

Third Sector Interfaces (TSI)  
Monitoring Report Review  
April – September 2011

national voice **local impact**

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# Introduction

## About this Report

This report reviews the feedback from the inaugural Monitoring Form submitted by Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) to SG, to cover their activity over the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. All 32 TSIs reported. The quality and scope of reporting varied considerably. This report summarises the responses made, both in narrative and tabular format. The tables - which cover all 32 TSIs - are currently 'anonymised'. Most tables show the response from each Interface, which is then totalled at the base of the table. In tables used to report common themes, blank spaces indicate that no information was recorded by the reporting Interface. National Outcome tables show the number of Interfaces which directly reported identification with specific outcomes.

## About the Monitoring Format

The monitoring format was devised by a working group comprising Evaluation Support Scotland and a representative range of Interface agencies. It was designed to be as user-friendly as possible, with a mix of quantitative and qualitative information requested, and with a series of 'open' questions, purposely designed to elicit the key issues and concerns identified by TSIs, to enable both the Scottish Government and Voluntary Action Scotland to get useful intelligence about the status of both the sector and its infrastructure.

There were some practical restrictions on reporting, such as restricted word count, which very clearly hampered some Interfaces – particularly the more complex 'partnership' Interfaces - from reflecting the richness and variety of their different activities, and there were quite considerable variations in interpretation by respondents of some of the questions.

A significant element of this report therefore deals with feedback on the Format itself, with a view to making improvements to the second Form.

## About the Common Themes which emerged from the Report

Common themes are identified from responses made at various points throughout the reports – in the initial 'Context' section, within the TSI 'Four Functions' - of volunteering development; social enterprise development; supporting & developing a strong third sector; building a third sector relationship with community planning - and in the section colloquially entitled 'Other stuff'. They are summarised in the Context Session, and referenced in the final section: Shared Strategic Agendas

# Section 1: Context

## 1.1 Operating Context for Interfaces

Interfaces were asked to write a few paragraphs to set the context for their report by identifying their particular circumstances. A suggested list of report headings included the type of geographic area and population the Interface operates in, the staffing of the interface and Third Sector Structures assisting Interface delivery. This section also suggested that Interfaces outline key sectoral issues of concern.

*Three key common elements from this section are reported below. These are*

- *the staffing levels of Interfaces*
- *the number of voluntary organisations across Interfaces*
- *key issues of concern for Interfaces*

## 1.2 Staff

This section is extremely useful, in for the first time ever capturing the 'ballpark' figure of numbers and status of staff / volunteer deployed within local third sector infrastructure, available to support the sector. In total *28 of the 32 reports* gave some form of figure relating to staffing levels in this section.

There are however some 'grey' areas where clarification is required. It is not entirely clear from all reports whether they have given staffing figures for *all* departments of all the organisations which make up the Interface, or whether they are reporting specifically those staff employed *by* the Interface or specifically employed *for the purposes of* delivering the Interface's work-plan.

Some reports have broken down the particular details of employee roles, one indicated sources of funding for particular staff, some gave full time equivalent calculations and some have given information on the numbers of staff employed full and part time. There are also estimations for the number of *volunteers* who contribute to supporting organisation functions

**Table 1.1** indicates staffing levels identified across organisations.

**Interface Staff:** The **total** staff figure of **568** is a combination of full time staff, part time staff and interns. Some reports show that a high proportion, or in one instance all, of staff are part time – where this is delineated, **42%** of posts are part-time / **58%** are full-time. The smallest TSI complement is 7 people (4 full-time, 3 part-time); the largest is 72.

**Interface volunteers:** these **total 890**. Many Interface organisations are supporting a large number of volunteers. Some indicated that volunteers are attached to specific projects; one organisation indicated that they have a volunteer who provides administrative support to the Interface. The ratio of volunteers to staff is 1.5:1

**Table 1.1**

<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Full time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>	<b>Intern</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>
20				4
23	2	21		
24	11	12	1	49
14		14		35
13.83 (wte)				67
25	12	12	1	18
12	4	8		29
11				69
14	8	6		85
40	19	21		
13				
20	18	2		14
72	48	24		45
50	31	19		60
9				
14	6	8		44
7	4	3		
17	11	6		20
34	31	3		3
15	5	3		56
10	7	3		1
17	14	3		3
20				90
14	7	7		33
22	17	5		58
8	5	3		4
14	13	1		
15				103
<b>567.83</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>890</b>

### **1.3 Voluntary organisations**

29 Interfaces gave some indication of the number of third sector organisations in their area. 3 did not. In total, the 29 responses indicate an estimated minimum **of 31,102** third sector organisations across Scotland of which Interfaces are aware / with which they have engagement.

There is huge diversity thereafter in how TSI's report or estimate / categorise numbers within their areas:

- Some gave the number of organisations *registered* as a charity with OSCR;
- Some gave figures for the number of *member organisations* of Interface partners,
- Some gave a figure for the number of organisations registered with or contained on contact databases of Interface partner organisations.

*Where more than one partner organisations membership figure was given they have been combined in the table.*

In total, the 29 responses indicate an estimated minimum of **31,102** third sector organisations across Scotland. The table shows five areas estimating over a particular number in their area; (this is indicated by a + in the table).

4,658 third sector organisations are indicated to be members of representative organisations which are part of an Interface; *this number is low as this constitutes the membership of only 15 Interface partner groups.*

Similarly only 11 responses gave a figure indicating the number of organisations registered with Interface partners which totals 5,637 third sector organisations.

**Table 1.2**

Total Estimate	Member Organisations	Registered Organisations	OSCR registered
4000	92		800
1000+		850	1000
	506	150	597
		441	
3000		102	852
1800			617
600		400 +	
		600 +	
2000			
800 +	100		
1000 +			
1700			
4457	1144		
500 - 600			
500+	35	228	246
1400	683	605	
650	80		
	261		585
	166	600	
1200			
600	200		
2000			
1000	70		295
	55	336	
	650	1325	
1000	194		
895			
1000+			458
	422		
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>31102</b>	<b>5637</b>	<b>5450</b>

## **1.4 Key Issues of Concern**

23 of the 32 reports from Interfaces included an indication of key issues or concerns for the third sector in the context section of the report. The most commonly recurring issues identified are:

- Funding
- Sustainability
- Unemployment
- Commissioning
- Ageing population

### **1.4.1 Funding**

Funding is the most commonly reported issue of concern for the third sector. A general lack of resources is repeatedly cited, as are reductions in funding. There is particular concern surrounding uncertainty of funding due to potential further cuts. There are also concerns raised over the "delayed effect of funding cuts"; "lack of a strategy for Third Sector funding" and "increasing demand for services with diminishing resources."

One report stated that "the major concern with the sector currently and for the foreseeable future will be reductions in the levels of funding at local and national level."

