

## TOP TIPS FOR:

### FORENSIC MI AND FUNDING EVIDENCE COLLECTION

A project is only successful if it is possible to measure and report on the success. Adequate collection of data and production of reports can be time consuming and can easily detract from the point of the project but, if not done properly, can lose you the project. Here are the SOA Development top tips for successful management information (MI) and evidence collection:

1. **Identify** ALL of the MI and evidence requirements at the start of the project. Involve your 3<sup>rd</sup> party suppliers and providers to get it right from the start.
2. **Read** the contract and make sure that you **truly understand it**. Ensure any system and requirements are communicated clearly and simply to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties in advance of the commencement of the project. Time spent here will pay dividends down the track.
3. Design and instigate an **evidence collection and collation system**. If your system is complicated, provide a manual and ensure that this is simple to follow for 3<sup>rd</sup> parties that may not be familiar with the project requirements.
4. Design your **reporting templates** – asking your funder for guidance at the start will save a lot of time and stress later on. Ensure your systems adhere to any guidelines laid down by funders' and include any additional requirements that your organisation may have.
5. **Prepare to be flexible** as needs will change as funders begin to get a feel for the project through regular reports.
6. **Report frequently** (monthly as a minimum) and ensure 3<sup>rd</sup> parties adhere to this too. **Be tough** at the beginning to ensure co-operation later when additional info will be required. Frequent reporting ensures that systems are kept up to date by all concerned and allows for any issues to be resolved before they become a danger to the project.
7. Operate an **open door policy** or a helpline for your providers/suppliers/team. It is better that they come to you with issues than you hunting for them yourself.
8. **Audit 3<sup>rd</sup> parties regularly** to ensure compliance to requirements. If issues are found, deal with them immediately and ensure that any misunderstanding or training needs are covered off as soon as possible. A day spent training a third party will pay back ten fold in your saved time over the life of the project.

9. Identify and collect any **missing evidence** as soon as you realise that you do not have it. The sooner you retrace your steps the easier it will be.
10. **Use your MI and evidence** to report to the project board and stakeholders to allow for more focused decision making.
11. **Police your system** and do not accept any evidence that does not fulfil your requirements. It is tempting to sometimes ignore missing information that may seem trivial at the time, but this will only come back to haunt you later.
12. Have your report and evidence ready before any **audit**. Be thorough! Ensure you have all your evidence filed and accessible should you ever be audited. Also ensure that the evidence is complete.
13. **Collect soft information** during your project. This helps to colour and personalise your reports and ensures that they will be read on a regular basis.
14. **Protect yourself** - remember being able to easily and accurately prove what you have done may protect you from potential clawback.