

Change Up Jargon Buster

Term	Meaning
Accountability	Obligation to ensure that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules or standards.
Aim (Overall)	The overall aim is the same as the Mission.
Aims (Specific)	Particular changes or differences the project or organisation plans to bring about for its users.
Audit	Independent, objective assurance activity.
Baseline	Information about the situation a project is trying to affect, showing what it is like before the intervention(s).
Benchmark	A standard of achievement that a project has already achieved, which it can compare with other achievements (of its own or of other projects).
Benchmarking	Systematic comparison of performance and processes. E.g.: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. measuring what you do 2. comparing your organisation to others 3. identifying gaps in performance - 'fail' points where the expectations of internal or external customers are not met 4. looking for new ways of reducing those gaps by learning from others 5. putting the new ideas into practice 6. reviewing the benefits of what you have done.
Capacity Building	Empowering activity that strengthens the ability of VCOs to build their structures, systems, people, and skills so that they are better able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. define and achieve their objectives 2. engage in consultation and planning 3. manage projects 4. take part in partnerships, social enterprise and service delivery.
Cost-effectiveness	Comparison of costs and results.
Economy	Absence of waste for a given output or series of outputs.
Effectiveness	Extent to which objectives are achieved.
Efficiency	Measure of how economically resources are converted to results.
Evaluation	Using information from monitoring and elsewhere to make judgments on the performance of an organisation or project.

First Tier Organisation	See Frontline Organisations below
Frontline Organisations	VCOs working directly with the public, or particular target groups or communities.
Generic Infrastructure Organisations	Organisations which support all frontline VCOs in a particular geographical area. See also Specialist infrastructure organisations
Governance	The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation.
ICT	Information and Communications Technology. E.g. computer hardware and software, connections to the internet etc., intended to fulfil information processing and communications functions.
Impact	There is no one agreed definition. The CES and Jargonbuster definition is that impact refers to broader or longer-term effects of a project's or organisation's outputs, outcomes and activities.
Indicator	Measure of achievement. See also Performance indicator
Infrastructure	The physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, coordinate, represent and promote front line organisations, thus enabling them to deliver their missions more effectively.
Infrastructure Organisations	Often called 'Second tier' or 'Umbrella' organisations, they support frontline VCOs.
Milestone	A well-defined and significant step towards achieving a target, output, outcome or impact, allowing one to track progress.
Monitoring	Collecting and recording information in a routine and systematic way to check progress against plans and enable evaluation.
Mission	Same as Overall Aim. The broad effect the organisation or project wants to have, why it exists. A summary of the overall difference it wants to make.
Objectives	The areas of activity or overall practical steps a project or organisation plans to accomplish its aims.
Outcomes	The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that result from what the project or organisation makes, offers or provides.
Outputs	The products, services or facilities a project or organisation offers or provides to its users.

Organisational Development	Development and reinforcement of organisational strategies, structures and processes for improving an organisation's effectiveness.
Performance	The extent to which a VCO achieves its mission and furthers its cause.
Performance improvement	Achieving one's mission more effectively; achieving better outcomes, and becoming a better quality organisation.
Performance Indicator	Measure of result(s) relative to what was planned. <i>See also Indicator</i>
Project	A particular service or a whole organisation (more frequently used of smaller organisations).
Programme	A co-ordinated series of projects or one complex project with multiple co-ordinated services.
Quality	Learning about what you are doing well and doing it better; finding out what you may need to change to make sure you meet the needs of your users more effectively.
Qualitative Information	Information about the nature of the thing someone is doing, providing or achieving.
Quantitative Information	Information about the number of things someone is doing, providing or achieving, or the length of those things, or the number of times they happen.
Resources	The things a project or organisation draws on to carry out its activities. These include concrete things such as people, equipment, money and services you need. It also includes invisible things such as time, morale and knowledge.
Risk Analysis	Systematic assessment of the threats or vulnerabilities which may affect any aspect of VCO's business, including the likelihood of occurrence, potential severity of impact and mitigation measures needed.
Second Tier Organisations	<i>See Infrastructure Organisations</i>
Social Capital	The degree of social cohesion in communities. Refers to processes between people that establish networks, norms and social trust, and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit.
Social Enterprise	A business with primarily social objectives. Surpluses are re-invested for the purpose in the business or in the community, rather than distributed to shareholders. Social Enterprises can encompass everything from mutuals, employee-owned businesses, private companies or co-operatives.
Specialist Infrastructure	Organisations which either support the organisations in a particular sub-sector or offer a particular area of expertise.

Organisations	See also Generic Infrastructure Organisations
Stakeholders	People with an interest in the organisation. Includes internal stakeholders such as staff, volunteers, or management committee members, as well as external stakeholders such as users, funders etc.
Sustainability	Continuation of benefits after major assistance ends. The probability of longer-term benefits.
Target	A defined level of achievement which a project sets itself to achieve in a specific period of time.
Third Tier Organisation	Infrastructure organisation which supports other infrastructure (or 'second tier') organisations.
Transparency	Quality of being open, straightforward, accountable etc.
Triangulation	Use of three or more sources or types of information to verify assessment.
Umbrella Organisations	Can refer either to membership bodies or federations, or more loosely to infrastructure bodies.
Vision	The ideal state a project or organisation wants the world to be in. What the world will look like if the project or organisation is successful in achieving its mission and aims.
Workforce Development	The process of developing the skills and knowledge of paid staff, volunteers and trustees and board members, underpinned by good management and good employment practice. It also includes work to attract new people to work in the sector so it can flourish and grow.