

Local and Regional Programme 2008-11: Modernising Support Services Programme (Consortia Modernisation)

Stock Take

Contents:

1. Overview, Background and Context of Programme and Review

- 1.1 Background on Development of Programme
- 1.2 Phasing of Awards
- 1.3 Context and Methodology of Review
- 1.4 Shape of the programme – Key Facts

2. Trends and patterns

- 2.1 Priority theme
- 2.2 Reported Progress
- 2.3 Progress Vs Priority Theme selection
- 2.4 Progress Vs. No. of themes
- 2.5 Progress Vs Size of Award
- 2.6 Length of Project Vs Reported Progress
- 2.7 Progress Vs Region, and Priority Theme Vs Region

3. Common Delivery Themes

- 3.1. Specific keyword categories
 - 3.1.1 Collaboration
 - 3.1.2 Consortium development
 - 3.1.3 Procurement
 - 3.1.4 Equality and Diversity
 - 3.1.5 Governance
 - 3.1.6 Quality and Training

4. Further Interpretations and Evaluations

- 4.1 Impact and Programme Delivery
- 4.2 Project Design
- 4.3 Programme Design
- 4.4 Next Steps / Further Analysis

Appendix 1

1 Overview, Background and Context of Programme and Review

The Modernising Support Services Programme was conceived in 2007 as a series of 1, 2 and 3-year high quality projects to ‘help achieve significant transformation in the ways support services are planned, delivered and evaluated.’

At its core was the intention for these support services to:

- meet the changing needs and expectations of frontline organisations
- respond to changes in the policy and funding environment
- promote better use of available resources

Crucially, the projects were charged with an ambition to ‘achieve demonstrable gains in *efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability*’ of sector support services’

1.1 Background on Development of Programme

The Modernising Support Services Programme was launched as part of Capacitybuilders’ Local and Regional Programme for 2008-11 which is being delivered by ChangeUp consortia. In the past, consortia had been offered considerable discretion with regard to how they used funding and the types of projects they ran – as long as they fit within the broad themes of ChangeUp. Under the Modernising Support Services Programme, Capacitybuilders set narrower criteria for projects it would fund, with a particular focus on those that would deliver real and lasting change. See table below for further information on the seven Modernising Support Services Programme priority themes, as set out in ‘*Strategic change in local and regional third sector support*’ (February 2008)

Table 1.1.1 Modernising Support Services Programme Priority Themes

Priority Theme	Description
a) Collaboration	Greater efficiency among sector support providers through organisational changes, including enhanced collaboration, alliances or mergers
b) Quality	Achievement of recognised common quality standards, benchmarking and performance improvement across support providers
c) Frontline Line Organisation (FLO) Engagement	Strong user-focus in the way sector support services are planned, delivered and evaluated, by enhancing the way diverse frontline organisations are engaged in sector support services
d) Diversity	Joint initiatives and effective partnership with specialist sector support agencies, including those working in and with marginalised communities and sectors less well connected to the broader third sector (such as social enterprise, sports, arts)
e) Commissioning	Supporting enterprising approaches among support providers (including reducing dependency on grant funding), and transition of more traditional funding advice to encompass broader sector needs in relation to procurement, commissioning and trading
f) Neighbourhoods	Ensuring consistent and reliable sector support at community and neighbourhood level, developing appropriate linkages and referral for smaller organisations, and effective working between services operating at different levels
g) Leadership & Influence	Developing leadership and more effective, influential and accountable mechanisms for sector influence on local governance, policy and decision making

Other key changes from previous consortia funds included:

- Removing the assumption that the lead body for Consortia would be accountable for delivery and funding for each local project.
- No guarantee that all areas would receive funding, with national competition (though a nominal formula was used to provide guide allocations across the regions).

Regional and local consortia that had been assessed as 'fit for purpose' during 2007-8 were invited to nominate up to 3 projects from their newly developed Business Plans which match these priorities. These were then subject to competitive assessment.

This process resulted in higher demand in the 'southern regions', where awards were generally made early in the programme. This was due primarily to a higher concentration of consortia in these areas. In other regions there were delays in awarding grants – most notably the North East – where some nominations were judged not to be of an acceptable standard by the Capacitybuilders' Grants Committee (now the Funding, Policy & Programmes Committee). An extended period of negotiation and resubmission was allowed.

