key Stage 4/5 pupils

f. Students, especially freshers, graduates and work experience candidates

g. Lower-socio economic communities

h. Volunteers

2.1.3. It aims to improve the mobility and health of individuals within these target audiences by widening their travel choices (especially active travel), subsequently enabling them to access a wider range of work, training and educational opportunities; ultimately ensuring they can fully contribute to the local economy and maximise their own income.

Table 1: SEAT Outputs, Outcomes & Impacts

Outputs (as per bid)	Outcomes	Impacts

• 2,958 ESA benefit claimants engaged
• 6,633 employees engaged via 60 pre-engaged employers
• 150 employees engaged via public outreach events
• 600 employees receive cycle training / cycle maintenance support
• 1,221 employees engaged via 15 newly-engaged employers
• 5,136 students engaged via 75 schools
• 1,050 FE/HE students engaged
• 60 individuals trained as targeted travel engagement volunteers
• 3 apprenticeships
• 3 community cycle hubs established
  – 315 new bikes sold
  – 1,800 bikes maintained
  – 3,150 bikes refurbished
• 135 individuals complete a cycle maintenance apprenticeship course
• 190,000 people reached by Ideas in Motion South Essex travel awareness campaign
• 600,000 Twitter accounts reached
• 900,000 Twitter impressions
• 900,000 Facebook impressions
• 9 active travel challenges run
	• Increased use of sustainable travel modes (in particular of walking and cycling) by people who engage in the SEAT programme, in particular:
	  – ESA claimants
	  – School pupils
	  – Students
	  – Apprentices and trainees
	  – New employees
	  – Existing employees
	  – Volunteers
	• Increased take up of interview, training, education, work experience & employment opportunities by ESA claimants, pupils, students, young people and residents of less affluent communities
	• Increased take up of volunteering opportunities by new volunteers
	• More skilled local sustainable transport sector workforce
		• Lower transport-related carbon emissions
		• Better air quality
		• Less congestion on local roads
		• More use of new walking & cycling infrastructure
		• More active and healthier residents
		• Less pressure on local NHS Trusts from preventable illnesses
		• Bigger local labour pool
		• Better trained local labour pool
		• Lower rate of vacant employment positions
		• Lower rate of vacant FE/HE spaces
		• Lower unemployment
		• Fewer benefit claimants
		• Fewer lost working days due to staff ill-health

2.1.4. Table 1 shows the outputs SEAT has committed to achieve for these target audiences in its bid, as well as the outcomes and impacts that might arise from these outputs. (Further details of the number of people to be targeted and engaged, and the mode shift to achieved, for each sub-audience are included in Appendix A.)

2.1.5. Some of the headline numbers for the outputs SEAT aims to achieve initially seem quite high. However, when put in the context of a South Essex population of 650,000, a workforce of 280,000 and over 21,000 out-of-work benefit claimants, it is clear that those individuals targeted by SEAT, and those that subsequently make a change in their travel or access to opportunities, make up a small proportion of the overall target audience.

2.1.6. To assess the outcomes and impacts of SEAT it would therefore be ineffective to look at area-wide data (e.g. bus patronage data on routes to the six Local Growth Areas, number of ESA claimants or take-up of FE/HE places), as any change affected by SEAT is unlikely to create changes in the longer term trends which are visible within natural year-on-year fluctuations, or which are not overshadowed by 'interference' in the data from other factors (such as weather, road works, or broader transport and economic trends).

2.2. SEAT's Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

2.2.1. The type of engagement delivered by SEAT should have a big impact on the people who participate in it. SEAT's monitoring and evaluation approach will therefore focus on obtaining data from individuals who have received advice, support or services through the programme, asking them directly about whether/how their travel habits have changed and if/how the programme has helped improve their access to education, training and employment opportunities.

