

User Guidance

Edition 7

October 2025

Welcome to your Impact Evaluation Standard supporting guidance

This document is intended to help you apply the Impact Evaluation Standard (IES) framework of metrics (outcomes) and proxy values to the recording, valuing and reporting of social value.

It supports and supplements any other guidance issued:

- Within your Thrive platform
- In the supporting metric spreadsheet

We are looking forward to seeing the social impact your organisation is delivering.

The Impact Evaluation Standard team

What is social value?



There is no one overarching definition of social value.

[The Institute for Social Value](#) outlines that 'social value measurement tries to understand and record the relative importance we place on the wellbeing changes we experience. It helps to inform better decision-making to increase positive change and decrease the negative.' Examples of social value might be the value we experience from increasing our confidence, or from living next to a community park. These things are important to us but are not commonly expressed or measured in the same way that financial value is.

From a public procurement perspective, within the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 the UK government describes how spending from the public purse '*might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area*'.

So, broadly, social value is a 'catch-all' term used to describe **the positive difference an organisation or project can make to communities or society, within the broad categories of social, economic and environmental change.**

The goal is to meet current needs with an aim of improving the quality of life for future generations.

What is the Impact Evaluation Standard?

The Impact Evaluation Standard is a framework that enables you to bring consistency and additional rigor to your reporting and auditing of social value for individual projects or your entire organisation. It encompasses economic improvement, sustainability and community benefit aspects.

The framework is led by a steering committee of industry experts alongside other specialist working groups. Together they create one of the most robust, consistent, up-to-date and forward-looking social value measurement methodologies available.

The framework can assist organisations in the completion of a social value calculation by:

- providing a comprehensive and standardised list of metrics as a guide to typical social value outputs (measures of the activities undertaken) and outcomes (the longer-term benefits and/or changes for beneficiaries)
- acting as a prompt to help steer what resources (inputs) and activities might be required to achieve those outputs and outcomes
- where possible or relevant, providing financial proxy values for either the economic benefit of those outcomes or the forecast social value of those outcomes

An overview of the metrics and proxy values included in the Impact Evaluation Standard is provided below.

Impact Areas and Metric Groups

With suppliers now obliged to measure and report on new social value commitments under one model and older ones under another, the Impact Evaluation Standard has been restructured to incorporate both PPN 002 and PPN 06/20, without being exclusively tied to either.

- It is now structured around 15 **Impact Areas** – Arranging the metrics around clear, everyday categories of impact (e.g. Employment Opportunities), rather than using specialised or model-specific terminology
- Underneath each Impact Area is a series of **Metric Groups** – Intuitive subcategories where related metrics can sit together, and – where appropriate – roll up into single social value totals (e.g. Creating Jobs (FTE))
- At the bottom of the hierarchy, sit individual **Metrics** (e.g. IM19 – *Number of LOCAL full time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities created*)

While the Impact Area breakdown provides the platform's default view, users can switch between this and the PPN 002 and PPN 06/20 reporting models, between and even within projects.

Proxy Values

Many metrics have been given proxy values – indicative financial values of social impact and economic benefit that provide an additional way to quantify social value, compare outcomes between projects or organisations and evidence impact to society.

Most social value calculators include proxy values and while there is no single definitive source of these values, it is important that a consistent methodology is adopted in the derivation of the values. Having a consistent set of metrics and proxies that all relate to each other provides significant reporting and credibility advantages compared to blending metrics and proxies from many different frameworks or sources. Thus, the Impact Evaluation Standard allows you to report more robustly and credibly.

The derivation of proxy values for the Impact Evaluation Standard follows the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) methodology recommended within the UK HM Treasury Green Book guidance.

CBA estimates the benefits and costs of a project by how it affects the wellbeing of individuals in society, and it measures this in monetary terms. The monetary values are estimated in such a way that they represent changes in people's quality of life. CBA is currently the internationally endorsed best practice method.