1.2 Phasing of Awards

- **Spring 2008:** The majority of awards were made in the South West, London, South East and East England, with some coming from East Midlands, West Midlands and Yorkshire & Humberside. Proposals from the North East and North West have a low success rate (see above).
- **Summer/Autumn 2008:** Key gaps resulting from earlier grant awards were addressed following assessment of resubmitted / revised proposals. The majority of proposals from regional consortia were also submitted at this stage.
- **Spring 2009:** Proposals from consortia subsequently rated as 'fit for purpose'.

1.3 Context and Methodology of Review

This Review represents a 'stock-take' of Modernising Support Services Programme projects, providing an overview of, and reflection on, reported progress made by grant holders against intended outcomes. The stock-take draws on a range of information sources, including the original programme prospectus and guidance notes; Capacitybuilders' monitoring system – GIFTS; and grant holder Workplans (WP) and Monitoring Reports (MR) submitted by October 2009 (where this is not been available, the latest MR for each grant holder has been used i.e. April 2009).

A number of key criteria are considered, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to explore emerging patterns, trends and areas of learning coming from a diverse range of projects.

1.4 Shape of the programme – Key Facts

- The Modernising Support Services Programme has provided 101 grant awards – of which 95 are currently active, 6 have been completed.
- Grant awards were based on a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 year funding arrangements:
 - 1 year = 4 awards
 - 2 year = 37 awards
 - 3 year = 60 award
- Table 1.4.1 has further details on the type of information available for each grant holder / project.

Table 1.4.1 Type of project information available across the 101 Modernisation projects

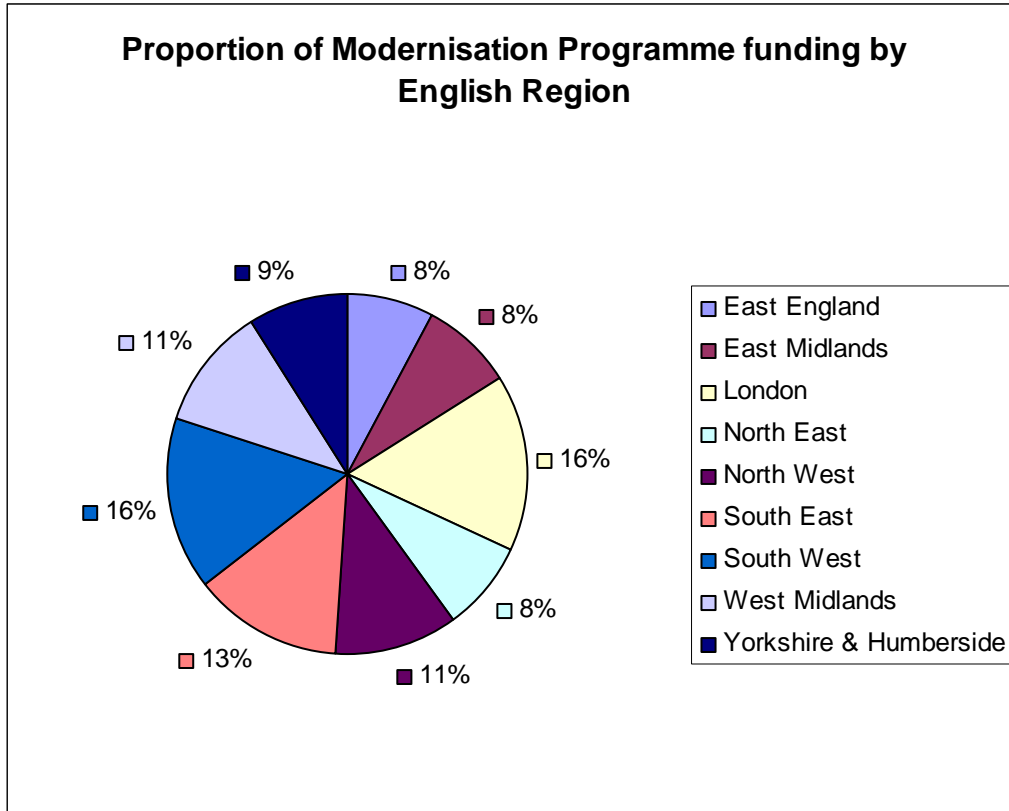
Information	Number of grant holders / projects
Monitoring Reports	91*
Workplans	95

* Of these 91, October 2009 Monitoring Reports were available for 82 projects; April 2009 MRs were reviewed for the remaining 9 projects.