2.2.2. Provided representative numbers of participants supply this data, it can then be factored up to show SEAT's outcomes for all participants. From these outcomes the programme's transport, health and economic impacts can then be estimated. For example, using average trip lengths to estimate how many car km have been saved by any reduction in car mode share, and then calculating the carbon emissions saved from these based on average vehicle emissions.

3. Implementing SEAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Approach

3.1. Overview

3.1.1. To capture the output and outcome data required to monitor SEAT, the process shown in Figure 1 will be set up. This will ensure *output* and customer satisfaction data is collected at the project level, and passed on to the programme management team (PMT) along with participant contact details. All participants will then be given the opportunity to take part in a survey assessing the *outcomes* of the programme on them personally.

3.1.2. This process will also ensure data is collected about individuals working in a voluntary capacity to help deliver SEAT projects, to assess whether this has helped improve their employability and capacity to find work.

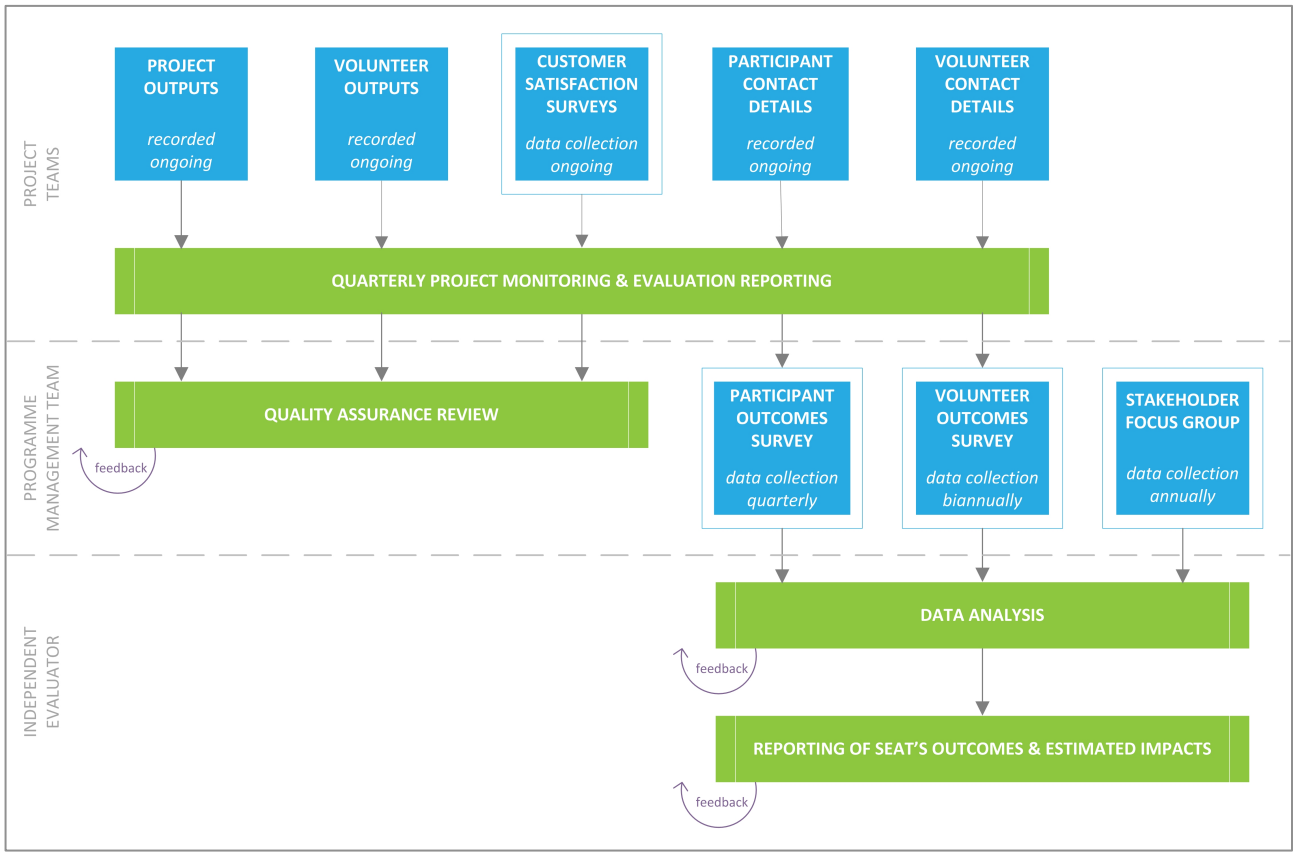
3.1.3. This approach also uses a focus group to engage programme stakeholders in ensuring the programme is as effective as possible and obtain their insight as to whether the programme is achieving its intended outcomes and impacts.