Social value is captured through the positive and negative quality of life impacts of a project for all stakeholders, including:

- individuals and communities
- government/taxpayer
- businesses

Environmental impacts are captured through their impact on people's quality of life.

To further analyse the impact on quality of life, we use the established Wellbeing Year (WELLBY) calculation (which is informed by the Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALY)); as endorsed in the [HM Treasury Green Book Wellbeing Guidance](#).

The increase (or decrease) in health and wellbeing can be quantified in terms of health outcomes and measured using the subset of WELLBY methodologies.

WELLBY is a measure of disease burden, including both the quality and the quantity of life lived. One WELLBY equates to one year in perfect health and happiness.

The proxy values in the Impact Evaluation Standard are UK-specific. They have been derived by a consortium of social value experts using industry best practice and are drawn from different sources and studies. For instance:

- primary sources – the most preferable – are government policies, studies or research such as data collated and published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- secondary sources are university or thinktank studies
- tertiary sources – used where no studies exist – are created via independent research undertaken by Thrive, the Impact Evaluation Standard steering committee, or independent consultants

Some examples of how to communicate what the Impact Evaluation Standard is to your clients, partners or workforce

“The Impact Evaluation Standard is a proprietary framework designed to help UK organisations consistently measure and value their social value activities.”

“The framework is a collection of 149 metrics and supporting guidance that has been developed by industry experts in accordance with the UK government’s Green Book Guidance. It incorporates and expands upon both versions of the UK government’s Social Value Model PPN 002 and PPN 06/20.

The framework includes a range of custom proxy values that allow organisations to convert the social impact they are creating into an indicative financial value.

Collectively the metrics, proxy values and guidance provide a transparent, consistent and auditable model for tracking and valuing many business activities.”

For more information refer to:

www.thrive-platform.com/impact-evaluation-standard/



New changes for October 2025

If you are new to the Impact Evaluation Standard, you may wish to skip this section.

If you are an experienced user, you might find the following summary of changes for the October 2025 Impact Evaluation Standard useful.

Key updates include:

2025 has been a landmark year for the Impact Evaluation Standard (IES), seeing more development, improvement, and enhancement than ever before.

In April, our 2025.1 release (covered in Edition 6) presented a number of significant updates to proxy methodology and evidence guidance, as well as improvements and additions to our metrics.

But the publication in February of PPN 002 and a brand-new Social Value Model – mandatory for new central government procurement processes from October 1 – made a more extensive update necessary.

The Impact Evaluation Standard 2025.2 (covered in this Edition 7 guidance) is the culmination of that work – incorporating the new PPN 002 Standard Reporting Metrics in parallel with and interoperable alongside the PPN06/20 rules that will continue to govern existing contracts for many years to come.

Structure

Moving on from direct mapping of metrics onto PPN06/20's Social Value Model Themes, the Impact Evaluation Standard 2025.2 presents:

- 15 Impact Areas – Arranging the metrics around clear, everyday categories of impact (e.g. Employment Opportunities), rather than using specialised or model-specific terminology
- Underneath each Impact Area is a series of **Metric Groups** – Intuitive subcategories where related metrics can sit together, and – where appropriate – roll up into single social value totals (e.g. Creating Jobs (FTE))

→ At the bottom of the hierarchy, sit individual **Metrics** (e.g. IM19 – *Number of LOCAL full time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities created*)

New Metrics

In order to incorporate the new Social Value Model, the Impact Evaluation Standard 2025.2 has added 36 new metrics (9 of which feature full proxy values). Combined with the existing metrics, this new cohort ensures continued point-for-point incorporation of government Social Value Models along with extensive flexibility.