- Table 1.4.1 provides information on the number of grants and value of resources flowing into the English regions from the Modernising Support Services Programme.

Table 1.4.2 Breakdown of grant values across the English regions		
Region	No. of grant awards	Value of grant awards per region
East England	8	£1,160, 526
London	18	£2,313,873
South East	12	£1,963,928
South West	12	£2,318,516
East Midlands	12	£1,220,160
West Midlands	12	£1,608,019
North West	10	£1,609,623
North East	9	£1,192,535
Yorkshire & Humberside	8	£1,316,799
Total	101	£ 14,703,979

- The graph shows the proportion of Modernising Support Services Programme funding going into each of the English regions.



2 Trends and patterns

2.1 Priority theme

Of the 95 projects where a WP was available, 21 of these have not carried across their stated Priority Themes from the application stage to their WP. Of those 74 remaining, the following Themes have been selected (please also note that grant holders were able to select more than one Priority Theme):

Priority Theme	No. of projects
a) Collaboration	50
b) Quality	38
c) FLO Engagement	42
d) Diversity	43
e) Commissioning	33
f) Neighbourhoods	44
g) Leadership & Influence	31

The data suggests that project delivery is occurring across all seven Programme Priority Themes although not on an equal basis. Collaboration has proved appreciably more popular than other Themes, while fewer than half of projects are delivering against the Commissioning and Leadership & Influence themes.

2.2 Reported Progress

Capacitybuilders has put significant emphasis on taking an 'outcomes focused' approach to its grants programmes. Prior to funding being awarded, Capacitybuilders agrees project outcomes with each grant holder. These are the outcomes against which progress is reported and therefore provides Capacitybuilders with an indicative measure of the success of individual projects.

Three grades are available to grant holders when reporting progress:

- Very good
- Good
- Moderate

For the sake of simplicity and consistency, where more than one outcome is being delivered, an average of the reported progress has been used. For example, where there are three outcomes with two 'very good' and one 'good' rating, it is considered 'very good' overall. Similarly, where there are two project outcomes – with one rated 'very good', the other 'good' – the overall rating is rounded up to 'very good'.

The percentages given below relate to the proportion of the 91 projects where sufficient data is available for analysis.

The majority of Modernising Support Services Programme grant holders (57%) are reporting 'very good' progress against project outcomes, with a little over a third (38%) making 'good' progress. Only a small minority (4%) report 'moderate' progress.

(NB: 'Moderate' includes one project where payments have been withheld since June 09 due to issues between the consortia accountable body – VONNE – and primary delivery organisation – NESEP)

2.3 Progress Vs Priority Theme selection

Sufficient data does not exist across projects to effectively analyse whether there is any variability between Priority Themes and the progress being made against them. Suitable data – where both an MR and WP (with Priority Themes listed) – exists for 68 projects.

The table below uses this data only.

Table 2.3.1 Reported progress against Priority Theme

Priority Theme	Reported progress		
	Very Good	Good	Moderate
a) Collaboration	60%	36%	4%
b) Quality	51%	43%	6%
c) FLO Engagement	59%	37%	4%
d) Diversity	54%	41%	5%
e) Commissioning	68%	26%	6%
f) Neighbourhoods	57%	38%	5%
g) Leadership & Influence	52%	45%	3%

Given that 57% of all grant holders reported 'very good' progress (see section 2.2), data from the table above suggests that projects which incorporate Commissioning (68%) as a Priority Theme are being delivered more successfully. Projects with Collaboration (60%), FLO Engagement (59%), Neighbourhoods (57%) and Diversity (54%) as Priority Themes are performing at or close to the average base rate (+ / - 3%). However the data indicates that those projects which encompass Leadership & Influence (52%) and Quality (51%) are being delivered at a lower than base level.

Case Study

This project includes the two Priority Themes which have seen the lowest rates of 'Very Good' progress being made against them:

b) Quality: Achievement of recognised common quality standards, benchmarking and performance improvement across support providers

g) Leadership & Influence: Developing leadership and more effective, influential and accountable mechanisms for sector influence on local governance, policy and decision making

The grant holder has assigned both of these themes a 'Good' rating, however, the MR provides a sound indication of the factors preventing 'Very Good' progress being reported.

