

8 Monitoring and evaluation

8.1 Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation of the OPOF scheme is required in order to meet the funders' reporting requirements, as well as drawing out learning for internal and external audiences, and informing future work.

The aims for OPOF's monitoring and evaluation are:

- To meet evaluation requirements of the main funder, HLF.
- To build up a body of evidence to demonstrate to partners, funders and others about what works, in order to inform work elsewhere and future work in the New Forest.
- To provide information as the Scheme is being delivered to inform its ongoing management and delivery, suggesting adaptations if required and building on what is working well.
- Through the lifetime of the Scheme, helping to create information which can be used to communicate its work, its goals and its achievements.

Resources for Change were contracted to produce the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and a full copy is available as supporting documentation.

8.2 Overview

This framework focuses on the social/'people' outcomes including behaviour change, but also refers to the physical environment/natural heritage. The project staff recognise the importance of gaining a strong understanding of the benefits that the project has on people, as well as the impacts on the physical environment. Gathering meaningful data about the benefits for people and communities can be less straightforward than ecological monitoring, requiring targeted work with the different audiences/stakeholder groups, using techniques appropriate to the variety of audiences, and recognising the value of qualitative data.

The monitoring and evaluation of behaviour change is especially challenging, although of immense importance for OPOF; as a result, there is specific work scheduled to carry out research about the best ways to do this which will take place during the first year of the Scheme's delivery. Therefore, this section only contains initial thinking about behaviour change, which will be added to – and changed if necessary – in the light of the research.

The approach will rely on a combination of work by project staff, partners, volunteers and a commissioned external evaluator. It will be vital to embed monitoring and evaluation activities within day-to-day working, but also to include external, objective input at key points. Project staff, partners and volunteers will need support in order to fulfil their monitoring and evaluation roles effectively, and to make the most of evaluation as a project management tool. For this reason, the external evaluator will have an on-going mentoring and support role, in addition to leading on two specific evaluation interventions (mid-term and final evaluations). The project staff will be responsible for on-going monitoring of activities, e.g. participant satisfaction, and will

work with the project manager to carry out internal annual reflective reviews, while the external evaluators will design and deliver the two evaluations.

The interim evaluation will take place at around the mid-point of Scheme delivery. The final evaluation will take place after five years; whilst we expect to be able to observe extensive positive changes within this time period, the full potential impacts for both the physical environment and for people are likely to take longer to be fully realised.

The Scheme's team will provide quarterly quantitative data returns to HLF relating to financial spend and achievement of targets, as well as three returns of output data sheets (at the beginning, middle and end of the Scheme). The monitoring described in this framework will contribute towards these requirements, but is focussed on providing additional material that will help to tell the qualitative story behind the numbers. The two evaluations may draw on summaries of the quarterly data reporting, but will focus on the additional information with the intention of providing qualitative depth to 'tell the story' behind the quantitative reporting to the main funder

In addition to this Framework, Project Change Statements for each of the Scheme's projects will provide a structure to trace the pathway of a project from start to finish. Each Project Change Statement presents a simple baseline 'picture of now', explaining the current situation and the need for the project; it also summarises what the project will do and its intended outputs and outcomes. At the interim and final evaluations, each Project Change Statement will be updated to describe what the actual outputs and outcomes have been, so that it will be possible to review whether the intended outcomes have been achieved and the pathway towards these.

8.3 Key Topics for Evaluation

Key Topics and sub-topics describe what the evaluation will focus on, in order to meet its intended aims, as well as to be able to report on HLF intended outcomes. The Key Topics will guide what information is gathered through on-going monitoring and the evaluation intervention(s), and then used for the evaluation analysis.

Engagement¹

- The extent to which people have become more engaged
- Who has become engaged

What it is about the approach that works

- What messages and activities contribute to achieving behaviour change
- What elements of the Scheme's governance and ways of working contribute to achieving outcomes

Legacy

- Future work priorities
- Future working relationships
- Skills and knowledge transfer and on-going application.

¹ OPOF use the term 'engagement' to mean a two-way process, involving interaction, interpretation and listening, with the goal of increasing *connection* to the heritage.

On-the-ground impact

The starting point is the suite of intended HLF outcomes i.e.