Correct application of the Impact Evaluation Standard

Application

The Impact Evaluation Standard has been designed to be a transparent and accessible framework for organisations wishing to:

- uncover where they are already delivering social value across their organisation and supply chain
- re-align their social value strategy to focus on new areas of social value delivery
- report consistently on social value delivery to various internal and external stakeholders
- make social value tender submissions for new work
- report on public contract social value delivery as required by PPN 002 and PPN 06/20 Social Value Models

Many users choose to use the framework as an overall guide to what can be collected and reported but focus on a subset of metrics that are most relevant to their project or organisation.

A significant benefit of using the Impact Evaluation Standard is the consistency and rigor it brings to your social value reporting. It should be recognised that the application of the Impact Evaluation Standard provides a transparent indication of your social value but that it may also be possible to complete a more detailed and bespoke assessment of social value for an individual project or organisation.

More details on bespoke social value consultancy services, provided by Thrive, can be found [here](#).

Quantitative and Qualitative

Comprehensive social value reporting will include both quantitative aspects (e.g., reporting on the number of new jobs created or reporting the indicative financial value of carbon emissions reduction) supported by qualitative aspects (e.g., the narrative around why and what you did) as well as providing supporting evidence of this work such as case studies, employment records etc.

It is important therefore to retain and record the qualitative aspects to give context and supporting evidence to the quantifiable aspects reported using the Impact Evaluation Standard.

Some organisations who are early in their social value journey can put a great deal of focus on chasing 'big numbers'; especially when appraising the Social Return on Investment generated by an activity. However, our experience has shown that often the greatest impacts and the most compelling stories about real changes in people's lives do not always come from focusing on the big numbers alone, but from a varied range of metrics and thematic areas, which holistically address the challenges and needs of the communities in which you operate.

Understanding what local means in relation to specific metrics

The definition of local should be decided in consultation with the needs of the client or your business.

The definition of local should be decided using the following hierarchy:

1. Determined in consultation with the client, your organisation, and the residential community.
2. If no definition is provided, use the local authority boundary or district.
3. If the local authority boundary is unsuitable, a bespoke definition may be used, provided it is documented and justified.

For additional information please see below:

If no definition of local is provided by the client, then, in most cases, the local authority boundary should be used to inform the definition. [The UK government's postcode checker](#) can be used to determine the local authority of a specific postcode.

In some circumstances it may not be fit for purpose to use the local authority boundary. This may be due to a project or business activities spanning two or more local authority areas or a business' activities bearing no relation to a specific local authority.

In these circumstances, and with evidenced rationale to inform the decision, local can range from anywhere between 5 – 40 miles, often depending on the population density of the surrounding environment.

Where a definition of local is not stipulated by the client, where the local authority boundary is not fit for purpose or where the local population density is not considered, you can use a default 30-mile range.

It is important to remember that consideration should be given to where the activity was delivered and/or where the benefit occurs. For example, on a construction project where money is being spent with local MSME suppliers, those suppliers must be located within the defined area. For new local jobs created, the people hired into those jobs must live within the specified area.

Data collection, auditing and assurance

The Impact Evaluation Standard is built-in to the [Thrive software platform](#), which is accessible for easy data collection, storage, audit and reporting. As a minimum, we would recommend that you put in place good internal communications around the collection of social value data.

A core consideration to the use of the Impact Evaluation Standard is the quantity and quality of data being collected and entered. This is key to getting the most out of the framework and most organisations experience some degree of challenge around this.

When reporting social value results from the Impact Evaluation Standard, you have a duty to tell the client whether the figures you have provided have been audited or not and the type of audit completed.

Examples include:

- unaudited – figures and evidence have been entered by individual employees but have not been checked by anyone else
- internally audited – figures and evidence have been checked by one or more employees acting as a social value reviewer
- externally audited by an approved Impact Evaluation Standard assessor – figures and evidence have been checked by a third-party auditor, who is approved by the Impact Evaluation Standard. More information on auditing support [can be found here](#). When an external audit is completed, details of the audit should be provided, for example; was the audit a 'dip test', a relevant 'sample size', or a complete audit of all records.
- To minimise complications due to GDPR, when storing evidence for the Impact Evaluation Standard metrics it is recommended that you avoid storing directly Personally Identifiable Information (PII). For example, instead of storing new employee names, store an employee ID number or other reference that, if required and with permission, can be traced back to the employee as part of an audit trail.