Against Quality, the project aims to improve 'the provision of support and awareness required practice in property management', and 'a more informed local voluntary sector that is comfortable and capable of managing assets'. It appears that difficulty in establishing an Asset Management Network is holding back the delivery of this outcome. The subsequent delay has had a knock-on effect in terms of collating baseline data and the consultation required, i.e. there may have been an *underestimation* of the timescales required to bring together an effective, fledgling Network. A second point mentioned in the MR was that bringing in a property professional has highlighted that the systems used for the project were not as comprehensive as they had assumed, i.e. external knowledge identified further development required *beyond* that envisaged at the time of the WP.

The project also delivers against the Leadership & Influence theme by 'forming an informed network to engage in discussions relating to Asset Transfer', resulting in 'a more informed and trusting relationship with key Local Authority workers which in time will lead to greater opportunities for asset transfer and other forms of community ownership'. It appears that while very good progress has been made in raising awareness and linkages through outward facing promotion, this may have been at the expense of embedding those systems and processes which lie behind specific asset transfers and relationship building, i.e. 'developing leadership and...mechanisms for sector influence' requires both influencing and networking *in tandem* with the processes to back this up.

The factors highlighted in the Case Study above are also apparent in some of the other MRs for projects delivering against the Themes of Quality and Leadership & Influence. However, it should be acknowledged that, since a majority of projects encompass a number of Priority Themes, the overall analysis cannot be presented as a precise indication; though some meaningful trend analysis can be drawn. (Please see ‘Specific Keyword Categories’ section below for further observations around Quality and Leadership and Influence.)

2.4 Progress Vs No. of Themes

In order to accurately determine the extent to which individual Priority Themes are being delivered, it is essential that projects and their associated WPs assign separate outcomes to each Priority Theme.

The stock-take found that there were 74 WPs that clearly stated both the Priority Themes and outcomes being delivered by each project. The table below shows the proportion of grant holders reporting very good progress by the number of Priority Themes being delivered against.

Number of Themes delivered	Proportion reporting ‘very good’ progress (number of projects)
One	75% (8)
Two	43% (7)
Three	75% (12)
Four	43% (21)
Five	55% (11)
Six	50% (6)
Seven	57% (5)

Taking 57% as our average proportion of grant holders reporting ‘very good’ progress, data from Table 2.4.1 may suggest that generally the fewer Priority Themes selected, the more likelihood of ‘very good’ progress being reported than projects delivering across multiple Themes.

2.5 Progress Vs Size of Award

The size of Modernisation grant awards range from £1,001 to £399,997. This section looks at whether there appears to be a clear relationship between reported progress and the size of the grant received. Grant sizes of 91 projects where we have comparative data have been split into quintile groupings as follows:

- Lower quintile (19 awards) - to £82,432
- 2nd quintile (18 awards) - to £123,809
- 3rd quintile (18 awards) - to £149,836
- 4th quintile (18 awards) - to £245,022
- Upper quintile (18 awards) - to £399,997

Table 2.5.1 Reported progress against size of grant award

	Very Good	Good	Moderate
Lower quintile	63%	32%	5%
2nd quintile	28%	61%	11%
3rd quintile	56%	44%	-
4th quintile	67%	27%	6%
Upper quintile	72%	28%	-

The data appears to suggest that grant holders with larger grants are more likely to report 'very good' project progress to date. In addition, the dataset shows that of the smallest 8 awards (£1,001 - £27,507), all bar one have reported VG progress.

2.6 Length of Project Vs Reported Progress

Data shows that there is no clear parallel to be drawn from the length of an individual project and its reported progress.

Table 2.6.1 Progress against length of grant			
Length of grant	Very Good	Good	Moderate
1 year	67%	33%	-
2 year	59%	38%	3%
3 year	56%	41%	3%

2.7 Progress Vs Region, and Priority Theme Vs Region

There are clear and apparent trends to be noted from the data (see table 2.7.1), yet no obvious and compelling reasons from the documentation to hand for such a regional disparity between. For example, the proportion of grant holders in the North East (33%) and North West (100%) reporting 'very good' progress. Given the phasing of awards, and the low success rate of North East and North West proposals (see section 1.2), it is surprising that the greatest gap in delivery should exist between these two regions.