- Outcomes for Heritage: Better managed; In better condition; Identified / recorded
- Outcomes for People: Skills development; Learning about heritage; Volunteering time
- Outcomes for Communities: Environmental impacts reduced; More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage; Your local area / community will be a better place to live

Behaviour change²

- People taking positive action to managing their land and managing it better
- People noticing and reporting encroachment issues
- How people maintain their heritage assets, including buildings and archaeological features.
- People driving appropriately
- People not feeding or petting ponies
- People not littering
- People not going into the areas which are sensitive because of ground-nesting birds
- Children playing in the outdoors
- Less conflict

Awareness and understanding

- People reconnecting with the Forest, including young people
- People conscious of their impact on the Forest
- Increased awareness and understanding of the traditional land management practices in the Forest
- Increased understanding of conservation and habitat management, including issues around non-native species
- Partners and staff understanding the behaviours that are relevant to the project's aims, and what actions this project (or others) can do in relation to these behaviours.

There is an intentional separation between behaviour change, and awareness and understanding. These are two separate, although related, concepts. It is important to recognise that changes in awareness and understanding may lead to changes in behaviour, but not necessarily; similarly, changes in behaviour may or may not be a result of someone having become more aware or understanding more.

Also, this builds on work undertaken during the audience development research, which used a typology of audience development to consider where different audiences are on the pathway of awareness and engagement at present, and where they might be as a result of the Scheme's activities. (See **Section 1.3.3.4** for typology diagram).

² NOTE: These are subject to change, following the research in Year 1.

8.4 Identifying Success

OPOF staff and partners have considered what things would be like, if the Scheme is successful. This encompasses various dimensions – for the physical environment and heritage, for people (local communities and visitors), for the organisations involved in delivering the project (**Table 18**). The list below is indicative; the Project Change Statements will give a more detailed view of what success ‘looks like’ at a project level and the individual project will state specific targets for outcomes such as more people volunteering.

Table 18: How it will look if the scheme is successful



A Theory of Change approach (**Figure 66**) to evaluation is used in this Framework, i.e. where the intended outcomes and impacts are articulated, and related to the intended inputs, activities and outputs of the Scheme. In this way, the evaluation can test whether the planned activities have led to the anticipated results.

