



Communications Guidance for Evaluation and Research Contracts

Introduction

This guide is to help you produce reports relating to research and evaluation contracts delivered on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund.

This includes specific guidance on:

- using the Big Lottery Fund's name, branding and logos
- transparency of data
- style, layout and accessibility.

There's also information about:

- using graphics and illustrations
- using digital and social media
- how to structure reports (including commonly-used headings).

If you have any queries about guidance or any subjects not covered below, please contact your contract manager at the Big Lottery Fund.

Communication and dissemination strategy

A clear and appropriate communication and dissemination plan must be in place for all research/evaluation work commissioned by Big Lottery Fund (henceforth, 'the Fund'). The communication and dissemination plan must be agreed by your contract manager at the Fund.

The communication and dissemination plan will be discussed as part of the inception process however it must remain flexible and should be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Fund does not require a specific structure or format for this plan but we would expect it to cover the following information:

- a list of appropriate target audiences and stakeholders for the evaluation/research
- key findings and learning, targeted for appropriate audiences
- a list of channels that will be used to communicate key findings and learning
- actual and potential possibilities for presenting findings to audiences (press, conferences, roundtables, service provider organisations)
- a list of people who have received similar reports or materials relating to reports in the past
- a timeline for when the activity will take place
- early identification and notice of opportunities for the Fund or partners to support or be involved in.

We require a minimum of two weeks to complete our review of your communication and dissemination plan and to provide feedback. At this point we will also confirm specific timescales you need to consider for your communication and dissemination activities. For example, we ask that you allow two working days for us to review and approve a press release.

Branding and logos

On all communications (print and online) relevant to the evaluation/research, please use the agreed lock-up logo ([provided by the Fund](#)). This includes reports, case studies and websites.

The following copyright should be on the inside page:

This report was researched and written for Big Lottery Fund by xxxxx. The authors of the report are xxxx xxx, xxxx, and xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Copyright: Big Lottery Fund 20xx

Published by:

Big Lottery Fund, 1 Plough Place,
London, EC4A 1DE

Tel: 020 7211 1800

Fax: 020 7211 1750

Use of material in this report must be appropriately acknowledged.

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Reports and publications

Requirements and considerations

All evaluation/research reports must have a clear purpose, structure and target audience. This must be agreed with your contract manager at the Fund before work commences.

The Fund is keen to remain open to innovative ways to present information. We acknowledge that it is important to retain a degree of flexibility around the use of specific headings in reports as these will largely depend upon the purpose and type of report being written.

However, when creating an evaluation or research report, authors should at least consider the appropriateness of the following commonly-used headings:

- contents
- an executive summary (no more than five pages)
 - should include evaluation/research aim and purpose
 - context
- introduction
- methodology
- background and context
- findings supported by robust evidence
- recommendations (practical, specific, actionable)
- lessons learned
- conclusions.

We expect evaluation/research reports to be no more than 50 pages long. Please use an appendix for any further information. If you have any concerns around exceeding 50 pages, please discuss this with your contract manager at the Fund.

Audience

Evaluation/research reports should be written for the audience set out in the specification or in agreement with your contract manager at the Fund. It should be clear why findings presented are interesting, relevant and useful to the agreed target audience.

Style, layout and accessibility

Evaluation/research reports should be as accessible and clear as possible. We recommend that reports:

- use a type size no smaller than 11pt
- make use of section headings and page references to aid clarity
- keep text left justified with a ragged right margin
- use a font that is easy to read
- use a font colour that provides good contrast with the background
- use plain English
- avoid jargon and technical language wherever possible. Industry abbreviations should always be written out in full in the first instance
- produce a supporting glossary if technical language is unavoidable
- use short, clear sentences wherever possible
- use the active voice
- make appropriate use of graphics and illustrations
- aim to be selective in the information presented
- use box outs for key points or stand-alone information in order to break up pages for visual appeal
- include stand-alone summaries where appropriate
- consider the need for different summaries for different audience types
- include case-studies to reflect people's experiences where appropriate.

Style, layout and accessibility (continued)

All evaluation/research reports must take into account the Fund's requirements relating to Welsh language translation. If you are unsure whether this applies to your report please contact your contract manager at the Fund.