Table 2.7.1 Reported progress by region			
Region (no. of grants with MR & WP)	Very Good	Good	Moderate
East England (8)	38%	62%	-
London (16)	63%	31%	6%
South East (11)	45%	36%	9%
South West (12)	75%	25%	-
East Midlands (11)	73%	27%	-
West Midlands (10)	40%	60%	-
North West (6)	100%	-	-
North East (9)	33%	56%	11%
Yorkshire & Humberside (8)	50%	50%	-

Overall, the data shows that there are four regions where grant holders are performing above average in terms of reporting 'very good' progress: South West, South East, London and North West.

Table 2.7.2 highlights those Priority Themes which are being delivered. In the South West, the Collaboration Theme has markedly been selected ahead of others, with just one project delivering against a Commissioning Outcome. Although it must be noted that two further South West-based projects are working on commissioning projects but as they have no stated priority Themes on their WPs, they have been excluded from this dataset. However, the data is much less clear for some of the other regions; over 70% of projects in Yorkshire & Humberside are delivering against 5 of the Themes despite there being only seven projects in this region.

It is worth highlighting at this point that having such unrefined, general source data from the outset makes for more problematic evaluation of ongoing project delivery.

Table 2.7.2 Progress by region and Priority Theme							
Region (no. of WPs with stated Priority Themes)	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
East England (6)	83% (5)	33% (2)	67% (4)	83% (5)	67% (4)	50% (3)	67% (4)
London (12)	67% (8)	33% (4)	33% (4)	58% (7)	50% (6)	67% (8)	50% (6)
South East (10)	60% (6)	50% (5)	60% (6)	40% (4)	60% (6)	70% (7)	70% (7)
South West (8)	100% (8)	38% (3)	50% (4)	38% (3)	13% (1)	50% (4)	25% (2)
East Midlands (9)	67% (6)	67% (6)	78% (7)	44% (4)	2% (2)	67% (6)	78% (7)
West Midlands (7)	71% (5)	71% (5)	71% (5)	43% (3)	29% (2)	57% (4)	29% (2)
North West (6)	83% (5)	33% (2)	50% (3)	100% (6)	100% (6)	50% (3)	17% (1)
North East (7)	43% (3)	71% (5)	57% (4)	57% (4)	29% (2)	57% (4)	29% (2)
Yorkshire & Humberside (7)	86% (6)	86% (6)	71% (5)	86% (6)	43% (3)	86% (6)	29% (2)

a) Collaboration

b) Quality

c) FLO Engagement

d) Diversity

e) Commissioning

f) Neighbourhoods

g) Leadership & Influence

3 Common Delivery Themes

It has become apparent from data analysis that different project leads have interpreted the selection of Priority Themes in different ways. Some have defined their project as delivering against all seven Themes, even though in some cases this may appear tenuous. Others have selected one or two, though drilling down further into delivery suggests that several more Themes are being delivered. To address this in some way, individual MRs have been studied, defined and grouped into a series of 'keywords' which may allow for further categorisation of activity.

Keywords have been selected where a significant portion of delivery is covered rather than for every strand of a project. For instance, one particular project in East Midlands (RCAN's 'Stepping Up to the Challenge') is headed up as a Collaboration project, yet is explicitly and substantially working on not only encouraging and supporting organisations in the areas of mergers and rationalisation, but also towards Quality Standards, a Funders Forum, a communications strategy, improvements to infrastructure efficiency, and beyond. As overall progress for this project has been reported as 'very good', for the benefit of the table below an example of 'very good' progress has been added to the following groupings: Collaboration - Outward; Comms & ICT; Quality; Sustainability.

For further clarification, this same project states as one of its indicators:

'Evidence of the needs of specialist sub groups being included in any collaboration partnership or representation work.'

However, this represents only one of 23 indicators, and subsequent monitoring does not cover in any depth work with specialist sub groups. Consequently, this project does not warrant being included under the Equality & Diversity keyword.

Keywords - further information

Collaboration - inward focus: This refers to collaboration or partnership working which has been affected with an internal focus, i.e. encouraging collaboration between members of a consortium or the lead body.