### **1.4.2 Sustainability**

Responses evidence the degree of sophisticated thinking / knowledge within Interfaces about the real difficulties of local organisations to become sustainable. This concern about sustainability is closely related to funding, and relates not just to the sustainability of projects and services, but also to the actual survival of key local third sector organisations.

There is also an aspect of concern relating to a push for self-sustainability in the Third Sector. Some reports indicated concern around the ability for social enterprise to thrive due to its consumer-centric model, particularly in remote areas or those with sparse populations.

One Interface reported: "main issues facing the sector include the push towards self sustainability and the myth around Social Enterprise - although we are delivering training and support to address this issue."

### **1.4.3 Unemployment**

Concern is repeatedly raised in relation to unemployment, particularly youth unemployment and youth employability.

One report indicated that there has been an increase in demand for volunteering placements due to more people applying, mainly for employability purposes. Another report noted a "massive interest in volunteering from other organisations without the existing recognition of local structures and systems."

One report highlighted the issue of unemployment and the resulting focus of efforts in this area: "One of the main areas of concern is unemployment levels in young people and in the general population. Employability projects to enhance skills and experience to increase employability and help move people into training, further education, volunteering and employment, have therefore been high priority."

#### **1.4.4 Commissioning**

Concerns are raised variously in terms of commissioning, procurement and tendering. Each of these indicates a concern that changes in the application processes will impact, or already has already impacted on third sector organisations, particularly smaller organisations, which are unable to compete effectively. Comments relating to this from the reports include:

“Concerns about the move towards commissioning, which will add to a heavy administrative burden, and about larger organisations moving in...with negative effects on small, local organisations.”

“The tendering of services has also caused concern for organisations which deliver high quality cost effective services but are now having to tender and in competition with larger organisations. Again we are delivering a no-nonsense, straight to the point procurement training.”

#### **1.4.5 Ageing Population**

A number of reports indicated a concern for issues related to an ageing population; several included statistics for the forecasted increase in elderly populations in their area. A rise in demand for support and services is anticipated with ageing populations, which will impact particularly in areas which have already expressed concern over funding and sustainability.

Linked to this area there are also concerns raised over cuts to health and social services and Reshaping Care (RCOP) agendas.

#### **1.4.6 Additional Concerns : Sectoral Issues**

Additional issues of concern for the sector reported include:

- Single Outcome Agreements
- Change Funds (RCOP and others)
- asset acquisition and transfer from the local authority;
- mergers and partnership working
- governance concerning lack of committee members
- up-skilling organisation board members
- Protecting Vulnerable Groups and improving child protection
- public sector reluctance to pay for CRBS checks for volunteers
- finding appropriate volunteers

#### **1.4.7 Additional Concerns : Internal, Interface issues**

There are also concerns reported about specific areas and particular problems Interfaces are facing, many of which relate to “The Interface being a new entity”, problems associated with the practical establishment of Interfaces and issues in working with Local Authorities in particular areas.

Working relationships with Local Authorities are listed in a number of reports, in particular relating to asset transfer but also in relation to provision of services by the public sector in rural or remote areas. “Various issues with public sector” and “hope that there will be a proper partnership with local government” are included in the comments.

One example of specific circumstances affecting a particular Interface is where volunteers and volunteer development are reported to have fallen into a “vacuum” “as a result of the local Volunteer Centre (VC) and Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) having no involvement in the formation or operations of the new Interface . Both organisations’ remits were effectively removed via the cessation of Scottish Government funding on 31 March 2011. This unique situation means that this particular Interface has no transferable resources (staff/financial/premises, etc.)”

## Section 2 : Delivering the 4 TSI functions

This section outlines activity and performance across the 4 TSI functions. The reports outline a significant amount of activity, both in the form of statistical information, and in the form of qualitative information, provided through case studies and narrative. It also relates TSI activity to the National Outcomes, and notes cross-reference to Local Outcomes.

The information comes with two caveats: the terminology and methodology for gathering information and reporting performance varies so considerably across TSIs, that while the data is robust, it is not definitive. Also, TSIs noted that reporting restrictions within the Form itself made it difficult for TSIs to reflect the range of their activity.

### 2.1 Volunteering Development

#### 2.1.1 : MV Awards

Across all 32 reporting Interfaces there were a total of 4696 MV award registrations; 1686 MV 50 hour awards; 1338 MV 100 hour awards; and 548 MV 200 hour award. It should be noted that some organisations (12.5%) did not have information available for this question. One commented: "we collate this information on a yearly basis to coincide with our annual award ceremony therefore any figures entered would be distorted."

MV registrations	MV 50 hour awards	MV 100 hour awards	MV 200 hour awards
28	11	15	5
479	8	8	4
184	43	91	Move to Saltire
345		181	34
7	3	2	1
273	54	30	18
24	59	16	4
212	79	61	31
71	11	4	5
149		11	1
323	210	167	71
349	257	156	46
126	44	23	50
95	50	30	11
98	35	18	7
82	23	14	3
81	50	37	17
418	368	137	50
59	24	21	8
241	44	73	57
38	21	13	4
65			

226	83	73	41
73	58	47	21
422	95	87	26
55	17	10	2
17	7	2	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>
<b>4696</b>	<b>1686</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>548</b>

### 2.1.2 : Saltire Pilots

Across the Saltire pilot areas a total of 118 achieved Challenge; 55 achieved Approach; 236 achieved Ascent; none achieved Summit; and 9 achieved Ambassadors.

**Table 2.1.2**

<b>Achieved Challenge</b>	<b>Achieved Approach</b>	<b>Achieved Ascent</b>	<b>Achieved Summit</b>	<b>Achieved Ambassadors</b>
In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress
12	0	10	0	0
83	39	85	0	7
0	5	119	0	2
17	11	5	0	
6	17			
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>
<b>118</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

### 2.1.3 Volunteering Enquiries and Placements

As table 2.1.3 shows, Interface organisations recorded a total of 34726 volunteering enquiries and they supported a total of 11403 placements (i.e. volunteers registered as 'active' on v-bay or with v-bay placements).

**Table 2.1.3**

<b>Enquiries</b>	<b>Placements</b>
9097	101
3115	79
1076	910
3133	1772
47	N/A
440	229
728	322
210	190
822	220
564	310
330	285
2544	620
886	735
368	448

1505	N/A
526	88
335	284
342	195
106	95
397	338
1043	780
70	550
301	55
297	94
Not recorded	228
726	349
254	215
1919	666
629	259
1635	608
799	276
482	102
<b>Total: Enquiries</b>	<b>Total: Placements</b>
<b>34726</b>	<b>11403</b>

### 2.1.3 Recording variations:

The reporting of issues associated with 'recording enquiries' indicates that the total figure above is in reality a low estimate, and that voluntary organisations find it difficult to record enquiries which they receive from numerous sources and in various ways.

Some organisations recorded placements as N/A and one report stated that volunteering enquiries were not recorded. A number of organisations indicated that the number of enquiries recorded on the Monitoring Form was significantly lower than the actual number. Below are some of the explanations given:

"registrations only, as don't have time and resources to count all enquiries who do not follow through."

