



Department of Human Services

# Social Impact Framework Assessment Tool



Government  
of South Australia



human  
services



University of  
South Australia

The Australian Alliance for  
Social Enterprise (TAASE)

# Step 1 Government priorities

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
1.1	How does the program/ service/initiative align with Government Policy and Investment priorities?	<p><b>Aim: Government and provider authorisation and support, through clear alignment to priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Priority Areas for Human Services investment</li> <li>• Alignment with overarching program purpose/guidelines</li> <li>• Connection with other Department programs (located within DHS investment)</li> <li>• Relationship with broader Government Policy commitments and other agency programs.</li> </ul>	
1.2	Is there a defined target group/s that is clear in the program logic and service approach (and that aligns with Government priority cohorts)?	<p><b>Aim: Clarity of target group, particularly in context to place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data, provider and client information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Intersecting disadvantage (particularly child neglect and domestic and family violence)</li> <li>– People living with disabilities</li> <li>– People at risk and or experiencing vulnerability and disconnection</li> <li>– Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander community, People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities and New and Emerging Communities (NEC)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Target groups are set in context of place (regional data sources may differ) and focus on both improvement measures and anticipated outcomes – particularly for ATSI and CALD/NEC clients.</li> </ul>	

## Aligned to outcomes > Step 1 > Government priorities

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>1.3</b>	<b>What is the funding quantum and any other related/complementary funding sources?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Proportionality in SIF assessment, and ability to leverage/collaborate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the risk profile and level of risk rating for the particular program based on total funding and potential impacts of poor outcomes</li> <li>• How proportional should SIF assessment using this tool be, if total funding is limited and if contribution to overall investment impact likely to be minimal within this one program?</li> <li>• Are there other provider resources and infrastructure or complementary program resourcing that can be leveraged (potential for generating greater impact; if no additional resources, greater emphasis needed on collaboration and higher rating in Step 6).</li> </ul>	
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Do you have the support of peak industry organisations, sector and cultural leaders?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Early and pro-active support from key stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of sector and cultural leaders in program development, both informal conversations and more formal support if appropriate.</li> </ul>	

## Step 2 Social impact objectives

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>Is there a clearly stated purpose and rationale for the program/service/initiative?</b></p>	<p><b>Aim: Clear purpose that is consistently supported by key documents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Logic, Theory of Change, Strategic Statement</li> <li>• Service Model outline/procedure (may be ‘living’ documents that guide program operation)</li> <li>• ‘What works’ evidence in support of Results-Based Accountability performance measures.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>What is the primary Social Impact Objective contributed to and how?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Creating:</b> Safe environments and Wellbeing</li> <li>2. <b>Connecting:</b> with Opportunities to Engage and Participate</li> <li>3. <b>Building:</b> Resources and Skills for Self-Direction and a Fulfilling Life</li> <li>4. <b>Aspiring:</b> Toward Economic, Social and Civic Empowerment</li> <li>5. <b>Belonging:</b> To Strong Communities that are Inclusive, Equitable and Supportive</li> </ol>	<p><b>Aim: Clarity of primary social impact objective, and alignment to this</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how key documentation (e.g. program logic, program outcomes, theory of change) is clearly aligned to/will support the achievement of primary social objective</li> <li>• Selection/nomination process may highlight weaknesses in outcomes clarity and also lead to program refinement</li> <li>• An opportunity to delve into the thinking behind how the program works and what is the most important objective for clients to achieve.</li> </ul>	

## Aligned to outcomes > Step 2 > Social impact objectives

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>2.3</b>	<b>What is the secondary Social Impact Objective contributed to and how?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Determine if secondary objective also applies, and alignment to this if so</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of whether there is clarity around program outcomes</li> <li>• Identifying a secondary objective can assist with clarifying the theory of change and outcomes clients may want to achieve and ensuring that funding and effort is being channelled appropriately.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Do you currently work in partnership with other providers or community organisations that may be working toward similar or other Social Impact Objectives?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Connection with other important partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For your primary/secondary social impact objectives – who would be important partners to assist you in meeting these?</li> <li>• For other social impact objectives (those that you are not focussing on, but will be important to help achieve overall impact) – who else are important partners to complement your efforts?</li> <li>• Demonstration of quality of existing relationships, contacts and connections</li> <li>• Any established protocols or practices that support collaboration and partnerships.</li> </ul>	

