

C3 Carry out research on the campaign issue

What do we know, and what do we need to know?

Some campaigns are conceived because hard data suggest that a campaign might be able to influence an issue of importance to the organisation's beneficiaries. Many others, however, arise from anecdotal evidence or "gut feeling" of perceived need and this may not be enough to persuade potential supporters to back the campaign.

In such circumstances, research can supply facts and figures that strengthen your message or argument. Research, which may be commissioned via an external body, or carried out internally, can be used to legitimise the cause and provide a means of measuring progress towards achieving the campaign's objectives. Research can also have the opposite effect, by disproving claims or anecdotal evidence, thus requiring a review or modification of aims.

Research should be approached honestly and objectively and used to inform ethical decisions about the campaign.

Performance criteria

In order to carry out research on the campaign issue, you should be able to:

1. Identify gaps in information about issues of relevance to the campaign
2. Identify and agree with the **campaign team** where research is necessary
3. Assess your or your organisation's capacity to conduct and/or commission research
4. Identify the purpose of the research and prepare a realistic **research brief** or work plan, as appropriate, containing time frame and key **objectives**
5. Investigate factors that may be relevant to the campaign such as political, economic, legal or social
6. Analyse the findings of the research using appropriate tools and techniques
7. Build appropriate evidence – positive and negative – including, where appropriate, that from **beneficiaries'** experience
8. Record your findings in an appropriate manner and report objectively in a format suitable for your intended audience
9. Review your campaign **aims** against the findings of your research

Knowledge and understanding

In order to carry out research on the campaign issue, you will need to know and understand the following:

- a) The importance of maintaining objectivity when conducting research
- b) The aims of the campaign
- c) The resources available to conduct or commission research
- d) How to assess the information needs of the campaign
- e) The importance of setting out aims for the research and developing a realistic research brief or work plan
- f) The difference between qualitative and quantitative techniques and the value of each
- g) The difference between primary and secondary research and the value of each
- h) The timeframe for the research and, where appropriate, the priorities
- i) The methods for accessing relevant sources
- j) How to assess the validity of relevant sources and techniques for interrogating them reliably and objectively
- k) Techniques for analysing primary and secondary research and weighing findings, where appropriate
- l) How will the research contribute to or influence the direction of the campaign
- m) The importance of ethical balance when shaping evidence
- n) The audience for the findings of your research, their information needs and the power or influence they have on the issue

Skills

- Basic research skills
- Analysis
- Presentation

Behaviours you need to be able to display

- Ethically
- Honesty
- Thoroughness
- Objectivity
- Adaptability