



Consultation on the Value for Money (VfM) questions in the project registration and completion forms (Forms 2 and 9)

- Subject of this Consultation:** We are undertaking a consultation with EBs regarding the Value for Money (VfM) data we collect through the project registration form (Form 2) and project completion form (Form 9) to ensure that it remains useful and the most appropriate measure for assessing the impact of the scheme.
- Scope of this Consultation:** The VfM questions asked on the project registration form (Form 2) and project completion form (Form 9).
- Who should read this:** Environmental Bodies (EBs).
- Duration:** This consultation will be open for six weeks. The closing date for responses will be 19 February 2020.
- Enquiries:** If you have any questions about this consultation, you should contact the Regulations team on 01926 488 323.
- How to respond:** <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/vfm2020>
- Additional ways to become involved:** We will also be offering a focus group if there is demand for such an event.
- After the consultation:** After reviewing the responses to this consultation document, we will publish a summary of responses alongside our 'next steps' report, which will outline our position on the way forward.

This report will be located on the consultation pages on our website.
- Previous engagement:** Consultation on revisions to the VfM questions, final report published in [March 2015](#) following a consultation in [March 2014](#).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 ENTRUST is the regulatory body appointed by HMRC to regulate the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). Consultations and discussions with stakeholders are key in ensuring that any recommendations for change to the Landfill Tax Regulations 1996 (the Regulations), guidance, or procedures are fit for purpose.
- 1.2 Under our Terms of Approval with HMRC, we are required to collect information relating to the Value for Money (VfM) that projects funded by the LCF deliver. This information is reported to HMRC and other stakeholders to show the positive impacts the LCF has in local communities, and the contribution the LCF makes to achieving UK Government priorities. This is particularly important in the context of increased scrutiny of the LCF following the devolution of landfill tax in Scotland and Wales.
- 1.3 To collect the data necessary for this annual reporting, ENTRUST ask a number of VfM questions to project applicants to cover topics including volunteering, sustainability, resource use and project assets. Until our most recent consultation these questions were asked as part of the project registration form (Form 2). During 2013/14, a consultation was undertaken with the aim of reviewing the VfM questions to ensure that the information that we collected remained fit for purpose.
- 1.4 In response to the 2013/14 consultation most VfM questions (with the exception of volunteering questions) were removed from Form 2, and instead are now asked as part of the project completion form (Form 9). A new set of questions was also introduced to fit this new format, and to address any suggestions/concerns which were raised by stakeholders in consultation responses.
- 1.5 The moving of most of the VfM questions from the Form 2 to Form 9 has been successful. By implementing this change, we have been able to gather much more accurate data, and response rates have been high. For example, in the most recent annual report to HMRC (relating to 2018/2019) we reported that we received 99% of completed Form 9s from EBs, and only 10 remained outstanding.
- 1.6 In the 2019-2022 ENTRUST Corporate Plan we announced we would hold a consultation which will review the current VfM questions to ensure they remain useful and the most appropriate measure for assessing the impact of the LCF.

2. Reasons for this consultation

- 2.1 This consultation seeks to assess the views of stakeholders on the current VfM questions, and evaluate whether there is a need for changes to be made to them. Specifically, we would like to seek EBs' views on whether revisions to the current VfM questions, or the way they are structured, are necessary to appropriately measure the VfM delivered by LCF funded projects.
- 2.2 It is important that the VfM data collected by ENTRUST is relevant to priority indicators measured by the UK Government and Government bodies. It is also vital that the data we collect is comprehensive, accurate and verifiable so that we can have confidence in the reports made on the impact delivered by the LCF. Without accurate and verifiable data, we

cannot effectively report to HMRC on the VfM which the LCF delivers. We understand that funders also seek VfM information from their applicants.

- 2.3 ENTRUST does however recognise that future changes to Form 9 may create an additional administrative burden for EBs, or require new processes to be in place for the collection of any data which may be needed to answer any new/revised VfM questions. As such we understand that it is essential that a sufficient lead time is given between this consultation and the implementation of any changes. We would therefore propose, if any changes are needed to the VfM questions, that these would come into effect in April 2021. This would still mean that current projects, and new projects beginning in 2020, would likely be asked to complete the revised version of the Form 9 (dependent on their end date), but that projects currently running and reaching completion during the 2020/2021 financial year would not be subject to any changes to the Form 9.
- 2.4 As a result of this consultation we therefore hope to review and, where appropriate and a need is identified, revise the questions we ask in order to measure the VfM delivered by LCF funded projects.