Outputs: reported and recorded by programme management process

Outcomes: captured by outcomes survey, volunteer survey and stakeholder focus group

Impacts: estimated from outcomes survey data using standardised metrics

Figure 1: SEAT Monitoring & Evaluation Process



3.1.4. The four key mechanisms for capturing monitoring data for SEAT are outlined below.

3.2. Participant Customer Surveys

3.2.1. Paper or online surveys gathering initial feedback on participants' satisfaction with individual engagement processes and services, and their contact details. The former to be used by projects and programme management to quality assure individual projects. The latter to be passed to PMT to enable participation in the participant outcomes survey.

Data collection: to be obtained on an on-going basis by delivery partners, integrated in to the delivery model of their individual project(s).

Analysis: to be completed by delivery partners (on-going) and programme management team (quarterly).

PMT Requirements: Customer satisfaction data collection protocol to ensure consistency of core questions, methodology and submission of data.

3.3. Participant Outcomes Survey

3.3.1. Quarterly online survey gathering feedback on if and how participants' travel and access to opportunity has altered as a result of the advice and/or services they received. Participants from the previous quarter to be invited to complete the survey at the start of each new quarter, based on contact details supplied by project delivery partners in their quarterly reporting. Prize draw incentive to be offered to maximise response rate.

Data collection: to be completed by programme management team.

Analysis: to be completed by independent monitoring and evaluation assessors at the end of each financial year.

PMT Requirements: Outcomes survey design and methodology. Set up of outcomes survey. Quarterly management of outcomes survey. Commissioning of independent analysis.

3.3.2. **Note:** If response rates to the participant outcomes survey are high enough, it could be worthwhile implementing a further *follow-up participants outcomes survey*, which respondents are asked to complete at say 3 or 6 months after the initial survey. This would enable assessment of the medium-term impact of the interventions, e.g. if participants have maintained their sustainable mode choices or used them to access further opportunities. Once participant outcomes survey response rates are known and all elements of the monitoring and evaluation strategy are set up, then it may be worth re-visiting this idea.

3.4. Volunteer[1] Outcomes Survey

3.4.1. Online survey gathering feedback on the experience and outcomes of individuals gaining work experience, volunteering or training through the delivery of SEAT projects. To be used to assess the impact of SEAT on strengthening the local sustainable transport workforce and providing opportunities for people to become more 'job ready' and employable. Project teams to report on relevant output metrics (e.g. volunteer hours completed, training completed) via quarterly reporting, as well as supply contact details for relevant individuals.

Data collection: to be completed by programme management team twice yearly.

Analysis: to be completed by independent monitoring & evaluation assessors at the end of Year 1 (to allow for any amendments to the survey/process to be implemented in Year 2/3 if necessary) and Year 3.

PMT Requirements: Volunteer outcomes survey design and methodology. Set up of volunteer outcomes survey. Biannual management of outcomes survey. Commissioning of independent analysis.

[1] 'Volunteer' used for brevity but wherever this is referred to it also covers work experience pupils, interns, apprentices and other trainees engaged in project delivery.

