

Impact Framework 2025 to 2030 September 2025

Overview

John Ellerman Foundation's Impact Framework is a tool designed to help us understand our progress in achieving the aims set out in our 2025 to 2030 strategy. It builds on the approach and progress that we made in developing our first Impact Framework in 2023 to 2024, under our previous strategy.

There is no expectation that our grant-holders should have to use this Impact Framework. It is designed to help our staff and Trustees to understand the Foundation's work and contribution – not to monitor or claim credit for the work of others.

What is 'impact'?

We find the Association of Charitable Foundations' (ACF) definition of impact helpful: *"ACF defines impact as the positive and negative effects of a foundation's resources, activities and behaviours, and the extent to which these effects contribute to its charitable mission."*

The type of impact that can be achieved by an endowed charitable grantmaker like ourselves is quite different from the type of impact that is achieved by other types of social and environmental sector organisations, such as those we fund through our grantmaking. We are not a direct delivery organisation; we spend most of our working days choosing how to allocate resources to others, rather than delivering projects, campaigns or support services ourselves. Nonetheless, the decisions we make about how to use our resources, our time, our expertise and our voice can make a significant difference overall.

Our understanding of impact includes the following beliefs:

- Every choice we make (or don't make) has an impact.
- Impact can be positive, negative or neutral.
- Impact can be intended or unintended.
- 'Our' impact is the direct consequence of our work and decisions – we do not claim credit for the impact of other organisations' work, though we may have contributed in part by, for example, choosing to provide a grant to fund their activities.
- 'Our' impact is not linear nor isolated from other factors, like political and economic systems or the actions of others in our sector – therefore it is important to understand the wider context in which our actions play out.
- We recognise the relevance of, and give credence to, all types of information in understanding our impact – including qualitative data and narratives, as well as quantitative data.
- Change can be very long term, and can take decades or multiple generations to play out – the impact of our actions may not be immediately obvious, but this does not necessarily mean that there has been no impact at all.

Our ambitions in developing and using this Impact Framework are to:

- Consider our impact in the round – this means through our investing and use of our endowment, as well as through our grantmaking.
- Make the best possible use of our resources in service of our charitable aim.
- Understand, reflect on and adjust our own actions (and thinking) in response to learning over time.
- Be transparent and invite wider accountability, by sharing our progress with others.

Our strategy for 2025 to 2030

Our overarching aim is to advance wellbeing for people, society and the natural world. We are committed to delivering our aim with 100% of our assets, which means our investing, our grantmaking, and our wider operations.

Our current strategy for 2025 to 2030 sets out how we intend to progress our aim in this five year period. We will advance our aim by focusing on supporting work that acts on:

- Tackling the triple planetary crisis by mitigating and adapting to climate impacts, reducing pollution and protecting and restoring nature.
- Reducing polarisation, for example by building greater trust and connection within society, and/or increasing the levels of participation and influence in the political process (which is sometimes referred to as political equality).
- Promoting the development and adoption of economic models and systems that support people and planet and reduce wealth inequalities.
- Advancing equity and justice for marginalised communities impacted by the issues above.

We feel the best way we can do our bit is by striving to:

- Apply our values to all that we do. We have five values, which are to be responsive, discerning, flexible, connected and to apply the personal touch.
- Invest sustainably, generating financial returns through responsible and social investing.
- Be a modern and effective grantmaker supporting work in the UK (including in the UK Overseas Territories) committed to delivering best and promising practices, including our preferred offer of core and multi-year funding.
- Work with others – including our grant-holders, applicants, other funders and grantmakers, investors, policy and decision makers, the media, our staff and our Trustees – in ways that ensure we are transparent and accountable, and enhance our own experience and knowledge, especially as our small size and open approach means that we are not working as experts or specialists across our various areas of work.

Understanding our Impact Framework

As an endowed charitable grantmaker, we have impact through:

- a) The use of our **money**
- b) Our **time and expertise**
- c) The effects of these **in the long term**, which we recognise may not be immediately apparent from our day to day decisions.

These three aspects of our impact are represented as rows in our Impact Framework.