Collaboration - outward focus: This refers to a project or programme which is encouraging collaborative practice, merger or partnership working to a wider audience of support services, frontline organisations, or statutory bodies, or as a means unto itself.

Equality & Diversity: By the very nature of some of the projects which encompass working with specialist infrastructure or representing, say, BME communities, collaborative practices or representation occurs. However, in most cases unless there is a more specific outcome or group of indicators addressing these areas or keywords more directly, then they have not been included.

Consortium Development: This refers to any project which is either transforming or altering the way a consortium operates, or the services it provides.

Voice and Influence: This is used as a keyword for those bodies which are *providing* or seeking to provide a voice for the sector or other organisations.

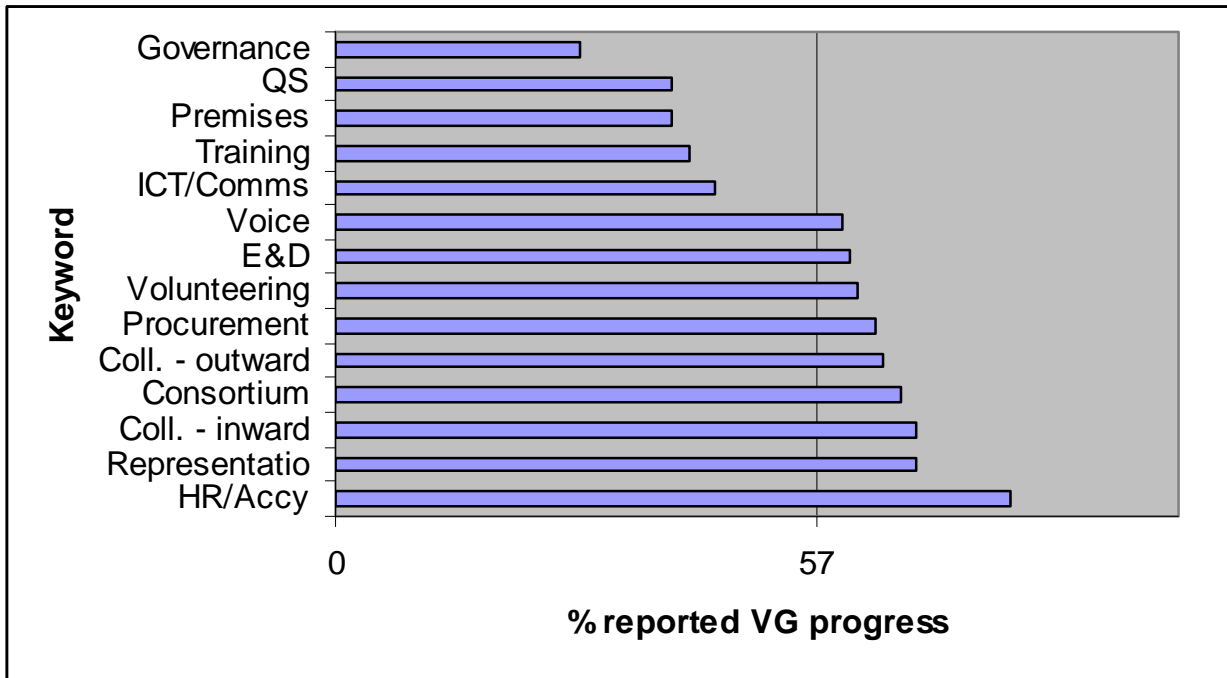
Representation: Distinct from Voice and Influence, this keyword is applied to those projects which are *enabling* or *facilitating* other organisations to be represented or represent themselves elsewhere.

Volunteering / Volunteer Centres: As with specialist infrastructure / equality and diversity strands (above), a majority of volunteering projects seek to adopt a consistent approach to volunteer centres services across a given area. As collaborative working is implicit in achieving this, then unless there is a separate, discrete statement of partnership working as part of the WP, then these have not been included under the collaboration keywords.