"Enquiries have not been captured systematically – will really value new database as we struggle with this function on VBay."

"this is incredibly difficult to quantify. We do not note down every call, email, drop-in, etc."

**One interface** reported enquiries in terms of the number of organisations making enquiries rather than individual enquiries.

**Table 2.1.4 Number of Volunteers Placed**

<b>Were unemployed</b>	<b>Declared a health issue or special needs</b>	<b>Were under 25</b>	<b>Were over 60</b>
31	23	51	5
12	3	52	2
302	161	378	109
172	191	136	280
2	0	2	0
87	21	107	14
125	29	135	3
189	61	38	5
95	20	82	23
108	18	144	15
63	14	173	34
217	146	180	40
138	Unable to quantify at present	545	16
309	70	140	89
292	67	322	25
125	30	224	33
82	53	85	8
29	24	175	5
72	10	37	6
85	29	143	5
196	41	401	60
28	12	86	4
3	2	50	1
58	11	39	4
85	45	128	9
13	16	289	7
89	63	58	5
229	47	264	54
172	94	111	17
356	239	65	187
140	39	134	37
18	6	51	2
<b>Total: unemployed</b>	<b>Total: health issue Special need</b>	<b>Total: aged 25 or under</b>	<b>Total: aged 60 or over</b>
<b>3922</b>	<b>1585</b>	<b>4825</b>	<b>1104</b>

**2.1.4 Recording variations:**

It is important to note that the figures recorded above for volunteers aged under 25 and over 60 have some variances due to the ages used to record information at some organisations.

For example, **one interface** recorded ages as under 26 and over 65 thus possibly over-recording under 25 year olds in the figure above and under-recording over 60s.

**Another interface** recorded over 55s rather than over 60s and therefore the figure included above for their report may be over.

In **one report** over 50s were recorded, again possibly resulting in over-reporting in the above table. It recorded volunteers aged 50 to 64 and clarified that volunteers aged under 25 are also 16 or over.

**Another report** recorded volunteers aged 56 – 65, again possibly resulting in over-reporting of volunteers aged over 60.

**Table2.1.5 Number of volunteering opportunities registered**

<b>Total Number of Opportunities Overall</b>	<b>Opportunities Registered in the Last 6 Months</b>
805	75
567	66
Not available	Not available
1400	194
11	11
957	34
299	36
817	144
507	31
252	46
160	66
2755	460
310	29
1454	203
642	245
1592	71
132	27
329	22
244	28
254	20
872	39
109	15
275	45
105	85
1157	110
137	14
1500	160
524	36
260	44
594	143
556	58
374	27
<b>Total: Number of Opportunities Overall</b>	<b>Total: Opportunities Registered in the Last 6 Months</b>
<b>19950</b>	<b>2584</b>

The TSI reports show that 19,950 volunteering opportunities are currently registered. Allowing for those who were unable to report figures at this time, this means that there are likely to be well **over 20,000** known volunteering opportunities across Scotland associated with Interface organisations, with 2584 new volunteering opportunities which have been registered in the six months prior to reporting.

### **2.1.6 Volunteering Outcomes : Links with Local and National Outcomes**

The 32 Interface reports asked what difference volunteering development made to both individuals and organisations with reference to local and national outcomes. Many reports gave specific examples of Interface Achievements which most commonly related to improvements in terms of assisting with unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.

For example, **one interface** reported on working closely with Jobcentre and a local Works Project to deliver volunteering as a stepping stone to employment. Interfaces also reported volunteering benefits for seniors. In particular **one interface** reported an increase in the number of seniors as volunteers and a reduction in isolation of socially isolated seniors through befriending projects.

5 reports omitted reference to specific outcomes for one or both of the questions: for difference made to individuals, 2 did not give National Outcomes, one did not give Local Outcomes and one did not give either; while for difference made to organisations, 2 did not give National Outcomes, 2 did not give Local Outcomes and one did not give either.

The table below shows the number of reports which identified Interface Achievements with specific National Outcomes. At the time of reporting there were 15 National Outcomes - *a sixteenth Outcome was added to the National Performance Framework in December 2011 relating to older people which is therefore not included in the reports and will not be considered here.* A number of organisations provided examples which indicate that they would be able to identify with this additional National Outcome.

**Table 2.1.6: Volunteering Outcomes / links with Local and National Outcomes**

<b>National Outcomes</b>	What difference your volunteering has made to individuals.	What difference your volunteering has made to organisations
We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.	3	2
We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	12	8
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	12	13
Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	15	12

Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	3	4
We live longer, healthier lives	10	10
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	11	14
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	3	4
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	4	3
We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	3	3
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	19	18
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	3	4
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	6	2
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	1	1
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	1	6

The strongest responses received relate to the 11<sup>th</sup> National Outcome: **“We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.”**

### **2.1.7 Case Study examples of the benefits to individuals of volunteering**

The TSI reports were overflowing with examples of volunteering which made a difference not only to the individual who volunteered but to the organisations and individuals they volunteered with. In particular, **one case study** outlines the experience of 19 volunteers across a range of ages, backgrounds and circumstances; it highlighted that different volunteers often recognised similar benefits in their experiences. Four key common themes were identified from the responses gathered from volunteers: contributing to the community; breaking social isolation; choices in life; and volunteering changes lives. It was also highlighted that there are often myths around volunteering in terms of the age, skills, confidence and employability of volunteers. Through the variety of examples given these myths were dispelled as they identified such volunteers as:

An 18 year old volunteer who was applying for jobs but felt that her administration skills were not adequate for the positions she wanted and felt that she did not perform well in interviews due to shyness sought to volunteer to help with these issues. Since volunteering she said: "... I have been going out and meeting my community, my social skills have really improved. I now feel very motivated to look for work, and the people I volunteer with have even been helping me with interview skills. I now feel very optimistic about the future. Volunteering was the best thing that I could ever have done."

A volunteer who was Head of the Mathematics Department for 20 years went abroad to Spain to work after the school closed down. He missed Scotland and on his return he felt that he had too much time on his hands and no output for his skills which he did not want to risk losing. He explained that through volunteering he has felt value in his skills: "I was always a confident man but felt that this was ebbing away a little. I really wanted to volunteer in tutoring, and dealing with age groups ranging from infants to university graduates has expanded the range of skills that I had. I feel that I „belong“ more and I value myself much more and it's a bonus that people value me in return."

A volunteer in his mid-fifties found himself in the position of becoming a single parent. Although he enjoyed taking care of his daughter he began to feel that he was becoming socially isolated, a friend suggested volunteering and before long he had attended 4 different courses. He commented: "You've no idea what a difference this has made to me, and how good it feels to be back in the swing of things. ... it has socially opened up new horizons for me and that is what I was missing so much. I feel more confident about myself and I really believe that I can do this and much more. I always knew that I could help my child – but now I know beyond a doubt that I can help so many others."

