



Evaluating environmental enrichment project plan

What is your research question? What are you investigating? Do you want to see if an enrichment item is used, in what way and by how much; which of a variety of enrichment items is preferred; or whether occurrences of a certain behaviour are increased/decreased?

What approach will you use to answer this question? Think about what method you will use to answer your question, what approach will be most suitable for your circumstances? How will you interpret data to determine the answer to your question? Do you need to consult someone with statistical expertise?

Which animals will be involved? You should evaluate enrichment for the species, age and strain that will use it. Consider which animals will be available to you for the duration of your study and how many you are planning to involve in your study.

Which people will be involved? Will you need support modifying cages, collecting data or with statistical analysis? Who should be made aware of the evaluation? Does anyone need to approve your study?

Where will it take place? Which animal rooms will you carry out your work in? Will the animals under observation need to be moved elsewhere (e.g. to avoid disturbance)?

What equipment will you need? Is there anything you need to borrow or buy?

What will your schedule be? How will you fit the project in alongside your day-to-day duties? How long do you expect the whole process to take? Consider the preparation, data collection and data analysis.

What will the output be? Would you like to produce a report for internal use, a presentation or poster at a conference, a paper in a peer-reviewed journal, or a combination of these? Make sure your experimental design and project plan will be suitable, checking the journal's instructions to authors if applicable.

This document forms part of the 'Evaluating environmental enrichment' resource, developed by the NC3Rs, IAT and RSPCA to support animal technicians to undertake robust evaluations of enrichment items and assess their impact on animal welfare. For more information, visit www.nc3rs.org.uk/evaluating-environmental-enrichment.