Table 3.1.1 Reported progress by keyword classification

Keyword Category	Very Good	Good	Moderate
Collaboration - inward / internal	69%	23%	8%
Collaboration - outward / external	65%	32%	5%
Equality and Diversity / Specialist Infrastructure	61%	31%	8%
Consortia / Consortium Development	67%	28%	5%
Voice and Influence	60%	40%	-
Representation	69%	31%	-
ICT / Communications	45%	55%	-
Sustainability / procurement / commissioning/ investment readiness / fundraising	64%	32%	4%
Leadership / governance / trustee development	29%	57%	14%
Volunteering / Volunteer Centres	62%	38%	-
HR / Community accountancy	80%	20%	-
Premises / Resource Centre / asset management	40%	40%	20%
Training / Learning / Workforce Development	42%	58%	-
Quality / Quality Marks	40%	53%	7%

It is apparent from Table 3.1 and the corresponding bar chart below (with the 'very good' progress 'baseline' of 57% marked) which keyword activities / Themes are reported as being more successful. Some points raised in monitoring reports may indicate reasons why some are seeing better levels of progress than others.



3.1 Specific keyword categories

3.1.1 Collaboration

Through analysis of WPs, it appears that a number of projects and their respective partners were already committed to collaborating at the outset, or have identified indicators and / or milestones which are well within the delivering body's control (i.e. less influence by external factors and therefore, more likely to be assessed and achieved). An example of managing expectations comes from a project based in the South East which is reporting on three Outcomes.

- 1) Strengthening of partnership working through a survey and audit of its members;
- 2) Strengthening of Regional Voice through intelligence-sharing;
- 3) Regional policy makers incorporating Third Sector needs in policy documents, through engagement with the Regional Cross Sector Partnership (RCSP), and by way of learning-sharing and policy responses.

Both outcomes 1) and 2) lie clearly within the control and remit of the consortium.

Engagement with the RCSP will have been an integral to its strategy prior to applying for Modernisation funds, hence it is reasonable to anticipate a high likelihood of successful project delivery. Therefore, 'very good' progress could be construed as being more likely for similar projects, rather than those starting from an earlier developmental position or reliant on managing external parties and influences.

3.1.2 Consortium development

Perhaps similar to the Collaboration grouping, funds to support and develop a new or changing Consortium / organisation are often contributing to a process which has already been set in train. For instance, a project in the South West (involving the formation of a single body for the public sector to more easily and efficiently engage with) is likely to have come about in response to consultation and negotiation which had been ongoing before the announcement of the Modernisation Programme. Hence, mapping of the requisite milestones has been more accurate.

3.1.3 Procurement

Numerous projects have reported 'very good' progress, and it is clear that the use of small, easily measured quantitative indicators and milestones is very helpful in terms of evidencing progress. This is especially true when compared to, say, the longer term indicators and milestones required as part of a project focussed on workforce development. For example, a Third Sector Commissioning Project lists various outputs around the provision of training, or the number of Organisations benefitting from training. One such output is '75 frontline organisations benefitting from training and/or information'. On one single day, a 'Commissioning Carousel' event was able to provide information to 60 different organisations. With most of its target achieved in a single 'hit', 'very good' progress can be expressed. However, it is also worth noting that this type of activity may not necessarily result in delivering outcomes.

3.1.4 Equality & Diversity

A CVS in London has discovered that VCOs are wary of discussing issues of equality and diversity and, as a result, are slow at seeking and accepting support from support providers. This has affected the projects ability to achieve 'very good' progress.

An alternative example from the South East of an Equality & Diversity project also reflects a level of ambition to achieve something which is highly qualitative and ambitious. Less than a year into delivery, it is seeking to establish not one specialist support agency but seven, one for each individual Equality & Diversity strand. The chances of something not running to schedule must be greater than the London project above for example.

3.1.5 Governance

A project run by a CVS in the North West, aimed at improving levels of involvement and increasing change management skills, notes a quite straightforward reason why 'very good' progress is more difficult to achieve than in other areas: trustees are very busy people. It may also be that building the momentum needed to affect cultural change takes considerable time and effort. Also mentioned in MRs was a perceived challenge around encouraging participation. This may be a result of the top-down design of the project – creating demand rather than responding to it.

3.1.6 Quality and Training

A project in Yorkshire & Humberside reports that VCOs are having considerable difficulty building accreditation costs into existing projects. Allowing for accreditation is often not considered part of core funding. If these resources cannot be found elsewhere then VCOs typically have to forego this type of capacity building activity.