Evidence and internally auditing your social value claims

In the supporting metric spreadsheet, the 2025.2 Evidence Guidance column outlines the evidence required to substantiate a claim.

If mandatory evidence is not practical, IES customers are empowered to use their professional judgment to determine whether alternative evidence can be provided that is equivalent and equal to the guidance outlined in the IES. The alternative evidence must demonstrate the action and outcome of the intervention, informed by the metric name and description.

Evidence, particularly including sensitive and/or personal information, may not be able to be uploaded directly onto the system. In this scenario the evidence must be available through a clear audit trail that can be used to substantiate the claim. E.g. to claim the number of local full-time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities created (IM19), an employee code can be uploaded to the system to demonstrate where the evidence is held securely by the organisation or by a third party. The evidence can then be accessed if the organisation is undertaking an audit.

Please see below for examples of the types of evidence required against two sample metrics. Comprehensive guidance on evidencing across all metrics can be found within your Thrive platform, as well as in the supplementary supporting spreadsheets provided.

Metric Code	Metric Name	2025.2 Evidence Guidance
IM18	Number of NON-LOCAL full time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities created	To substantiate your claim under this metric; the following GDPR-compliant evidence must be provided. 1. Evidence that the job you advertised was for a position intended to last at least 13 continuous weeks of employment. 2. Evidence of the individual's employment status prior to securing the job (e.g., a self-declaration from the new hire). 3. Evidence of start date and continued employment covering period of claim (i.e. HR report / payslip etc). 4. Anonymised employee data including unique identifier, postcode prefix and role. In addition to the mandatory evidence items, the reporting organisation may provide: a. Correspondence from supportive agencies, i.e. testimonials from supported organisations, photographic evidence of activity taking place, social media posts, press releases and/or press cuttings.

Metric Code	Metric Name	2025.2 Evidence Guidance
IM122	The number of contract opportunities awarded to NON-LOCAL businesses	To substantiate your claim under this metric; the following GDPR-compliant evidence must be provided. 1. Evidence of official award notice to supplier, Purchase order or Contract report (reports from procurement systems such as jaggaer, oracle, SAP are acceptable) This evidence must include: -Supplier details including postcode prefix -Date of Award -Scope of work 2. The date of award must be clearly stated and align with claim period *Note this metric applies to contract awards NOT payments 3. Confirmation of Local definition used for reporting purposes

Double counting – risks and opportunities

One of the fundamental principles of social value measurement is to ensure that you do not 'over claim'. In the Impact Evaluation Standard framework, there are a number of areas where your social value activities could fall into one or more metrics, for example...

activity logged against...

IM6 – Number of people hours spent by employees on volunteering schemes made available to the workforce specifically related to COVID-19 recovery

could easily also be logged against...

IM109A – Number of hours spent by employees on volunteering schemes

It is important to ensure that the same data is not input twice i.e., that you are not double counting. For your convenience, the Double Count Risk column in your metric spreadsheet highlights all of the areas where there could be a double counting risk.

The exception to the above is four specific areas where there is opportunity to double count the same data against more than one metric. For convenience these are described in the Double Count Opportunity column in the metric spreadsheet. This information has also been included in the 2025 Full Metric Description column.

Only claiming 'additionality'

Another important aspect of ensuring you don't over-claim social value is to make sure you only record activities that are 'above and beyond' what you are being paid to do. For instance,

- if you are being paid and obligated under the contract to ensure that 100% of waste is diverted from landfill, you cannot claim the social value generated by that because there is no additionality.
- If you are being paid and obligated under the contract to ensure that 90% of waste is diverted from landfill, you can claim the social value generated by any additional percentage of waste diverted above and beyond the contractual obligation of 90%, i.e. If you diverted 100% of waste from landfill you would claim an additional 10%.