Similar reports of volunteers benefiting from their experience as well as benefiting those they volunteer with can be found across the TSI areas.

**Another case study** gave an account of the experience of a young mother of two who had never worked, was a victim of domestic abuse and lacked confidence and direction. She received mentoring to volunteer and was supported in low level volunteering initially before she was introduced to skills training and she undertook Learndirect. Through the mentoring and support provided on personal development, she gained confidence and became more assertive. She was then transferred to a more challenging volunteering opportunity where her attendance improved and she went on to additionally volunteer to in an office to acquire skills in administration and computer literacy. She continues to volunteer and now earns an income from tutoring evening classes at a local college in jewellery making, which is an interest she discovered when volunteering alongside another woman at an arts and crafts organisation. She has also developed her own enterprise running a small business via ebay selling homemade jewellery. She commented on the changes that she had since became a volunteer. She could hardly believe how she has developed her confidence and self-esteem. She also recognised that her children have benefited due to her positive attitude and motivation as she feels her family now has a future and she is in control of her life.

The case studies provided by TSIs show that volunteering offers an opportunity for volunteers to make use of and therefore retain their existing skills. It can offer a route into training and provide

experience which enhance or provide skills which in turn enable volunteers to pursue opportunities in employment. Volunteering can promote involvement in local communities, give volunteers a sense of purpose and belonging, and generally improve their motivation, commitment and abilities.

## **2.2 Social Enterprise Development**

### **2.2.1 Support Services**

The pattern of SE support was varied across the geography of Scotland. All Interface reports contained examples of providing support - to existing Social Enterprises as well as to new enterprises – through providing advice, training, tender assistance and hosting meetings. Many Interfaces gave examples of specific projects which they had supported or developed, as well as providing information on steps they had taken to build partnership working, networks and support services to social enterprises, and on promoting training and opportunities provided by other organisations.

Most Interfaces specifically reported partnership work – some with Social Enterprise Networks as core partners within the Interface - or identified on-going meetings with local or emergent Social Enterprise Networks developed in the reporting period.

Some Interfaces also reported work with Local Authorities and Community Planning Partnerships to enhance SE activity: e.g. **one Interface** had set up a process with local Council to support social enterprises to find appropriate funding and had held discussions with CPP partners and local agencies about development, specifically for strategic social enterprises in food and energy production.

In addition several Interfaces (whose) reported the development, launch or update of online support for social enterprise businesses. One interface's Social Enterprise Network website received 56,340 hits and 6,594 visits over the six month reporting period while another reported the development of a Social Enterprise Strategy in the period.

Around 25% of Interfaces had appointed Social Enterprise specific staff, others had sent staff on relevant business-development training or sought training to be delivered locally by the Social Enterprise Academy, and in the case of a particular Interface has looked to become more socially enterprising as an organisation in order to develop practical experience to share and demonstrate willingness to lead by example.

### **2.2.2 Referrals to specialist Social Enterprise programmes**

Interfaces reported a significant number of referrals to the three specific Social Enterprise programmes operating over the period: Just Enterprise Programme, The Social Entrepreneurs Fund and The Growth Fund, as the table below shows. The table does not include figures from **two Interfaces** which reported their referrals without indication of which fund they referred to; **one Interface** reported 250 referrals across all three programmes and **another Interface** indicated referral to all CVS members (which is reported elsewhere as a total of 175).

**Table 2.2.2**

<b>Just Enterprise Programme</b>	795
<b>The Social Entrepreneurs Fund</b>	478
<b>The Growth Fund</b>	1002

Two Interface reports did not include any referrals. **One** omitted any information for this question and the other recorded 0 referrals for all programmes.

There were also dramatic differences in the number of referrals reported. For example, **one** reported only 1 referral across the three programmes and **one** reported 1 referral to each of the programmes; while **another** reported over 200 referrals to each programme.

Several interfaces articulated concerns about communication and quality control: i.e. about making efforts to engage with specialist SE support organisations, and about signposting local organisations on to them, but then being re-contacted by the local organisations who felt they had not had the quality and consistency of support they required from national providers, and sought further Interface development support.

### **2.2.3 Social Enterprise Outcomes : Links with Local and National Outcomes**

The table below shows the number of reports which identified Interface Achievements with specific National Outcomes in terms of social enterprise development work. At the time of reporting there were 15 National Outcomes; *a sixteenth Outcome was added to the National Performance Framework in December 2011 relating to older people which is therefore not included in the reports and is not considered here.*

**Table 2.2.3: Relationship between SE activity / Case Study and Outcomes**

<b>National Outcomes</b>	<b>What difference your social enterprise development work made</b>	<b>Outcomes relating to a case study to illustrate the impact of social enterprise support for a social enterprise</b>
We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.	8	6
We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	22	17
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	7	3

Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	2	0
Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	0	1
We live longer, healthier lives	0	1
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	2	0
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	1	1
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	0	0
We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	3	2
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	11	7
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	1	0
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	1	1
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	0	2
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	4	3

Unsurprisingly perhaps, most Interfaces identified their Social Enterprise development work as contributing to **National Outcome 2**: *We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.*

A significant number of Interfaces also identified contributions to **National Outcome 11**: *We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*

Social Enterprise development is also particularly linked to improving education, skills and innovation (**National Outcome 3**) and contributing to making Scotland the most attractive place for doing business in Europe (**National Outcome 1**).

## 2.2.4 Case Study examples of the benefits of Social Enterprise

Case study examples from the 32 TSI reports show a variety of Social Enterprise activity across Scotland ranging from organisations which deliver childcare to initiatives which take on Community assets. Included here are just three examples of the enterprises which have been supported through TSIs.

**One case study** reported business support provision to Bespoke Organic Events (BOE) to form a CIC (Community Interest Company) and support for the merger of BOE with an existing restaurant which specialised in organic, locally sourced food (the Ceilidh Collective) and the acquisition of Unicorn Foods. It is reported that this merger will result in employment for ten full time equivalent staff and will create an enterprise with a turnover of £550,000. The CIC will also provide employment and training opportunities for people with learning disabilities. BOE is also linking in to Social Firms Scotland, Just Enterprise, the Enterprise Growth Fund and investing in Ideas.

In **another Interface area** a new social enterprise was established in order to take over a museum which the local authority was going to close. The Chairperson of the enterprise attended a local network meeting to access information and support and admitted that he was struggling to get the enterprise established. He was given a range of information including on constituting, volunteer support and good practice, and accessible training. Six months on the enterprise is established and has exceeded the expected number of visitors. The Chairperson continues to attend the network meetings and now has access to a range of support that he can call on.

In **another case study** a group of local people wanted to set up an arts materials retail outlet, as well as to provide free classes and gallery space for local artists. The Interface worked closely with the group and Scottish Government's economic and community development agency to help them to choose an appropriate structure for the initiative and let space within the Interface shared accommodation building. The group were also supported with a range of advice and training including a "Speak Up Speak Out" session which allowed one Director to promote the business on local radio. Gallery space which is being provided is hosting its 4th exhibition of local artists. The Director commented that "without this Interface we wouldn't be here – they facilitated every step."

