NIDOS 2014-17 Strategic / Business Plan Evaluation Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary
2. Background to NIDOS and Evaluation Context
3. Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Methodology
4. Findings
    - (a) Relevance
    - (b) Effectiveness
        - (i) Outcome 1
        - (ii) Outcome 2
        - (iii) Outcome 3
        - (iv) Outcome 4
    - (c) Factors That Have Affected Relevance and Achievement of Outcomes
5. Looking Forward - Key Learning and Recommendations for the Future
    - (a) What is NIDOS / Scotland's International Development Alliance's Added Value?
    - (b) Community Building and Convening
    - (c) International Development versus Organisational Development Capacity Building?
    - (d) Service Level Packaging and Targeting
    - (e) Members' Engagement and Ownership
    - (f) Policy and Influencing
    - (g) Support for Fundraising
    - (h) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
6. Recommendations
7. Annexes
    - A. Evaluation Terms of Reference
    - B. List of documentary evidence
    - C. List of Interviewees
    - D. List of outline questions
    - E. Analysed Results Chain
    - F. Analysis of NIDOS Events by Category, Year, and Members' Participation (2014-17)
    - G. Summary of INTRAC Research Report (2016)
    - H. Staffing chart
    - I. Annotated Excerpts of Scotland's International Development Alliance's 2017-20 Strategic Plan

ACRONYMS

BOND	British Overseas NGOs for Development
CIFAL	International Training Centre for Authorities & Leaders (French / Spanish acronym)
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DfID	UK Department for International Development
FTE	Full time equivalent (staff)
GNI	Gross National Income
ID	International Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOT	Ministry of Transport - a shorthand reference to a basic operating test
NIDOS	Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland
OSCR	Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PQASSO	Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations
SCIO	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
SCVO	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFTF	Scottish Fair Trade Forum
SG	Scottish Government
SINDA	Scotland's International Development Alliance
SMP	Scotland Malawi Partnership

This evaluation was conducted by Fiona Talcott, during February and March 2017, with the help of a wide range of NIDOS members, current and ex-Board members, and current and ex-staff. All have given their time and input generously and thoughtfully, which has been much appreciated.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) unites the international development (ID) sector in Scotland to promote effectiveness and collectively influence the policy agenda. NIDOS was established in 2000, and has over 100 members, ranging from large international development organisations to small charities and community groups. It is led by a mainly elected Board, and activities are delivered by a relatively small secretariat of approximately four (full-time-equivalent) staff. In addition to a small amount of membership and services fee income, NIDOS operations are funded by a core grant from the Scottish Government (SG), which is allied to the delivery of a 3-year Strategic / Business[1] Plan.

This evaluation report focuses on implementation of the most recent Plan that covered the period April 2014 - March 2017, but it's also intended that learning from this evaluation will feed into planning for a new organisational strategy and development of the next three-year Business Plan. The latter are a result of wide ranging consultations that have led to NIDOS' vision, mission, values and objectives being rearticulated, and a new name - Scotland's International Development Alliance (referred to hereinafter as 'the Alliance'). The new strategy is designed to draw more people into the network of supporters of ID, to help them improve their impact, and to strengthen their voice. Membership of the Alliance will not be limited to international development NGOs but will also be open to organisations in other sectors (e.g. universities and private sector organisations), as well as interested individuals.

The purpose of this evaluation is, therefore, to ascertain:

- whether NIDOS has met its aims and objectives for 2014-17,
- the extent to which its members have benefitted from being part of NIDOS;
- how the Alliance can be more relevant and effective in the next 3-year planning period

The evaluation methodology has included:

- A desk review of relevant documentation
- Analysis of existing monitoring data on members' usage of and feedback on NIDOS services, and data from sixteen respondents to a NIDOS Members Survey conducted in December 2016 / January 2017 (eleven of whom participated in full interviews - see below).
- Discussions with current NIDOS staff and Board, and three ex-staff / Board
- One-to-one interviews with a representative sample of twenty NIDOS members providing views from twenty-two member organisations.

Findings - 'Looking Back'

Relevance

The services NIDOS has offered to its members (and non-members) - information, 'effectiveness' and fundraising support, collective policy engagement, training and networking opportunities - are generally relevant to its overall aim ('to strengthen the contributions of Scottish organisations to tackling inequality and poverty worldwide'). Additionally, at a general level, the services are well aligned with members' needs and priorities, but less so when considering specific organisations within the hugely diverse membership at particular points in time - services need to be relevant to where on their organisational journeys each one is at, and timing of service delivery is crucial for take-up. The relevance of services offered by NIDOS to its status as a network was also considered and, while they were generally well matched, some areas showed that what was on offer went beyond the balance of roles and responsibilities between members and the secretariat / staff so that the latter carries out more network functions than it should - i.e. services going beyond just facilitation and support, and without equal *member* participation, a network doesn't exist.

[1] In documents and conversation, the Plan seems to be referred to as the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan interchangeably.

Overall, members believe they have benefitted from being part of NIDOS, especially from being 'kept in the loop' on international development issues / information; fundraising support; networking; effectiveness support; and the individualised and personal approach that NIDOS offers. However, fundraising support linked to specific focused funding streams and funders' country priorities lacks relevance for many members and serves to disengage those who don't fit the criteria but still need fundraising support (perhaps even more).

There are some gaps in service provision (both content and mechanisms) that would be relevant for some members - for example: special interest groups; wider conversations on values, aims and visions not related to funders priorities; more focus on policy areas and collective campaigning; facilitation to grow individual and collective public presence / profiles; tangible pieces of work to collaborate on; and more web-based service delivery.

Effectiveness

NIDOS set itself one overall aim and four objectives (see below) in its 2014-17 Plan, which have been partly achieved, more successfully in the first half of the Plan period than in the second. Unfortunately, NIDOS wasn't able to keep up the initial intensity due to loss of key staff in the summer of 2015, including the Chief Executive and Policy Officer, with only the former being replaced after a gap of many months covered by the ex-Chair. There have also been other staffing gaps caused by resignation and uncovered maternity leave.

Despite the above, and even although some outcomes haven't been fully delivered, NIDOS appears to have done remarkably well to deliver a wide range of planned activities and outputs. Although Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) data has been kept but hasn't been well maintained in the second period, evidence tells us the following:

'**Scottish international development CSOs are stronger and more effective'** - Has shown good impact for, the unfortunately relatively few, member organisations that engaged with the formal effectiveness programme that was seen as too 'clunky' and lacking relevance for many members that are part of larger organisations headquartered elsewhere. Even so, many members who participated in training, events, etc. reported improvements in their knowledge, skills, and capacity, but there's insufficient evidence available to document what changes that led to.

'Scottish organisations in ID are better networked and more collaborative with each other and with others in Scotland and beyond, and as a result have strengthened capacity and impact'. Although its facilitation of networking is well regarded and appreciated by its members, and NIDOS has included a networking element to most of its services, it has been insufficient to achieve this outcome more than partly. Though limited, internal (member to member) collaboration has been more successfully initiated than collaboration with wider stakeholders, there is insufficient evidence to clarify what, if any, impact there has been as a result.

Scottish organisations have greater collective influence on international development policy - This first half of the Plan period was very busy for NIDOS policy and influencing work that achieved a very great deal, through good collaborative work and making effective use of political connections, to successfully achieve large parts of this outcome: increases in levels of SG ID funding; commitments to the Policy Coherence for Development (PCD - see footnote 5 on page 25) approach and 0.7% of national income for ID; and greater Scottish voice within DFID's policy development on the UN's Global Goals. However, NIDOS can probably only claim a limited contribution to some policy change - e.g. the UK government's decision to legislate for 0.7% - but more substantially so for the SG's commitment to PCD.

NIDOS is more effective and can sustainably deliver its Aim and Business Outcomes - Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity especially in 2016/17, NIDOS has been unable to deliver much against this

outcome, and has spent much of that latter period 'fire-fighting'. As a result, it hasn't managed to diversify its funding base and increase its income generation, but it has improved some systems for organizational review (notably developing a quality action plan and its financial management and administration) but less so on its impact measurement. Although the remaining and new staff and Board have worked hard and well together, NIDOS has not managed to increase its membership.

Key Factors that have affected relevance of services and achievement of outcomes.

- NIDOS recognises the large diversity of member organisations it has, and works with them in an approachable and responsive manner.
- Service delivery processes / mechanisms (including timing) are equally important to content / category for actual take-up.
- Supporting members individually, especially through problem-led engagement, is successful but resource- intensive.
- Networking works best if it is deliberate and targeted (not hit or miss), and it's able to be followed up.
- Achievement has been enabled by:
  - member expertise and commitment
  - making good use of connections and relationships at UK (especially DfID) and European levels
  - working in partnership with other networks and service providers
  - the flexible approach and commitment of remaining / new staff
  - Board engagement
  - review and development of internal management / administrative systems.

Services are unlikely to be taken up if:
- they don't fit with members' profiles / needs
- they're readily available and/or more relevant from elsewhere
- time-benefit analysis concludes that they aren't valuable or relevant enough to warrant engagement
- they're perceived as too time-consuming
- they're not offered at the 'right' time, when members actually need them
- they're subject to 'hard sell'
- they're not 'sold' at all (people unaware of them and their appropriateness / relevance for them)
- they're not packaged to make them accessible - including language used, location held, inappropriate modes of delivery for specific individual and organisational journeys / ways of working.

Outcomes haven't been achieved because of:
- insufficient resources / capacity gaps
- too few planned services actually delivered
- it's difficult for members to sustain relationships without tangible work to progress together
- MEL framework not maintained sufficiently

Findings - 'Looking Forward'

Most importantly, there is nothing in the findings above that suggests the need for substantial changes in the new Alliance strategy. The changes it does suggest are mostly around nuance, emphasis, and proposed additions and tweaks.

Going forward, in addition to noting and acting on the learning on key factors above, it'll be important for the Alliance to:

› Concentrate on the international development component of the services it offers.

- Recognise the even larger diversity of the Alliance's likely membership and the need to realign staffing to focus on facilitation, sifting through and signposting individual members to a range of internal and external resource options. These processes will be resource-intensive, especially in maintaining good understanding of specific members' needs, but also for signposting to be kept up to date. Establishing a help-desk system for triage, and monitoring incoming demands, may be a useful first step in ensuring a more self-help or collective-support approach can be developed for members.

- Focus on community-building within the Alliance, and (re)engaging and growing member interaction, participation and ownership to co-deliver services. Priority mechanisms should include development of a suite of accessible organisational / governance documents; the creation and facilitation of sub-sector interest groups; and more web-based services for member participation and learning.

- Reach out to other networks and service providers to clarify what the Alliance intends to focus on and what it seeks to collaborate on, so that roles and relationships with other, perhaps more generic charity service providers in Scotland and elsewhere, can be properly developed / reaffirmed

- Kickstart the policy and influencing work again and put renewed emphasis on public- as well as politician-facing profile raising for international development, the Alliance and its members. Ideally, additional funding should be sourced to support this strand of the Alliance's work, and more use should be made of social media.

- Develop a new fit-for-purpose MEL framework and data gathering mechanisms that are clearly thought through so that the right things are measured and monitored for effective management that links to the Alliance's overall aims and objectives. It is recommended that the review of the MEL systems includes the development of a robust risk management plan that is used and acted on.

- Increase its income.

2. BACKGROUND ON NIDOS AND EVALUATION CONTEXT

The Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) unites the international development sector in Scotland to promote effectiveness and collectively influence the policy agenda. NIDOS was established in 2000, and today it has over 100 members. The latter range from large international development organisations to small charities and community groups, often run exclusively by volunteers, as well as a number of other membership-based networking, support and campaigning bodies. NIDOS is led by a Board that's currently made up of nine elected representatives from large and small member organisations, together with three co-optees. Day-to-day activities are delivered by a relatively small secretariat of approximately four (full-time-equivalent - FTE) staff. In addition to membership and services fee income, NIDOS operations are funded by a core grant of approximately £130,00 per annum from the Scottish Government (SG), which is allied to the delivery of a 3-year Business Plan. The only other substantive grants NIDOS has received is approximately £20,000 per annum from the UK Department for International Development's (DfID) for 'effectiveness' work.

This evaluation report focuses on implementation of the most recent Plan that covered the period April 2014 - March 2017, a significant period that included general elections in Scotland and the UK; the independence referendum in Scotland; and the global development framework transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the broader and universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); DfID's Civil Society Partnership Review; and the SG's revision of its ID Policy.

Although no explicit organisation-level Theory of Change has been articulated, the results chain in NIDOS 2014-17 Business Plan logically links one overall aim and four intended outcomes:

- Overall aim: To strengthen the contributions of Scottish organisations to tackling inequality and poverty worldwide.
- Outcome 1: Scottish ID Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are stronger and more effective.
- Outcome 2: Scottish organisations in ID are better networked and more collaborative with each other and others in Scotland and beyond, and as a result have strengthened capacity and impact.
- Outcome 3**:** Scottish organisations have greater collective influence on ID policy.
- Outcome 4: NIDOS is more effective and can sustainably deliver its Aim and Business Outcomes.

