

NICVA Membership Survey 2009



Overview

As a membership organisation, NICVA needs to continually assess and measure the attitudes and opinions of its membership towards the quality and relevance of services it provides. NICVA used this year's survey to gain the views of its members in relation to its dissemination of information, advice and support services and their experiences with NICVA staff. The survey was circulated to 1,023 organisations and a response rate of 24.0% was achieved (243 responses).

79.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the **funding advice they have received from NICVA** has been appropriate to their organisation. This advice has been consistently viewed by members as an important service. For example in 2008 79.8% of respondents stated that this service is valuable to them.

70.0% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the **research advice and support provided by NICVA is appropriate** to meeting the needs of their organisations. This has increased from 39.7% in the 2007 membership survey.

73.0% of responding organisations stated that **the CommunityNI website was a communication channel which meets the**

information needs of their organisation. This has increased from 65.7% since 2008.

Nine out of ten organisations agreed or strongly agreed that they have never had any issues in relation to a response from NICVA staff. This has increased since 2008 where 81.6% of respondents stated that their organisation has never had any difficulty gaining a response to an enquiry or request for information.

In 2008 72.1% of respondents indicated that **the range of services NICVA provides generally meets the needs of their organisation.** This has increased by over 16% to 88.2% in this current survey.

Two thirds of respondents (66.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the **support and guidance NICVA provides to their organisation help it function efficiently.**

93.5% of respondents stated that they have received a professional response from NICVA staff when they contacted them for advice or support. This has increased from 81.5% since 2008.

43.1% of respondents stated that the additional **information on social economy, provided by NICVA since October 2008** in conjunction with UCIT, has been beneficial to their organisation.

Introduction

NICVA carries out an annual survey of its members to assess and measure the quality and relevance of services, assess members' needs, ascertain the perception of the organisation and how it is performing. This enables NICVA to gather the necessary views and opinions of its membership.

NICVA is conscious of the number of surveys organisations and groups are asked to complete and so has introduced a new membership survey cycle which will be directly linked to our strategic planning process and will only require the completion of a more detailed questionnaire once every three years. The other two annual surveys in the cycle have been condensed. This year respondents are asked to assess NICVA's services and support, and the performance of the organisation and its staff.

Objectives

The objectives of this survey are twofold:

- To determine the attitude of members towards the services and support NICVA provides.
- To ascertain and assess the performance of NICVA the organisation and its staff.

Methodology

The findings of this research are based upon the results of a survey that was distributed to NICVA's membership during February 2009. A total of 1,023 surveys were circulated and a response rate of 24.0% was achieved (243 responses).

Structure of report

The report reflects the structure of the questionnaire: in the first section a range of questions was asked in relation to the generic services provided by NICVA such as its advice and support services and information dissemination. The report examines NICVA's funding, human resource, research, policy and financial advice services. The respondents were asked to give their responses on a number of scales which tested their attitudes to these services and were asked to indicate how appropriate these are in meeting the needs of their organisation.

The report then examines the dissemination of information through the variety of channels that NICVA employs to provide members with up to date, relevant and accurate information. These different channels were listed and respondents were asked to indicate if they meet the information needs of their organisation.

The first section of the report also examines respondents' views on how beneficial the social economy

information they receive from NICVA, in conjunction with UCIT, is to their organisation. The second part of the report examines the performance of NICVA in relation to the provision of support and advice services, meeting the needs of its membership and the performance of staff.

Findings

NICVA support and advice services

NICVA has continued to develop its support and advice service over the past 12 months and recognises the importance of asking its membership if the services provided have been appropriate in meeting the needs of their organisations.

79.9% of respondents indicated that the funding advice they have received from NICVA has been appropriate to their organisation. This advice has been consistently viewed by members as an important service which is appropriate to their organisation. For example a similar result was found in 2008 when 79.8% of respondents stated that this service was valuable to them.

Another significant increase can be seen in relation to research information and support. In this survey 70.0% of respondents stated that the research advice and support provided by NICVA is appropriate to meeting the needs of their organisation. This has increased since 2008 when 30.5% respondents found NICVA's research support to be valuable.

Table 1 - Appropriateness of services

	Very appropriate	Appropriate	Not sure	Not appropriate at all	Never used
Advice on policy matters	32.6	47.5	6.2	0.8	12.8
Funding advice	43.4	36.5	5.3	1.2	13.5
Research information and support	24.0	46.0	11.8	1.7	16.5
Human resources information and support	23.7	45.2	8.3	4.6	18.3
Finance information and support	17.0	44.4	13.3	3.3	22.0
European Union information and support	16.4	33.2	22.7	2.1	25.6

Base: 243

The feedback from respondents in relation to the appropriateness of services has been very positive. For example 80.1% of respondents stated that the advice NICVA provides on policy matters is appropriate to their organisation. This has increased from 68.1% in the 2008 membership survey.