Attribution, deadweight and displacement

A third aspect of not overclaiming and ensuring you are measuring the tangible additional impact of your interventions is to consider social value discounting.

Three of the principal concepts of social value discounting are:

- **Attribution** – *How much of the value can be attributed to your interventions alone?* For example, if 3 other organisations have equally supported the social value outcome (your organisation plus 2 others) then your organisation should only claim 33% of the total value (*also see note below in reference to attribution of Supply Chain Activities*).
- **Deadweight** – *How much value would have been generated without your interventions?* For example, would a person that you gave a job to have likely gone on to immediately find a job somewhere else? If so, the full value of that job should not be claimed by your organisation.
- **Displacement** – *How much value generated through your interventions in one location generates a reduction in value elsewhere?* For example, if the new employment you create in one locality is secured by individuals that were employed by other similar businesses in that same location, the value could be deemed as displaced, the NET value would be £0.

When claiming social value using the Impact Evaluation Standard users must consider these aspects and if they think they apply, adjust the amounts claimed and keep records to note where this is the case.

These are important aspects in social value reporting and consideration should be given to the appointment of external expertise and auditors to ensure that these principles have been appropriately considered and applied in the reporting of your social value data.

These aspects are also covered in the Impact Evaluation Standard training sessions provided.

Attribution of interventions made by your supply chain

When an intervention or activity is delivered/achieved by an indirect employee (i.e. an employee working on your project, product or service as part of your supply chain) then the attribution of value needs to be considered. If there is no other specific rationale in place on the project to calculate an informed level of attribution, **then a standard attribution discount of 50% of the total value generated should be applied in your reporting** to activities and interventions delivered by indirect employees.

If an organisation decides to include 100% of the value generated through their supply chain, then the IES suggests using the statement below in reports and communications:

“The social value shown in this report reflects the value enabled by [YOUR ORGANISATION NAME] and includes the value of all related interventions delivered throughout our supply chain.”

The value of upskilling people and giving your time

There are many metrics within the Impact Evaluation Standard that help measure the impact of training others or giving your time to help others. The principles of evaluating the social impact of these interventions are based upon the value that is received by the individual. So, within the framework, there are two distinct rationales...

Where the intervention is intended for small group support, to maintain effective learning, a maximum trainer-to-participant ratio of 1:20 applies. If exceeded, the recorded hours are adjusted accordingly. Several examples can be found below.

- A 4-hour session with 30 participants and 1 trainer exceeds the 1:20 ratio. Only 20 participants are counted, resulting in 80 people-hours (20×4).
- A 4-hour session with 36 participants and 2 trainers meets the 1:20 ratio. The full 144 people-hours are recorded (36×4).

Where the time provided represents more general volunteering where the value to the ultimate beneficiaries is unquantifiable or negligible at an individual level (e.g., if your team paints a community hall, or presents to a large school assembly), then within the Impact Evaluation Standard it is the volunteering hours provided by your employee that is recorded. For example, if 5 team members spent 4 hours each painting the community hall, the hours claimed would be 20 ($5 \text{ people} \times 4 \text{ hours each}$).