# Step 3 Outcome indicators

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Can the program/service/initiative demonstrate how client outcomes could align with nominated Social Impact Objectives?</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>Alignment between nominated social impact objective, and outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drilling down into the outcomes and theory of change behind outcomes to clarify how primary and secondary Social Impact Objectives are being met. May lead to refinement or reflections on need for funding adjustments or fine-tuning of outcomes.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Is there capacity and capability to report against both quantitative and qualitative measures required to understand impact?</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>Ability to meaningfully understand and report on client impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many clients are participating in the program</li> <li>• How well is the service meeting the needs of clients? (Client satisfaction at minimum, should consider cultural responsiveness and lived experience feedback)</li> <li>• Are clients better off through participation in the program/service/initiative?</li> <li>• Importance of 'story behind the data' and developing this capacity as part of reporting.</li> </ul>	

## Aligned to outcomes > Step 3 > Outcome indicators

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Is there capacity to report beyond individual client outcomes to capture broader social impact?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Ability to meaningfully understand and report on broader impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an opportunity to consider whether a program does or can undertake broader outcome measurement, for example: Does the program also benefit families, is there group participation, volunteering benefits, community forums that impact people beyond clients.</li> <li>• Can also lead to better understanding of whether the program seeks to impact fewer individuals on deeper basis (through case management for example) or a wider number of people through broader or more episodic engagement.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.4</b>	<b>What are the system objectives needed to best support individuals and families to achieve client level outcomes?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Clarity about how the system of providers/others need to best work, to achieve client and wider outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of understanding of how the program/service/initiative needs to work within a broader system whether that be a program, funding portfolio or across a particular region.</li> <li>• Opportunity to develop awareness of department objectives and establish/or confirm system-wide outcomes to align both sector and department funding objectives.</li> </ul>	<b>Non-rated</b>

# Step 4 Evidence-informed

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
4.1	Is the program/service/ initiative being delivered in an identified area of persistent disadvantage?	<p><b>Aim: Resourcing is directed to where it is most needed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will require DHS provision of data to provider to enable discussion of population indicators, regional data and SEIFA ratings etc and alignment with service provision</li> <li>• Reflection on to what extent services go to where target cohorts either live or congregate (i.e. services go to where clients are located, rather than client required to go to where the service is located)</li> <li>• Consideration of particular issues of disadvantage in regional areas, including isolation and thin service markets.</li> </ul>	
4.2	How do you know what is needed by your clients in the local community and what evidence do you gather to support this?	<p><b>Aim: Funders and providers are connected to local needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies, community member testimonials, evidence of engagement with community members, clients and cultural leaders and their contribution to program design, evidence of Aboriginal-led processes to identify needs for Aboriginal people</li> <li>• Any evidence of service improvement based on changing client and community needs/gap analysis and feedback</li> <li>• Indigenous Knowledge Systems considered as evidence and to inform programs</li> <li>• Consideration of environmental impacts of any program or service</li> <li>• Differential data sources and needs in regional areas.</li> </ul>	

## Designed for impact > Step 4 > Evidence-informed

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>4.3</b>	<b>What are some ways in which research on client risk factors and innovative best practice interventions have been considered?</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>Research and best practice are informing the proposed approach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for two-way sharing and increase understanding of provider innovations and for the department to share any research and proven interventions, i.e. Common Elements service provision for children and families as relevant.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.4</b>	<b>How are people with lived experience involved in design and delivery of services?</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>Intended beneficiaries are informing design, delivery and evaluation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms to seek input from clients of diverse backgrounds that the service directly addresses their needs</li> <li>• Use of peer support approaches.</li> </ul>	

# Step 5 People-centred approaches

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
5.1	Which program-type classification best captures the services delivered in this program/initiative?	<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>Allow whole of investment overview (by program type) for funders and providers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service-type Classification: Prevention/early intervention, crisis or emergency relief, intensive case management, broader group or cohort support, community capacity.</li> </ul>	
5.2	How is the client's voice valued and their strengths, capabilities and agency supported?	<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>Approaches seek to build client agency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of involvement of target client groups in designing, delivering and evaluating service support, i.e., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, CALD communities, disability, LGBTIAQ+</li> <li>• Recognition of the history, wisdom, sensitivities and strengths of different cultural communities and the diverse voices, knowledge and experiences within each cultural or social grouping.</li> <li>• Ongoing mechanisms to gain client input on program gaps and improvements</li> <li>• Strengths-based philosophies and recognition of self-determination.</li> </ul>	