There has also been a slight increase in the number of respondents that believe that the human resources information and support services and financial information and support services are appropriate to the needs of their organisation. Unlike the other services listed, NICVA has asked

respondents to comment on its European information and support service for the first time. Nearly 50.0% of respondents (49.6%) believe that this service is also appropriate in meeting the needs of their organisation.

member organisations were also viewed positively by the majority of respondents. 62.3% and 71.5% respectively stating that they agree or strongly agree that these channels meet their organisation’s information needs.

Dissemination of information

Member organisations were asked to indicate if the communication channels employed meet the information needs of their organisation.

In relation to the NICVA websites, the feedback from respondents is also very positive. 80.3% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that NICVA’s website is a communication channel which meets the information needs of their organisation.

Table 2 - Dissemination of information

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
NICVA news	58.9	37.0	2.4	0.8	0.8
grant-tracker.org	44.9	31.2	18.8	2.6	2.6
eNews (NICVA email briefings)	42.6	36.9	16.0	2.1	0.4
nicva.org	36.2	44.1	16.2	3.1	0.4
communityni.org	31.7	41.3	22.6	2.6	1.7
Advice notes	27.3	43.2	28.2	0.9	0.4
Assembly monitor ebriefing	21.9	40.4	34.2	2.2	1.3
communitybuyer.org	14.3	33.2	42.6	6.3	3.6

The feedback in relation to the dissemination of information continues to be positive. For example 95.9% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that NICVA news is a communication channel which meets the information needs of their organisation. In addition 79.5% of respondents believe that NICVA’s email briefing (eNews) is also an appropriate communication channel. The Assembly Monitor ebriefing and the advice notes that NICVA provides for

This is a very similar result to the 2008 survey when 83.6% of respondents stated that the NICVA website was either a useful or very useful mechanism in providing information to their organisation. Just over three quarters of respondents (76.1%) stated that the Grant Tracker website is an information channel which meets the information needs of their organisation. Again this is similar to 2008 when 75.0% found Grant Tracker as useful or very useful in

providing information to their organisation. 73.0% of respondents stated that the CommunityNI website was a communication channel which meets the information needs of their organisation. This has increased from 65.7% since 2008.

There has been a significant increase in the number of respondents that believe that the Community Buyer website (www.communitybuyer.org) is a communication channel that meets the needs of their organisation. In 2008 27.2% of respondents found this website useful or very useful in providing information. This has increased to 47.5% in 2009.

Social economy information

Since October 2008 NICVA and UCIT have been working together to deliver social economy information to the wider sector and specialist groups. A social economy and trading section now appears in NICVA News and Grant Tracker respectively, to allow a co-ordinated approach to providing information in these areas. Other social economy support organisations have also been encouraged to use these channels to disseminate information on best practice.

Member organisations were asked to indicate if this additional information on social economy has been beneficial to their organisation.

Table 3 – The value of social economy information

	Count	%
Strongly agree	22	9.2
Agree	81	33.9
Not sure	104	43.5
Disagree	28	11.7
Strongly disagree	4	1.7

Base: 239 (10 missing)

A total of 43.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the information provided on social economy has been beneficial to their organisation. 13.4% of respondents disagreed and 43.5% of respondents were unsure however this is unsurprising as the information on social economy has only been circulated since October 2008. It is likely that within this time period not all members will be aware of the provision of this information. In addition not all member organisations will be interested in this information and therefore it would not be of any benefit to them. NICVA will continue to publicise this service to its members.

Those organisations that did not find the social economy information beneficial were asked to indicate why this was the case. Despite the low number of responses to this question (10 respondents) two of the reasons mentioned were that organisations are unsure as to what social economy is or where NICVA provides information on the social economy.

Experience of NICVA's services

Member organisations were asked if NICVA provides all the support and guidance their organisation requires in order to help them function efficiently.

Table 4 - Support and guidance

	Count	%
Strongly agree	35	14.3
Agree	136	52.5
Not sure	44	18.0
Disagree	25	10.2
Strongly disagree	5	2.0

Base: 245 (4 missing)

As Table 4 indicates two thirds of respondents (66.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the support and guidance NICVA provides to their organisation helps it function efficiently. This is an increase of 14.3% since 2008 when 52.5% of respondents reported a similar result.

Organisations were asked to give additional comments on how NICVA has or has not provided all the support and guidance their organisation requires in order to help it function efficiently.

“Funding information excellent.”

“Have been assisted with advice and practical guidance in all the times I have asked for help.”

“Up to date and relevant recent communication with NICVA, positive outcome.”

“NICVA is very helpful but doesn't provide all the support and guidance my organisation needs to function efficiently.”

“NICVA provides a very high level of support but not all of it.”

Organisations were asked if they ever had any difficulty in receiving a response to an enquiry or request for information and support.