Whilst our primary activity is to make grants to fund charitable activities, we recognise that the decisions we make about how to invest our endowment to generate money for grantmaking also have a significant impact on our charitable aim. For this reason, we have included both our **investments** and our **grantmaking** in our Impact Framework, as two columns.

Within each column, we have listed eight **types of activities** through which we have impact, as well as an explanation of *why* we want to understand the impact of these activities.

Beneath the Impact Framework itself we also provide two tables – one covering our investments, and one covering our grantmaking – that summarise the **information sources** that we will use to assess our progress and impact (positive, negative or neutral), including information on when and how we will analyse them.

Outputs and reporting cycle

As outlined in the Impact Framework, the main outputs will be:

- Bi-annual summaries of information about our grants and investments (we call these 'grant snapshots' and 'investment snapshots'), reported to our Finance and Investment Committee (FIC) and Board.
- Annual analyses of our progress, incorporating data from the grant and investment snapshots as well as applicant, grant-holder, partner and investee feedback, reported to our FIC and Board.
- An annual research and reflection piece, which draws together all of the above as well as referencing external evidence to consider our progress in the wider context. These will be shared publicly.

We already have access to most of the information that we intend to draw on to understand our progress under this new Impact Framework. However, we have previously lacked the capacity to consider this information 'in the round' and use it to reflect regularly, take stock and adjust our approach. The next five years of our strategy provide an opportunity for us to build a rhythm of analysis and reflection which we believe will help us to continue improving our impact as an endowed grantmaker in the years to come.

Conclusion

Throughout this strategy cycle, we hope that our Impact Framework and associated reporting will help us to:

- Consider how far we have been able to deliver against our aim to advance wellbeing for people, society and the natural world in this age of significant disruption and interconnected global threats, across our investing, grantmaking and wider operations, and the value we have been able to add.
- Evolve and respond to our learning from implementing the strategy over a five year period, alongside the changing operating context between 2025 and 2030.
- Support greater connections and influence between those we work with, especially across our grantmaking and investing, to advocate for the causes we care about with those that have influence and power.
- Ensure those working with us have a clear understanding on what it is that we care about and why, and this enables them to take informed decisions on working with us – this applies to applicants, grant-holders, fellow funders and investors, and policy and decision makers.
- Enable those we work with to make impact and secure the change they want to make, with support from us – and that we are able to use this to generate learning and evidence on the role that funders can play in delivering change.

We will use our learning to evolve our strategy in ways that help those we work with, and we will strive to be a stronger advocate for the causes we care about with those that have influence and power.

Please contact us if you need to access a version of our Impact Framework that is compatible with screen readers.

John Ellerman Foundation's Impact Framework

What is the impact of our...	Investments		Grantmaking	
a) Money	What is the impact of:	Why are we asking this?	What is the impact of:	Why are we asking this?
	1) What we invest in?	We want to understand how the decisions we make about investing our endowment impact our charitable aim, including our role in the context of the wider investment sector.	1) What we fund?	We want to understand how the decisions we make about our grantmaking impact our charitable aim, including our role in the context of the wider grantmaking sector.
	2) What we don't invest in?		2) What we don't fund?	
	3) How we invest?		3) How we fund?	
	4) All of the above, in their wider context?		4) All of the above, in their wider context?	
b) Time and expertise	What is the impact of:	Why are we asking this?	What is the impact of:	Why are we asking this?
	5) Our engagement?	We want to understand how the ways we use our influence as an asset owner impact our charitable aim.	5) Grants Plus support?	We want to understand how the ways we use our influence as a grantmaker impact our charitable aim.
	6) Our partnerships?		6) Our partnerships?	
	7) Our voice?		7) Our voice?	
c) ...over the long term?	What is the evidence that:	Why are we asking this?	What is the evidence that:	Why are we asking this?
	8) We are achieving as positive an impact on our charitable aim as possible through the use of our endowment, in the long term?	We want to understand whether, overall, how we invest our endowment and use our influence as an asset owner is making as significant a contribution to our charitable aim as possible.	8) We are achieving as positive an impact on our charitable aim as possible through our grantmaking, in the long term?	We want to understand whether, overall, how we make grants and use our influence as a grantmaker to support the social and environmental sectors is making as significant a contribution to our charitable aim as possible.