Throughout 2016, a strategic planning process for 2017-20 has been carried out, with wide ranging consultations with NIDOS members throughout Scotland, and key stakeholders such as the Scottish Government, the UK DfID and the UK-wide network of international development NGOs, BOND. Through this process, NIDOS' vision, mission, values and objectives have been rearticulated, and a new name (Scotland's International Development Alliance) has been adopted to reflect its new direction. The new strategy is designed to draw more people into the network of supporters of ID, to help them improve their impact, and to strengthen their voice. Thus, membership of the Alliance will not be limited to international development NGOs but will also be open to organisations in other sectors (e.g. universities and private sector organisations), as well as interested individuals. It is intended that learning from this evaluation will feed into planning for this new organisational strategy and further development of the next three-year Business Plan.

3. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this evaluation is:

1. To examine critically NIDOS' implementation of the 2014 - 2017 Strategic Plan, and in particular:
   a. To help NIDOS learn to what extent it has met the aim and objectives of the 2014-17 Plan;
   b. To help NIDOS learn the extent to which members have benefitted from being part of NIDOS.
2. To inform programming decisions in the next funding cycle (2017-2020).

In line with the purpose, but due to the limited time and resources available, this evaluation is focused on two of the five OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance, namely *relevance* and *effectiveness*, and on answering the following evaluation questions:

To examine critically NIDOS' implementation of its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan (i.e. 'looking back')

- To what extent are NIDOS services relevant to the achievement of its overall aim?
- To what extent are NIDOS services aligned with members' needs and priorities?
- To what extent have NIDOS activities achieved their intended outcomes?

To inform programming decisions in the next funding cycle (2017-2020) (i.e. 'looking forward').

- How (if at all) can NIDOS services be made more relevant to its overall aim?
- How (if at all) can NIDOS services be better aligned with members' needs and priorities?
- How (if at all) can NIDOS be more effective in achieving its intended outcomes?

Methodology

To answer these questions, the evaluation process has included:

1. A desk review of:
   - relevant documentation - see Annex B for details
   - existing monitoring data - including a spreadsheet of members' usage of NIDOS services; users' feedback on NIDOS services (detailed in a spreadsheet of evaluation data, online evaluation and survey forms, etc.)
   - data from 17 respondents to a NIDOS Members Survey conducted in December 2016 / January 2017 (11 of whom participated in full interviews - see '4' below).

2. An inception meeting (25 January), focus group discussion (7 February), and subsequent one-to-one discussions / electronic communications, with NIDOS' staff.

3. A brief focus group discussion with NIDOS' Board of Trustees (1 March), and a one-to-one interviews with an ex-Board member (8 February) and the previous Board Chair (14 February).

4. 20 interviews providing views from 22 NIDOS member organisations (see list at Annex C), selected as a representative sample (e.g. a cross-section of sizes of organisation, location within Scotland, levels of engagement with NIDOS and usage of different services, country / sector focus, etc.). Outline questions were sent to interviewees in advance - see Annex D. Approximately half of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and the rest by phone / skype.

5. An interview with NIDOS' longest-serving mentor (9 February).

6. An interview with an ex-NIDOS Effectiveness Advisor (16 February).

This spread of data sources (including a total of 31 member organisations) has allowed for an adequate range of inputs and views to be considered, and for analysis of data be triangulated to test accuracy of evidence. However, NIDOS stated that, due to timing / budget considerations, it did not want consultation with external stakeholders included in the scope of this evaluation. Nor did it want much attention paid by the evaluator to the content of the new strategic plan as it had already been formulated and agreed by members, and formed the basis of a 3-year grant application to the SG.

In the course of this evaluation, considerable use has been made of NIDOS' Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System, which is focused on supporting implementation of the different elements of its business plan (rather than its functions and effectiveness as a network). Overall, the results framework is quite robust, providing a clear picture of how activities tie in with outputs and intended outcomes,

with relevant indicators being monitored and reported on to NIDOS's Board and the SG. Initially, monitoring data was actively sought and maintained but, due to capacity issues and patchy feedback from participants / responses to surveys, monitoring against targets hasn't been maintained as thoroughly in the second half of this Plan period. This evaluation has, however, drawn extensively from NIDOS's MEL quantitative and qualitative data, including a variety of valuable spreadsheets covering event, activity and service participant and recipient evaluations, annual reports to funder, and an external evaluation of the Effectiveness Programme jointly contracted with BOND, conducted by INTRAC.

4. FINDINGS

(a) Relevance

Relevance of NIDOS services to the achievement of its Overall Aim

One of the main evaluation questions asks "to what extent are NIDOS services relevant to the achievement of its overall aim" (to strengthen the contributions of Scottish organisations to tackling inequality and poverty worldwide)? To answer this, the overall aim and what is meant by 'NIDOS services' needs to be unpacked. Through doing that, it is apparent that, to be relevant, 'NIDOS services' need to focus both on organisational strengthening and acting effectively to tackle inequality and poverty. More specifically, 'NIDOS services' need to encompass a range of capacity building functions (generic to those delivered by many other networks) such as organisational development and performance improvement; knowledge development and management; amplification of voices and advocacy; convening and community-building; and resource mobilisation.

In terms of the content of the services (i.e. the subject matter of knowledge management, events that convene members, advocacy statements amplified, etc.), these need to be relevant in current social-political and economic operating environment - for example, relevant to the Post-2015 global development framework transitions, various political elections and concomitant policy change, funding constraints, and public calls for greater cross-sector transparency and accountability.

Finally, the term 'Scottish organisations' is deliberately broadly defined to indicate that services need to be relevant not just to member and non-member CSOs, but also to a wide range of stakeholders whose policy and practice impact on poverty reduction worldwide.

From evidence collected from NIDOS' website and newsletter; its activities and feedback data; bi- and annual reports to the SG; and interviews with members about the types of services that have been delivered, and the content of them, it is apparent that the majority of 'NIDOS services' are relevant to achieving its overall aim. Particular 'services' over the 3-year business plan period have mainly focused on information; organisational development, fundraising and advocacy support; training; events; networking opportunities; and outreach. For example, services have included:

- addressing organisational effectiveness issues such as governance and transparency on both collective and one-to-one bases;
- training and providing access to expertise in charity law, grant management and social media
- proactive policy influencing activities focused at Scottish, UK, and international levels;
- bringing members together with funders and building capacity of members to bid successfully for the likes of the SG small grants programme; as well as
- facilitating a wide range of networking activities (including in the margins of other events) that have brought together CSOs, and a smaller number that have included academics, politicians and officials, and members of the public (for example at NIDOS AGMs and through the Scotland v Poverty exhibition that highlighted members' contributions to poverty eradication).

All of that notwithstanding, see discussion below on perceived gaps in provision.

Relevance of NIDOS Services to its Status as a Network

While 'NIDOS Services' can be perceived as the *services* that are delivered by the secretariat for the members (e.g. enabling access to funding databases, and newsletter publication), these aren't always of direct relevance to the Network's overall aim. Alternatively, 'NIDOS Services' can be perceived as the *functions* that the Network as a whole performs to achieve its overall aim (e.g. knowledge management; advocacy; and convening). These, and a number of other relatively generic, functions detailed in the table below are what all three components of the Network (secretariat, board and members) do, and can more easily be seen as directly relevant. It may therefore be useful to clarify that '**NIDOS services' can mean both the collectively delivered functions alongside those delivered solely by the secretariat, the latter of which would generally be considered the functions of *supporting* and *facilitating* Network members to strengthen their contributions**. If members are not co-delivering the principal five network functions, the network would cease to exist, and the secretariat would become merely a singular service delivery organisation with far fewer mechanisms and buy-in to ensure relevance and ultimate impact. In short, the services / functions need also to be relevant in terms of the needs of a network, and the processes used for supporting and facilitating (i.e. th e mechanisms used) also need to be relevant, especially for members' needs and priorities.

Table 1: The five network functions[2]

Function	Purpose	How does the network carry out this function?	How does the supporting entity support this function?
Knowledge management	Identify, filter and share important people, events, facts and stories; stimulate learning; mitigate information overload	Sharing information through websites; contributing to or editing a journal or newsletters; diffusion of ideas; storytelling; mentoring	Editing websites, publications and newsletters; moderating mailing lists; passing on relevant/useful information
Amplification and advocacy	Extending the reach and influence of constituent parts – members, ideas, initiatives	Hosting conferences, running campaigns, publishing targeted material, providing extension services, ripple effect	Disseminating publications, newsletters; managing campaigns; coordinating field work; representing the network
Community building	Building of social capital through bonding, building relationships of trust; consensus and coherence; collective learning and action among homogeneous actors	Hosting learning, networking or social events; creating opportunities to collaborate with others; providing space for open discussions	Organising events, facilitating internal introductions, coordinating projects or initiatives
Convening	Building social capital through bridging; stimulating discourse, collective learning and action among heterogeneous actors	Hosting formal multi-stakeholder meetings or discussion/decision-making events, enabling reputation by association, identifying and connecting new or emerging ideas	Organising events, maintaining contacts, facilitating external introductions, representing the network
Resource mobilisation	Increasing the capacity and effectiveness of members, stimulating knowledge creation and innovation	Offering training, grants, sponsorship, consultancy and advice; providing access to databases and libraries	Brokering training opportunities and consultancies/advice, managing grants and sponsorship programmes, administering database/library access

Even through analysing NIDOS services through this lens, what it is doing seems, as a whole, to be mainly relevant to the overall aims of the Network. However, a few things that would be relevant in the example lists, or have been identified by members, have not been delivered or only patchily or too much by the secretariat (and not enough by the members) - and these are discussed in the 'Relevance to members' section below and the findings on 'Effectiveness' in Section 4(b).

[2] Taken from ODI Background Note "Not everything that connects is a network"

Relevance of NIDOS 'Services' for Non-Members / Wider Stakeholder Groups

In terms of wider stakeholders that are included in the broadly defined 'Scottish organisations' in NIDOS' overall aim, there is strong evidence of relevance because a significant amount of policy-influencing services was delivered, and many NIDOS services have actually been driven by wider stakeholders' agenda and priorities. For example, the facilitation of funder-related outreach and consultation; responses to government policy development processes; and networking events where other sector representatives have participated.

Additionally, NIDOS' evaluation data makes reference to participation of 34 non- and potential-members in various events (between 2104-17), which seems to indicate that some services are relevant enough at least on paper to encourage them to sign up and, for the 5 that went on to become members, that they had engaged with something they felt was sufficiently relevant for them. (The others included a few representatives from funders, academia, mainly domestically-focused CSOs and churches, as well as 4 'anonymous', 5 individuals, and 1 business.) However, with the exception of considerable efforts to reach out to diaspora communities, there doesn't seem to have been any services specifically designed to develop two-way communication or collaboration between different sectors with an interest in international development (e.g. academia, the private sector or the media). Unfortunately, no data on non-member participation in NIDOS' annual conferences or, say, its newsletter readership, is available.

Alignment of NIDOS Services with Members' Needs and Priorities

Another key evaluation question asks "to what extent are NIDOS services aligned with members' needs and priorities? ". The short answer to this question is, at a general overview level, services are quite well aligned but, when looked at in detail, the answer changes to partially and sometimes, depending on individual members' changing needs and priorities, and the specific services on offer.

The evidence for this is drawn from service user data (including participation levels), membership survey responses, interviews with individual member organisations, and discussions with NIDOS staff and Board. Slight bias was apparent from faded and selective memory but this has been ameliorated by service user data that's been relatively accurately kept on an on-going basis.

Designing and delivering services that are relevant to members' needs and priorities is challenging for NIDOS because of the huge diversity that must be catered for. It's not just a case of different sized organisations wanting different things, it's also driven by member organisation:

- structure and remit - e.g. local single entity, a branch of a UK body, a membership body, part of an international group or network, focused solely on international development or only one stream within a larger remit, etc.
- functions - e.g. advocacy and campaigning, funding conduits, service delivery, volunteer-sending, research, humanitarian relief
- geographical focus - e.g. worldwide, Malawi, other non-SG priority country oriented, or domestic
- sector specialisms - e.g. health, education, water, trade, sport, environment, gender
- channels that they work through and within - e.g. faith organisations, community activists, paid staff, different age groups, specific southern partners, and/or all or none of the above
- funding - e.g. wholly or partially through members and supporters' fees, statutory grants, private donations, philanthropic legacies, service delivery fees collected regularly or rarely.

All of which dictates members' interests, capacities (e.g. to engage, absorb and act), and their needs and demands over time. The latter is absolutely crucial and has been a caveat explicitly mentioned by the vast majority of interviewees - that relevance of services to them is very often a function of timing (scheduling, and point in organisation's journey / development) and time (available to make it relevant enough for take-up) - and NIDOS largely recognises this.

The importance of timing for relevance also relates to members' needs and priorities (and those of the Network as a whole) reacting to external change, and there is good evidence that NIDOS services have remained largely relevant because NIDOS has recognised and delivered against new requirements, for example, for knowledge and advocacy on international issues during the Scottish Independence Referendum, and to both advocacy against, and compliance with, regulatory requirements for the new Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIOs) governance structure.

To try to ensure relevance of services (amongst other things), NIDOS has ….

- communicated frequently with its members to know what services they need
- advertised the services (e.g. at new members' meetings and in the newsletter) so that members know what benefits they can derive
- collected and monitored members' feedback on services
- tried to ensure that each service offered is of a consistently high quality.