Table 5 - Response for information and support

	Count	%
Strongly agree	112	45.5
Agree	109	44.3
Not sure	17	6.9
Disagree	8	3.3
Strongly disagree	-	-

Base: 246 (3 missing)

Table 5 clearly illustrates that the majority of organisations have not had any difficulty in relation to receiving a response to an enquiry or request for information and support. Nine out of ten organisations (89.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have never had any issues in relation to a response from NICVA staff. This is an increase of 8.8% compared with the previous year. In 2008 5.6% of respondents stated

that they had difficulty in receiving a response from NICVA staff with regard to an enquiry or request for information or support. This however has decreased to 3.3%, which demonstrates a continual improvement in terms of responding to enquires or requests from members.

Organisations were also asked to provide additional comments relating to staff responses to queries. Below are some of the comments.

“All queries have been dealt with as promptly as possible and without fail.”

“Any requests to date have been good, positive, informative.”

“Had difficulty registering for Assembly Monitor via email, got it by word of mouth.”

“Would appreciate better understanding of the workings of small charitable groups.”

Membership organisations were asked if the range of services NICVA provides generally meets the needs of their organisation.

Table 6 - Range of services

	Count	%
Strongly agree	68	27.6
Agree	149	60.6
Not sure	22	8.9
Disagree	7	2.8
Strongly disagree	-	-

Base: 246 (3 missing)

In the 2008 membership survey 72.1% of respondents indicated that the range of services NICVA provides generally meets the needs of their organisation. This has increased by 16.0% to 88.2% in 2009. In addition 8.3% of responding organisations in 2008 stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that the range of NICVA services was sufficient to meet the needs of their organisation. This has decreased to 2.8% and indicates that NICVA services continue to meet the needs of the majority of its members.

Once again organisations were asked if they would like to further comment on the range of NICVA services. Below are some of the comments.

“We [organisation’s name] feel NICVA provides clear and concise information when and if needed, thanks.”

“As we are a voluntary/community group we depend on the services and information provided and feel it does meet our needs (except funding which they can’t provide).”

“NICVA does give quality advice and support on funding, governance etc.”

“Our needs are met through many sources.”

NICVA members were asked if when they call NICVA for advice and information, they always receive a

highly professional response from NICVA staff.

Table 7 - Professional responses from NICVA staff

	Count	%
Strongly agree	111	45.5
Agree	117	48.0
Not sure	14	5.7
Disagree	2	0.8
Strongly disagree	-	-

Base: 246 (3 missing)

The feedback from respondents in relation to the professional response from NICVA staff is very positive. 93.5% of respondents stated that when they contacted NICVA for advice and information they always received a high professional response from NICVA staff. This has increased by 12.0% since 2008 when 81.5% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they received a professional response from NICVA staff.

Organisations were given the opportunity to comment further on the professionalism of NICVA staff when dealing with enquiries for information and advice. Below are some of the comments.

“The response and information is always professional and helpful.”

“Always satisfied, staff welcoming and friendly.”

“All staff we have dealt with have been knowledgeable and highly efficient.”

Conclusion

Throughout this report one consistent theme has emerged and that is NICVA’s progress in meeting the needs of its members. As has been the case in previous surveys, the members’ view of NICVA is generally very positive. There is a clear indication that NICVA continues to provide high quality services, support and advice for its members, other organisations and institutions with an interest in the voluntary and community sector.

Respondents were given the opportunity to state how valuable they find NICVA services and the feedback was very positive. This survey has shown that NICVA is very proficient in providing its member organisations with support and advice services including governance, HR, finance, funding and research.

There was also very positive feedback in relation to how NICVA disseminates information. Respondents were asked if the communication channels employed by NICVA meet the information needs of their organisations. Over 63.0% of respondents stated that communication through NICVA news, eNews, the Assembly Monitor and advice notes meets their information needs. This is especially the case in relation to NICVA News and eNews with 79.0% of respondents indicating that these were a good source of information. Respondent’s views in relation to NICVA’s websites were also positive, with the majority of organisations

stating that the various sites meet the information needs of their organisation.

Respondents indicated strongly that NICVA provides all the support and guidance their organisation requires to function efficiently. In addition respondents stated their organisation has never had any difficulty in receiving a response to an enquiry or request for information and support. In addition, the majority of respondents agreed that the services NICVA provides generally meet the needs of their organisations and they receive a professional response from NICVA staff when they call for advice and information.

If you require further information on this report or NICVA's research programme, please contact

Andrea Thornbury
(Research Officer)

andrea.thornbury@nicva.org

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Appendix

Appropriateness of services	2008 (Valuable)	2009 (Appropriate)
Advice on policy matters	68.1	80.1
Funding advice	79.8	79.9
Research information and support	39.7	70.0
Human resources information and support	61.9	68.9
Finance information and support	-	61.4
European Union information and support	-	49.6

Dissemination of information	2008 (Useful)	2009 (Agreed)
NICVA news	-	95.9
grant-tracker.org	75.0	76.1
eNews (NICVA email briefings)	-	79.5
nicva.org	83.6	80.3
communityni.org	65.7	73.0
Advice notes	-	70.5
Assembly Monitor ebriefing	-	62.3
communitybuyer.org	27.2	47.5