Information we will use to understand the impact of our investments

We will use the information outlined in the table below to address each question in our Impact Framework that relates to our investing. This will support us to regularly take stock of our progress and consider whether we could improve our approach.

What is the impact of our...	Investments			
a) Money	What is the impact of:	What kind of information will we consider?		How & when?
	1) What we invest in?	Financial portfolio	Social investments portfolio	Bi-annual investment snapshot
		Fund values Financial returns Asset allocation Geographic allocation Sector allocation Largest 10 holdings Carbon intensity ESG risk scores	Investment values Financial returns Asset allocation Geographic allocation Sector allocation Social and/or environmental impact	
	2) What we don't invest in?	Exposure to fossil fuel stocks Exposure to exclusions Response to any breaches in our Policy	Reasons for investment opportunities not taken forward Response to any breaches in our Policy	Bi-annual investment snapshot
	3) How we invest?	Effectiveness of our Investment Policy and processes	Effectiveness of our Social Investment Policy and processes	Annual process analysis Investee feedback
	4) All of the above, in their wider context?	Size of our investments, relative to total fund size Fund managers' voting record	Size of our investment relative to total invested Leverage or other added value of our investment	Annual context analysis

b) Time and expertise	What is the impact of:	What kind of information will we consider?	How & when?
	5) Our engagement?	Outcomes of our engagement with fund managers Outcomes of our engagement with the wider investment industry, e.g. through consultations	Annual engagement analysis
	6) Our partnerships?	Outcomes of investment-related partnership working, e.g. through the Charities Responsible Investment Network	Partner feedback Annual partnership analysis
	7) Our voice?	Results of sharing our insights through investment-related events, blogs, or other public-facing activities	Annual communications analysis
c) ...over the long term?	What is the evidence that:	What kind of information will we consider?	How & when?
	8) We are achieving as positive an impact on our charitable aim as possible, through the use of our endowment, in the long term?	We will take stock of all the information above, as well as wider evidence, to consider how far we feel that we are making progress towards our charitable aim in the long term through our financial and non-financial impact.	Annual research and reflection piece

Information we will use to understand the impact of our grantmaking

We will use the information outlined in the table below to address each question in our Impact Framework that relates to our grantmaking. This will support us to regularly take stock of our progress and consider whether we could improve our approach.

What is the impact of our...	Grantmaking		
a) Money	What is the impact of:	What kind of information will we consider?	How & when?
	1) What we fund?	Number of live grants Grants approved – size & length Grant themes Grant-holder income Grant-holder geography Grant-holder DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) information	Bi-annual grants snapshot Annual DEI Data Standard analysis
	2) What we don't fund?	Number of applications Grants requested – size & length Applicant income Applicant geography Applicant DEI information Success rates at different application stages	Bi-annual grants snapshot Annual DEI Data Standard analysis
	3) How we fund?	Time taken to apply Time taken to receive decision Applicant and grant-holder satisfaction	Annual process analysis Grant-holder and applicant feedback
	4) All of the above, in their wider context?	Our grant in context of grant-holders' overall income Our grantmaking in context of other grantmakers Grant-holder progress towards strategic aims, as outlined in annual reports	Annual grants analysis, including grant-holder financial analysis and use of 360Giving data

b) Time and expertise	What is the impact of:	What kind of information will we consider?	How & when?
	5) Grants Plus support?	Outcomes of additional support provided to grant-holders, including uptake and feedback	Annual Grants Plus analysis Grant-holder feedback
	6) Our partnerships?	Outcomes of grants-related partnership working, e.g. through the UKOTs Fund (a pooled fund supporting environmental work in the UK Overseas Territories)	Partner feedback Annual partnership analysis
	7) Our voice?	Results of sharing our insights through grants-related events, blogs, or other public-facing activities	Annual communications analysis
c) ...over the long term?	What is the evidence that:	What kind of information will we consider?	How & when?
	8) We are achieving as positive an impact on our charitable aim as possible, through our grantmaking, in the long term?	We will take stock of all the information above, as well as wider evidence, to consider how far we feel that we are making progress towards our charitable aim in the long term through our financial and non-financial impact.	Annual research and reflection piece