3. Current position

- 3.1 Currently, when registering a new project, EBs are asked to provide information relating to the number of volunteers that are expected to take part in the project as part of Form 2. Furthermore, when a project is completed, the EB is asked various questions as part of Form 9 concerning the VfM which the project is expected to/has delivered.
- 3.2 We recognise that if questions are difficult to answer or create an administrative burden the information gleaned from them is likely to be less useful in ascertaining the VfM the LCF delivers as a whole. We therefore seek to engage stakeholders to assess their opinions on the current questions, and allow them to suggest appropriate changes, to ensure the project registration and completion processes are kept as straightforward as possible, and the data gathered remains comprehensive, accurate and verifiable.

Question 1: Do you consider that revisions need to be made to the current VfM questions to allow figures to be more accurately and easily reported?

Yes No

4. Current questions

- 4.1 The current VfM questions asked at both the project registration and project completion stages are outlined in Appendices A and B.

5. Possible changes

- 5.1 Following the 2013/14 consultation many of the VfM questions were edited, and some added/removed to improve the quality of the data gathered. The changes made also simplified the process of project registration. It is now proposed that the VfM questions are

reviewed by stakeholders through this consultation. This section summarises some areas we wish EB to consider based on feedback received to date via other forums.

- 5.2 As mentioned, moving most of the VfM questions from Form 2 to Form 9 following the 2013/14 consultation has been very beneficial. We would therefore consider moving the VfM questions which currently remain in the Form 2 (number of volunteers) to Form 9. This would increase the length of the Form 9, but would simplify the project application process and improve the accuracy of the data collected through these questions.

Question 2: Do you think that VfM questions which currently remain in the Form 2 should be moved to the Form 9 and asked at the project completion stage?

Yes No

- 5.3 Question 8 of Form 9 (Appendix B, Paragraph 8.4) looks to identify the reductions in total utility costs of a structure, building or amenity which may have occurred as a result of an LCF funded project. Since the implementation of this VfM question we have observed that a number of project contacts have difficulty answering this question because at the time of project completion it is unlikely that enough time will have passed between the completion of the project and the filling in of the Form 9 to correctly identify any reductions in utility costs.

Question 3: Would you recommend that VfM question 8 stay the same as it is currently, or should it be removed or revised?

Stay the same Removed Revised

Question 4: If you answered that VfM question 8 should be revised, please describe the changes you think would be most appropriate below.

- 5.4 In the recent Information and Networking Forum (INF) held between ENTRUST and representatives of EBs on 10 September 2019, it was suggested by stakeholders that the VfM questions “should seek information on biodiversity metrics, for example the number of trees planted per project”. As part of this consultation we are therefore asking stakeholders whether such questions should be added to the current project completion form.

Question 5: Would you suggest that introducing new VfM questions such as ‘number of trees planted’ to collect information on the positive environmental impacts of LCF projects would be beneficial?

Yes No

Question 6: If you answered yes, please suggest additional VfM questions you think would be most beneficial and appropriate to ask at the project completion stage.

- 5.5 In our previous consultation it was also noted that questions 11 to 13 on Form 9 (Appendix B, Paragraph 8.5), relating to the project achieving its intended outcomes, were potentially ambiguous and too open ended, making them difficult to answer. Despite this, we do find the responses to these questions valuable in demonstrating the VfM of the LCF to HMRC in our annual reporting. We therefore suggest reviewing this in the current consultation to identify whether there is still a need for these questions to be changed, and to seek suggestions for

how these questions could be modified to make them easier to answer and more targeted, while still allowing the same or similar data to be gathered.

Question 7: Should VfM questions 11-13 on Form 9 be changed?

Yes No

Question 8: If you answered yes, please suggest any changes which you feel could be made to VfM questions 11-13 on Form 9.

6. Consultation questions

6.1 This section sets out in one place the consultation questions which have been asked in relation to the subject of this consultation. In addition, a question has been added (question 9) to allow stakeholders to make any additional comments in relation to the consultation subject matter which do not lie within the scope of the consultation questions and to make suggestions for further questions. We are also asking EBs to indicate their interest in a focus group.