## Designed for impact > Step 5 > People-centred approaches

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
5.3	<b>In what ways is the familial context recognised and individual needs responded to?</b>	<p><b>Aim: <i>The potential impact of family context is reflected</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of trauma-informed care approaches</li> <li>• Capacity to understand family context, in particular cultural familial relationships and impact on individual support</li> <li>• Application of Common Elements in service provision for families and children.</li> </ul>	
5.4	<b>How is cultural respect demonstrated and cultural responsiveness prioritised, with particular regard to Aboriginal communities, individuals and families?</b>	<p><b>Aim: <i>The initiative is best placed to make positive change with Aboriginal people</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established relationships with Aboriginal groups or ACCOs</li> <li>• Awareness and/or adoption of DHS Aboriginal System Design Criteria and Co-Design principles</li> <li>• Appropriate training provided e.g. Cultural Awareness training</li> <li>• Clear commitment to reconciliation e.g. via Reconciliation Action Plan</li> <li>• Demonstrate willingness and capability to support Aboriginal-led initiatives and programs and self-determination of Aboriginal people, to foster cultural safety, deeply listen, learn and seek guidance on best ways of working, to practice cultural humility and respect, and challenge systemic racism and white privilege at individual and organisational levels.</li> </ul>	

# Step 6 Systemised alliances

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
6.1	<b>If your program/service/initiative had to meet all Social Impact Objectives for your clients, would you be able to identify other providers to partner with?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Active partnerships with other key supporting providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of potential to build alliances across Social Impact Objectives</li> <li>• Knowledge of gaps and related programs/providers who may meet additional Objectives</li> <li>• Two-way transparent provision of information: DHS to provide information on other department funded programs to encourage collaboration and connection (can new partnerships be created across investment to support other Social Impact Objectives?).</li> </ul>	
6.2	<b>What other state or federal government resources or funded-programs do you connect with?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Other key complementary programs and resources are utilised</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated awareness and connections with other state or federal government programs/resourcing</li> <li>• Opportunity for department to highlight other state government department programs that may be complementary/share similar outcomes/deliver same program but different geographical area</li> <li>• Relationships with local councils.</li> </ul>	

## Designed for impact > Step 6 > Systemised alliances

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Are there other local organisations or services you work with that can connect your clients into communities in their area?</b>	<p><b>Aim: <i>Specific local community assets and resources are utilised</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated use of existing place-based networks and assets</li> <li>• Connection of clients into community centres, local library groups or council-run groups to encourage sustainable outcomes</li> <li>• Collaboration with children’s centres, local schools, health services.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.4</b>	<b>What established referral pathways do you have in place for clients to assist them with transitioning to complementary support or beyond your service?</b>	<p><b>Aim: <i>Recognition supporting provider roles, and effective, simple links for clients with them</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong Referral relationships for continuum of care</li> <li>• Consider whether provider has established referral pathways beyond their nominated Service-type classification (as identified in 5.1).</li> </ul>	

# Step 7 Shared accountability

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
7.1	Is there willingness to agree to principles of shared accountability with the department/ Government?	<p><b>Aim: Practical and agreed understanding of how shared accountability will occur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS/Sector Shared Accountability Agreement</li> <li>• Sharing of data for systems and service improvements</li> <li>• DHS Organisational Requirements and Standard Contract Conditions</li> <li>• Child Safe Environments (in accordance with Section 114 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017).</li> </ul>	
7.2	Is there an identified manager responsible for program management and reporting and what training have they received to attain the requisite competencies?	<p><b>Aim: Clear and adequate agency management of the program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May consider expected qualification levels and overall workforce capacity within resources</li> <li>• Opportunity to identify any further training that may be required</li> <li>• May highlight systems change potential or sharing of resources across small providers.</li> </ul>	
7.3	What are other state or federal government funded programs complement, or potentially duplicate, services provided?	<p><b>Aim: Consider programs that could potentially be better utilised, and possible DHS role in this</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on response to 6.2 on existing awareness and connections with other government programs and agencies</li> <li>• DHS Identify with provider other Government agencies that could support the program</li> <li>• Consider whether there is any duplication with other funded programs and if re-alignment or program modification is required.</li> </ul>	

