



SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND QUICK GUIDE

Continuous learning

The Social Investment Fund (the Fund) partners with organisations to deliver social services that make a positive difference in the lives of New Zealanders.

The Fund is looking to invest in organisations and initiatives that continuously learn over time so that they better support New Zealanders to overcome their challenges and achieve their goals.

This quick guide is designed to help organisations understand how the Fund will assess 'continuous learning' when considering proposals.

Why continuous learning matters

No initiative in the social sector that supports people facing multiple challenges can be designed perfectly at the outset. The context will change, and the theory does not always work out in practice. Different groups of people also respond in unexpected and different ways to the same activities, requiring organisations to re-design and tailor what they do.

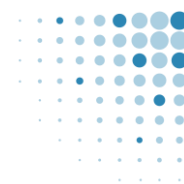
The Social Investment approach recognises the importance of continuous learning and adaption. This is why tight service specifications are not used by the Social Investment Fund. The social investment high-trust model relies on confidence in the ability of the partner organisation to design, implement and adapt initiatives as they learn.

What we look for

When assessing proposals, the Social Investment Fund looks for evidence that continuous learning is built into the practice of the organisations and the design of the initiative.

This will involve asking, for example, how insights and data will be gathered from discussions with people being supported by the initiative, and how these insights and data will be analysed and used to inform changes to practice and feedback to frontline staff and people receiving support. These learning cycles or 'feedback loops' are critical to the social investment approach.

We recognise that embedding and demonstrating the impact of taking a learning approach takes time and resources that organisations have not always had.



How we will work and learn together

It can be helpful to think of each funded initiative as a medium-term learning partnership between the Social Investment Fund and the funded organisation – although obviously the initial decision to invest relies on both parties being confident that the initiative will lead to significant positive changes.

The Social Investment Fund will work with organisations it funds on a jointly agreed evaluation model and plan for each initiative. This means that ‘evaluability’ and a shared learning approach will be built into the initiative from the start.

To support the evaluation, the Social Investment Fund will rely on funded organisations providing data to Statistics New Zealand’s Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). This data will be used to support the evaluation and help funded organisations understand more about the people they are reaching. This data will include:

Personal identifier(s)	Sufficient information for Statistics New Zealand to identify an individual, such as an NHI number, or a name, gender, and date of birth. This data is used only by Statistics New Zealand for linking in the IDI and is not shared with the Fund.
Start date	The date the individual began working with your organisation.
Exit date	The date the individual ceased working with your organisation.

Funded organisations will need to have the processes and systems required to collect and share this personal data safely. The agreed evaluation plan will also recognise and draw on other valuable information collected by organisations.



Further resources

- [Centre for Social Impact](#) – Easy-to-use toolkit and insights
- [Better Evaluation](#) – Global guidance on evaluation and learning