## 2.3 Supporting and Developing a Strong Third Sector

### 2.3.1 Support Services

Interfaces were asked to identify the scale of activities they undertook in 3 key specific area areas – handling enquiries, delivering 1:1 support, and delivering training - **in the 6 months immediately prior to reporting.**

According to the table below, Interfaces handled 46,699 enquiries (defined as: 'an enquiry is a short piece reactive advice or information which is probably provided over the phone or by email'); Interfaces provided 5,245 organisations with consultancy or one-to-one support; and 1817 organisations received training from Interfaces.

**Table 2.3.1: supporting and developing a strong third sector**

Number of enquiries handled	Number of organisations receiving consultancy or 1-1 support	If you ran a training programme how many organisations received training?
1513	170	29
2031	615	51
12756	98	112
4507	1264	289
97	8	N/A
823	174	79
966	188	40
2100	88	61
1000	44	25
848	29	3
		21
1804	68	212
412	2	13
1024	142	167
25	86	67
3743	544	106
211	24	0
45	35	45
1350	45	4
22	20	49
	174	30
556	40	40
39	98	48
4120	143	4
310	435	16
101	44	12
51	36	30
700	212	84
415	88	9
1632	94	32
446	130	55
3052	107	84
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>
<b>46699</b>	<b>5245</b>	<b>1817</b>

### 2.3.1 Recording Variations

The table clearly shows dramatic differences between different Interfaces, which is not easy to explain in terms of location and staff resources deployed. It shows that information was not recorded for every Interface, and it is clear from the narrative in feedback on the form that respondents have interpreted this request for information in very many, different ways.

*The range of interpretation is so great as to call into serious question whether these figures can be viewed in any way as accurate or properly informative:* for example the feedback from one report suggests they answered only 25 enquiries and supported only 67 organisations through training in a 6 month period, when their Annual Report records tens of thousands of enquiries answered, and over 500 organisations receiving training over 12 months.

For Interfaces where data is not recorded, reasons given were a lack of capacity to record, in particular the number of enquiries handled, or the fact that Interface did not currently record this information as one explained (ref the number of enquiries handled): “traditionally this figure has not been collated – other than when participating in the annual “sampling fortnight”.”

There may also be some confusion relating to this question as some reports specified that they had recorded the number of *organisations* who made enquiries rather than individual enquiries. There were also suggestions that in future it may be useful to record the number of incidents of consultancy or one-to-one support *rather than the number of organisations which received such support*, as many organisations will require more than one session of in-depth support depending on their particular circumstances and the issue concerned.

Overall it seems the form suggest that the level of support provided in reality is likely to be far higher than identified. It also suggests that this information would need to be re-collected, in a more standardised format, if it were intended to provide any form of baseline or comparator figure. Several Interfaces recorded their hope that the MILO system would enable them to record this data more satisfactorily and consistently.

### 2.3.2 Interface Outcomes / links with Local and National Outcomes

The table below shows the number of reports which identified Interface Achievements with specific National Outcomes. At the time of reporting there were 15 National Outcomes; *a sixteenth Outcome was added to the National Performance Framework in December 2011 relating to older people which is therefore not included in the reports and is not considered here.*

**Table 2.3.2: Interface Outcomes / links with Local and National Outcomes**

<b>National Outcomes</b>	<b>Examples of third sector organisations helped to do their work better</b>	<b>Levels of funds levered in following funding advice.</b>	<b>Outcomes relating to a case study to illustrate the impact of work with a third sector organisation</b>
We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.	2	3	4
We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	8	10	4
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	7	3	0

Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	4	2	2
Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	2	2	3
We live longer, healthier lives	1	2	3
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	6	5	4
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	1	2	3
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	2	1	0
We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	4	3	4
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	21	18	17
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	1	1	2
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	0	1	1
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	2	1	1
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	7	6	6

As the table shows, the majority of TSIs reported that they identified their work as contributing to **National Outcome 11: *We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*** A significant number reported contributions to **National Outcome 2: *We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.*** The work of TSIs in supporting and developing a strong Third Sector also showed contributions to high quality public services which are improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs (**National Outcome 15**) and some identification with tackling

significant inequalities in Scottish society (**National Outcome 7**) as well as improving education, skills and innovation (**National Outcome 3**).

### **2.3.3 Case Studies**

TSIs offered a wide range of case studies of the vital work they are doing to support and develop a strong third sector, highlighting the skills TSIs are able to share through the advice, consultancy and training they provide. The case studies provided highlight the variety of organisations which seek assistance and make enquiries of TSI organisations.

**One case study** provided an example of a charity which required assistance as it was non-compliant with OSCR and its own governing documents. The charity is dedicated to granting the dreams of sick and disabled children but the trustees were unaware of their roles and responsibilities particularly in relation to jointly putting the interests of the charity first. Support was provided through: facilitation at Management Committee meetings; training; advice; review of constitution and policies; support with risk assessments; guidance and support to comply with OSCR; and assistance in finding new Trustees. The organisation now has 7 Trustees, a revised constitution and policies including finance, expenses, volunteers, internet banking and media and advertising.

**One Interface** was also involved in assisting a charity with OSCR compliance, in their instance a registered charity at risk of becoming non-compliant and facing the possibility of dissolution. The charity received intensive, ongoing long-term support which has resulted in recruitment of new Trustees and the revival of organisation activities. OSCR are satisfied and reportedly very appreciative of their committed approach and the resulting satisfactory outcome.

**Another Interface** provided a case study of supporting a local Drugs initiative through funding applications including applying to Awards for All which secured £9,900 for their alternative therapy sessions. This TSI is continuing to work with the initiative to source bigger grants and in addition to individual support, the organisations receives news on in-work training opportunities and regularly attend training sessions.

**One case study** also reported funding support to an organisation. A small childcare provider was advised that it would have to leave its existing accommodation inside a school which is closing. New premises were identified by the childcare provider but they lacked the necessary resources to make the premises suitable. Working with the organisation on funding applications the Interface has supported the organisation to over-achieve their funding target and as a result this childcare provider is looking towards a playground for the children as well.

## 2.4 Building a Strong Third Sector Relationship with Community Planning

### 2.4.1 Representation on CPP Boards

All 32 Interface reports have confirmed involvement in Community Planning, and confirmed representation of the Interface - or representatives from organisations which make up the Interface - holding places on the CPP board.

The overall feedback was of an improved status for the sector within CPPs, of maturing relationships and better understanding of the role of the sector – *although this was tempered by feedback from several TSIs about concerns about relationships with key individual CP partner agencies, particularly with Local Authorities.*

In terms of Partnership Working, many of the TSIs are themselves partnership organisations, and all the TSIs identified a broad range of other partnerships with which they are involved (listed under Q33 of the template), with most listing engagement with far in excess of 10 different local partnerships, working closely with third sector networks, with CPP and Local Authority groupings, and in some cases being involved in National initiatives.