## Designed for impact > Step 7 > Shared accountability

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>7.4</b>	<b>How do you gauge efficiency in use of resourcing and meet contracted expectations/ current outcomes within existing resources?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Shared understanding of best use of available resources (directly funded and indirectly available)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost efficiency: consider unit cost for service as a guide</li> <li>• Consideration of existing provider resources and potential for leveraging</li> <li>• Potential for shared resourcing or consolidation of contracts across programs to support economies of scale and stronger infrastructure</li> <li>• Identification of any other resourcing that may increase the potential impact of department program funding or complementary government funds.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.5</b>	<b>What support is needed from DHS to meet contracted requirements and a shared accountability agreement?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Clear agreement of how DHS and agencies will best support each other into the future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity for the provider to identify any information or support needed from the department to meet shared accountability i.e., assistance with applying for ASES, understanding of data sharing and privacy conditions, contractual expectations etc.</li> </ul>	<b>Non-rated</b>

# Step 8 Relationship-based

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
8.1	How well are program barriers and potential risks managed by this program/service/initiative?	<p><b>Aim: Consideration of how to best overcome potential negatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of capacity to identify potential limitations, unintended consequences and develop risk mitigation strategies</li> <li>• Understanding of potential barriers to program meeting its Social impact Objectives and willingness to innovate to overcome.</li> <li>• Opportunity for providers to inform the department about the conditions under which work is happening in the sector and current barriers and strengths.</li> </ul>	
8.2	What do you consider you do that is innovative and best practice to improve access to quality services and respond to emerging and changing needs?	<p><b>Aim: Identify innovations that can be promoted and potentially applied more widely</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of best practice: capacity to initiate innovative approaches to strengthen services and responsiveness, e.g., involvement of new partners beyond immediate sector, seize emerging opportunities to better integrate services, adapting to the local conditions and client needs, involving client voice, expanding scope, depth or sustainability of social impact</li> <li>• Opportunity for department to identify examples of leading practice to promote and share across sector through communities of practice.</li> </ul>	

## Designed for impact > Step 8 > Relationship-based

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>8.3</b>	<b>What is the status of current relationships between the provider and department and potential for ongoing communication?</b>	<p><b>Aim: <i>Communication channels for open and constructive improvement</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of openness and willingness to build relationships</li> <li>• Identifying best methods of communication, any concerns and expectations (frequency of contact and mode), suggested steps for improvements</li> <li>• Opportunity for department to identify primary contacts and build trust.</li> </ul>	
<b>8.4</b>	<b>What do you need from DHS to help build strong relationships, openness and trust?</b>	<p><b>Aim: <i>Solution focussed relationship</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity for the provider to identify how the department can support them in jointly creating a culture where innovation and openness to possible failure is supported.</li> </ul>	<b>Non-rated</b>

# Step 9 Capacity for improvement

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Has the provider of the program/service/initiative achieved ASES or equivalent standard and have a plan for continuous improvement?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Quality/similar framework assists with provider capability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation in Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) or other approved whole-of-organisation quality management accreditation</li> <li>• Workforce development strategy/skills matrix.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.2</b>	<b>What reporting systems are used and is there capability to utilise and analyse data?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Data/reporting systems are both adequate and complimentary to DHSs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity for DHS to better understand the diversity of reporting systems used, their capabilities and limitations</li> <li>• Demonstration of data capability and need for further training if required.</li> </ul>	

## Designed for impact > Step 9 > Capacity for improvement

	Assessment questions	Supporting information	Rating
<b>9.3</b>	<b>What evaluation framework has been put in place to review progress and strengthen service provision?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Clear, agreed and effective evaluation framework in place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation on evaluative framework and process</li> <li>• Refer to ASES continuous improvement processes as a guide.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.4</b>	<b>What support is required from DHS, other providers or from sector leaders in terms of capacity building?</b>	<p><b>Aim: Consideration of how to best build provider capacity and capability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity for providers to identify any areas where capacity building is needed, for example, in supporting data collation, evaluation, reporting, governance or other organisational operations</li> <li>• Enable DHS to identify capacity areas that are common across a program or the sector more broadly and to seek the agreement of providers on what support (and from whom) would be appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>Non-rated</b>

## Contact us

 DHS.SocialInclusion@sa.gov.au

 (08) 8415 4383

 dhs.sa.gov.au

## Social media

   /HumanServicesSA

## Feedback

DHS Client Feedback

 GPO Box 292 Adelaide SA 5001

 DHS.clientfeedbackandcomplaints@sa.gov.au

## Alternative formats

The information in this publication can be provided in an alternative format or another language on request by calling (08) 8415 4383.

January 2022 | DHS-1436

Kylie Heneker  
Ian Goodwin-Smith