3.5. Stakeholder Focus Groups

3.5.1. Yearly workshops with project delivery partners and representatives of beneficiary organisations (e.g. HE/FE, key employers, schools) to assess their expectations and experience of the programme. Led by an independent facilitator to enable Southend-on-Sea/PMT to participate as an equal stakeholder, and to create an impartial environment where all stakeholders feel able to speak frankly.

3.5.2. Year 1 focus = engage stakeholders, understand requirements of stakeholders and agree collective vision of success. To be held during Q2 of 2017.

3.5.3. Year 2 focus = facilitate continued engagement of stakeholders, assess progress and agree any necessary changes to approach. To be held mid-way through financial year 2018/19.

3.5.4. Year 3 focus = reflection and assessment of outputs, outcomes and impacts, capture lessons learnt and celebrate successes. To be held during Q2 of 2020.

Data collection: event management by PMT in conjunction with an independent facilitator.

Analysis: to be completed by independent facilitator after each focus group.

PMT Requirements: Commissioning of independent facilitator. Event management of 3 x focus group workshops.

3.6. Role of Project Managers

3.6.1. For the above approach to work effectively frontline projects must submit their monitoring information in a timely manner at the end of each quarter. The obligation to do this, and report the following as part of this, should be written in to Service Level Agreements / Memorandum of Understanding / contracts as appropriate:

a. Project-specific output metrics

b. Standardised high-level customer satisfaction metrics

c. Participant contact details

d. Standardised project volunteer output metrics

e. Volunteer contact details

3.7. Role of Independent Evaluator

3.7.1. In order to ensure that no bias is unintentionally introduced to the evaluation of SEAT (i.e. by one partner organisation being responsible for this) an independent third party should be commissioned to analyse SEAT's monitoring data and evaluate the findings from it.

3.7.2. A brief for this work would need to be developed, but it might be useful if the role of independent monitoring and evaluation body included:

a. Periodic liaison with the PMT to ensure data is being collected at the required intervals / methodology is consistent / etc.

b. Providing ad-hoc advice on monitoring and evaluation to PMT / delivery teams.

c. Analysis and reporting of volunteer survey data in Q2 2018.

d. Analysis and reporting of outcomes survey data to date in Q2 2018 and Q2 2019.

e. Analysis and reporting of all outcomes survey and volunteer survey data in Q2 2020, including calculation of potential impacts.

f. Submission of final monitoring report in Q2 2020.

3.7.3. While the first analysis isn't due to take place until May 2018, it would be sensible to commission this supplier within the first six months of the programme, so that they can deliver a. and b. above in the interim.

3.8. Timeline

3.8.1. See Appendix B for a timeline of all tasks related to monitoring and evaluation throughout the period of the SEAT programme.

3.9. Action Plan

3.9.1. The tasks to be completed in the first six months of the programme, to set up this monitoring and evaluation approach, are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: SEAT Monitoring & Evaluation Tasks to September 2017

No.	Task	Task Owner	Completion By	Contingencies
Participant Customer Surveys / Quarterly Project Management Reporting				
1	Specify project customer service survey headline metrics / guidelines	PMT	End April 2017	Must be completed before first quarterly project management reporting occurs in July 2017
2	Design project outputs reporting form / spreadsheet	PMT	End April 2017	
3	Design project participant / volunteer contact details spreadsheet	PMT	End April 2017	
4	Specify data transfer procedures and write data protection / sharing agreement	PMT	End May 2017	
5	Awareness raising with projects on project reporting / monitoring requirements	PMT	On-going from no later than June 2017, as projects come on-stream throughout Year 1	
12	First quarterly project management reporting	DP	Early July 2017	Tasks 1-5 to be completed beforehand
13	Review / quality assure first quarter's project management data	PMT	Early July 2017	Task 12 to be completed beforehand
Participant Outcomes Survey				
6	Design participant outcomes survey / process	PMT	End May 2017	Must be completed for first survey to be run in July 2017
7	Set-up participant outcomes survey online	PMT	End May 2017	
14	Run first participant outcomes survey	PMT	Mid-late July 2017	Tasks 6 and 7 to be completed beforehand
Volunteer Outcomes Survey				
8	Design volunteer outcomes survey / process	PMT	End June 2017	Must be completed for first survey to be run in October 2017
9	Set-up volunteer outcomes survey online	PMT	End July 2017	
Stakeholder Focus Group				
10	Commission Independent Facilitator of stakeholder focus groups	PMT	End May 2017	Must be completed before first focus group can be arranged
16	First stakeholder focus group event management / facilitation	PMT / IF	End July 2017	Task 10 to be completed beforehand
17	First stakeholder focus group reporting	IF	End July 2017	Task 16 to be completed beforehand
Other				
11	Commission Independent Evaluator	PMT	End September 2017	Must be completed before first analysis in May 2018