For example, a members' survey was conducted in January 2017, which gleaned the following:

Summary of NIDOS Membership Survey - January 2017
Responses from 16 member organisations (2 large, 1 medium, 3 developing, 5 small, and 5 very small)
14 found their membership of NIDOS quite or extremely useful.
The most useful aspects of membership were perceived to be: - Being kept in the loop of what goes on in the international development sector (13) - Access to training (9) - Help with fundraising (9) - Help to make my organisation more effective (8)
Services respondents thought they're very or quite likely to access in the coming year: - Training courses/webinars (15) - Support and advice on occasional queries (13) - Networking Events (12) - NIDOS Annual Conference &AGM (12) Least likely - Mentoring scheme and Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Group
The most relevant forms of fundraising support were: - Access (through the NIDOS subscription) to the Trustfunding database (14) - Training/webinars on fundraising (14) - Information sessions with funders (12) - Funding updates on NIDOS newsletter and website (10)
"I would, or maybe would, be more likely to participate in NIDOS event if...." - The topics were more relevant to my organisation* (12) - They were held in a location nearer to me* (10) - Online participation was available* (10) - I received reminders by email and text messages* (9) - They were cheaper and free (7) ** These are discussed below.*

Additionally, individual feedback from evaluation interviewees on relevance of services, and benefits they felt they've received from NIDOS membership, most often included the following:

Which NIDOS services are most relevant / beneficial for your organisation? (General area, plus specific example answers in italics)	**# of Mentions (out of 22)**
Fundraising support - up to date information on opportunities, access to funders, applications being reviewed by NIDOS staff, etc. *"Support with SG small grants application - info sessions, facilitated trustee discussions, and review of drafts (language, big picture, gaps, etc.)"* *"Where to go and not to go for funding is useful."* *"Info on funding and connections with funders (e.g. SG and DfID)."*	13
Information - access to / dissemination of *"Good quality, up to date info - helps flag things up."* *"The newsletter, which we share widely through our mailing lists"* *"Couldn't survive without them as wouldn't even know the language* [of ID]*."* *"Services that let you know who to go to for help (e.g. new member's meetings)"*	11
(Organisational) Effectiveness support / Mentoring *"Most relevant is organisational management stuff as we struggle with that."* "[Organisational] *MOT and light mentoring helped us put many systems in place = great added value."* *"Showing we're part of an organisation that promotes good practice - builds confidence in us, and our own self-confidence too".*	10
Networking *"Networking - it can fix anything!"* *"Enables us to meet with other groups as NIDOS knows who's around and facilitates the networking."* *"Networking - informing and getting smaller and large together - it's not exclusive."*	8
Training / access to expertise *"the effective budgeting course was scary but good, and upcoming exchange rates workshop is spot-on - just what we need"* *"SCIO training - very helpful and reassuring"* *"Access to expertise, especially mentoring and help with log frames."*	8
Policy engagement - learning about; being involved in; getting support for *"Involvement in consultations which we wouldn't always be able to do on our own. Helps to be part of a shared group rather than doing a full process of putting it in on our own - and can remain anonymous."* *"Learning about government policies including DfID policies very useful."*	7
MEL Working Group *"2 team members brought back best practice that we implemented."* *"MEL Group - has been good for sharing lessons and ideas (e.g. value for money talk). "Excellent!"*	5
Events - e.g. AGM, inspirational speakers, multi benefits of *"Great speakers, and well-managed and organised events that are sufficiently different from each other to be interesting"* *"Free group meetings and events with specialised speakers - conference at Pollock Halls - met new Minister".*	4
Not being alone / being made to feel part of something *"A sense of belonging - we were welcomed from the beginning, offered a space and they featured us - excellent."* *"NIDOS has walked with us every time we've needed them - every time we knock."* *"Gives us an opportunity to participate - size doesn't matter."*	4

Outreach - being featured beyond own organisational reach *"Scotland v Poverty - interesting outreach work that we couldn't have done on our own."* *"A volunteer found us via our entry in the NIDOS membership directory."*	3
Adverts - ability to place them (and get responses) *"Publication of our recruitment ads that get responses."* *"Available whenever we want to put them in."*	2
Small Organisations / Members Group *"Decided amongst ourselves what we wanted to do next, and provided opportunities to talk about things in common in a low key way around a table"*	2

Analysis of all these members' views, and data collected by NIDOS on service usage, highlight a number of consistencies and quite a few contradictions. For example:

- Being 'kept in the loop' on international development / information services, fundraising support, networking, and effectiveness support are all rated very highly, but training is perceived as more useful in the members' survey than with the interviewees (perhaps because it's included alongside webinars - see paragraph below). However, any or all of these service categories can be aspects of the same event / service and may or may not be presented or perceived as such.[3] Also, as part of NIDOS' usual practice, all events, training, etc. are designed to provide useful networking opportunities for participants as an additional benefit to course or event content. Hence it is very difficult to tease out what is perceived as the most relevant aspect without additional, very specific, evidence gathering (including pre-engagement warning of participants that they're going to be asked to try and differentiate about it).

- Are low participation / attendance rates related to lack of, or insufficient, relevance?
  It is apparent that various services are collectively and/or individually valued and relevant but, although NIDOS service usage data tells us that the NIDOS AGM can get 100-200 attendees and policy-oriented events average 15-30 participants, training courses and even fundraising support attract, on average, only 5-10 participants, and some things are cancelled due to insufficient numbers registering. Additionally, a few members have not engaged with any NIDOS services over the whole three years of the Business Plan. This seems quite contradictory and may suggest that, as mentioned above, timing is critical. Indeed, many of the smaller member organisations, in particular, seem to experience a degree of difficulty in assessing different calls on their time and choosing when to engage. Similarly, over 50% of the members' survey respondents indicated that they'd be more likely to participate if services were delivered in a location nearer to them, if online participation were available, and/or if they were sent an email or text reminder about upcoming events - perhaps indicating that travel time and last minute decision-making (i.e. the processes or mechanisms) are more or equally important compared to content or functional relevance for actual take-up of services. However, 75% of those surveyed (i.e. a wide range of organisations) stated that they'd be more likely to participate in NIDOS event if the topics were more relevant to their organisation - but this doesn't, in itself, tell us that the topics / subject matter of existing services aren't relevant, only that there are others that could be more relevant - see below.

- When asked explicitly about the most relevant forms of fundraising support, members' survey respondents appeared to think that most of the five options mentioned would be. This may be genuine as, for example, accessing the 'Trustfunding' database delivers very specific relevance for

[3] For example, it is often perceived that larger member organisations don't think that effectiveness support is relevant to them, which may be the case in terms of the use of full Effectiveness assessments and tools. However, they are interested in different forms of training and peer-to-peer support which may be advertised differently. Similarly, smaller organisations are not seen as being interested in policy issues but many are - it's just a time issue and things need to be packaged differently for them.

each member, and it can be done whenever is most appropriate for them. Additionally, information sessions with funders was also valued by evaluation interviewees, especially as they didn't feel they could gain that type of access on their own. However, there is also clear evidence that a focus on specific countries or funding streams significantly reduces the perceived relevance for a large proportion of the NIDOS membership - see below.

Also worthwhile in considering relevance of NIDOS services for members' needs and priorities is what services they feel aren't relevant to them, and those they feel they don't get but would be important for them. The following is a summary of feedback (approximately in order of number of times mentioned) obtained from the 31 member organisations that provided evidence for this evaluation.

What and Why things aren't relevant:

- We don't want our organisation to grow or develop, we're happy as we are (i.e. just doing some fundraising).
- There's overlap with other support bodies providing either similar or more directly relevant (e.g. country or specific sector) services.
- Training and funding support tends to be linked to particular funding streams and/or funders' country priorities, which disengages those that don't fit - but still need fundraising support.
- Some things are considered interesting / nice to have, but not essential / practical enough to be relevant if time is limited.
- Mentoring scheme and MEL Group - least likely to be taken up by members' survey respondents (8 and 7 quite unlikely, and 2 and 3 not sure / don't know about it, respectively) - but no explanation of why provided.
- No need for training / support as expertise is available internally.
- Partnerships support not seen as relevant as don't have any problems with partners (some / most part of same global network so are known and have shared values, purpose, etc.).
- Mode of operation and more domestic focus limits relevance.
- Don't feel part of anything - motivated by events but, the rest of the time, don't feel we know what's going on.

What services would be relevant that you feel you don't currently get?

- Substantial demand for differentiated interest groups (or introductory workshops at least), e.g. - country specific; small member organisations; larger UK organisations' Scottish arms; sector / study / cluster groups, especially if outside SG priority countries; and a relaunched Business Forum.
- More focus on policy areas, and collective meaningful campaigning - including flagging up current actions and facilitating more joint working.
- Actual tangible pieces of work to collaborate on - currently completely missing.
- Stronger collaborative efforts to make the most of the critical mass that Scotland has in international development sector (to encourage us all to stop ploughing our own furrows).
- The ability to ask questions via website of other members (e.g. a members' forum or egroup).
- More focus on wider conversations, values, aims and visions - not related to funders priorities.
- More non-Central Belt delivery of services, including web-based.
- More support and facilitation to grow presence, raising members' public profiles & collectively amplifying messages (especially via social media and websites)
- Best practice in doing development / aid (not in organisational development) Issues - e.g. communications and different cultural expectations, including timescales, hierarchies, etc.
- Building capacity for themes in country programme - e.g. child protection.
- Volunteer management & retention.

Many of these are interesting and are discussed more fully in Section 5 'Looking Forward' - but some highlight the need to focus on new staff as well as new member organisations, as many people are unaware of current services and those that used to exist (e.g. specialist working groups) but have not

been sustained for one (difficult to completely ascertain) reason or another. The fact that members are requesting similar things to those that have been tried in the past is possibly a good indication of their continued relevance and worthiness of another attempt.

Finally, there are substantial gaps in evidence from what may be dis-satisfied customers as it hasn't been possible to cross-check data with members who have left NIDOS nor with those who have declined to engage with the evaluation. The latter could just be a function of insufficient time available and/or that they may, erroneously, feel that they don't have anything to contribute, but it also may conceal a less positive view of NIDOS than has generally been provided by those who did agree to contribute. Also, as some among the group that didn't engage were non-Central Belt members (i.e. those who are located in smaller towns and villages across Scotland and therefore can't easily access all NIDOS services), a specific request was made for (even brief) input from others outside the Central Belt, which unfortunately gained only one response. Whatever the reasons, it hasn't been possible to rectify these data limitations, and this needs to be recognised.

Key Findings on Relevance
To be relevant to its overall aim, 'NIDOS services' need to: - encompass a range of capacity building functions - include content that reflects the current social-political and economic operating environment - align not just with member and non-member CSOs, but also a wide range of stakeholders whose policy and practice impact on poverty reduction worldwide - reflect its status as a network, with the secretariat concentrating on supporting and facilitating members. ✔✔✔The majority of NIDOS services are relevant to achieving its overall aim. ✔✔½ There is relatively strong evidence of relevance for wider stakeholders' agenda and priorities. However, few services have been specifically designed to develop relevant two-way communication or collaboration between different sectors (e.g. academia, the private sector or the media). ✔✔A relatively small number of non- and potential-members have participated in events, indicating that at least some services are relevant enough for them to engage. ✔✔½ At a general overview level, NIDOS services are quite well aligned to members' needs and priorities but, only partly and sometimes when considered in detail according to the changing needs and priorities of individual members and the specific services on offer. Because of the huge diversity of members, designing and delivering services relevant to their needs and priorities is challenging. ✔✔✔NIDOS staff and Board have made considerable effort to try to ensure ongoing relevance of services, and have recognised and delivered against new requirements. Being 'kept in the loop' on international development / information services, fundraising support, networking, and effectiveness support are well-aligned and valued by members. However, it is difficult to tease out comparisons as any or all service categories can be aspects of the same activity. Relevance of services is very often a function of timing (scheduling, and when they're offered relative to the point in an organisation's journey / development that it's at) and time (that things require, and how much time members have available, to make it relevant enough for take-up). So, service delivery processes / mechanisms may be more or equally important compared to relevance of content or function for actual take-up of services.

Most forms of fundraising support are seen as relevant. However, there is also clear evidence that a focus on specific countries or funding streams significantly reduces the perceived relevance for a large proportion of the NIDOS membership whose work doesn't fit with them - but still need support.

Some services are of questionable relevance for some members - for example, because they don't perceive a need for them; they don't fit the target audience profile; they get the services elsewhere; and/or the time-benefit analysis tells them the service(s) aren't valuable or relevant enough to warrant engagement.

There are some gaps in service provision (both content and mechanisms) that would be relevant for some members - for example:

- Special interest groups;
- Best practice in doing development / aid work (not organisational development);
- More focus on wider conversations, values, aims and visions - not related to funders priorities;
- More focus on policy areas, and collective campaigning;
- More support and facilitation to grow individual and collective presence, public profiles, and amplifying messages;
- Tangible pieces of work to collaborate on;
- An electronic members' forum or egroup;
- More non-Central Belt delivery of services, including web-based.

See Section 5 'Looking Forward' for discussion of issues and key learning that may inform programming decisions for the new strategic plan.

(b) Effectiveness

The third key evaluation question 'looking back' at how NIDOS has implemented its 2014-17 Business Plan asks "to what extent have NIDOS activities achieved their intended outcomes"?

Outcome 1: Scottish international development CSOs are stronger and more effective.

As can be seen from the colour-coded Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at Annex E, all **Activities** planned under Outcome 1 were delivered, except peer involvement in effectiveness reviews; the provision of effectiveness related sessions in collaboration with diaspora groups; and the provision of paid-for packages of support to non-members, all activities delivered. Evidence to conclude this has been cross-checked across many direct and indirect sources, making it generally quite robust.

