

# Impact Measurement

Impact measurement is assessing the results of your work and your social purpose organization (SPO).

Broader than how many people you reach (outputs), impact measurement is about how their lives are better because of your programs or offering (outcomes). Your impact measurement system includes identifying the most important outputs and outcomes for your organization and creating a system of indicators and tools to track your progress.

LIFT Philanthropy Partners is a national, non-profit organization working with social leaders across Canada, helping them build their capacity to do more through improved efficiency and effectiveness, and by applying an adaptive and innovative business mindset and resources to the social sector.

The Canadian Women's Foundation is a national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada. Through funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing we work to achieve systemic change.

## Key Benefits of Impact Measurement

- Impact investors are focused on both the impact and the financial return of their investments and want their investees to be able to measure and report their results.
- Demonstrate accountability to funders and potential supporters.
- Enhanced capacity and capabilities for impact measurement to allow for better decision making and continuous improvement.
- Opportunities for client feedback to ensure relevancy and alignment with the SPO's overall vision, mission, and goals.

## What makes a "good" impact measurement system?

Choosing and implementing the right impact measurement system can be a challenge. SPOs are encouraged to create a simple, best-practice-based impact measurement system that is user-friendly and can be understood across your organization. While moving beyond outputs to include outcomes, a good impact measurement system should also ensure that data focuses on core areas to ensure that data can be effectively collected and used. Embedding impact measurement into organizational workflows will strengthen your ability to articulate the change you are seeking to make and lead to evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement. A “good” impact measurement system should seek client feedback and embrace a client-centered approach, to ensure programs and services remain aligned to your SPO’s overall vision, mission, and goals.

**Remember, your impact measurement system will not be perfect from day one; it is about putting together a system that reflects your impact and then evolving it over time.**

## The Impact Measurement Process

LIFT’s impact measurement framework uses the Results Chain tool as a foundation of the measurement process. A Results Chain depicts how an SPO's strategies and activities lead to the ultimate change it is seeking to make in the world (typically an SPO's existing vision), helps SPOs identify outcomes (not just outputs), and allows SPOs to streamline indicators to move beyond data collection to data analysis. Key performance indicators are then developed for each result, or outcome.



### Food For Thought

Before developing your impact measurement system, consider the following:

- Who do you serve? How do you impact their lives?
- What data are you currently collecting? How do you use that data?
- What is working well with your measurement system? Where are there opportunities for improvement?

## Top Tips

- Data can be a powerful tool to both prove and improve results. Focus on how you will use data to design the right impact measurement system for your SPO.
- Use your Results Chain to help separate out "need to have" vs. "nice to have" data.
- Capture the impact of your work through outcomes, not just outputs.
- Use a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- Your impact measurement framework will, and should, evolve as your SPO enhances its measurement capacity.