Aims, Outcomes and Outputs

When writing a funding application, you will often be asked to identify your aims, outcomes and outputs. It is therefore fundamental that you are able to differentiate between them. **Outcome** and **output** are most often confused, and to add into the jargon mix, outcomes can also be sub-divided into hard and soft. It is important that you understand the difference between these both when writing the bid and when evaluating and monitoring the project.

**Outcomes**

These are also sometimes called impact assessments. Outcomes measure the difference that has been made through the project.

For example: ‘Through this scheme, 50 people have given up smoking.’

**Hard Outcomes**

These are the tangible differences that have been made as a result of a project which are measurable.

For example: ‘Through this scheme, 50 people have given up smoking.’

**Soft Outcomes**

These are sometimes incidental to the hard outcome but are nevertheless positive differences which have been made during the life of the project.

For example: ‘Through this scheme, 50 people have given up smoking and have increased self-confidence as a result.’
Outputs

It is sometimes useful to consider in terms of a production analogy, these are the tangible activities that have happened during the project.

For example: ‘Through this scheme, 100 people attended a course about the dangers of smoking.’

It might help you to think about this diagrammatically:

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Aim

Outcome (what will change?)

Outputs (activities)
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Consider the examples in the table below and discuss whether each one is an example of a hard (measurable) outcome, a soft outcome, or an output (activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement:</th>
<th>Outcome or Output?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 500 young people will attend our project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Young people will have increased confidence.</td>
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<td>3. Young people will be able to work as a team and be more employable.</td>
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<td>4. Creating positive relationships between parents and children, increasing self-esteem and aspirations.</td>
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<td>5. Young people will receive advice on careers.</td>
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</table>
6. 36 young people will be more independent as a result of the summer scheme by October 2001.