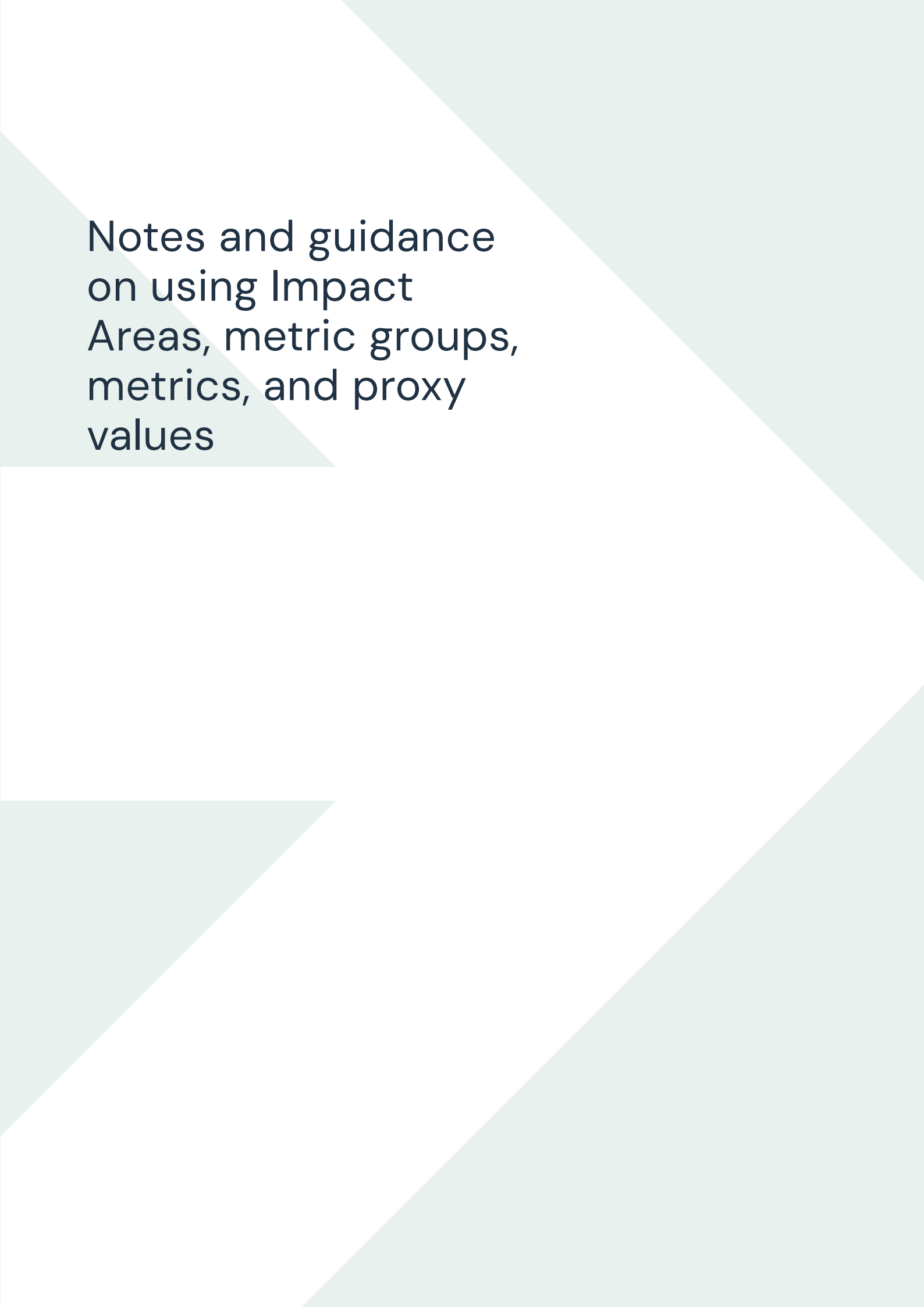
The rationale that applies for each specific metric is clearly stated in the guidance spreadsheet and within the Thrive platform for your convenience.

Other best practice hints and tips

When choosing metrics and proxies to use, do not be solely influenced by the value of the proxy. Consider both what is most impactful to the community where you are operating and the desires of the client, if one exists, for your delivery.