However, although there is monitoring data for **Output and Outcome** levels, it isn't extensive after Year 1 and doesn't always address the indicators. What does exist, tells us the following about what NIDOS **members** think about improvements in organisational and individual skills, knowledge and effectiveness:

- NIDOS Effectiveness and Training Events Evaluation Data

  - although considerable effort has been put into collecting feedback, little is strong enough to be properly comparable and useable. For example, different questions are asked on different forms; some answers are quantitative while others are free flowing text; and different classifications are used (some versions use a four grade scale such as no increase/some/quite a bit/large increase in, say, skills and knowledge, and other use a five grade scale between strongly agree and strongly disagree that, say, I have increased my understanding and capacity). Finally, there are few or no baselines.

- given the difficulties mentioned above, the clearest assessment of the evidence from members in post-event feedback that it's possible to provide is to say that participants generally reported that the training / support had put them in the mid-range of improvement. Only one person said they had had no improvement; roughly 10% said they'd had a large increase in knowledge / skills / capacity, and the remainder were in the mid-categories of some / quite a bit improvement. Some, especially training, sessions were assessed for their overall value and generally scored 80-100%, which is very good but it's not possible to translate all of above to confidently say that this led to change and that the specific percentages in the indicator targets in the Business Plan M&E framework have been met.

- NIDOS April 2016 Training Survey

  - generally, the five responses to the question about whether training has led to changes in organisational practice were 'No, but I expect to in the future / too soon to tell'.

- NIDOS Effectiveness Package MOT Users' Feedback Forms

  - Of the eleven organisations that utilised the introductory 'MOT' organisational effectiveness assessment and tools, eight completed feedback forms, with five saying they had increased their knowledge, skills, confidence and/or access to tools for strengthening effectiveness 'quite a bit' and three said they'd experienced a 'large increase'.

  - Additionally, three thought that as a result of the effectiveness work, there will be 'some improvement' in practice in their organisation, resulting in strengthened effectiveness, and five thought there would be 'strong improvement'. For this group, and for those that engaged the services of a NIDOS mentor outside of the formal organisational effectiveness assessment (i.e. to help them with specific self-defined tasks), almost all thought the individual facilitators / mentors were 'excellent', with one rating them 'very good', and the other 'good'.

Extracts from Participant Feedback

"Awareness-raising is a slow process and NIDOS staff are very good listeners."

"Speaking personally, I particularly appreciated the list of tools and sources of support [but] I value what we have already achieved - in organisational terms - a little more."

"By concentrating on tasks, the [effectiveness toolkit] bypasses 'people-oriented' issues, which are as important to good management as task-orientation."

"The resources for the MOT were provided quickly and this enabled people to participate in the process, even if they could not attend the meeting."

[I have gained] "confidence in speaking up about issues and addressing them, [and] the skill of noticing the strengths, as well as the weaknesses".

"There is no doubt that the board has gained more understanding of the challenges and opportunities we face. The process created opportunities for all board members to participate, and has amounted to a good deal of team-building."

"We looked into doing the MOT but thought it was still too big for us so didn't pursue it. It helped us recognise the need for some basic policies, which we've now put in place."

"In Scotland, the MOT was helpful, especially for benchmarking, team-building, and the reflection parts of the process. Our trustees were all interested, but its use was also a condition of our first capacity building grant [from LloydsTSB] so funding focused the mind! It was an absolute disaster trying to use it with Malawi partners as the language and concepts weren't culturally transferable. Also, it was all designed to be used with electronic forms, so was useless without electricity."

- NIDOS MEL Working Group

  - two of the three participants that provided feedback thought their participation had 'somewhat' added to their personal knowledge and one thought they had 'a lot'. All thought it was 'too early to tell' whether this would lead to changes in organisational practice

  - four of the sample member interviewees mentioned the MEL Group as the main or only way that NIDOS support has helped make their organisations 'stronger and more effective' - but their participation hadn't particularly affected organisational change. This, and the experience of the group above, isn't surprising as all but one is a large organisation with well-established M&E systems already in place.

- Trustfunding Database
  - five users found this 'very useful' for increasing knowledge of funding opportunities, and another two found accessing it 'somewhat useful'.

Overall, the above evidences well the almost uniformly positive feedback from members, and the high quality of NIDOS' effectiveness and training services. However, especially given the high quality, numbers of participants (and of those who provided feedback) have been disappointingly small (see Annex F for details). Some reasons for this have to do with relevance that have been discussed above (e.g. time constraints; the fact that much tends to be outside the remit of, say, Scottish branches of larger organisations; and some members may have utilised effectiveness support at an earlier stage of their organisational development - i.e. not during 2014-17). However, other reasons for low uptake relate to the effectiveness of the different components of the Effectiveness Programme itself and, especially, the fact that many member organisations initially found it 'clunky' and difficult to access (in all senses of the word). *"The idea and aims of the Effectiveness Programme were superb, with lots of resources put into it, but it was far too clunky and complicated."*

External Assessment of the Effectiveness Programme

Independent research commissioned by BOND and NIDOS and conducted by INTRAC has provided a more in depth and useful analysis of the Effectiveness Programme - see Annex G. Although the report was made available to NIDOS members and wider stakeholders on the NIDOS website, it unfortunately wasn't disseminated in an active way (i.e. the planned sharing events), nor has it been followed up on. This is mainly because of NIDOS staff time constraints, including the fact that they felt the report wasn't aimed sufficiently at members and would require additional resources to make it more accessible. This is a pity as there are a number of suggestions and recommendations of relevance to, and potentially helpful for, NIDOS' new strategy and planning. See Conclusions and Lessons in Section 5 below.

Conclusions - to what extent has Outcome 1 been achieved?

As shown on the colour-coded Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at Annex E, almost all **Activities** planned under Outcome 1 were delivered. Despite the gaps and limitations in the data, there's a reasonable probability that **Outcome 1 and its Outputs** have at least partly, if not largely, been achieved, and many year-on-year targets been achieved. The exceptions are 'skills / confidence in fundraising' where the % increase appears to have been relatively fully met (though that's not to say they're always successful!), and 'members reporting strengthened financial strategy' and 'meeting financial reporting requirements to OSCR on time' which have insufficient data to make any assessment of. It's a 'reasonable probability' because almost everyone that used effectiveness support and training reported improvements in their knowledge, skills, and capacity, but there's insufficient evidence available to document all the changes that led to. We can, however, definitely can say that some members, for example, the eleven that did the MOT / Health Check and the thirteen that have had mentoring, have implemented changes that have made them stronger and more effective.

While NIDOS is no longer pursuing the Effectiveness Programme in its original form, low participation rates are still a genuine concern, including in the second half of the Plan period when many less services were actually on offer. For those who did engage, there is evidence of impact, especially from individually specifically targeted support. Training has also delivered high quality content but suffered from relatively low take-up, except where it was incentivised by association with funding opportunities - see below.

Factors that have influenced Outcome 1 Achievement or Non-Achievement

(a) Factors and service characteristics which have enabled positive engagement and helped NIDOS members to be stronger and more effective:

NIDOS
- includes a viable group of people (staff and members) who push things forward
- is open to feedback and change
- has approachable staff
- recognises the huge range of member organisations it has, and works with it.

The mentoring rather than consultancy approach (helping people, rather than doing it for them) has built ownership and greater sustainability of change for member organisations.
Mentors were recruited who are quite adaptable in offering a wide range of support at different levels.

Supporting members individually has been most successful (including individuals getting moral support).
Problem-led engagement has enabled tailored services for member organisations, who can then actually utilise the effectiveness tools that are available and most suitable for them.
Organisations need to meet basic requirements such as having a business plan, and once they have that it's easier to start working with them, and they often progress quite quickly.
Organisations with low capacity but high willingness are best to focus on if resources are limited.

The MOT and the Health Check worked well for both structure and as a hook for support services.
Benchmarking has encouraged organisations to become better as they're relevant and breaks things down into what they really need to do.

Providing training and support linked to funding is a good, focused and tangible ways to get member organisations to think about effectiveness - for example SG small grants programme support that included SCIO training and support for applications.

The MEL Group is seen as a good model as it functions as a peer-to-peer capacity building group offering soft training, which is sometimes a good way to learn, and it's able to sift and pinpoint best practice without a lot of resources.

(b) Factors and Challenges that Have Hindered Successful Delivery of Outcome 1.

Accessibility of the components of Effectiveness Programme and online tools, including:
- 'clunkiness' of overall design and links between component parts
- the terminology / language / concepts used for both the international development and organisational development elements of support packages are often quite opaque (especially for overseas partners) appear to be off-putting for many members.

Time / Timing:
- perception of members that everything was/is too time-consuming
- the challenge of offering services at the 'right' time, when members actually need things

Belief in its value, and lack of take-up, led to attempts to 'sell' the Effectiveness Programme to members and the extensive promotion may have switched people off - "you can only plug things so much until people start to ignore it"

People are often embarrassed by their organisations performance and/or think services are for other people more needy than them.

Some members don't seem to take advantage of any services and many seem to be unaware of opportunities.

As mentioned in the section on Relevance above, trying to offer support in an appropriate location and mode of delivery for specific individual and organisational journeys remains challenging, especially given resource constraints.

Although cost analysis is beyond the scope of this evaluation, other than time, cost to members shouldn't be a factor affecting outcome achievement as everything has been offered free, apart from a small contribution for the mentoring service (which is paid for collectively by DfID and the member).

In conclusion, there are no doubt member organisations that are stronger and more effective as a result of NIDOS services, there's just not as high a number as hoped and insufficient evidence currently available to prove that targets were met.

Outcome 2: Scottish organisations in international development are better networked and more collaborative with each other and with others in Scotland and beyond, and as a result have strengthened capacity and impact.

As can be seen from the colour-coded Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at Annex E, only some of the **Activities** planned under Outcome 2 have been delivered, principally those designed to deliver Output 2.1 on networking. Very few of those associated with collaboration (Output 2.2) have been delivered to any great degree.
Some monitoring data at **Output** and **Outcome** level does exist but, as with Outcome 1, it isn't extensive, especially in Years 2 and 3. From the evidence that has been collected, and cross-checking as best as possible, the following assessment is provided.

Output 1 (NIDOS member organisations are better networked with each other and with other agencies and groups with an interest in tackling inequality and poverty worldwide) has partly been delivered, with targets for members reporting new contacts and knowledge of other agencies, and increased membership and engagement of diaspora-led organisations, both being met in Year 1. Data for Years 2 and 3, which had fewer events and opportunities for networking, hasn't been as actively collated, and what data has been made available suggests targets were not met. However, two diaspora-led member now sits on the NIDOS Board, which is hoped will help improve engagement with diaspora groups in Scotland after efforts by NIDOS to work with the Africa Council weren't responded to.

The most successful activity under Output 1 has been the huge increase in readership of the NIDOS newsletter. In April 2014 there were 1395 subscribers to the (old pdf format) newsletter, and this number had only increased to 1513 by April 2015, the month a new electronic format newsletter was launched. Nearly two years later, the number of subscribers has almost doubled to 2531 subscribers. Unfortunately, as many people don't complete all sections of the online sign-up form, no target group subscriber statistics have been collected, but some of the new subscribers seem to have non-UK email addresses. In total, about 35% of subscribers open the email, which is above the 30% average for the charity sector (and similar to the open-rates of the top three sectors - legal & accounting; TV & film; and

government)[4]. On average, there's around 300 unique 'click throughs' (by the 800 people who open the emailed newsletter), which implies that many people read / skim through without engaging. However, not all of the newsletter content requires action - reading a headline and brief summary of a news item might be sufficient, depending on that month's content and the reader's interests and time available. The most clicked item in the newsletter, though, is consistently the funding update - usually a minimum of around 30% of all clicks. Vacancies are also popular, but clicks through to other content (news items, events, resources, etc.) vary significantly month-to-month based on the topics, so these aren't tracked separately. This, together with the mixed views of members highlighted below, may indicate that a monthly newsletter isn't always the best vehicle for engaging members in international development issues (i.e. non-funding / vacancies news) and that the readership base isn't necessarily full of NIDOS' target groups.

Evidence on NIDOS Newsletter from Evaluation Interviewees

Of the twenty interviewees, nine did not mention the newsletter at all until asked specifically about it - i.e. it wasn't mentioned as a benefit or something they valued about their membership.

However, the following wildly mixed comments were made.
"The newsletter is …

- great. I share it with trustees. The 'read more' format is a great improvement that allows you to scan and not miss things, and you only need to delve into what you're interested in - all quite quickly - so it's a valuable service;
- not terribly useful for us;
- good;
  not much of great interest to us;
- great but I've not got time to look at it;
- read and shared with other trustees - events info is very interesting;
- funding info is of interest;
- funding info is never of any use to us;
- a big part of NIDOS;
- obviously valued.

I can get demotivated and frustrated, then get some energy when the NIDOS newsletter comes in.
I read / scan it - all trustees are signed up to it so I don't share it further.
I scroll through quickly (e.g. to events and training)."

More broadly, no data on key sector partners (non-member NGOs, academic and policy partners) reporting improved understanding of, and links with, other international development actors in Scotland has been collected. As consultation with external stakeholder is outside the scope of this evaluation, it's not been possible to examine all this any further.

