

Alastair McPherson

Bio



I am an Economic Geographer and Economic Consultant and work with government departments, agencies, and private-sector partners, to help them improve performance and build an evidence-base that informs strategic decision-making (<http://www.additionalgroup.co.uk>).

I have extensive experience in my specialist area: conducting research, economic appraisal & evaluation (including evaluation manager for UK economic development agency); impact assessment; developing national and regional evaluation guidance (UK economic development agencies); and building capacity through training and workshops (including UK Government Economic Service).

This work is applied to business-critical projects across policy areas and industry sectors, to deliver strategic insights and is combined with an in-depth knowledge of the public sector and policy environment.

Particular interests include economic development & regeneration, innovation & commercialisation, skills & labour issues, work organisation, and international trade & investment.

Affiliated with Bentley University Center for Quantitative Analysis (<http://www.bentley.edu>)

Workshop title

Cost-Benefit Analysis and Economic Impact Assessment as an Evaluative Tool

Target audience

Those involved in commissioning, delivering, or using the results of studies with a strong focus on quantified monetary costs and benefits. The workshop will be of particular interest to evaluators working on interventions where a rigorous and quantitative approach to measuring net economic development outcomes is important.

You will find the course useful if:

- you are new to economic impact assessment, or about to embark on a project or programme appraisal or evaluation
- you work in project or programme management and are planning to collaborate with strategy or evaluation colleagues to carry out an appraisal or evaluation, or intend to use economic impact assessment findings
- you commission or manage activities to support economic appraisal or evaluation in central or local government, or other applied policy sectors

Level

Intermediate to Advanced

Some general familiarity with evaluation planning, structuring and method choices will be useful, however the workshop will seek to avoid technical jargon and provide an accessible introduction.

Workshop content

Participants examine the key features of economic impact assessment, the methods commonly employed, and how it can be used for demonstrating value for money in public sector projects and programmes. We also cover how findings can be understood and presented to a wider audience.

The course adopts a varied format including structured presentations, a focus on practical application, and discussion.

Participants will each receive course resource materials. Small group size: 15 places.

Detailed workshop outline

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course participants will be able to:

- Describe the key features of economic impact assessment
- Understand how economic impact assessment fits in the project or programme lifecycle
- Understand the links between economic impact assessment and value for money calculations including tools such as cost-benefit analysis
- Identify the main data and factors used to calculate economic impact
- Describe additionality and its components and know how to estimate these (e.g. Deadweight, displacement, economic multipliers)
- Identify the role of risk and uncertainty in adjusting impact calculations
- Understand the relevance of discounting and net present values
- Use simple tools for recording and calculating economic impact
- Understand gross value added and its calculation for projects and programmes
- Understand the limitations of economic impact assessment techniques and their relationship to other forms of evidence

Course Format

Monday 4th October, 9.30am to 4.30pm (morning break c15min, lunch c45min, two afternoon breaks c15min)

The course adopts a varied format including structured presentations, a focus on practical application, demonstration, and group discussion. Participants will each receive course resource materials. Small group size: 15 places.

Detailed outline:

- Introductions
- Economic impact assessment in the project or programme lifecycle
- Identifying the main data and factors used to calculate economic impact
- Identifying costs and benefits
- Adjusting costs and benefits: describing additionality and its components
- Identify the role of risk and uncertainty in adjusting impact calculations
- Understand the relevance of discounting and Net Present Values
- Using tools for recording and calculating economic impact
- Capturing data for economic impact assessments
- Gross Value Added and its calculation
- The limitations of economic impact assessment techniques and their relationship to other forms of evidence
- Communicating findings
- Conclusions