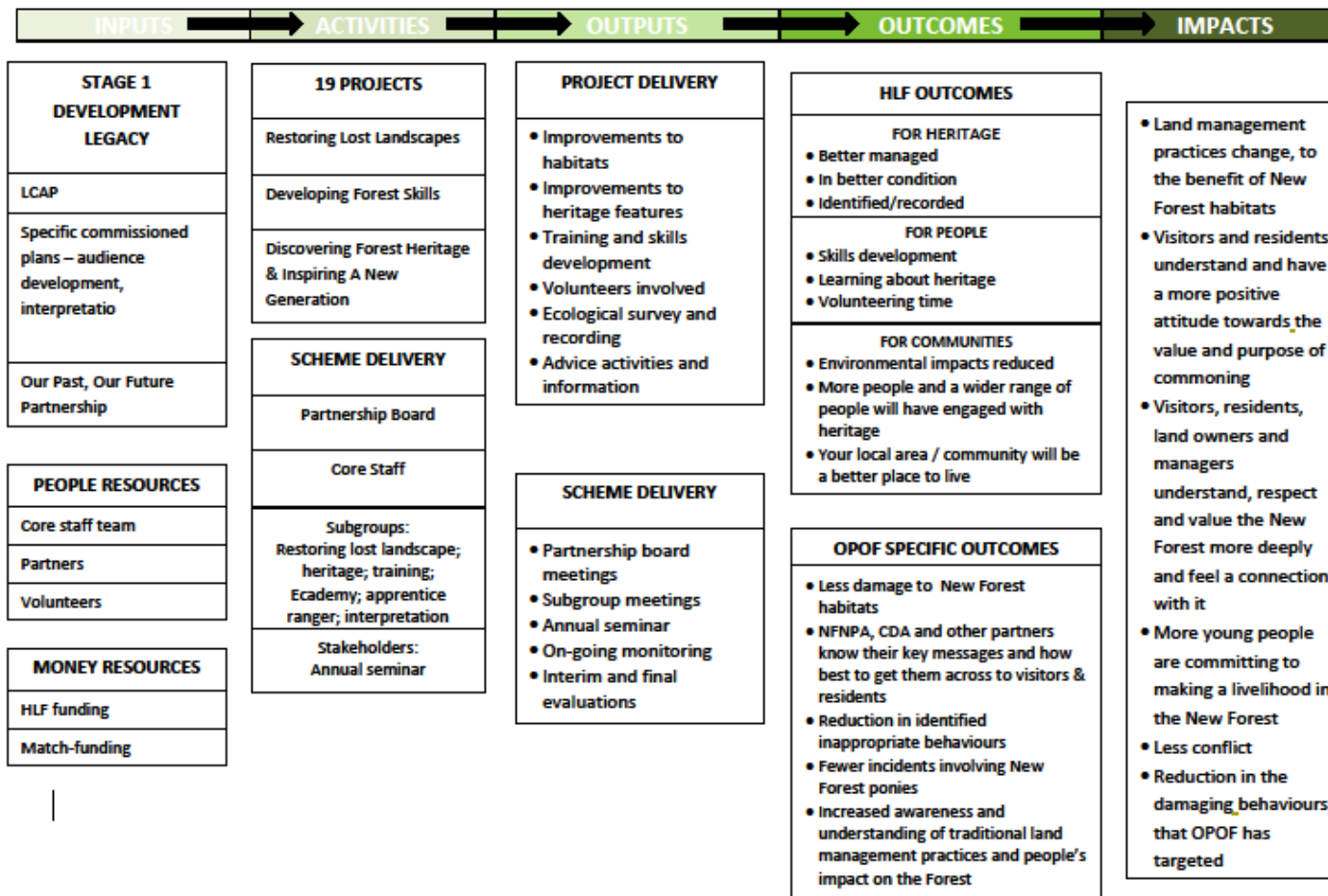


Figure 66 - Measuring success, Theory of Change diagram

8.5 Measuring Success

8.5.1 Measuring key topics

The next step is to describe how the Key Topics and indicators of success will be measured, through both on-going monitoring and one-off evaluation information-gathering exercises. The following **Table 19** outlines this and **Table 20** indicates who has responsibility for carrying out these measuring activities and what the monitoring and evaluation tasks will be.

Table 19 - Measuring Topics

Topic	Technique	Detail	HLF Outcome this relates to
IMPACT - HLF intended outcome for heritage: Heritage will be – better managed, in better condition, identified/recorded			
Heritage will be better managed	Project output monitoring, e.g. survey of habitats restored or created and survey of condition of heritage features improved.	Quantitative	Heritage will be better managed
Heritage will be in better condition	Project output monitoring, e.g. survey of heritage features improved.	Quantitative	Heritage will be in better condition
Heritage will be identified/recorded	Project output monitoring, e.g. number of surveys/species/days.	Quantitative	Heritage will be identified/recorded
IMPACT - HLF intended outcome for people: People will have – developed skills, learnt about heritage, volunteered time			
Developed skills	Project output monitoring, e.g. numbers of training activities, numbers of participants and participant interviews regarding their learning experience.	Quantitative – numbers of accreditations/qualifications achieved through OPOF. Numbers of trainees. Qualitative – satisfaction, nature of skills, current and intended use of skills gained.	People will have developed skills, learnt about heritage. More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.
Learnt about heritage	Project output monitoring, e.g. numbers of learning activities, numbers of participants,	Quantitative – numbers of activities. Numbers of participants. Characteristics of participants such as	People will have developed skills, learnt about heritage. More people and a wider

Topic	Technique	Detail	HLF Outcome this relates to
	characteristics of participants, surveys of level of knowledge of stakeholders.	age, gender, ethnicity, resident or visitor, previous engagement with heritage (to be agreed). Qualitative – satisfaction, learning ‘distance travelled’.	range of people will have engaged with heritage.
Volunteered time	Volunteer numbers and hours monitoring - recording by project leads. Volunteer survey – interviews, case studies, online survey.	Quantitative- Numbers of volunteers. Numbers of volunteer hours. Characteristics of volunteers – age, gender, ethnicity, resident or visitor, previous engagement with heritage. Qualitative – satisfaction. Learning and skills. Personal development.	People will have developed skills, learnt about heritage, volunteered time. More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage. The local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
IMPACT - HLF intended outcome for communities: For communities, environmental impacts will be reduced, more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage, the local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit.			
Environmental impacts reduced	Analysis of project output monitoring Scheme staff, partner and project lead interviews.	Quantitative. Qualitative – perceptions of reductions.	
More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage	Project output monitoring e.g. numbers of participants at events, characteristics of participants. Scheme staff, partner and project lead interviews.	Quantitative – numbers of OPOF participants. Characteristics of participants – age, gender, ethnicity, resident or visitor, previous engagement with heritage. Qualitative – perceptions of new audiences.	
The local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit.	Participant and volunteer survey – interviews, case studies, online survey.	Qualitative – perceptions.	
IMPACT - Behaviour change			
People taking positive action	Land owner and manager interviews.	Qualitative – nature of actions,	Heritage will be better