Output 2 on collaboration between NIDOS members, and with wider stakeholders, focused especially on improving impact for communities, is only partly delivered. In addition to very little reporting and monitoring data, most of the activities either weren't delivered or faltered early on. For example, despite efforts to run working groups for Small Organisations, diaspora, South Asia, and effectiveness, only the MEL Group has functioned adequately (with five meetings over the three years involving an average of 10 member organisations). A Private Sector Group / Business Forum was convened and began to collate a document outlining ten case studies of how NIDOS members engage with business in their development work, and a policy group focused on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) also

[4] https://econsultancy.com/blog/67649-the-ultimate-2016-email-marketing-benchmark-guide/

met and produced some very good work (see Outcome 3), but both groups have been short lived. The creation of a South Asia networking forum apparently was thwarted by difficulties over availability of the SG Minister to lead the launch.

However, from comments made by evaluation interviewees, there appears to be a few examples of successful but embryonic collaboration. For example:

- "Through the MEL Group, NIDOS facilitated a collaboration with [*name of large member organisation*] for us, which we wouldn't have known about or been able to call on on our own, and they've also helped us with tips on filling out funding application forms."
- "The Strategy Day 2015 and AGM 2016 were useful. I met a Tanzanian teacher seconded to [*name of a small member organisation*] who helped us with information on linking with primary schools, and we're now going ahead with one. An excellent link - very helpful and enabled us to initiate a link in an informed way."
- "I attended the Open University / NIDOS / SCVO event on the SDGs and met two new people at the networking session after the presentations that we're now working with (the Democratic Foundation and the New Economics Foundation) - we've done one event together and posted to each other's blogs."
- "We've learned about other NGOs work in countries that we're working in (e.g. *name of small member organasitaion* that we're already partnering). We're sharing about challenges and hoping to develop work on inclusion as a result."

Additionally, there have been a few occasions where NIDOS has co-created / co-hosted events with members - e.g. an SDGs workshop with CIFAL Scotland. There's also ample evidence of good collaboration between NIDOS, SMP and the SFTF, especially where their different perspectives can add value (e.g. on public procurement); in co-promoting issues and events (such as elections hustings); and co-hosting training.

In terms of collaboration with wider stakeholders (including Southern partners), the picture is less rosy. Although non-member and other key partners' feedback on major networking events in Year 1 showed that they made new contacts with NIDOS members and some resulted in planned activity, very little evidence has been found to substantiate any results or any subsequent new contacts made at events in Years 2 and 3. Attempts to develop collaboration with partners in Pakistan and Tanzania weren't able to be progressed due to lack of staff resource at both ends. (Engagement with funders has not been considered as collaboration here as the relationships tend to be too imbalanced, with very mixed accountabilities.)

The only links with the media that have been made relate to sponsorship of three films at the Take One Action film festival in Year 1. There's no evidence of any outreach to journalists. More positively, NIDOS' social media activities have included posts to its Facebook page and Twitter feeds to promote NIDOS and members' events. Unfortunately, NIDOS no longer has a social media volunteer, and had not been able to actively develop a larger social media presence.

There was some mapping of international development organisations in Scotland early in 2015, and more has been initiated in early 2017 - but neither has produced any significant results (yet).

<u>Conclusions - to what extent has Outcome 2 been achieved?</u>

Although it's facilitation of networking is well regarded and appreciated by its members (reference its high ranking in the section on Relevance above), and NIDOS has tried to develop its networking function, it has been insufficient to achieve Outcome 2 more than partly (but see also Outcome 3 for an area of greater collaboration). Internal (member to member) collaboration has been more successfully initiated than collaboration with wider stakeholders, and neither have achieved any obvious positive impact for

communities - but the latter was always going to be a stretch for NIDOS to demonstrate its contribution even if it has happened.

That said, networking is of use for a wide range of reasons, not just or directly linked to capacity and impact improvements. Softer indicators such as motivation, self-confidence, and just learning who to go to in future, are worthy outputs from the margins (e.g. of training courses, and tea breaks) as well as purposeful parts of activities designed to link small and large, country / sector specific, members / non-members - and these can be said to have been better achieved.

Factors that have influenced Outcome 2 Achievement or Non-Achievement

(a) Factors and service characteristics which have enabled positive engagement and helped NIDOS members to be better networked and more collaborative:

- Scotland is a relatively small place
- NIDOS staff know the members well
- Almost all events and activities tend to have a networking element built in
- Members are keen to network with each other, and with wider stakeholders
- Information is, and needs to be, shared relatively freely
- The new newsletter format
- Many networking opportunities happen as part of themed activities allowing members (and non-members) to select what's most relevant to them and those with similar interests and priorities
- The MEL Group offers a good range of member organisations and tangible sharing on a peer to peer basis

(b) Factors and Challenges that Have Hindered Successful Delivery of Outcome 2.

- Insufficient staff resources (within NIDOS, its members, Southern partners, etc.)
- Time constraints / insufficient demand from members who feel they have enough to deal with already
- Different ways of working, values and accountabilities
- Too few (meaningful) networking opportunities offered
- Too much competition among members *[? - alluded to by a few people but not investigated further*]
- Difficult to sustain relationships without tangible work to progress together

Evidence from Evaluation Interviewees

"I met a young diaspora charity with essential local contacts - but they work too fast for us and our slow decision-making processes!"

"We've met people through NIDOS events, but don't have much *[enough of a basis]* to continue or maintain those relationships."
"Not sure we go to each other's events - seems to be too much competition but maybe not enough time too."

"We don't do so much networking now as we're working on different subject matter."

"Apart from the AGM, there's not been many obvious opportunities for interaction with each other. Maybe we should be asked to support each other?"

"Have met other charities in Scotland but there aren't many opportunities for us to get together - and NIDOS is the main facilitator."

"We don't have one person designated as our contact to engage with NIDOS."
"We've very occasionally opened up in-house training but that's not often thought of - policy collaboration more normal."

"Haven't had much time to engage."

"We're also members of SMP, Scotland Rwanda, etc. - but only for info as well."

"NIDOS linked us up with someone in [a larger member organisation] as they also work on [the same subject area] as us. They may be putting in a bid to DfID that could involve us but I haven't had the time to get back to them yet."

Outcome 3: Scottish organisations have greater collective influence on international development policy.

Generally, all **Activities** designed to deliver Outcome 3 were either fully or partly implemented, except the running of two events in the approach to the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections, and the development of partnership structures for the SG's implementation of a PCD[5] approach and Scotland's delivery of the United Nation's Global Goals (SDGs).

As for **Outputs and Outcome indicators**:

- Annual advocacy strategy days were held for members in Years 1 and 2 but not 3, and the resultant collective policy and communications priorities were mostly all delivered - see below for those aspects that weren't fully.

- Commitments were won from the SG to increased policy coherence / transparency and continued funding for international development at a minimum of 2014/5 levels (the latter has actually translated into a 10% increase in funding for international development from 2017 in a challenging economic environment). Additionally, commitments were obtained from both the UK and Scottish Governments that aid spending would equate to 0.7% of GNI each year - the former passed a bill to enshrine it in law, but the latter wasn't able to implement its commitment as the 'no' win in the independent referendum precluded it.

- Efforts to ensure that all political parties in the 2016 Holyrood elections supported at least current levels of funding for ID and a policy coherent approach were also largely successful.

- Scotland-based diaspora input to these ID policy debates was supported by NIDOS.

- Unfortunately, due to insufficient staff capacity at NIDOS from mid-2015 onwards, these successes weren't able to be followed up on. So, for example, NIDOS has not been able to develop partnership structures with the SG to support implementation of PCD, nor to put procedures in place to ensure accountability for the latter (but the SG has included PCD in its new ID Strategy 2016). NIDOS' planned ethical strategy for the private sector's role in development has also yet to be developed.

- In addition to all of the above, NIDOS hosted a number of DfID-supported events to increase the knowledge and confidence of its members and others to engage with the Post-2015 global ID framework that saw the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the broader and universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs or Global Goals). Due to the high level that these goals were being negotiated at, the NIDOS events, though initially perhaps aimed at influencing, in the end focused mostly on informing participants rather than advocacy. Even so, a stronger Scottish voice in DfID's deliberations was achieved at least to a small degree, and the two-way exchange seemed to be welcomed, especially by those involved in mental health issues that were included in the Goals. Discussion on the final version of the new Global Goals were the overarching theme of

[5] Policy Coherence for Development is an approach and policy tool for integrating the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making.

the Annual Conference and AGM in November 2015. From feedback received, NIDOS members improved their understanding of the content of the Goals, and their significance for partners in the South, and potentially can work with them to help deliver for the benefit of communities there. However, there doesn't appear to have been any NIDOS engagement with the SG, either to support or to begin monitoring, the latter's efforts to implement the Goals at home and internationally - though some members have initiated some independent actions (i.e. outwith the network).

- External stakeholders have not been consulted as part of this evaluation, and NIDOS doesn't seem to have collected any specific data, to try to verify that 'policy makers and others with an interest in international development are committed to continued engagement of CSOs in their international development programmes', nor can it be demonstrated that the former have 'greater awareness of the unique and positive contribution of CSOs to tackling inequality and poverty worldwide, including that of small and large CSOs'. However, on a positive note, the SG has 'continued to have CSOs included in funding programmes', and NIDOS was able to build on its major success in getting the SG to initiate a Small Grants programme by participating in a review of the 3-year pilot that confirmed its transformation into an established longer term funding programme. Further recognition of policy-makers and others' commitment to engage and value the unique role and positive contribution of CSOs is the ongoing participation of relevant Government Ministers in NIDOS meetings, and the likes of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Groups on International Development (CPGID), Malawi, Fair Trade, etc. continuing to include strong contributions from CSOs. Unfortunately, some links between NIDOS and officials / politicians has ebbed or appear now to be considered less important - for example, the SG ID Team no longer holds quarterly meetings with representatives of NIDOS (usually Board level) and, due to capacity constraints, NIDOS has not been playing a leading role in facilitating the CPGID.

- Finally, NIDOS has facilitated its members' contributions (by highlighting opportunities, encouraging input, hosting discussions, and drawing together formal collective responses) to relevant public policy consultations - for example, those of the Scottish Parliament's European and External Relations Committee (Connecting Scotland: How Scotland Engages Internationally); the UK Parliament's ID Committee (Beyond Aid: Future Approach to ID); and DfID's Civil Society Partnership Review. However, these have been fewer and less comprehensive in the second half of the Plan period when the CEO was new and no Policy Officer was in post.

Conclusions - to what extent has Outcome 3 been achieved?

This was a very busy period for NIDOS policy and influencing work that achieved a very great deal through hard work and making good use of political connections. However, NIDOS can probably only claim a limited contribution to some policy change - e.g. the UK government's decision to legislate for 0.7% - but more substantially so for the SG's commitment to PCD. Defining exactly how much contribution is beyond the scope of this current evaluation and would require a specific impact assessment to clarify properly.

Unfortunately, successfully achieving large parts of its influencing and policy outcome (increases in levels of SG ID funding; commitments to PCD; 0.7%; and greater Scottish voice within DFID's policy development on Post 2015) all came at a cost, with the loss of key NIDOS staff and reduced capacity (especially for policy work) for a significant period thereafter. (See Annex H for details of staffing changes and gaps.) As a result, NIDOS wasn't able to keep up that level of intensity on its limited resources, so some important follow-up actions and outputs were either not or only partly delivered.

Factors that have influenced Outcome 3 Achievement or Non-Achievement

(a) Factors and service characteristics which have enabled positive engagement and helped NIDOS members to have greater collective influence:

- significant effort in mobilising members and engaging latent interest, initially through advocacy strategy days but also through continuing to build members knowledge of higher level ID processes and debates
- policy expertise and commitment for drafting substantial policy outputs
- making good use of political / policy connections at Scottish and UK levels
- conducive political will, and opportunities for policy development provided, at Scottish and UK levels.

(b) Factors and Challenges that Have Hindered Successful Delivery of Outcome 3.
- Insufficient staff capacity
- high level negotiations beyond NIDOS' (capacity and advocacy) reach?
- 2016 annual advocacy strategy day not held because the new strategic planning process overtook it
- No agreed approach / internal policies / systems in place for how policy consultation and collective responses should be handled.

Outcome 4: NIDOS is more effective and can sustainably deliver its Aim and Business Outcomes.

Approximately 75% of Outcome 4 **Activities** have been successfully implemented.

In terms of delivery of **Outputs**, it is a mixed picture affected hugely by the second half of the Plan period being blighted by staff changes and shortage. More specifically,

- Although NIDOS' policy and practice quality improvement action plan was developed (under the Charity Evaluation Service's PQASSO scheme), under-staffing and organisational 'turbulence' meant it didn't have the resources, nor was it an appropriate time, to implement the action plan.

- A detailed and thorough MEL framework was produced that included a wide range of indicator data that was collected and reviewed in Years 1 and 2. Unfortunately, the large time burden required to maintain the framework meant it wasn't utilised to any great extent in Year 3. Some members were involved in NIDOS annual review / 'impact assessment' (albeit only as sources of information) in Years 1 and 2 but, overall, improved measurement of impact and implementation of learning within NIDOS has only partly happened. Completion of this (planned) evaluation is an integral part of Output 2 and will hopefully provide some useful learning but a significant review of NIDOS' MEL framework should support planning for the new strategic planning phase - see more below.