Task numbering reflects that of project plan in Appendix B. PMT = Programme Management Team IF = Independent Facilitator DP = Delivery Partners

Appendix A: SEAT Mode Shift Targets by Audience Type

	Audience Size (no.)	Engaged Participants (no.)	Mode Shift Target (engaged participants)
ESA Benefit Claimants	5,000 per year (15,000 total)	986 per year (2,958 total)	16% shift to sustainable modes
Selected Employees of Pre-Engaged Employers from 60 employers	11,340 per year (34,020 total)	2,211 per year (6,633 total)	5% shift to cycling 2% shift to walking 3% shift to public transport
Selected Employees of Newly-Engaged Employers from 15 employers	2,085 per year (6,255 total)	407 per year (1,221 total)	5% shift to cycling 2% shift to walking 3% shift to public transport
Other Employees (public outreach events)		50 per year (150 total)	10% shift to cycling (15 people) 4% shift to walking (6 people) 6% shift to public transport (9 people)
Other Employees (cycle trainees)		200 per year (600 total)	16% shift to cycling (96 people)
Selected Pupils from 75 schools	17,125 per year (51,375 total)	1,712 per year (5,136 total)	3% shift to cycling 8% shift to walking
New FE/HE Students	3,500 per year (10,500 total)	350 per year (1,050 total)	3% shift to cycling 8% shift to walking

Appendix B: SEAT Monitoring & Evaluation Timeline

		Owner	Year 1												Year 2												Year 3															
			Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20
Stage 1: Monitoring & Evaluation Set-Up																																										
1	Specify project customer service headline metrics / guidelines	PMT																																								
2	Design project outputs form / spreadsheet	PMT																																								
3	Design participant / volunteer contact details spreadsheet	PMT																																								
4	Specify data transfer procedures and data sharing agreement	PMT																																								
5	Liaison with projects on reporting / monitoring requirements	PMT																																								
6	Design participant outcomes survey / process	PMT																																								
7	Set-up participant outcomes survey online	PMT																																								
8	Design volunteer outcomes survey / process	PMT																																								
9	Set-up volunteer outcomes survey online	PMT																																								
10	Commission stakeholder focus group Independent Facilitator	PMT																																								
11	Commission Independent Evaluator	PMT																																								
Stage 2: Monitoring & Evaluation Data Collection																																										
12	Quarterly project management reporting	DP																																								
13	Review / quality assurance of project management data	PMT																																								
14	Run participant outcomes survey (quarterly)	PMT																																								
15	Run volunteer outcomes survey (biannually)	PMT																																								
16	Stakeholder focus group event management / facilitation	PMT/IF																																								
Stage 3: Monitoring & Evaluation Analysis																																										
17	Stakeholder focus group reporting	IF																																								
18	Analysis and reporting of participant outcomes survey data	IE																																								
19	Analysis and reporting of volunteer outcomes survey data	IE																																								
20	Calculation of potential programme impacts	IE																																								
21	Final monitoring and evaluation report	IE																																								

PMT = Programme Management Team DP = Delivery Partner(s) IF = Independent Facilitator IE = Independent Evaluator