Topic	Technique	Detail	HLF Outcome this relates to
to managing their land and managing it better	Scheme staff and partner interviews.	people's understanding of the impact of their actions. Perceptions of changes in land management activity.	managed, in better condition. Skills development. Learning about heritage. Volunteering time. Environmental impacts reduced. Your local area/community will be a better place to live.
People reporting encroachment issues	Monitoring of reporting in places where OPOF has been active	Numbers of reports made.	Your local area/community will be a better place to live.
People actively maintaining their heritage assets	OPOF participant/beneficiary interviews & online survey. Project lead interviews.	Numbers of trainees and project participants reporting management/maintenance activities. Nature of activities carried out. Perceptions of changes in heritage maintenance activity.	Heritage will be better managed, in better condition. Skills development. Learning about heritage. Volunteering time. Environmental impacts reduced. Your local area/community will be a better place to live.
People driving appropriately	Monitoring of incident data in places where OPOF has been active.	Change over time.	Environmental impacts reduced. Your local area/community will be a better place to live. Learning about heritage.
People not feeding or petting ponies and related incidents of people being 'attacked' by ponies.	Fewer incidents reported. Fewer incidents of feeding observed Less illnesses in ponies reported due to visitor feeding?	Quantitative – nos. of incidents Qualitative – discussions with relevant stakeholders (owners/rangers)	Environmental impacts reduced. Your local area/community will be a better place to live. Learning about heritage.
People reducing or not littering	Monitoring of litter in places where OPOF has been active.	Change over time	Environmental impacts reduced. Your local area/community will be a better place to live.

Topic	Technique	Detail	HLF Outcome this relates to
Children playing in the outdoors	Monitoring use of Wildplay sites. Site interviews with parents and children. Continued use of wild play survey.	Numbers of users. Characteristics of users (sample) – age, gender, visitor or resident. Experience of outdoor play – frequency, new to it or always done it, satisfaction.	Your local area/community will be a better place to live. More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.
Less conflict	Project lead interviews.	Fewer reports of conflicts between visitors and commoning activities.	Your local area/community will be a better place to live.
IMPACT – AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING			
People connecting and re-connecting with the Forest	Volunteer, participant, project lead interviews and online survey. Site surveys with the public.	The nature of people's feeling of connection. If re-connecting, what the driver was.	Learning about heritage. More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.
People conscious of their impact on the Forest	Volunteer, participant, project lead interviews and online survey. Site surveys with the public.	What impacts people appear to be or report being conscious of.	Learning about heritage. Environmental impacts reduced.
Increased awareness and understanding of traditional land management practices in the Forest	Volunteer, participant, project lead interviews and online survey. Site surveys with the public.	Whether people report learning about traditional land management practices for the first time, or report an increased depth of understanding.	Learning about heritage.
Increased understanding of conservation & habitat management	Volunteer, participant, project lead interviews and online survey. Site surveys with the public.	Whether people report learning about conservation and habitat management practices for the first time, or report an increased depth of understanding.	Learning about heritage.
Partners and staff understanding the behaviours that are relevant to the project's aims, and what actions this project (or others) can do in relation to these behaviours.	Partner and staff interviews.	Which behaviours they identify as relevant. What they have learnt about the relationship between awareness and understanding, and changes in behaviour.	Heritage is better managed. Skills development.