- Be timely, clear and consistent about inputting data – upload data regularly (e.g., monthly). Try to avoid retrospective reporting, or mass uploading of data as this can become inefficient and difficult to manage
- Appoint identified data managers across your organisation who are responsible, accountable, trained and supported to use the Impact Evaluation Standard
- Consider the quality of your data, rationale and evidence; your claims are only as robust as the quality of your data and supporting evidence/information
- Consider the legitimacy of your data and your claims. Can you confidently stand by and share your claims? Would they stand up to an external or independent verification?
- Have a Social Value Strategy and Implementation Plan that supports the transparent reporting of the social value generated by your organisation

This guidance is included in full metric descriptions when applicable for a specific metric.



Notes and guidance on using Impact Areas, metric groups, metrics, and proxy values

The Impact Evaluation Standard 2025.2 update reflects a significant shift in how metrics are organised, compared to earlier versions.

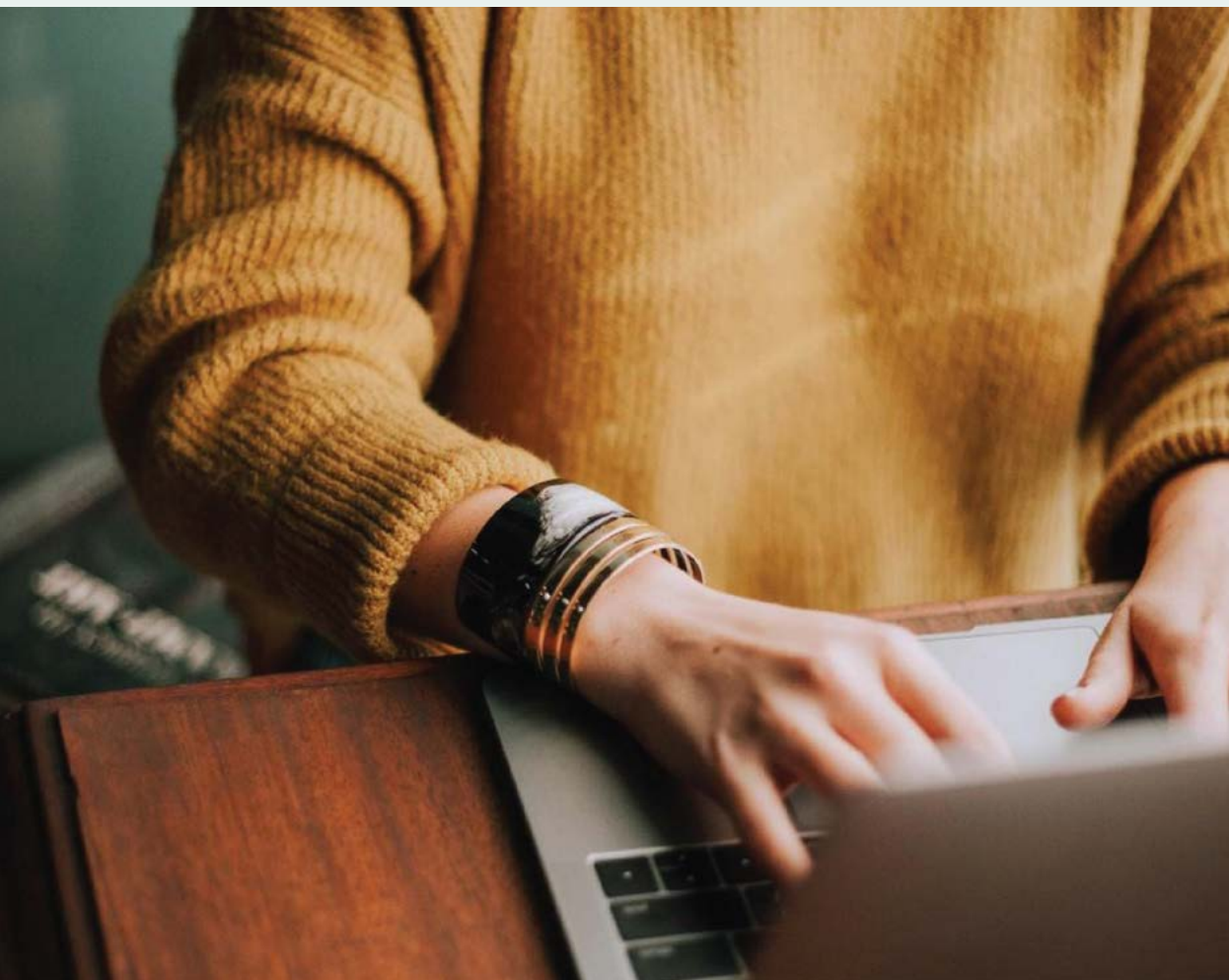
Previously, metrics were organised to map onto the Themes presented in the PPN 06/20 Social Value Model. With the PPN 002 Social Value Model and its Missions replacing PPN 06/20 for new procurement processes from October 1 2025, but PPN 06/20 remaining valid for older contracts, a new schema that incorporates both sets of rules simply and clearly is required.