Our name

Please refer to us as 'Big Lottery Fund' in full, in the first instance. Thereafter please use 'the Fund'. Do not use BLF, BIG, 'the Lottery', 'Big Lottery' or any other alternative.

Quotes

Use appropriate quotes to highlight or support points made in the document. Do not use an excessive number of quotes. Please ensure that if you are using quotes they are presented in a consistent format throughout your document. Highlighting key quotes can be eye-catching and add appeal to a report but this is usually best done sparingly for effect.

Graphics

If you have created graphs, charts or other graphics/images as part of the report, please also supply them as separate individual jpeg files so that we can use them on our website and social media if appropriate.

Data requirements

The Fund plans to publish evaluation and research data as part of its commitment to open data. To this end, all evaluation/research should be transparent about its data and methods. All grant data and related information used in research and evaluation must be shared with the Fund via your contract manager.

In addition, suitably anonymised original data and all computer code needed to prepare and perform an analysis should be provided in an electronically accessible form so that we can share it with others who seek to understand, replicate and/or further extend the research.

Digital media

Evaluation/research must meet our digital media guidelines and recommendations to ensure they align with our digital and e-learning strategies.

Online resources will need to be accessible to at least W3C WAI WCAG 2.0 AA standard. For details see Big Lottery Fund's consolidated accessibility guidelines at:

projects.webcredible.co.uk/guidelines/blf

Websites should be designed with mobile devices in mind and must reflect the Fund's commitment to using plain English across all communications channels.

Media and public relations

All media releases and media briefing materials issued must appropriately acknowledge the Fund. This includes standard text (see below) which should be included as a 'Note to Editors' and should include contact details for the Fund's press office, general enquiries and website.

Draft press releases for media events, announcements or publications related to evaluation/research must be shared as early as possible to avoid clashes with media work being carried out by the Fund and to ensure adequate support can be provided.

Significant media coverage should be shared with the Fund so it can be circulated to colleagues and where appropriate, promoted through social media and other channels.

We expect the following to be included in all releases:

Notes to Editors

Big Lottery Fund

- Big Lottery Fund supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. It is responsible for giving out 40 per cent of the money raised by the National Lottery for good causes and invests more than £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes.
- Since June 2004 it has awarded more than £8 billion to projects that make a difference to people and communities in need, from early years intervention to commemorative travel funding for World War Two veterans.

Website: biglotteryfund.org.uk

Twitter: [@biglotteryfund](https://twitter.com/biglotteryfund)
#BigLottery

Facebook: facebook.com/BigLotteryFund

For funding and general enquiries call:
Advice Line: 0345 4 10 20 30

For press enquiries call:
Press Office: 020 7211 1888
Out of hours media contact: 07867 500572

Social media

The Fund promotes and shares news and stories about our work on a range of social media channels. Communication and dissemination plans for evaluation/research should consider creating stories, blogs, case studies, films and other content that can be promoted externally via social media.

Any materials being produced by evaluation/research should be considered for promotion via the Fund's existing channels in order to broaden the audience and ensure consistency of message.

Please use the handle [@biglotteryfund](https://twitter.com/biglotteryfund) or the hashtag #BigLottery when mentioning Big Lottery Fund on social media, to make it as easy as possible to track and share content.

Communication and dissemination plans should consider the use of other hashtags for engaging in wider discussion around specific subjects, for example #socinv and #socent are social investment and social enterprise.

If you have any questions about the Fund's hashtags for specific themes, please discuss this with your contract manager.

The Fund's Facebook page is facebook.com/BigLotteryFund

We also have a blog at <http://bigblog.org.uk> where we share stories from organisations we fund, beneficiaries and volunteers.

All materials for external audiences should be produced in plain English to ensure they are as accessible as possible.

Public affairs

The Fund aims to ensure clear, consistent and coordinated communications with MPs, local authorities and other political opinion formers that avoid duplication or contradiction.

If you are planning to undertake any significant stakeholder work or need any advice or guidance please highlight this to your contract manager at the Fund.

Any queries regarding the communications activity outlined in this document should be directed to your Big Lottery Fund contract manager.