Topic	Technique	Detail	HLF Outcome this relates to
ENGAGEMENT			
The extent to which people have become engaged in heritage	Surveys at OPOF activities. Interviews with participants (sample), including some repeated over time. Social media monitoring	Numbers of participants in OPOF activities. Proportion of these participants who have previously been engaged with the Forest. Nature of people's engagement over the time of OPOF. Number of website hits, tweets and re-tweets, Facebook likes etc.	More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage. Learning about heritage.
Who has become engaged	Participant monitoring by project lead.	Characteristics of OPOF participants – age, gender, ethnicity, visitor or resident, frequent or infrequent user of the New Forest and/or heritage (to be agreed).	More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.
LEGACY			
Future work priorities	Partner interviews.	Whether future work priorities have been identified. The nature of these priorities and their linkage to OPOF.	Heritage will be better managed. Your local area/community will be a better place to live.
Future working relationships	Partner interviews	Whether working relationships created through OPOF will be continued, and in what way.	Heritage will be better managed.
Skills and knowledge transfer and on-going application	Scheme staff and Partner interviews. Key participant survey – interviews, online survey.	Whether and how skills and knowledge gained through OPOF will be transferred, by whom and to whom, e.g. more widely within partner organisations, to other LPSs etc.	Skills development. Heritage will be better managed. Learning about heritage.
WHAT IT IS ABOUT THE APPROACH THAT WORKS			
How well the land	Staff, partner organisation, project	Qualitative – perceptions.	Heritage will be better

Topic	Technique	Detail	HLF Outcome this relates to
management/conservation techniques and projects work	lead interviews and/or workshop.		managed, in better condition, identified/recorded.
How well the people-focussed projects work	Staff, partner organisation, project lead interviews and/or workshop.	Qualitative – perceptions.	
Which behaviour change messages work and why	Staff, partner organisation, project lead interviews and/or workshop.	Qualitative	Skills development. Environmental impacts reduced. The local area/community will be a better place to live.
Which elements of the Scheme's governance and ways of working have contributed to the Scheme's achievements	Staff, partner organisation, project lead interviews.	Qualitative – perceptions.	Heritage will be better managed. Skills development.
Other			
Unintended outcomes survey	Staff, partner organisation, contractor interview.	Qualitative – open.	n/a
Most significant difference	Volunteer, staff, partner organisation, contractor interview.	Qualitative – open.	Potentially any.

Table 20 - Responsibility for Monitoring

Activity	Estimate of Number of Total Days during Scheme delivery			
	Scheme Manager & staff	Partners	Volunteers	Evaluators
M&E framework completion				
Updating to include recommendations from behaviour change research activities	0.5			1
Improving understanding & behaviour change				
Researching barriers - literature review and best practice case studies.	0.5			8.25
Audit past & current interpretation, training & campaigns	0.5			7.5
Determine indicators				2
Monitoring of behaviour change			Depends on volunteer nos.	30
Analysis, feedback and reporting	1			7.5
Guidance development - analysis, drafting & refining	1			9
Monitoring (on-going throughout the Scheme)				
Volunteer numbers & hours	8			
Volunteer satisfaction	4			
Participant numbers and characteristics	8	4		
Participant satisfaction		4	Depends on volunteer nos.	
Ad hoc feedback	4	2		

Activity	Estimate of Number of Total Days during Scheme delivery			
	Scheme Manager & staff	Partners	Volunteers	Evaluators
Internal annual review (in the 3 years with no evaluation) – as part of Board meeting	2	2		
Mid-term evaluation				
Update and review planning meeting	0.75			0.75
Collation and review of all monitoring data	0.5			1
Completion of HLF output datasets	1			3.5
Assessing progress to date: interviews with staff, partners & project leads, volunteers, trainees etc.				3
Assessing progress to date: fieldwork				4
Assessing progress to date: focus on understanding and behaviour change				12
Project & scheme legacy planning				2
Data collation & initial analysis				1.5
Legacy planning & review evaluation validation & recommendations workshop (if not part of scheduled Board meeting)	4	2		0.75
Interim review report, including easy read summary	1			5
Final evaluation				
Update and evaluation planning meeting	0.75			0.75
Collation and review of all monitoring data	0.5			1
Completion of HLF output datasets	1			3.75

Activity	Estimate of Number of Total Days during Scheme delivery			
	Scheme Manager & staff	Partners	Volunteers	Evaluators
Assessing impact: interviews with staff, partners & project leads, volunteers, trainees etc.				3
Assessing impact: fieldwork				4
Assessing impact: focus on understanding and behaviour change				12
Project & scheme legacy planning				2
Data collation & initial analysis				1.5
Legacy planning & review evaluation validation & recommendations workshop (if not part of scheduled Board meeting)	4	2		0.75
Review report, including easy read summary				5.5
On-going				
Call-off monitoring support				3
Client liaison				5

8.6 Implementation

The monitoring and evaluation comprises a mix of on-going monitoring and distinct evaluation interventions at mid-term and final points, supplemented by an internal annual review in the years when there is no evaluation intervention.