In order to ensure that the Impact Evaluation Standard can be used equally for social value measurement and reporting in respect of contracts governed by both PPN 06/20 and PPN 002, the metrics are now organised by way of 15 **Impact Areas**. This also helps to focus attention on outcomes!

The Thrive platform allows you to switch between viewing the metrics grouped in line with different reporting models, such as PPN 06/20, PPN 002, UN SDGs, and the new Impact Evaluation Standard Impact Areas.

Within each Impact Area are:

- **Metric Groups** – which provide intuitive sub-categories within each Impact Area, where related metrics sit together and can “roll up” to combined totals, enabling you to aggregate the effects of different activities, while still having visibility over each in isolation



The Impact Areas and the Metric Groups they contain are shown below:

Employment Opportunities

- Creating Jobs (FTE)
- Creating Jobs (Headcount)
- Recruiting Inclusively (FTE)
- Recruiting Inclusively (Headcount)

Formal Training

- Creating Training Opportunities
- Retaining Training Opportunities
- Training Completions
- Training Weeks Completed
- Providing Equitable Training

Informal Training

- Supporting Staff Learning
- Supporting Prison Leavers

Pre-Employment & Educational Engagement

- Delivering Educational Engagement
- Delivering Employability Support

Supply Chain Resilience

- No. of Contract Awards (Local/NonLocal)
- £ of Contract Spend (Local/NonLocal) Diversifying
- Contract Awards (No.)
- Diversifying Contract Spend (£)
- Diversifying Spend Distribution (% of total spend)
- Building Capacity in the Supply Chain

Community Investment

- Donating to Communities
- Volunteering

Safe & Resilient Communities

- Delivering Domestic Abuse Learning Interventions

Placemaking

- Delivering Community Placemaking

Environmental Stewardship

- Protecting the Environment
- Enhancing Green Space & Biodiversity
- Reducing Carbon & Resource Use

Fair Work

- Improving Wage Standards
- Promoting Pay Equity
- Securing Fair & Flexible Work
- Accrediting Suppliers

Inclusive Workplaces

- Increasing Workforce Representation (Headcount)
- Increasing Workforce Representation (%)
- Increasing Workforce Representation (Benchmark)

Workforce Wellbeing

- Improving Employee Wellbeing (Participation)
- Improving Employee Wellbeing (Hours Invested)
- Raising Supplier Wellbeing Standards (%)
- Raising Supplier Wellbeing Standards (No.)

Human Rights & Modern Slavery

- Managing Modern Slavery Risk
- Delivering Modern Slavery Training
- Conducting Supplier Due Diligence

Digital Resilience & Innovation

- Achieving Cyber Certifications (No.)
- Achieving Cyber Certifications (%)
- Investing in Innovation & R&D

COVID-19 *

* Archived from supporting documentation, but available within the platform for selection/for legacy PPN 06/20 projects where this was a relevant consideration



www.thrive-platform.com/impact-evaluation-standard