- Considerable improvements in NIDOS' financial management and administration systems have been achieved, especially latterly with the timely production of management accounts, and the meeting of all statutory reporting requirements. Unfortunately, risk management (assessment and review) doesn't seem to have been as thorough. While some risks have been properly predicted and mitigated (e.g. uncertainty in policy and funding environments), staff turnover was seen as a potentially moderate risk associated only with short term contracts, and the loss of key staff though what appears to have been very high workloads and challenging relationship management wasn't anticipated or monitored. Additionally, only likelihood of identified risks has been assessed, with no consideration given to the potential impact of their occurrence, e.g. reduced reputation and loss of membership - low likelihood, but potentially catastrophic impact not taken into account.

- Attempts to increase resources and diversify income have been made but unfortunately haven't been successful. Cost-benefit analysis of efforts to increase unrestricted income from member and non-member service fees have, so far, proved too resource intensive for little financial gain, and (with the exception of much appreciated core funding from the SG) approaches to external funders have not been rewarded either. Although relationships with funders have been well attended to, it's

not clear to what extent specific additional bids have been made, but NIDOS is keen to ensure that the secretariat isn't competing for funds with its members - thus reducing its options considerably, even for project funding. There is a desperate need to increase income as Network activities are very under-resourced with constant multiple calls on, and rationing of, staff time to try to deliver too large a portfolio of member and external stakeholder expectations. By illustration, in comparison with BOND, very roughly, NIDOS has approximately £1840 per member organisation, while the former has £3280 if only unrestricted funding is taken account of, and almost £6000 as a proportion of all income. In terms of staff numbers, BOND serves approximately 475 members with over thirty staff (i.e. almost 16 for each staff member), while NIDOS has just over four FTE staff for approximately 110 members (about 26 each).

- NIDOS has targeted, and promoted itself to, potential new members with some limited success. However, it has also lost some members over the Plan period, so membership numbers have actually dropped slightly - 114 in March 2015; 125 at March 2016; but 113 in March 2017 - and the target of a 15% increase has, in the end, been missed. Reasons for losing members seems to be mixed - e.g. organisations closing their Scottish offices; members not seeing sufficient value added / benefit for their membership fees; those whose own organisational activities have become dormant; and those with just no time to take advantage of NIDOS services. Slightly worryingly, many of the member who have lapsed or resigned are 'developing' or larger sized organisations, while the new ones are predominantly small or very small. However, given the current financial climate with few larger organisations expanding their operations, and the fact that NIDOS has been around for many years and already has all the larger international development CSOs as members, it's unlikely that the latter would be on the new members list.

- As has been highlighted, for Output 4 (improved staff, volunteer and board capacity), this has been a challenging period. Unfortunately, none of the previous interns and volunteers were available to participate in this evaluation. However, half of the Board have been in place since 2014, with the other six being elected or co-opted in the subsequent two years, and seven of them provided input, partly through a short questionnaire. From that, Board members seem clear about their roles, and feel the Board is generally effective (e.g. 'playing an active role in shaping programme strategy and priorities', and 'working together as a team'). Even so, areas of their responsibility they slightly marked down include 'spending appropriate amounts of their time debating key issues and challenges in strengthening network effectiveness'; having 'a clear policy on accountabilities'; and 'engaging in appropriate assessment of risks for the network'. Although the Board "didn't really recognise the workload pressure the team was under before cracks started to occur", Board members did work very well together in the transition period between Chief Executives (CE), including the Board Chair stepping in as Acting CE to fill the gap. Throughout the Plan period, staff report participating in support and supervisions sessions, team meetings, and training opportunities. There was also one Board - staff - volunteer 'away day' in 2015.

Conclusions - to what extent has Outcome 4 been achieved?

Overall, the indicators for **Outcome** 4 (More diverse funding base and increased income generation, and Improved systems for organizational review and impact measurement) show that it has not been achieved. At the same time though, all but four of the fourteen **Output** indicators have been partly or fully met. The periods of high workloads, staff turnover and 'fire-fighting' have been very difficult but, given the circumstances, what NIDOS has managed to achieve with its very limited capacity - mostly by trying to focus on what's most important and doing it well - has been very good indeed. That said, members have certainly noticed gaps in services (especially on the policy side), and the secretariat still has a lot of work to catch up on if it's to improve its effectiveness and sustainability, including expanding its resource base and retaining its members.

Factors that have influenced Outcome 4 Achievement or Non-Achievement

(a) Factors and service characteristics which have helped NIDOS be more effective and sustainable:
- flexible approach and commitment of remaining / new staff
- Board engagement
- thorough review and development of financial management and administrative systems
- ongoing support and supervision for staff

(b) Factors and Challenges that Have Hindered Successful Delivery of Outcome 4.
- very high workloads and challenging relationship management
- significant staff change and shortages
- insufficient financial resources
- inability to identify and successfully source additional funding
- MEL framework not maintained sufficiently
- external economic / financial environment reducing resources available to all

What Members Think About How Effective NIDOS Is?

Finally, as a simple gauge of what members think of NIDOS' effectiveness, the last question asked of evaluation interviewees was about what NIDOS does well, and what it does less well. On the former, there were significant commonality in highlighting the following themes:

- The approachability and responsiveness of NIDOS staff.

  "Can ask questions about anything"
  "Consultative and always asking you about your priorities, needs, etc."
  "Personal contact and ready with advice"
  "Very helpful people"
  "Both CEs have been approachable and have given us their personal time".

- The provision of a wider world view.

  "Providing a window on the world"
  "Providing an overall world picture, and Scotland's place and role in it, working with SG, etc."
  "Disseminating info (e.g. on MDGs / SDGs)".

- Bringing us together.

  "Networking opportunities and bringing the sector together"
  "Bringing people together - had a wobbly patch in terms of capacity but now through that"
  "Networking - recently connecting with DfID and pulling everyone together - informing and getting smaller and large together - not exclusive"
  "Giving us an opportunity to participate - size doesn't matter"
  "Co-ordinated joint agenda and bringing us together in clustered themes such as working together on the SDGs - NIDOS led as one of us, not over us, in development conversations - but momentum was lost"
  "Pooling expertise especially on different policy areas / actors. None of us would have been able to do the big pieces of work (e.g. in 2014) - even the big organisations are quite small in Scotland, and we tend to collaborate much better up here than in England - know each other and have to work together as we're so small".

- Events.

  "Great speakers, and well-managed and organised events that are sufficiently different from each other to be interesting"
  "Big events, interesting sessions - very worthwhile"

These partially chime with the evidence that 'being kept in the loop of what goes on in the international development sector' is seen (by membership survey respondents) as the most useful aspect of membership highlighted in section 4(a) on Relevance of services above. However, it also highlights the need to focus not just on services being tangible products but also the way things are done, the way people are made to feel, and the overall functions of a network.

The remainder of the evaluation interviewee responses covered a very wide range of things they thought NIDOS did well, including; the MEL Group, training opportunities, NIDOS' identity and credibility, championing the diversity of Scottish ID charities through events such as Scotland v Poverty, partnership with other networks, and just doing a great job with limited resources. This broad range of responses, and little overlap with what interviewees see as the most relevant services for them (see table in section 4(a) above, is also replicated in the lack of commonality in interviewees thoughts on what NIDOS does less well. A flavour of them is provided by the example quotes below:

> "It publishes for us but they don't follow up to build greater presence."
>
> "I don't think NIDOS links with or picks up on what we're doing (e.g. our e-news) - so can't signpost and/or help facilitate collaboration effectively."
>
> "Small attendances"
>
> "They're too fixated with Toolkit implementation (not flexible and didn't want to hear 'no' - probably cause of government funding though)."
>
> "I know there is the opportunity for networking in meetings, e.g. at tea breaks, but I don't think it works well - there is a lot of chance encounter when there's much else to do."
>
> "Somethings are way over my head."
>
> "Support for the second round of SG small grants was very near the deadline, not nearly early enough (and just caused anxiety!)"
>
> "Work on PCD has been wasted/lost, with lack of any forward accountability for SG. Very frustrating but not something individual members could do on their own."
>
> "Changes of staff after building up relationships with them."
>
> "[NIDOS] needs to be known about more (i.e. public profile)."
>
> "Materials not as useful as we'd hoped because of diversity of membership and lack of critical mass in Scotland"
>
> "Being agile and able to respond to policy and media challenges".
>
> "Cancelled events / training due to lack of registration - maybe worth doing, even if there's only a few participants."

If there is so little commonality here, can the key factors that have affected relevance of services and achievement of outcomes tell us any more to inform future strategic planning?

(c) Factors That Have Affected Relevance and Achievement of Outcomes

Key Learning and Positive Factors
that have affected relevance of services and achievement of outcomes.

- NIDOS:
  - includes a viable group of people who push things forward
  - is open to feedback and change
  - has approachable staff
  - recognises the huge range of member organisations it has, and works with it.
- NIDOS' offering needs to:
  - encompass a range of capacity building functions
  - include content that reflects the current social-political and economic operating environment
  - align not just with member and non-member CSOs, but also a wide range of stakeholders whose policy and practice impact on poverty reduction worldwide
  - reflect its status as a network, with the secretariat concentrating on supporting and facilitating members
  - consider and respond to changing needs and priorities of huge diversity of individual members
  - ensure ongoing relevance
  - engage latent interest in members and non-members.
- Timing (scheduling, and when they're offered relative to the point in an organisation's journey / development that it's at) and
- Time (that things require, and how much time members have available, to make it relevant enough for take-up) are crucial.
- Service delivery processes / mechanisms are equally important to content / category for actual take-up of services.
- Supporting members individually has been most successful.
- Problem-led engagement has enabled tailored services and utilisation of tools.
- Organisations with low capacity but high willingness are best to focus on if resources are limited.
- Incentivising training and support by linking to funding opportunities provides focused and tangible ways for members to think about effectiveness.
- Peer-to-peer capacity building and sharing groups:
  - offer soft training and are able to sift and pinpoint best practice without a lot of resources
  - have most impact if they bring together a wide range of member organisations
- Being 'kept in the loop' on international development / information services
- Fundraising support
- Networking
- Effectiveness support
  - are most well-aligned to, and valued by, members.
- Information is, and needs to be, shared relatively freely.

- Networking is popular and incorporated into almost all events and services, but works best if:
  - it's targeted / part of themed activities allowing members (and non-members) to select what's most relevant to them and those with similar interests and priorities
  - its followed up on.

- Achievement has been enabled by:
  - member expertise and commitment
  - making good use of connections and relationships at UK (especially DfID) and European levels
  - working in partnership with other networks and service providers
  - the flexible approach and commitment of remaining / new staff
  - Board engagement
  - review and development of internal management / administrative systems

- Mentoring has
  - built member ownership and therefore greater sustainability of change
  - been adaptable in offering a wide range of support at different levels.

Unhelpful / Hindering Factors and Negative Learning

Services are unlikely to be taken up if:
- they don't fit with members' profiles / needs
- they're readily available and/or more relevant from elsewhere
- time-benefit analysis concludes that they aren't valuable or relevant enough to warrant engagement
- they're not offered at the 'right' time, when members actually need them
- they're subject to 'hard sell'
- they're not 'sold' at all (people unaware of them and their appropriateness / relevance for them)
- they're not packaged to make them accessible - including
  - opaque terminology / language / concepts (in both international development and organisational development contexts)
  - difficult to get to locations
  - inappropriate modes of delivery for specific individual and organisational journeys, ways of working, values and accountabilities = big challenge for future

Outcomes haven't been achieved because of
- insufficient staff resources / capacity gaps and frequent changes
- too few services delivered
- insufficient financial resources
- it's difficult for members to sustain relationships without tangible work to progress together
- absence of agreed approaches / internal policies / systems in place for how policy consultation and collective responses should be handled
- inability to identify and successfully source additional funding
- MEL framework not maintained sufficiently
- external economic / financial environment reducing resources available to all.

5. LOOKING FORWARD - Key Issues, Learning & Recommendations for the Future

The following key issues, learning and recommendations result from answering formal evaluation questions on 'looking back'. Issues are also highlighted below because the evidence and lessons gleamed from examining relevance and performance over the most recent Business Plan period suggests they are the most resonant and potentially important for informing the next strategic planning cycle.

(a) What is NIDOS / The Alliance's Value Added?

The simplest answer to what value NIDOS adds, and why people take part, is its focus on international development, and the bringing together of all those with an interest in it in Scotland. NIDOS is also perceived as special because of the personal approach that underlies all of its activities, which may not be possible in other larger arenas. The combination of both attributes makes it very responsive for its members.

(b) Community Building and Convening

While noting the above, a key issue for the Alliance and the new strategy will be community building and convening an even wider diversity of members than so far managed - and there isn't a great deal of evidence about understanding and targeting of the needs of non-members. Fundamental though, will be developing clear visions of shared values and purpose, recognition of the importance and value of working together, and building trust across new and old members, including organisations with very different structures, ways of working and accountabilities, together with disparate individuals. Honest learning and sharing needs trust and sensitive leadership facilitation for collaboration to flourish - electronic communication and big events won't be sufficient. The learning from NIDOS is that it is challenging to bring together large and small, etc. so there perhaps needs to be more open recognition of the differences as well as the commonalities and common cause within the Alliance. Engagement with other umbrella bodies and associations that understand their client group may be of help in reaching out, broaching differences, and getting language right.

