The History of Social Return on Investment and the Development of An Internationally Standardized Valuation Methodology

- Social Return on Investment has existed as a conceptual research area for over 60 years.

- The First True Comprehensive Measurement Process:
  - The Government of Scotland – 1990's. The results:

  - Development of a Standardized Methodology:
    - The establishment of the SROI Network
    - Release of the initial SROI Methodology paper 2001
    - Release of the first SROI Methodology Framework draft 2004
    - Release of finalized SROI Methodology Framework 2005
    - Measuring Value – 2nd Edition Published 2008
    - Updated SROI Methodology Framework 2012
    - Consolidation of the SROI Network and Social Industry Analysts Association into Social Value International 2014
    - Updated SROI Methodology Framework 2017

Currently the SROI International economic impact/social return on investment model is the internationally accepted and accredited standard in over 30 countries including the U.K., Canada, France, Japan, Russia, Australia, Italy, Sweden, South Africa, and many others. Social Value – United States is the U.S. Affiliate of Social Value International.

The framework methodology is based on the concept of the Social Value Impact Map. A summary description of the Impact Map follows.

Social Return on Investment Analysis
Impact Map and Valuation Schedules

Description of the SROI Methodology and Data Elements

STAKEHOLDERS and CHANGES

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as the people or organizations that experience change (whether positive or negative) as a result of the activities being analyzed. In SROI analysis the primary stakeholders are those who provide the inputs that enable the services being analyzed.

Intended Changes

Intended changes are those anticipated changes that result from the completion of the activities being delivered through the inputs from stakeholders. These anticipated changes typically are the reasons that the stakeholders have contributed the input resources.

Unintended Changes

Unintended changes are those short- and long-term results that are not expected and were not part of the basis for the stakeholders providing the input resources. (An example of unintended changes is the increase in transportation time and fuel costs resulting from state and local regulations requiring disability services providers to pick up and drop off disabled persons at their doors).

These unintended changes are not forecast, but all changes – both intended and unintended – have financial impacts and are relevant to a SROI analysis.

INPUTS

Input Elements

Inputs are activities resulting in changes with a goal of achieving the planned outputs and the projected outcomes. The SROI analysis process focuses on those input resources that can be measured in financial value terms and that are used up in the course of the activity (i.e. money and time).

Unit of Measure (UOM)

The Unit of Measure is the basis for identifying the quantity of the individual input element. This may be in units such as Dollars, Hours, Portions of Hours, or other measurements as appropriate to each input.

Value per Unit of Measure

Value per Unit of Measure is the calculated financial impact of each input element per the appropriate Unit of Measure used for that input. These values can also include non-monetized inputs such as contributions of goods and services.

OUTPUTS

Output Deliverables

Outputs are the quantitative summary of the deliverable results from an activity. These results are the planned short-term goals of the activities and are typically well measured on a timely basis as completed.

Value per Unit of Measure

Value per Unit of Measure is the calculated financial impact of each output per the appropriate Unit of Measure used for that output.

Basis for Valuation

The Basis for Valuation is a description of the methodology and reasoning for the selection of the most appropriate Value per Unit of Measure for each output.

Output SROI Gross Fiscal Impact

The Gross Fiscal Impact is the Fair Market Value replacement cost for each output service delivered. This is the short-term SROI value that primarily measures the immediate SROI value and the comparative efficiency of the services delivered to the community by the provider.

OUTCOMES

Outcome Results (Description of Change)

Outcomes are the results of the output services delivered. These outcomes may either be the projected and anticipated changes that were the basis of the stakeholders provision of the resources required, or may be unintended and unanticipated changes resulting from these same outputs.

The description of the outcomes needs to be as precise as possible to avoid uncertainty on the measurement indicator basis used and the basis for valuation. Care must also be taken not to confuse outcomes resulting from resource inputs from one shareholder with inputs from other shareholders that can result in double counting of the outcome valuations.

Measurement Indicators

Indicators are measurement points that demonstrate that changes are taking place – that the outcomes are being achieved. These indicators are actions that are capable of being measured on a quantitative basis and that are capable of having financial impacts associated with their changes.

Frequently these outcomes have intermediate results that can occur over a period of years, but there may be observable and measurable changes along the way. It is important to understand what these intermediate changes may be and the financial impacts of these intermediate results, as the time period involved requires indicator tracking to gauge the progress of the activity and because the activities being analyzed may not bring about the anticipated final results but only some intermediate changes in the chain.

Duration of Change

Many types of outcome have a finite life expectance of the resulting benefits. The duration of change element defines this expected useful life of the outcome (when appropriate).

The Duration of Change element is also related to the 'Drop-Off" factor, which defines the reduction of benefits attributed to the outcome over longer periods of time.

BASIS FOR VALUATIONS

The Basis for Valuation is a description of the methodology and reasoning behind the selection of the most appropriate value per Unit of Measure for each outcome. When needed for complete understanding, alternative values are identified and discussed.

There can be types of outcomes that are difficult to value in monetary terms that are routinely left out of traditional economic appraisals. There are several techniques available in SROI analysis to approximate financial values via "proxy" methods that measure financial values via indirect comparative approaches:

• Contingent Valuation assesses via survey people's willingness to pay, or to accept compensation, for a hypothetical product or service.

• Revealed Preference infers valuations from the price of related market-supplied goods or services;

• The Travel Cost method recognizes that people are generally willing to travel some distance to access goods or services on which they place a value. This inconvenience and expense can be translated into money to derive an estimate of the values of the benefits of those goods and services.

Source of Valuation

The Source of Valuation is a description or listing of the research sources used in determining the Basis for Valuation.

VALUATION NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Deadweight %

Deadweight is a measure of the amount of the individual outcome that would have happened even if the output activity had not taken place. It is expressed as a percentage.

Attribution %

Attribution is an assessment of how much of the outcome was not caused by the contribution of each individual output service. This is expressed as a percentage.

The assessment of individual output service contribution can be a highly variable process with multiple conflicting factors. The relative contribution weight of an individual factor can vary from individual to individual, and the calculations can become problematic over long periods of time.

Drop-Off %

In longer periods of time (greater than one year), the amount of outcome is likely to be less, or if the same, will be more likely to be influenced by other factors. Drop-off is an assessment of the ongoing reduced attribution to the outcome factors.

It is expressed as a fixed percentage of deduction from the remaining level of outcome at the end of each year.

SROI NET FISCAL IMPACT

The Outcome Net Fiscal Impact is the total value of all fiscal benefits for each direct output valuation and each consequential outcome valuation (both anticipated and unanticipated) following inclusion of the Valuation Impact and Net Present Value discounting.