	Question	Paragraph
1.	Do you consider that revisions need to be made to the current VfM questions to allow figures to be more accurately and easily reported?	3.2
2.	Do you think that VfM questions which currently remain on Form 2 should be moved to Form 9 and asked at the project completion stage?	5.2
3.	Would you recommend that VfM question 8 stay the same as it is currently, or should it be removed or revised?	5.3
4.	If you answered that VfM question 8 should be revised, please describe the changes you think would be most appropriate below.	5.3
5.	Would you suggest that introducing new VfM questions such as 'number of trees planted' to collect information on the positive environmental impacts of LCF projects would be beneficial?	5.4
6.	If you answered yes, please suggest additional VfM questions you think would be most beneficial and appropriate to ask at the project completion stage.	5.4
7.	Should VfM questions 11-13 on Form 9 be changed?	5.5
8.	If you answered yes to survey question 7, please suggest changes which could be made to VfM questions 11-13 on Form 9.	5.5
9.	If you have any suggestions relating to the VfM questions which have not been brought up in this survey please describe these below.	6.1
10.	Would you be interested in attending a focus group to discuss this consultation?	6.1

7. Appendix A

- 7.1 The current VfM questions asked in Form 2 (at the project registration stage) cover volunteer numbers, and also seek to collect information regarding youth volunteer numbers and youth volunteer days created by the project.

1.	Number of volunteers expected to help in delivery of this LCF project.		A volunteer will have offered their time to participate in the project and will receive out-of-pocket expenses only.
2.	Of the above, how many are youth volunteers?		A youth is between the ages of 16 and 25 when they start working on a project.
3.	Number of youth volunteering days created by this project.		A youth is between the ages of 16 and 25 when they start working on a project.

8. Appendix B

- 8.1 The initial questions asked on Form 9 (question 1-4 inclusive) confirm project details and are automatically populated in EOL. These do not relate to VfM and so are not included in the consultation. The current VfM questions which appear in the Form 9 (at the project completion stage) cover a wide range of topics, as outlined below.

- 8.2 Question 5 is used to gather information about project assets.

5.	Has the LCF funding provided for this project been used to purchase or create a capital asset (including land or buildings)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
For the asset purchased or created by the LCF funding provided for this project, please state:			
a)	What type of asset is this?		
b)	The name or brief description of this asset		
c)	How much LCF funding was spent on this capital asset?		
d)	How much was spent in total on this capital asset (including LCF funds and funds from non LCF sources)?		
e)	Is this capital asset on a LCF asset register?		
f)	What protection is in place for the LCF funding used to purchase or create this capital asset?		

- 8.3 Question 6 concerns the optimal use of resources.

6.	Did this project receive funding from other sources?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	If yes, how much other funding (in total) was received?		

8.4 Questions 7-10 are used to gather information relating to the sustainability of a project.

7.	Will income be generated by the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
	If yes, how much income each year (to the nearest £1,000) is expected?			
8.	If relevant, has this project reduced the total utility cost of the structure, building or amenity (e.g. through reduced energy consumption, energy efficiency measures or energy generation)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
	If yes, please estimate the reduction in the total utility costs (to the nearest £1,000) each year.			
9.	Have any new jobs been created and/or existing jobs maintained, as a result of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
a)	If yes, please provide the number of jobs created (use full time equivalent e.g. 0.5, for part time jobs)			
b)	If yes, please provide the number of jobs maintained (use full time equivalent e.g. 0.5, for part time jobs)			
10.	Please estimate the number of visits to the project site each year prior to the project (not required for Object DA).			
	Please estimate the number of visits to the project site after the project has completed (not required for Object DA).			
	Please note that this counts every visit. For example, 1 person visiting the project site 10 times in a year counts as 10 visits.			

8.5 Finally, questions 11-15 relate to achieving the intended outcome of the project.

11.	Did the project achieve its aims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
12.	Do you consider that this project has improved the lives of people living in the community of the project, and / or achieved environmental benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
13.	Do you consider this project directly brought together people in the community of the project who are from different backgrounds and who otherwise would not have been brought together?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If you answered yes to any of questions 11 - 13, please provide more detail in your response to question 14.			
14.	Is there any additional information you would like to provide about this project?		
15.	Would you be prepared to have this project considered as an ENTRUST case study?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No