**2.4.2** The table below shows the number of reports which identified Interface Achievements with specific National Outcomes in relation to building a Third Sector relationship with Community Planning.

At the time of reporting there were 15 National Outcomes; *a sixteenth Outcome was added to the National Performance Framework in December 2011 relating to older people which is therefore not included in the reports and is not considered here.*

**Table 2.4.2: Interface Achievements / Case Study and Outcomes**

<b>National Outcomes</b>	What difference you have made	Outcomes relating to a case study to illustrate a specific example of the impact of your work on community planning.
We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.	5	3
We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	7	4
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	5	3
Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	7	6

Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	4	4
We live longer, healthier lives	9	7
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	12	8
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	7	6
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	3	3
We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	6	4
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	21	17
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	4	2
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	4	3
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	6	2
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	12	8

For Question 36 ("what difference you have made" ) three Interfaces reported that they identified contribution to all of the National Outcomes, with one noting that - based on their involvement and participation in a wide range of partnerships - they identified with all 15. Two organisations said that they identified contribution to all of the National Outcomes for Question 37 (outcomes relating to a case study given to illustrate a specific example of the impact of work on community planning.)

### **2.4.3 Case Studies of Community Planning Activity**

As noted above, all 32 TSIs identified more active engagement with Community Planning. Case studies giving examples of involvement with their local CPP / with other partnerships identified that most could recognise an improvement in third sector involvement, and meaningful consultation.

**One Interface** supported a successful Third Sector contribution to a Community Planning Seminar, which resulted in outcomes around strengthening opportunities for active third sector engagement with Community Planning. There is now evidence of a much stronger emphasis on the contribution and value of Third Sector activity to the achievement of the CPPs strategic vision for its Council area. This work has also directly resulted in the establishment of a new third sector Theme Group.

In the reporting period one Interface agreed a Community Engagement Contract, providing support for the PPF and supporting wider Community Engagement through Community Planning. An example of their activity includes the TSI running two Health Needs Analysis sessions which involved over 90 people. This work is now to be followed up via Community Planning for the Total Place project.

In another area, the Interface was invited by Community Planning Strategic Board to assist in the planning and coordination of thematic conferences which included all statutory partners, public sector, RSLs and the wider Third Sector. The aim of these conferences was to improve partnership working in the current economic climate, but it was also of equal importance to recognise the Third Sector as a vital partner in the delivery of future services. The Partnership worked on the planning group organising keynote speakers, facilitating workshops and progressing actions. There have been three successful conferences to date.

#### **2.4.4 Delivery of TSI activities: links to SG National Outcomes: Summary**

Across all four functions Interfaces have clearly identified with National Outcome 11: *We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*

Interfaces identified most with the following National Outcomes for each of the four functions:

#### **Volunteering Development**

2. *We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.*
3. *We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.*
4. *Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.*
6. *We live longer, healthier lives.*
7. *We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.*

#### **Social Enterprise Development**

2. *We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.*

## **Supporting and Developing a Strong Third Sector**

- 2. *We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.*
- 15. *Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.*

## **Building a Third Sector Relationship with Community Planning**

- 6. *We live longer, healthier lives.*
- 7. *We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.*
- 15. *Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.*

## Section 3: Reporting Issues

### 3.1.1 Introduction : The value of accurate recording and reporting TSI activity

It is perhaps worth recording at the outset of this section on Reporting Issues, about how encouraging this inaugural exercise has been, and how positively Interfaces have responded to the challenge of working with a new reporting format, which was required within a tight timescale, and had to be produced against a background of considerable change and churn within their own areas and in often-complex operating circumstances.

The task of finding a succinct, consistent and meaningful way in which information on Interface activity can be captured is an important one, to fill a major gap in bringing together the reporting and recording of third sector support activity coherently, across local authority areas in Scotland.

Up till now there has been no mechanism for recording and integrating information gathered across the country about the scale and nature of volunteering, of social enterprise activity, of capacity building support services to the sector, or of what constitutes valuable engagement with Community Planning.

From this initial exercise a whole range of solid information and data has now been produced. By balancing qualitative as well as quantitative responses, and by seeking honest feedback from TSIs, a wealth of information has been produced, which SG and VAS will be able utilise to help inform future support needs and areas for common development. 'TSI' brand.

Due to the lack of consistency in information gathering techniques in TSIs across the country, the picture is still incomplete, needing refinement. There are reports where information was not available at the time of reporting, there are instances where information seems to be reported inaccurately, and there are clear areas where reporting Interfaces were unsure about how to answer.

**Nevertheless, notwithstanding the problems, a considerable body of good robust information and evidence, and important baseline data has been provided, which can be built upon in future reports.**

### 3.1.2 Format / Content of the Monitoring Report: 'Themes'

This initial report concentrated on Context/Common Themes and Feedback on the Monitoring Form.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that to support future iterations of the Form SG should seek to further standardise key elements of reporting. This would enable production of more robust / statistically valid performance**

**information. Consideration should also be given to reporting in such a way as to better draw out**

- **Successes and Challenges**
- **Good Practice and Learning**
- **Identified Support Needs**

## **3.2 Feedback on the Reporting Template**

It was recognised that this first iteration of a Monitoring Report – for what are very complex and varied organisations across the country – would certainly highlight reporting issues, and it has done so. The remainder of this section of the report concentrates on areas for improvement, but it is important firstly to record the positive comments made on the template and the reporting process undertaken.

### **3.2.1 Positive Feedback**

- There was recognition of the value in discussing both negatives and positives “and the sense that this monitoring process is in our best interests and the best interests of the public, and the public purse.”
- The collection of a mix of numerical and descriptive reporting throughout was identified as a good point, along with the links to national and local outcomes and the opportunity that the reports will enable for comparing like for like across the network as well as identifying good practice and emerging trends.
- The use of case studies was commended as it prompted Interfaces to remember “the real differences we make to the lives of others through our work.”
- The use of ‘anything else’ questions was seen as a good way to ensure everything was captured and provided the means to highlight particular areas of work which did not easily fit elsewhere.
- A total of seven Interfaces positively responded that the template was user friendly and that the level of reporting was good or excellent.  
“We found this template very clear and easy to use. The only difficulty was keeping the word count down whilst trying to represent as fully as possible the variety and depth of work done. We’ve had to leave out a great deal but the report does provide a ‘flavour’ of work to date. I think we’ll improve with practice!”

### **3.2.2 Neutral Feedback**

It should also be noted some comments were neither positive nor negative, describing the template as “fine” or “manageable”, and that three Interfaces gave no response.