Recommendations:

1. Develop, with existing members, a clear approach to new non-ID specialist members
2. Review / create basic organisational documents and policies such as what members can expect and is expected of them, shared principles, basic governance and policy documents, etc. to help develop a sense of community and buy-in.
3. Consider developing a Theory of Change for the Alliance

(c) International Development Versus Organisational Development Capacity Building?

A major part of NIDOS' remit has been a focus on organisational development. However, as international development is the Alliance's key offer, where can / should the line be drawn between the two content areas. Can / should the former be dropped completely?

Learning from the previous period tells us that:

- services are most useful when there is a real value-added, i.e. there are no others available (INTRAC research);
- NIDOS has a lot of good experience in accessing expertise / delivering services related to both areas;
- many members experience challenges in both areas;
- many members don't recognise the similarity of their organisational development challenges with those of domestically-focused charities;
- relationships between NIDOS and other similar support organisations and service providers already exist, but it's unclear what lessons have been learned from those relationships;
- if resources remain largely similar to those of NIDOS, the Alliance won't be able to deliver both areas for its much widened membership (although new members are most likely to be seeking only international development support);

- if all organisational development support is provided outside the Alliance, members may lose networking and sharing opportunities with other similarly-focused organisations;
- current NIDOS members would not be happy if they had to pay additional fees to access the services / be members of other support bodies;
- there are lots of free online resources available - perhaps not specific for Alliance members but many likely to still be very adequate
- Sifting and signposting resources and reliable information will be required of staff, members and interest groups (see below) as it will be relatively resource-intensive and not easy to keep up to date.

Where are the dividing lines between generic organisational development and ID?

- Governance - e.g. trustees' responsibilities, OSCR rules, etc. - some is Scotland-specific but some boards are international so needs consideration;
- Partnerships - strong international element
- MEL - a mixture of both
- Fundraising - a mixture of both (e.g. grant applications, images used, etc need ID focus but unrestricted / public fundraising is mostly generic);
- Media / website training - not necessarily ID-specific
- Human Resources / Health & Safety / Legal - generally generic and members should be signposted
- elsewhere for these
- More technical ID (e.g. logframes) - new members are likely to require this if they're seeking grant funding for ID activities, even if existing members are saturated by this type of capacity building
- Thematic / sectoral support (e.g. disability, child protection; and community engagement) - should be a mix of both ID and generic capacity building;
- Issues around communications and different cultural expectations, including timescales, hierarchies, etc. - all ID content and expertise.

Recommendations:

4. That a mixed approach be taken - signposting members to some external resources and support, and (co-)delivering other capacity building services - including through peer-to-peer learning, and the development of resources such as policy briefs, subject briefs, glossaries that would be accessible online any time needed.
5. Networks, existing / new members, and other support providers should work together to jointly deliver services for Alliance members, including sharing resources / reducing costs.
6. The Alliance should reach out to clarify what it intends to focus on and what it seeks to collaborate on, so that roles and relationships with other, perhaps more generic charity service providers in Scotland and elsewhere, can be properly developed / reaffirmed.

(d) Service Level Packaging and Targeting

The Alliance intends to host two large events per year, which is a good idea. Coupled with that, findings across this evaluation show that existing NIDOS members especially value and have responded well to individualised services and, additionally, are seeking more and better ways to meet and collaborate with others involved in areas of common interest to them. All of the above could be achieved with a three-pronged conceptual approach along the following lines:

Big picture & Big Events	Clustered themes / interest groups	Individualised focus
- view on the wider world - great speakers - focus on policy & values - including wider stakeholders	- development themes - country / sector focus - member managed & secretariat facilitated - peer-to-peer sharing	- help desk - mentoring - specific to organisational or individual journey - confidence & capacity building

NIDOS already has experience of supporting sub-sector groups - some quite successfully (e.g. the current MEL Group) and others that have been tried in the past with mixed results. Some will continue to be challenging (e.g. the Business / Private Sector group with many differing interests and accountabilities) but others may more easily be rekindled (e.g. the small organisations groups).

Facilitating these niche areas and helping them to get started should be relatively easy if members are encouraged collectively to initiate groups of most relevance to their organisations / themselves. Some interest / cluster / working groups may be quite large, while others smaller and perhaps deliberately only short-term to do a particular piece of work. They could result from introductory sessions or networking at a bigger event or specific initiative but, ideally, should always be face-to-face first so that members can meet, establish some understanding of each other, and build some initial trust. Efforts should also be made to ensure groups aren't exclusive or cliquish, with individual support provided for those with less confidence to join in. Small organisations maybe can't contribute as much or as regularly but they should be included and 'kept in the loop'. Although time is a short commodity for everyone, and the secretariat can organise and make practical arrangements, record and circulate agreed actions, etc., group members should be prepared to participate and support in some way, even if it's only answering occasional emails. Groups should self-manage, hopefully, using online Alliance facilities such as an egroup or members eforum - see below - but this will need to be monitored and initially supported by staff. Groups don't necessarily need to be helped to keep them alive - as they may be topical, and/or produce some good introductions that lead to free-standing collaboration outside of the group setting. At the same time, some groups (e.g. a Policy, MEL, or Comms group could support individual people who cover these on-going areas as well as those that can be professionally isolated within larger organisations. In any case, as the MEL Group has proven, interest groups should be able to sift and pin point best practice without a lot of resources.

Individually-focused services will remain dependent on understanding and addressing organisations' and individual's journey requirements (including orientation for new staff), and the Secretariat continuing to be responsive. The new membership management staff post will help considerably with this, but time and timing need to be crucial aspects of the Alliance's service offering if they are to deliver their full value. Additionally, materials need to be accessible for all audiences, with strong steers on what something is, why individual members might be interested / come, etc. The mentors, who already are providing more reactive (rather than proactive) services, could be very useful assets, especially if they are utilised more for tailored service delivery, and if they're able to assist with a helpdesk-type service. The latter could provide the starting point and conduit for problem-led individualised capacity-building services that have already proven successful, albeit in a relatively small number of cases so far.

Recommendations:

7. That members be brought together to initiate some sub-sector groups and agree generic operating parameters.
8. Secretariat to develop the capacity to facilitate, monitor and service a range of new, established, short-term and/or on-going groups.
9. Consider establishing a specific help-desk service and contracting mentors as an integral part of that for individualised support services.

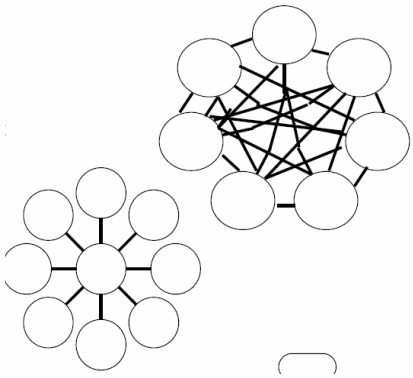
(e) Members Engagement and Ownership

Over the last three years, NIDOS has delivered a considerable amount of its Business Plan but there seems to have been quite high expectation of, and reliance on, the Secretariat to make everything happen. Rather than just facilitating and supporting members, NIDOS' Secretariat has been carrying out many of the network functions itself, and not enabling the members sufficiently. Despite quite high quality services, participation levels (and even the provision of feedback) have often been very low.

Alongside this, many members have expressed both appreciation that the network has been able to deliver things that individual members couldn't, while at the same time feeling frustrated that the Secretariat has had insufficient resources to do more.

Without member engagement and ownership, the network doesn't exist, and facilitating increased member interaction and co-production of services and benefits (such as the interest groups above) would help improve overall impact for the Alliance. This will be especially important for the new ways of working that will be required for it to service and support a larger and more diverse group.

While it's appreciated that member organisations themselves face considerable resource / capacity constraints, the Alliance operating more as a web and less as a wheel - see below - could help deliver more value for some functions and services (e.g. seeking and offering shared information, expertise, resources and connections). Other more individualised needs may require additional spokes on the wheel model but the point is that support doesn't always have to come from the secretariat - members have a lot to offer each other if mechanisms are put in place and initial values-driven encouragement is provided by the Alliance's Board and secretariat.



Notwithstanding the points about the need for trust building and initial face-to-face meetings above, establishing online mechanisms to encourage engagement and ownership could also help:
- members who (due to time constraints and/or location) aren't able to participate in face-to-face events
- provide means for compiling and sharing draft documents
- better enable follow-up (e.g. for clarification; new connections / potential consortia; very brief reporting; and collective feedback).

Recommendations

10. Include descriptions of the roles of members, the Alliance's Board and secretariat, and the values that bind them (with inclusive participation and collaboration within the Alliance added in), in organisational documents that all members are asked to sign up to.
11. That a members' eforum / egroups online communications be facilitated after consultation with members as to the most suitable approach, desired functions, software, etc.

(f) Policy and Influencing

After considerable emphasis and success, then relative inactivity, taking stock and kick-staring policy and influencing work again will be a priority for the Alliance. Even within NIDOS, there was considerable variation of interest and capacity among members, with some not interested / able / got time; others that would like to be involved but felt they didn't have much to offer or felt un-included; yet others who didn't think it was appropriate (for themselves or NIDOS); and those who feel policy and influencing are the strongest and most important aspect of the Network's purpose and activity.

So, going forward, it will be important:
- to recognise that NIDOS has been a credible and respected contributor to ID policy development / implementation, and public debate, in Scotland for many years;
- to focus on strengthening and amplifying the voices of members and those they serve (rather than to be 'representing' views);
- for members to understand what the focus of policy and influencing work is, why, and how / when they can engage;
- to recognise that full consensus may be more difficult with an even wider and more diverse membership, and that alerting members to opportunities for feeding into influencing processes, and encouraging everyone to have a voice, may on some occasions be enough;
- to ensure agreed mechanisms are in place for creating and delivering policy statements and campaigns;
- to agree protocols and lines to enable the Alliance Board / staff to act (including responses to the media), and for when there is a need for / value in more extensive consultation;
- to emphasise to policy-makers the legitimate and helpful role of the Alliance (and other civil society networks) in supporting policy development and implementation, even if it is sometimes critical and perceived as being adversarial;
- to try to seek additional funding sources for policy and influencing work (with other networks?) to be fully independent.

In addition to policy-centred work, members are keen also to focus on public profile-raising activities, building public support for ID, and increasing their collective presence in the public realm. Specific suggestions include collectively amplifying other members' social media activities to grow presence and improve motivation, and engaging more with 'moderate' news and features media.

Recommendations

12. The opportunity should be taken by the Alliance's Board and key staff to review how policy and influencing work is done once the new Policy Officer is in post.
13. A clear remit, taking account of the points above, should be produced and agreed with members at an early event designed to re-engage those with an interest in ID policy and public engagement.

(g) Fundraising Support

In line with how much fundraising support is valued by NIDOS members, and the conceptual framework of a three-pronged approach above, fundraising support could be delivered via all three avenues.

More specifically, it will be important for the Alliance to lead and maintain relationships with major funders, and to organise joint information dissemination and consultation events with (one or more) funders. Members may be interested in creating interest groups for those who are working through particular funding streams or in funder priority countries. Additionally, individual members will still be

keen to get advice on their fundraising approaches and specific funding bids - e.g applications being reviewed by Alliance staff (and/or mentors?).

With an influx of new non-ID specialist members, there is likely to be additional requests for individualised support, and existing NIDOS members that have already gone through a steep transitional learning curve could be of particular help for those that lack experience of applying for grants in an international rather than predominantly domestic context.

Another challenge highlighted in Findings above related to the on-going narrowing and specialisation of funders' interests, and the tendency for NIDOS funding support services to be linked to particular funding opportunities. This approach has disengaged many members who don't comply with the funders' criteria but, perversely, need funding support even more. While it has proven successful for capacity building / effectiveness support to be incentivised by linking it to funding opportunities, there is obviously generic fundraising support that could be drawn on from (or members signposted to) other service providers.

Recommendations

14. Collaboration should be sought with other fundraising support providers and/or other networks interested in jointly providing generic fundraising support for their members.
15. That non-ID specialist NIDOS members be asked to help support similar new Alliance members.

(h) MEL

NIDOS has an open culture of accountability, learning and responsiveness, which is commendable. It also has had quite a detailed MEL framework and a considerable amount of monitoring data has been collected, including on each members' engagement with NIDOS. However, much of the data hasn't been maintained or collated and analysed, and it's proven increasingly difficult to get member feedback on service quality and impact.

In an effort to generate meaningful and useable data, and maintain members' goodwill, a new MEL framework should be developed for the Alliance, ideally driven by an organisational Theory of Change rather than just its new strategic plan. This is an ideal opportunity to do a review but the mass of comparable information contained in NIDOS' MEL data should be considered for baseline measurements rather than being lost. The devil is in the detail here, and data gathering mechanism need to be clearly thought through so that the right things are measured and monitored for effective organisational management that links to the Alliance's overall aims and objectives, as well as accountability to funders. Data shouldn't be selected that you don't intend to use.

Another crucial aspect of organisational management that needs attention is a full and proper risk assessment of immediate, short term, and long term threats to ensure they are properly identified and managed through effective systems that include regular reviews.

Recommendations

16. Create a useable MEL framework, systems and processes that will support the Alliance's overall aims and objectives, and what realistically it expects to achieve.
17. Board and CE to develop a new risk management system that is effective and regularly reviewed.

Finally, please also see Annex I for some specific comments and suggestions on the Alliance's 2017-20 Strategic Plan - most of which have already been alluded to above.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above, the following are the key recommendations that the Alliance should prioritise going forward. They are in broad agreement with its new strategy.