Similarly, a grant holder based in the West Midlands has put into place a cost recovery plan due to a reported lack of VCS capacity for training opportunities.

4 Further Interpretations and Evaluations

4.1 Impact and Programme Delivery

Much of this review uses grant holders' reported progress - whether 'very good', 'good', or 'moderate' - as the foundation for analysing and capturing trends and patterns. However, such reporting is open to individual, subjective interpretation of what is meant by 'good' and 'moderate'. For example, some projects which appear to be on track and could have reported 'very good' progress have only reported 'good' progress. Clearly, continuing guidance could be issued to assist with this.

Again, deciding which keywords were appropriate for individual projects has been a difficult process, and would probably be interpreted differently by others. Hence, impact is more problematic to ascertain than might otherwise have been the case. For instance, and as mentioned below, the extent to which delivery is impacting on FLOs is often difficult to unpick from the reporting.

4.2 Project Design

There is some doubt as to whether all grant holders understand just what is meant by 'outcomes', i.e. how to report on them, and the indicators and milestones required to meet those outcomes. As this was one of the first Programmes to adopt an outcomes framework, this is perhaps not a surprise, but more guidance could be delivered at the inception of future programmes.

4.3 Programme Design

There appears to have been a general lack of understanding among grant holders of the types of projects that would fit specifically under each of the seven Priority Themes. Instead of choosing a limited number of Themes and developing clear and discrete outcomes for each, grant holders often wrote work plans which tried to meet the criteria of *all* Priority Themes that could possibly be linked to the project. This tended to either result in too many outcomes to measure progress against, or too few meaning that limited information on certain Themes was captured.

4.4 Next Steps / Further Analysis

- An early review of the latest MRs, i.e. Spring 2010, would be apposite, investigating whether trends noted above are indeed trends. It would be helpful to note whether those patterns which have emerged stand up to further scrutiny.
- The current review of the Improving Reach Programme should be compared, contrasted and analysed for emergent, joint trends and learning.
- The Consortia Development Grant review is revealing interesting points around influence and leadership work. There may be value to be had in exploring whether any key trends from this review resonate with the CDG findings.
- More distinct trends have been identified for the purposes of this review through the interpretation of common delivery themes or keywords, as opposed to Priority Themes. A thorough 'stock take' of keywords could be employed and subsequently flagged through the GIFTS monitoring system. This could enable a more streamlined approach to reviewing the delivery of projects.
- Due to the marked differences across the range of reporting, enhanced guidance could be issued by Capacitybuilders as to the level and detail of narrative we are seeking. Also, providing greater clarity to grant holders of the reasons we are asking for this information may elicit greater quality and focus towards these areas.
- Given the relative success of 'Collaboration' projects, further study of these grant holders may enhance our understanding around the characteristics of successful projects. Potential areas of interest could include whether collaborative functions and partnerships were in place prior to the awards or have developed subsequently, or the extent to which collaborative work has led to further, tangible successes around funding proposals or sustainability.

- As with the previous point, there has been no analysis of how FLOs have benefitted as a result of the awards made to the support providers. Though examples can be sought, an over-arching review of the impact on that next round of MRs would be extremely helpful in assessing whether those ‘needs and expectations of frontline organisations’ have and are being met.

Appendix 1

Those projects where an October 2009 MR was unavailable for this review, with April 2009 used as latest supplied report:

EE07AB	Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations
EM55AA	Northamptonshire C.D.A. Ltd
EM38AA	Community Council of Lincolnshire
SE22AA	Surrey Community Action
SE46AA	Aylesbury Vale EHRC (though updated WP Nov 2009 received)
	Barnet VSC
	Voluntary Action Camden
	Superhighways
	<i>No WP and one, undated MR</i>
	Islington Voluntary Action Council (no WP, and undated MR)
	<i>No MR available as first report due April 2010</i>
EM07AA	One East Midlands
	CIDA
	IVAC
NW03BB	GMCVO
	<i>No MR received to date (i.e. delayed)</i>
SE45AA	Sussex Community Internet Project
	<i>No MRs were available for review (projects completed)</i>
NW03BA	GMCVO
NW01AA	Cheshire Community Council
NW04AA	Sefton Council for Voluntary Service
WM05AA	Community Council of Shropshire
WM02AA	Wolverhampton Network Consortium