### **3.2.3 Areas for Improvement**

In terms of improvements which could be made to the template there are two key areas to consider:

- (1) Process - improvements to make the template easier to use and less onerous
- (2) Content - improvements which will result in more consistent reporting

**The next sections of the report make comments and recommendations on these 2 elements.**

## **3.3 Improving the template for users – to make it easier to use and less onerous**

In feedback from users on how they found the reporting template the majority of comments were - not surprisingly – quite critical; they ranged from general minor issues with the formatting and layout of the template, to more fundamental concerns at the lack of capacity within the report to fully reflect the diversity of the services, support and work undertaken by third sector support agencies.

Interfaces were obviously unfamiliar with the template and many did note that they felt they would be better placed to report accurately in future when they knew what information to record. One Interface commented that they felt it would be useful to maintain the template for a further reporting period to establish whether issues with it are the result of unfamiliarity rather than a problem with the template itself. Others though felt that technical improvements should be made in time for the end year report in 2012.

### **3.3.1 Word Count / space restrictions - limiting scope and richness of reporting**

The most common criticism of the template was the word limits and space restrictions in some sections. Reporting Interfaces felt this seriously limited their ability to fully explain or include all elements of their work. Frustration was evident where their ability to include details of important and valuable contributions was curtailed.

This was *particularly* expressed by Interfaces which operated some form of Partnership Agreement between various organisations, where the restricted space or word count meant that fuller contributions from each partner organisation were submitted, and then had to be collated and curtailed by the writer into a blander, less expressive 'Interface' response.

Only one respondent was positive, stating that its Interface understood the need for restricted fields as they recognised that "it would be extremely difficult to collate, compare, review 32 reports if these restrictions were removed (which would result in a fluid template and people copying and pasting significant amounts of text and detail)."

All other comments reflected concern about the restrictions. As one Interface explained: “We felt it did not allow us to capture the independence and integrity of individual organisations – the very building blocks of what has made the third sector what it is today and something which, coupled with our connections to local and very different communities, is a strength of the current partnership.”

Another respondent succinctly explained that “100 words to cover highlights leads to a very bland summary which will probably not change from month to month, as none of the interesting detail is captured.”

Questions 33, 34, 36 and 45 were specifically referred to as difficult to complete due to the lack of space.

- 33. Which other partnerships are you involved in?
- 34. What structures or forums do you have in place to hear from and feedback to the third sector (include type of forums, number of members)?
- 36. Tell us about the difference you have made. Evidence could include: active participation of third sector in SOA; active participation of third sector in other plans and strategies; examples of third sector influence in meetings or partnership working; proactive invitation by CPP partners to participate in new policy or programmes.
- 45. Please briefly outline your key priorities and challenges in the short term (next 12 months) medium term (3 years) and longer term (5 years).

**Recommendation: Despite the inherent difficulties, it is recommended that serious consideration be given to enabling Interfaces to make fuller, more meaningful responses to specific questions**

### **3.3.2 Practical difficulties experienced using of the PDF Format**

A number of Interfaces reported difficulties in using the PDF; many faced problems when attempting to return to the document to edit, particularly in partnership Interfaces when they needed to add content from different partners.

Absence of a word or character count was problematic and could readily to be added. There was also frustration that the PDF allowed spell checking in some fields but not all, and that the spell check was set to American English. One respondent pointed out that the template included two page 9s but no page 7.

Another respondent noted that the embedded links did not work. Yet another reported that they were unable to print the report to review, due to some fields using scroll text boxes resulting in content not being shown when printed; still others shrunk the text to a size it couldn't be easily read when printed.

Most of the problems identified above are readily solved. There were requests for further guidance on completion or ready access to technical support at the time of completion; at

least one Interface was interested in possibly receiving training in using the PDF programme to report.

**Recommendation: that more detailed information and guidance and technical support is made available to accompany the submission of the next report, and that a training session is scheduled in advance of the next reporting period**

### **3.3.3 Production of additional material : standardising format**

The limitations in reporting space resulted in some Interfaces adding appendices, including adding their case studies as an appendix or in one case attaching their operational report, because they felt this was the only way to adequately reflect the level of work undertaken. Other Interfaces submitted their report in their own format rather than the PDF supplied, either because they had difficulty using the PDF format, or - more likely – that they sought to expand the given fields, to answer more fully.

Individualising reports in this manner makes it difficult to collate and compare information, but it is recognised that each Interface does have different, important characteristics which should be documented, to help interpret its statistical and performance information.

**Recommendation: that thought be given to developing a further 'background briefing' document, with standardised headings, but which can be populated by TSIs to reflect their unique circumstances.**

### **3.3.4 Timing of the Report**

The timing of the reporting (October 2011) and the actual time it took to complete the template were also cited as difficult for Interfaces. One respondent found that the report template arrived when they were out-of-office on leave and on their return they had only 4 days in which to complete due to attendance at the National Conference.

A number of Interfaces indicated concerns at lack of integration / consistency with V-Bay figures (e.g. that they recorded the age of volunteers based on existing V-Bay fields which they found to be inconsistent with the figures requested in the Monitoring Report).

Other Interfaces reported disappointment that the reporting was not entirely consistent with existing reporting techniques or local reporting methods, and that it did not save them time, or save duplication. Feedback included: "this template could not replace our current internal reporting mechanism – nor could it be used to report to other funding partners (specifically the local authority). As a result it is merely one more report that needs to be undertaken."

**Recommendation: Some of the content of the reports could be pre-populated in future to reduce the time required to complete the report.**

- In particular the context and baseline section where the name of the Interface; the Governance and Management Structure; and descriptive details of the nature of the Interface including the location, size of the area and population. Staffing, membership, local third sector profile and composition.
- Similarly questions 33 and 34 show which other partnerships the Interface/Interface organisations are involved in and the structures or forums in place to hear from and feedback to the sector. These details could be pre-populated in reports to ease the time burden of reporting as they are unlikely to frequently change radically; with a field to correct or state key changes on future templates where necessary.

### **3.3.5 Pre-preparation: time required to record information appropriately**

The issue of timing also influenced issues of access to information to report. A number of organisations did not provide information for certain sections because they did not have access to specific information at the time it was asked for, due to their schedule for collating such information, particularly in terms of finances and support figures.

Interfaces noted that had they been aware of what information would be required at the start of the financial year or prior to the reporting period then they would have been better placed to provide accurate information where instead they have only been able to provide estimations. As a result, although the figures recorded provide a good indication for the four functions there are important inconsistencies in the ability of Interfaces to report or their method of reporting, which will be considered further in the next section.

**Recommendation: that early guidance is issued for future iterations, about the areas of quantitative and statistical information required, with due consideration taken of the lead-in times required to produce this.**

### **3.3.6 Reporting on National and Local Outcomes**

There was feedback that the reporting of National and Local Outcomes had also been impacted by the lack of space available to provide answers.

Some Interfaces wrote out the Outcomes in full, thus limiting the number they could include in the space provided.