1. Review / create basic organisational documents and policies such as 'what members can expect and is expected of them', shared principles, basic governance and policy documents, etc. to help develop a sense of community and buy-in.
2. Take a mixed approach to capacity building for international as well as organisational development - signposting members to some external resources and support, and sharing resources and jointly delivering services for Alliance members with other networks and support providers, including existing and new members.
3. Reach out to other networks and service providers to clarify what the Alliance intends to focus on and what it seeks to collaborate on, so that roles and relationships with other, perhaps more generic charity service providers in Scotland and elsewhere, can be properly developed / reaffirmed
4. Bring members together to initiate some sub-sector interest groups and agree generic operating parameters.
5. Create and facilitate members' eforum / egroups for online communications based on members' views on the most suitable approach, desired functions, suggestions for platforms, etc., together with a 'help-desk' approach to triage and monitor key areas of demand.
6. The opportunity should be taken by the Alliance's Board and key staff to review how policy and influencing work is done once the new Policy Officer is in post.
7. A clear policy and influencing remit should be produced and agreed with members at an early event designed to re-engage all those with an interest in international development policy and public engagement.
8. Create a useable MEL framework, systems and processes (including risk management) that will support the Alliance's overall aims and objectives.

7. ANNEXES

Annex A

External Evaluation Terms of Reference

Background and context of the evaluation

The Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) unites the international development sector in Scotland to promote effectiveness and collectively influence the policy agenda. NIDOS was established in 2000, and today it has today over 100 members in Scotland, ranging from large international development organisations to small community groups, often run exclusively by volunteers. In recent years, NIDOS' primary focus has been on improving the effectiveness of NGOs working in international development, by facilitating and promoting the sharing of knowledge, experiences, ideas and information on international development policy and practice.

The NIDOS Business Plan for the period April 2014 – March 2017 NIDOS has one overall aim and four outcomes, as follows:

- **Overall aim:** To strengthen the contributions of Scottish organisations to tackling inequality and poverty worldwide.
- **Outcome 1**: Scottish international development CSOs are stronger and more effective.
- **Outcome 2:** Scottish organisations in international development are better networked and more collaborative with each other and with others in Scotland and beyond, and as a result have strengthened capacity and impact.
- **Outcome 3:** Scottish organisations have greater collective influence on international development policy.
- **Outcome 4:** NIDOS is more effective and can sustainably deliver its Aim and Business Outcomes.

NIDOS is now approaching the end of its current business plan, with its core funding from the Scottish Government finishing on March 31st, 2017. Throughout 2016, a strategic planning process has been carried out, with a wide ranging consultation including almost 100 conversations with NIDOS members throughout Scotland, as well as with key stakeholders, such as the Scottish Government, the Department for International Development (DFID) and the UK-wide network of international development NGOs. Through this process, NIDOS vision, mission, values and objectives have been rearticulated, and a new name (**Scotland's International Development Alliance**) to reflect this new direction. The new strategy is designed to draw more people into the network of supporters of international development, to help them better and to strengthen their voice. Thus, membership of Scotland's International Development Alliance will not be limited to international development NGOs but also be open to organisations in other sectors (e.g. Universities and private sector organisations), as well as interested individuals.

The purpose of the evaluation is twofold:

1. To critically examine NIDOS' implementation of the 2014 – 2017 strategic plan, and in particular:

a. To help NIDOS learn to what extent it has been able to meet the aim and objectives of the 2014/2017 plan; and

b. To help NIDOS learn the extent to which members have benefitted from being part of NIDOS.

2. To inform programming decisions in the next funding cycle (2017-2020).

Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation focuses on two of the five OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance, namely *relevance* and *effectiveness*. The evaluation questions are as follows:

To critically examine NIDOS' implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan (i.e. 'looking back')

- To what extent are NIDOS services relevant to the achievement of its overall aim?
- To what extent are NIDOS services aligned with members' needs and priorities?
- To what extent have NIDOS activities achieved their intended outcomes?

To inform programming decisions in the next funding cycle (2017-2020) (i.e. 'looking forward').

- How (if at all) can NIDOS services be made more relevant to its overall aim for the next funding cycle?
- How (if at all) can NIDOS services be better aligned with members' needs and priorities?
- How (if at all) can NIDOS be more effective in achieving its intended outcomes for the next funding cycle?

Methodology and process

The consultant is expected to:

1. Become familiar with NIDOS' vision, current thinking, and services on offer, through a **desk review** of relevant documentation, including the following:

a. Report of previous impact evaluation, carried out in 2014 and covering the funding period 2011-2014;

b. NIDOS Business Plan 2014-2017;

c. Progress reports to the Scottish Government, as well as Scottish Government's responses;

d. Final Report of the Research Programme on the Use and Application of BOND and NIDOS Effectiveness Tools and Services (INTRAC, 2016);

e. NIDOS website and recent issues of the NIDOS newsletter.

2. Become familiar with members' uptake of services and feedback, through a desk review of the following monitoring data:

a. *Data on members' usage of NIDOS services ('Users services database').* The consultant will be provided with raw data, in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, as well as with preliminary quantitative analysis of such data, carried out by NIDOS staff in advance of the evaluation.

b. *Data on users' feedback on NIDOS services.* For trainings and events, this data is captured in an Excel spreadsheet *('evaluation database'*); for other services (e.g. mentoring) feedback is captured through online evaluation forms (Survey Monkey). PDF copies of these forms will be provided to the consultant.

c. *NIDOS Members' Survey.* A general survey will be sent out to all members in December 2016 through Survey Monkey, and the results will be provided to the consultant in PDF form.

3. Facilitate a focus group discussion with NIDOS' staff and Board of Trustees (TBC).

4. Interview NIDOS' longest-serving mentor, to get specific insights on the mentoring programme.

5. Hold interviews (face-to-face or by phone/Skype) with approximately 20 NIDOS members, selected to represent a cross-section of size of organisation, location within Scotland, levels of engagement with NIDOS and usage of different services, countries of operation.

Consultation with external stakeholders is not part of the scope of this evaluation.

Deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver an **Evaluation Report**, not exceeding 30 pages, including an Executive Summary. The report should be submitted in publishable form, with no need for further copy-editing. The outline of the report will be discussed with the consultant, but it is expected that it will include the following:

1. Background on NIDOS *(1 page max);*
2. Aim, purpose, questions, process and methodology of the evaluation *(1 page max);*
3. Looking back – key findings:

a. Relevance

b. Effectiveness

c. Other considerations

4. Looking forward - Key learnings and recommendations for the future.

The consultant is encouraged to provide findings and recommendations that are general (with regard to NIDOS' overall performance and value added) as well as specific to particular services. We are particularly interested in feedback, advice and recommendations on the following:

- Direct support and advice from NIDOS staff;
- Training and events;
- Mentoring;
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Working Group;
- Fundraising advice (including information sessions and grant application 'surgeries');
- Website and newsletter.

Preliminary findings will be presented in a debriefing meeting to NIDOS staff, approximately 2 weeks before the submission of the report.

Confidentiality clause

The evaluation report is in the ownership of NIDOS. Information gained through the evaluation should be treated confidentially and not made available to others without prior authorisation by NIDOS.

Timeline

The consultancy is expected to take place in the period January-March 2017.	Deadline for submission of bids
Friday, January 13th, 2017	Deadline for NIDOS Members' Survey
By January 20th	Selection of consultant
January 23rd-30th	Finalisation of process and methodology with consultant (including criteria for sampling)
February 1s – March 6th	Desk review of relevant data and documentations Interviews with sample of member organisations
Week of March 6th	Data analysis and report writing
Week of March 13th	Debriefing with NIDOS staff Draft Evaluation Report to NIDOS
March, 17th	Last day for NIDOS Board and Staff comments
March, 20th-24th	Final Draft completed ready for presentation to Scottish Government, BOND/DFID and NIDOS membership.
By early April	Completion and dissemination of report through newsletter and website.

Annex B

List of Documentary Evidence

BOND / NIDOS Transparency Review 2015

CIVICUS - Resource Guide for National [NGO] Associations

Dochas (the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations):
- Effective NGOs Networks Presentation
- Strategy for Sustainability 2009
- Hans Zomer's blogs on NGO Networks

INTRAC:
- Final Report of the Research Programme on the Use and Application of BOND and NIDOS Effectiveness Tools and Services (INTRAC, 2016);
- Effective Governance; A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs

Mudehwe, Jonah. Lessons and Recommendations for Effective Running of NGO Networks

NIDOS:
- AGM 2016 draft Minutes
- Business Plan 2014-2017
- Effectiveness Programme / Toolkit evaluation forms from 7 member organisations
- Evaluation Form Databases 2014/15; 2015/16; and 2016/17
- External Evaluation Report 2014 (covering the funding period 2011-2014)
- Evaluation forms for MEL Working Group from 3 members
- Evaluation forms from 5 mentored member organisations
- Evaluation forms for use of the 'Trustfunder' database from 8 members
- (internal) Impact Reports 2014/15 and 2015/16
- Management Response to External Evaluation 2014
- Members Survey analysis
- Members Survey data spreadsheet
- Mentor reports on work with 2 member organisations
- New members' welcome presentation 2015
- Newsletter issues during 2014-17
- Progress reports to the Scottish Government, and Scottish Government responses
- Text of 34 Survey Monkey responses to Members Survey
- Training Survey response forms from 5 member organisations
- User services analysis by service type
- Users Services database

ODI Background Note: "Not everything that connects is a network". Hearn, Simon and Mendizabal, Enrique. May 2011

SINDA Strategy 2017-20

Annex C

List of Interviewees

confidential until permission has been granted by each individual respondent

Annex D

List of Outline Questions Asked of Interviewees

Over the last three years (2014-17) …..

1. How has your organisation benefitted from NIDOS membership? Please provide examples.

2. In what ways has NIDOS helped your organization be 'better networked and collaborative'? Please provide examples and say what positive outcomes the networking and collaboration have led (or are likely to lead) to.

3. What things does NIDOS offer that you have found most relevant to your organisation's needs and priorities?

4. In what ways has NIDOS helped your organization become 'stronger and more effective'?

5. In what ways do you think the Network has delivered greater collective influence, and how could it increase that?

6. What subject matter / areas of expertise would your organisation like to learn more about?

7. What do you not get from NIDOS that you'd like to get?

8. *Where apart from NIDOS do you look to / get support from?*

9. *Who in your organization (staff and/or volunteers) engages with NIDOS, and in what way?*

10. *How have your organization supported the Network over the last three years?*

11. Overall, what do you think the Network does well, and less well?

If not already mentioned, please comment on …

- Direct support and advice from NIDOS staff;
- Training and events;
- Mentoring;
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Working Group;
- Fundraising advice (including information sessions and grant application 'surgeries');
- Website and newsletter.

12. *Is there anything else that you would like included in this evaluation of NIDOS's activities over the last three years?*

[N.B. Questions in italics were asked only if there was time.]

Annex I

2017-20 Strategic Plan Elements	Issues & Suggestions
Our **mission** is to represent our members and the people and communities they serve, to local, national and international decision-makers.	Change to 'to strengthen the voices of our members …'? Why? - Emphasises primacy of members voices, and role of secretariat as facilitator. Also, reduces need for consensus and questions of legitimacy.
Values …..	Publicise and use more proactively to build Scotland's International Development Alliance 'community'.
Objectives	
1. To grow our membership base and improve the services we provide to members.	
Improve member networking and collaboration by holding two larger events each year, on topic-specific events or themes. Identify creative ways of encouraging people to engage and support each other to resolve challenges and share information.	Larger events to be supplemented by service delivery at two other levels: - interest group - individual member Mechanisms for engagement - eforum / egroups (see below) - 'speed dating' and 'market place stalls' at big events? - job shadowing for those whose roles and remits overlap?
Improve the website to facilitate contact between special interest groups on countries or themes.	'To facilitate contact for all'? Establish (including initial populating of) a members' online forum / eGroup platform - such as 'knowledgepoint' but members should be asked to suggest other proven software options. This could be a benefit for members only.
Promote readership of the newsletter, ensuring it is well targeted to different membership groups and useful for signposting people to the website.	Also requires better understanding of who is subscribing. Additional, more frequent targeted information and messaging?
Engage staff member with specific responsibility for growing membership numbers, maintaining databases and improving and organising membership services.	To continue valued personal contact, and develop and maintain good understanding of members, all staff to be involved in relationship / customer management (including recording using specific software?)?
Membership services that will drive up professionalism and effectiveness will be mainly provided online with the exception of mentoring. This will include relevant content and signposting people to other places they can get help. Services will include providing advice and support on: organisational development; grant management; fundraising; effectiveness; profile raising.	Initial sifting and helped with targeting by initial helpdesk inquiry? Staff and mentors to operate helpline? See also section on ID vs generic organisational development in main text.

The mentoring service will be expanded and improved to allow better outcomes.	
2. To improve the perceptions of international development and the profile of the sector in the minds of the public and other key stakeholders across Scotland	Add *Amplify members' communications?
3. To better represent the sector on policy and advocacy issues	Change to 'to amplify the voices of the sector …'?
	Add * To facilitate and develop the capacity of members to engage on policy issues?
4. To ensure the infrastructure and IT capability are fit for purpose to deliver the plan	Add 'and day to day member interactions' to end of first bullet point?
* Improve monitoring and evaluation of activities in the plan, ensuring targets can be appropriately set and achievements measured	Add 'appropriately'?