



THE COMMON FOUNDATIONS

Fit and alignment with other standards and approaches

The Common Foundations reiterates the essential practices that are common to many different approaches and frameworks. The Common Foundations are therefore compatible with many other standards. The table below shows just how similar the Common Foundations are to those produced by previous working groups, commissions and task forces.

Common Approach's Common Foundations (2021)	Comité sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre de l'économie sociale et de l'action communautaire (CSMO-ÉSAC) (French only) (2007, 2015, 2019)	European Commission Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (2014)	European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) 5-Step Framework (p.31) (2015)	G8 Social Impact Investment Task Force (2014)	Ontario Impact Measurement for Social Enterprise Task Force (2017)	TIESS Evaluation and Impact for the Social Economy (2018)
<p>Engage those most affected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your intended change Use indicators Collect useful information Gauge performance and impact Communicate and use results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives, dimensions Indicators Measure Results Interpret results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify objectives Identify stakeholders Set relevant measurements Measure, validate, and value Report, learn, and improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting objectives Analyzing stakeholders Measuring Results—outcome, impact, and indicators Verifying and valuing Impact Monitoring and reporting 	<p>Engagement of stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set goals Develop frameworks and select measures Collect and store data Validate data Analyze data Report data Make data-driven investment management decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage stakeholders Set objectives Measure results Assess and value impact Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define objectives Choose a method and approach Identify and involve stakeholders Identify outcomes and indicators Collect and analyze data Use information and reassess needs

TIESS has a good [summary of the different categorizations](#) of the essential practices (French only).

If you are partial to any of these other categorizations, that is fine! They include the same essential practices.

You may notice some small differences. We outline some of those differences below. We do not believe these are substantive differences:

- Involving those who are affected by your organization's actions is mentioned by all six working groups, commissions, and task forces. The Common Foundations chose to emphasize that engaging those who are most affected should be an integral part of each essential practice. We felt that listing engagement of those most affected as a separate essential practice looked as though this is something that an organization can do once and be done with. We recognize that not listing engagement with those affected as one of the main essential practices may look like this is not part of our essential practices. This is a trade-off that the others faced. The substance of the practices is the same across all.
- The Common Foundations does not prescribe an order. The Common Foundations is a set of practices that can occur in any order.
- Other expressions of essential practices have combined impact *measurement* and impact *management*. Impact management focuses on learning, improving, and responding to needs that measurement identified. The Common Foundations focuses primarily on *measurement*, but—yes, please!—when you are done measuring, respond, learn, and improve.

The whole point of measuring impact is to better manage impact.

The Common Foundations are part of many impact measurement methods

Any organization using one of the following is likely already doing the Common Foundations! If you are not, these tools and approaches will help you start doing the five essential practices that are the Common Foundations:



- Theory of change
- Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
- Logical Framework Approach
- Results Based Approach
- Social Return on Investment
- Demonstrating Value
- TIESS's Les Six Grandes Etapes
- Rainbow Framework

And others....

The Common Foundations fit with other standards

The Common Foundations is compatible with other popular standards. This is not either/or; it is *and*. A social purpose organization can use the Common Foundations to enhance their work with:

- Impact Management Project
- Social Value International Principles
- IRIS
- B Corp
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
- Global Compact
- Imagine Canada Standards

And others....

The Common Foundations is working to be consistent with Indigenous and participatory approaches to impact measurement

As part of the work of reconciliation, the Common Approach to Impact Measurement understands that we have a responsibility to engage in and champion impact measurement practices that focus on community identified priorities, support Indigenous leadership on impact measurement, and prioritize the incorporation of Indigenous world views and realities. ([National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013](#); [Indigenous Innovation Initiative, 2021](#)). This is consistent with the Common Approach's commitment to impact measurement being driven by and being relevant to those who are most affected by an organization's actions.

Through its work, the Common Approach has found that most social purpose organizations are not currently engaging in Indigenous or participatory approaches to



impact measurement. The Common Approach is embarking on a collaborative process to raise the bar by evolving the current standard of practice such that it places a priority focus on culturally relevant participatory approaches that center the voices of those most affected by an organization's actions.

The Common Foundations support Social Value International's Principles of Social Value

Social Value International's [principles of social value](#) guide social purpose organizations on a journey towards maximizing impact in a way that reflects what those who are most affected value most, with the available resources, while ensuring that impact avoids advancing inequality or impacting climate change. The Common Foundations support these principles.

The Common Foundations are consistent with the Montreal Declaration

The [Montreal Declaration on evaluation and social impact measurement](#) is a set of principles that help to ensure that evaluation and social impact measurement responds to the needs of communities based on values and principles. The essential practices are consistent with evaluation that is useful, focused on learning, participatory, giving preference to the voices of those whose lives are most affected, and embracing a range of tools and approaches. The Common Approach is proud to be a signatory of the Declaration and shares the commitments outlined in it.



This work is licensed under a

[Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#)

