Benefits identification, definition and planning

Identifying and defining benefits and working with stakeholders.

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Benefits are identified early

The process of benefits management should start early. Benefits should be identified at the beginning of the project, before the submission of a business case. They should therefore form part of the investment case. The business case should include details of **how benefits will be tracked and realised**.

For this reason, change projects should only be approved once benefits have been identified. Without this in place, it is not possible to assess a return on investment.

Disbenefits

A disbenefit is a measurable negative consequence that is expected to result from implementing a change. It is an accepted and anticipated downside of the change, incurred to achieve the overall benefits and objectives. Examples include costs in time, money or disruption to business. Disbenefits should also be identified before the business case is created and should be measured alongside potential benefits.

Estimating and tracking the cost of a disbenefit allows:

- decision makers to decide if the change represents value for money
- the policing sector to make the case for investment to offset the disbenefit

Stakeholders are engaged and co-create

Engaging stakeholders is crucial. Engagement ensures that benefits are realistic and meet the needs of those they are directed towards. It also helps to ensure buy-in and can help with identifying hidden risks and disbenefits.

Examples of stakeholders include:

- frontline users
- delivery partners
- other public-sector organisations
- the public, including community representatives
- senior leaders
- analysts
- partner agencies

Stakeholders should be involved from the start of the initiative. Forces are likely to have a wide range of stakeholders with a breadth of experiences, backgrounds and expertise. It is important to consider tailoring communication styles and messages to these different audiences.

Where appropriate, stakeholder input should inform design. Stakeholders may also be involved in the ongoing **tracking and delivery of benefits**, with accountabilities assigned where appropriate. As well as engaging stakeholders at the outset, it is important to establish regular forums for updates and feedback on benefit progress.

Stakeholder engagement is about co-creation, accountability and continuous communication. Stakeholders will be more likely to support and champion benefits if they helped to define, measure and own them.

Benefits are clearly defined

Operational or organisational change projects should only be approved once the objectives and anticipated benefits have been identified.

The beneficiary of each benefit should be identified. In policing, these are typically:

- the public (for example, where the benefit is improved quality or output of service)
- the organisation (for example, meeting statutory or compliance objectives)
- the workforce (for example, where the benefit is to improve staff wellbeing)
- partners (for example, where the benefit is to a partner agency, such as improved data sharing)

Where the beneficiary is not the public, attempts should be made to identify how the change will result in a measurable benefit to the public.

Sometimes there may be several links in a chain where benefits are interrelated. For example, a quality benefit, such as achieving compliance, may lead to improved service quality, which is then a public benefit.

In line with **The Green Book**, all objectives and benefits identified should be:

- specific – about what you want to achieve
- **measurable**
- achievable – realistic targets are set
- relevant – aligned to strategy
- time-bound – deadlines underpin success

A benefit must be measurable. If it cannot be measured, it cannot be demonstrated, tracked or evidenced, and therefore should not be defined as a benefit.

Tags

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