Other organisations simply listed the Outcome Number; this was manageable in terms of collating and aggregating the National outcomes - which are standard for all Interfaces – but it made no sense at all in relation to Local Outcomes which are contained within local Single Outcome Agreements and which are completely unique to each Local Authority area, thus rendering meaningless any collation / analysis of trends

**Recommendation: In future, distributing the up-to-date national outcomes in accompanying guidance with clear numbering and instruction to list the number of the outcome identified with could improve reporting and make reporting outcomes quicker and easier for Interfaces. In terms of local outcomes it may be necessary for Interfaces to include the wording of local outcomes and therefore for the reporting space provided to be increased.**

## **3.4 Improving the template for consistent reporting**

### **3.4.1 Recognition of the TSI's status / longevity**

Interfaces are new structures in most areas, with a variety of different 'models' in place. Their local circumstances vary significantly – Falkirk has been an integrated agency for many years, while its neighbour Clackmannanshire Interface did not inherit any staff, premises or resources and therefore began life as an entirely new entity during the reporting period, with the first member of staff only coming to post in June 2011.

Therefore, while all Interfaces clearly have the same activities to undertake and to report on, much of the feedback has been about the need for the reporting format to better reflect the capacity for variation in scale within the TSI 'family'.

### **3.4.2 Confusion over Terminology and lack of Definition**

Many Interfaces indicate a lack of clarity in the template. The terminology used is a departure from that which the sector is familiar with and as such there is a pressing need for clarification and guidance and definitions on what exactly is required in the report. There was apparent confusion even on very basic terms like 'the number of voluntary organisations in Interface areas' where real inconsistencies were reported, Clearly some areas used a broad definition where others used a narrow definition, while some others only reported member organisations, and some areas were unable to report a figure at all.

Similar issues of definition or clarity are indicated across the reports. For example, Question 21 asks about 'the number of enquiries received', with one report asking whether this meant member groups only or if it should include public and other organisations as well.

There are indications that different Interfaces interpreted Questions 21 to 23 quite differently. These questions required a figure to reflect activities in the 6 months prior to reporting:

- 21. Number of enquiries handled (an enquiry is a short piece reactive advice or information which is probably provided over the phone or by email).
- 22. Number of organisations receiving consultancy or 1-1 support (longer more in depth support usually face to face).
- 23. If you ran a training programme how many organisations received training?

Respondents suggested that in future it should be clarified whether figures reported for all three of the questions should be in terms of organisations or of individual enquiries, the level and frequency of the one-to-one support that was provided, and the nature of the

training provided. Some respondents provided additional information for these questions, for example, including the number of individuals trained as well as the number of organisations receiving training, and specifying the type of training.

It may be of value to add fields for this additional information in future; however, as outlined above for the information to be of value for collation purposes it is important for Interfaces to know in advance what figures they will need to provide for reports in order for them to establish gathering techniques.

Issues in completing questions 43 and 44 were also reported with a request for guidance in answering these questions. These questions for: a summary of Scottish Government expenditure to the end of September; please also explain any variances including: changes in the % allocation of funding to the four functions; any underspend (43) and roughly what % of the total funding spent by your interface delivering the 4 functions did SG funding represent? (44)

Overall, reviewing the template to ensure that the questions are clear and providing guidance on what is expected for the answers should enable Interfaces to confidently report and ensure that the resulting reports are valuable for collation, comparison and monitoring, especially when tracking changes or identifying trends.

### **3.5 Summary of Reporting Issues**

Most of the template issues identified are minor, with many involving technicalities of using the PDF and a lack of prior knowledge of what information to record for reporting purposes within consistent categories. With appropriate revision of the template, clear definitions and guidance for completion in future they should be easily overcome.

Similarly issues for new Interfaces which have not commenced full delivery will not be a continuous situation and though this is important at this stage consistent monitoring will show improvement as these Interfaces develop; more practically continued monitoring reports should enable Interfaces to highlight issues as they develop and become established which will enable identification of necessary support needs.

The most important improvements to the template will be in **definition and clarification** which will enable consistency of reporting across the 32 Interfaces and will reassure Interfaces that the report is a valuable tool.

There is the element of frustration reported by Interfaces that the template does not allow them to adequately report the most interesting and valuable details of their work within the space provided and the requirement for them to dramatically edit content to fit with word limits or the temptation to add appendices to feel that they are fully reporting their activities. This should be considered when reviewing the template and providing guidance for future reporting.

For consistent reporting from all 32 Interfaces in future it is necessary to communicate in advance what information is required. As already established, if Interfaces know what information needs to be recorded for reporting purposes they can implement techniques to gather that information, but they need to be aware of the information required prior to the reporting period. It is also important to provide clear definitions if the reports are to be useful for collating, comparing and monitoring.

There are major assumptions being made that the MILO system, when in place, will address many of the problems faced by TSIs in collecting and collating management information / performance information. It is not clear whether these assumptions are correct.

## Section 4: Shared Strategic Agendas

### 4.1 TSIs finding their feet

The most consistent theme reflected throughout the Monitoring Reports is that Interfaces are new, that some areas still very much 'work in progress', at an early stage of establishment at the time of reporting, and that all are still developing their identity, and seeking to establish credibility - both in a local context, and as part of a stronger national TSI 'brand'.

### 4.2 Common Issues and Concerns for the Third Sector

Urban or rural, large or small, integrated TSI or multiple partnership area, there was a real sense of commonality about the greatest concerns that TSIs across Scotland identified, of seeking to keep the sector afloat, when faced with funding cuts and future funding uncertainty; about how realistic the drive towards 'sustainability' and social enterprise activity really was in some areas; on how commissioning and procurement were adversely affecting smaller organisations, on how unemployment – particularly youth unemployment – was blighting communities; and how demographic changes – particularly through an ageing population - would impact on their communities and on future patterns of service delivery.

### 4.3 Common Strengths/Successes

**4.3.1 Community Planning:** All 32 reports confirmed involvement in Community Planning at key levels of the CP structures, with many Interface Partners holding places on Community Planning Boards. The overall feedback was of an improved status for the sector within CP and maturing relationships and understanding of the role of the sector, albeit slow in some areas.

**4.3.2 Improving Relationship Building and Partnership Working:** Most Interfaces reported they had been involved in the positive if time consuming work of relationship building and establishing stronger partnership working; feedback was generally positive, about making good progress with the sector, and with a range of partner agencies.

**4.3.3 Strong engagement with key National Outcomes** : There is a very strong and direct 'read-across' between the work that TSIs are doing, and the SG's National Outcomes. Across all four functions Interfaces have clearly identified with National Outcome 11: *We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*

**4.3.4 Close alignment with the new 16<sup>th</sup> National Outcome** : There is already close alignment between TSI activity and the new 16<sup>th</sup> National Outcome - - *Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it* , given that all TSIs have reported some level of engagement with the Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP) agenda, and many are reporting significant 'gains' in helping resourcing the sector, meet real needs of older people, and begin to influence the change agenda.