The two evaluation interventions, carried out by the external evaluator, have slightly different purposes:

- Interim evaluation - Check on progress, legacy planning, and feedback to the community
- Final evaluation - Impact, legacy consolidation, and feedback to the community and funders

The project team are obliged to provide data returns to HLF relating to financial spend and achievement of targets on a quarterly basis, as well as three sets of output datasheets (at the beginning, middle and end of the Scheme). The information from this quantitative monitoring may be used as part of the wider Scheme monitoring and evaluation.

The annual reviews will be simple internal reflection exercises, comprising a half-day workshop with all team members and partners, perhaps replacing or as part of a Partnership Board meeting. Facilitated by the project manager, these will enable the whole team to take time out from delivery to reflect on what has been achieved during that year and to draw out learning from this, in order to inform planning for the following year.

The Scheme manager will have lead responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, with input from other project staff, partners and volunteers in order to carry out the on-going monitoring. The two evaluation interventions will be commissioned to an external contractor, who will also provide on-going mentoring support. The annual reviews will be led by the Scheme manager. **Table 20** provides more detail.

8.6.1 Evaluation Activities

The evaluations will be carried out by the independent external evaluation team, with support from the project manager, other project staff, partners and volunteers. At this stage, there are outline plans, comprising the following main information-gathering activities for each evaluation:

- Review of collated monitoring data (collected by the Scheme staff during the course of their work)
 - Activity/event participant numbers
 - Activity/event participant satisfaction surveys
 - Participant numbers
 - Volunteer satisfaction surveys
 - Volunteer numbers and hours
 - Ad hoc feedback
 - Areas/length/number of heritage features restored

- Staff team and partner in-depth semi-structured interviews (n=15 approx.)
- Participant, volunteer and beneficiary surveys
 - Online survey – all volunteers, registered participants
 - In-depth semi-structured interviews with other key informants (n=6 approx.)
 - Short semi-structured interviews with a sample of participants and volunteers (n=40 approx.)
 - Case study in-depth semi-structured interviews with approx. 4 volunteers.
 - Participatory information-gathering, e.g. pinboards, listening tree, with participants and wider public including local residents.

8.6.2 Reporting and Dissemination

For the mid-term and final evaluations, the external evaluation team will be responsible for compiling a full report which will be discussed with the Partnership Board as part of a Board meeting or in separate Validation and Recommendations workshop

It will be important to close the evaluation ‘feedback loop’ by disseminating the learning that is drawn out. The different audiences for this mean that a variety of ways will be used, in order to provide the information in a suitable format and level of detail for each key audience. Ideas for methods include: easy read summary of evaluations; powerpoint presentation; articles suitable for peer-reviewed journals.

The evaluation will assess both quantitative and qualitative outputs based on a range of methods. The quantitative outputs will draw on the data gathered during the period of the Scheme and will be straight forward outputs such as the number of ancient monuments or woodlands restored and with agreed management plans, or the number of people visiting the exhibitions and displays at the New Forest Centre.

Detailed data collected from surveys of indicator species before and after restoration projects will allow assessment the effectiveness of projects on biodiversity and this monitoring will continue beyond the life of this Scheme. The results of this will inform future management plans, programmes of work and budget decisions.

Each of the projects will have clear outputs and the lead delivery partner for each project will be expected to provide the statistics on a 6 monthly basis. These will be analysed and discussed at Board level to ensure progress is on target.

Qualitative outputs are more difficult to evaluate but it is intended that the monitoring work will provide data for the final evaluation into the "people" side of things. Assessments will include looking at how values and perceptions have changed within the different target audiences, has the Scheme changed the behaviours and actions of these audiences, do people have a better understanding of the heritage of the Forest and its working community, are people getting more involved and is this likely to have a longer-lasting effect beyond the end of the Scheme period. Surveys with visitors will allow us to assess whether their visit has been enhanced by the

Scheme, has our vision of visitors having a better understanding of the heritage of the New Forest been achieved?

Critically, the planned monitoring and evaluation will also look at how effective each method of engagement, involvement and learning has been. This will inform future audience development and interpretation work in the Forest.