



## Introduction

All systems have obstacles or actions which slow users down or frustrate them. We call this friction. When this friction is excessive or unjustified it makes life difficult and can decrease participation as people need to: *acquire information and navigate tasks* (which could be difficult or costly); *dedicate time* (which people may not have) or *generate negative emotions* (where processes create a sense of frustration, humiliation or stigmatisation). We call this Sludge.

Sludge audits help tackle these problems by:

- Understanding the friction that exists in activities and services
- Monitoring information from participants to identify friction
- Identifying friction(s) that can be reduced to improve the participant experience

## Steps to Sludge Audit success

### 1. Understanding what friction exists in the activity or service

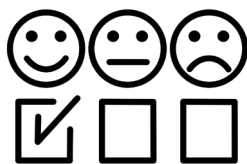
The first step is to map out the participant's journey from their initial interactions with the activity, for example how they became interested in the activity or service. Second, consider their attendance experience. Finally, their return journey to understand their experience of future activity attendances or service use.

When considering the participant journey, lookout for potential frictions that may exist, such as paperwork, complicated booking systems or an unfamiliar location (that the participant has to navigate), or a poor welcome experience. If possible, ask a group of current participants to discuss their experiences, then utilise their insight to identify sludge. However, if the activity or service is new, identifying sludge may be difficult until feedback can be provided by participants. These initial reflections help build discussions to inform the sludge audit.

### 2. Monitor information from participants to identify existing friction(s)

Sludge audits are helpful tools for identifying and minimising Sludge when developing community activities, such as a local wellbeing class or schemes such as Microgrants.

Sludge audits can take many forms, including a simple rating scale, a questionnaire, or a conversation. Whichever method is chosen, they should include key questions such as: "has anything caused you a loss of time, increased effort or frustration to book onto this activity?". It is important to select and adapt the sludge audit so it is relevant to the target audience. For example, children and time scarce individuals may benefit from a more visual sludge audit style, such as using an emoji-rating system as this is simple and requires less attention.





# Gameplan Sludge Audit Template

## Example Sludge Audit scorecard

The following example is a scorecard sludge audit that was completed by a Microgrant Scheme recipient. These example sludge statements can be adapted so they are relevant to a service/activity, as identified in Step 1. Using this method, areas of sludge can be identified and a percentage can be calculated and used to compare an activity or service at different time-points to identify any changes in sludge.

**\*Score each statement below YES (if you agree) or NO (if you disagree)**

	YES	NO
<b>The Application Process</b>		
The application was easy to understand	x	
The format of the application was useable	x	
The time taken to complete the application was OK		x
Any questions I had were answered	x	
<b>The Collection/Delivery Process</b>		
Collection of resources was convenient (time and place)		x
All items were delivered together	x	
<b>COMMENTS:</b>		

**Score = Number of YES answers / (Number of YES answers + Number of NO answers) x 100 = \_\_\_\_\_ %**

**Example: 4 / (4 + 2) x 100 = 66%**

### 3. Identify and minimise friction(s) to improve the participant experience

After undertaking the sludge audit, feedback can be collated to identify sludge. Some sludge may be difficult to minimise as it may require investment or resources that are unavailable. However, the aim should be to identify ways to minimise friction and enhance the user experience of the activity or service. For example, if participants found navigating their way to the activity location difficult, better signage, such as clear arrow markings and stationing an activity leader at the door to welcome participants could easily address this issue.

#### Useful tips for sludge audits:

- Identify the focus of the sludge audit and target group (for example, the age group and activity/service).
- A sludge audit should not be sludge so it is important to make the sludge audit easy to complete.
- Identify and minimise sludge that maximises the user experience.

