

THE COMMON FOUNDATIONS

How the Common Foundations were developed

The Common Foundations of Impact Measurement are a minimum standard of impact measurement practice. The Common Foundations are based on a broad global consensus on the essentials of impact measurement practices. The Common Foundations highlight the essential practices that are common to many different tools and approaches to measuring impact.

To identify the shared practices that are the Common Foundations, we reviewed over 500 tools and resources. We also looked at how those before us described the essential practices. This included reviewing the recommended practices put forward by these organizations, and others:

- **Comité sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre de l'économie sociale et de l'action communautaire 2007**
- **European Commission Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises 2014**
- **European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA)**
- **G8 Social Impact Investment Task Force 2014**
- **Ontario Impact Measurement for Social Enterprise Task Force Common Process 2017**
- **Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire (TIESS)**

An overview of the essential practices of these organizations can be found at the end of this document (p 4).

Starting point

The starting point for the development of the Common Foundations was the five-step “Common Process” of the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) put forward by the **European Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprise** (GECES Sub-Group), and recommended by the **Ontario Impact Measurement for Social Enterprise Task Force** after consulting with many charities, social enterprises, funders, and impact investors.

Version 1.0

The original Common Foundations document was created in collaboration with the Social Value Lab. It was released in July of 2019. The document provided detail around the five-step common process to help organizations identify when they had done enough to meet the standard.

Version 1.1

We worked closely with Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire (TIESS) to refine the French translation of the original version of the standard. Collaboration with TIESS led to some additions to the English text, thus creating Version 1.1. Changes included recognizing that **impact measurement is not for everyone**; the addition of our **definition of impact and impact measurement**, and a title change for one of the essential practices ("Communicate Results" rather than "Report Results").

Version 2.0

The revisions for Common Foundations Version 2.0 were led by a working group of the Common Foundations Champions. The champions are evaluators who are aligned with the Common Foundations and are raising awareness about them through their work.

The final working group was composed of four impact measurement specialists:

- Bryn Sadownik of **Demonstrating Value, VanCity Foundation** and a Common Foundations Champion
- Cathy Lang, **C. Lang Consulting** and a Common Foundations Champion
- Gabriel Salathé-Beaulieu of **TIESS**
- Garth Yule, formerly of **Junxion** and a Common Foundations Champion, now with the **Common Approach secretariat**

The following people also thoroughly reviewed the Common Foundations and provided comments:

- Laurie Ringaert of **Change Weavers Consulting** and a Common Foundations Champion
- Lisa Lowthers of the **Social Enterprise Institute**
- Stephanie Robertson of **Social Value Canada**
- Jason Dudek of the **Catholic Impact Investing Collaborative**
- Heather Tanaka of **VanCity Credit Union**
- Lynda Rey of **l'Ecole Nationale d'Administration Publique (ENAP)**
- Lars Boggild of **VanCity Community Investment Bank**
- Katie Allen of the **University of Guelph**

We also invited participants of the following Common Approach working groups and committees for their feedback on the Common Foundations:

- The Governance Group
- The social purpose organization National Advisory Committee
- The Social Finance Funders Advisory Committee

Version 2.0 of the Common Foundations was released in October 2021.

A limitation of Version 2.0 is that we relied on those who were already working with the Common Approach. We recognize that in the process, we have not been as community-driven as we would like to be.

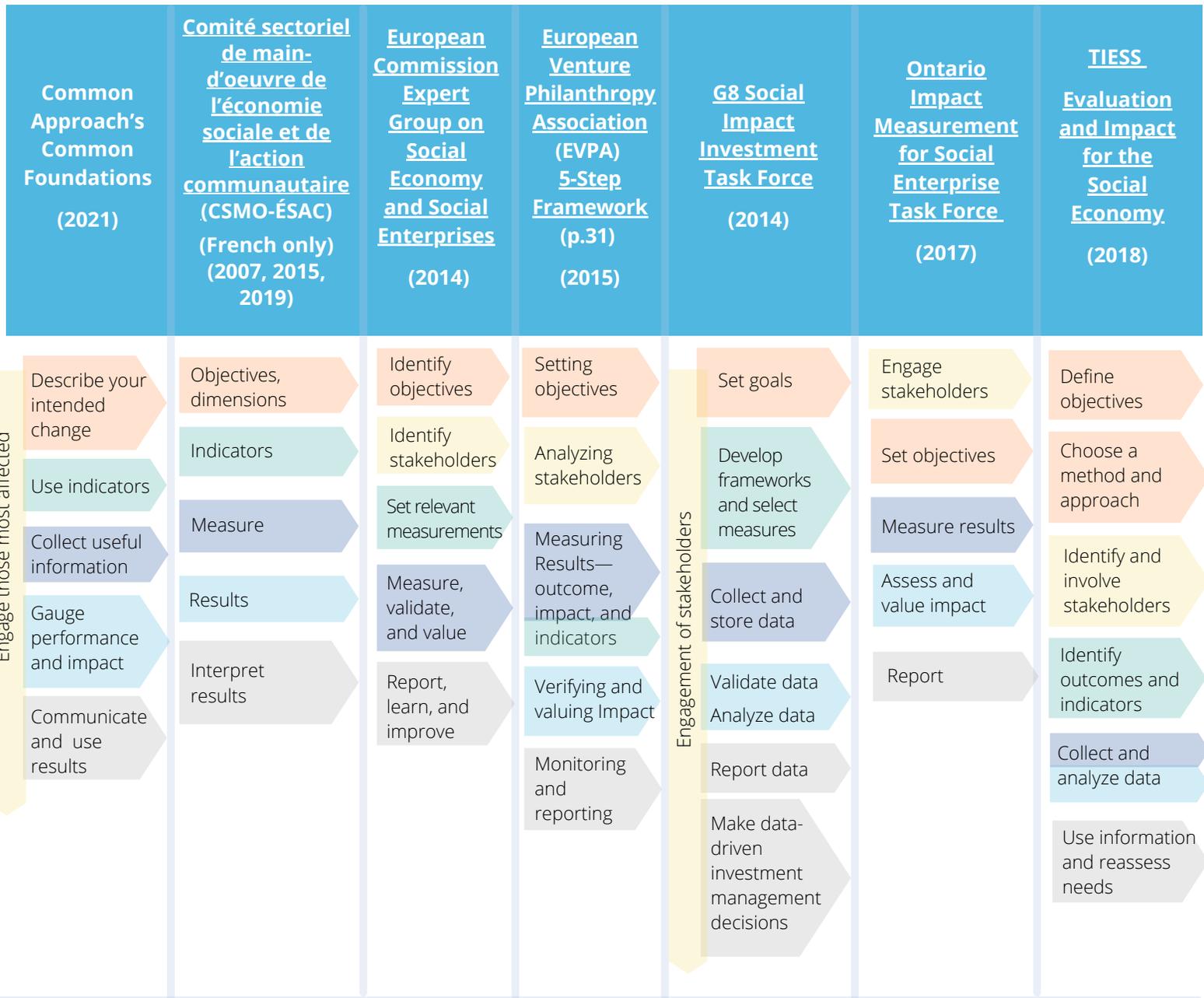
We are co-developing a protocol for revisions that will include processes for including a diversity of perspectives across stakeholder groups. While the need for more participatory protocol is great, the Common Approach is mindful that this deeply collaborative work will take time to do well. The Common Approach remains committed to creating multi-stakeholder participation that is inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible. We are committed to being more community-driven for Version 3.0.

Version 3.0

We are already getting ready for **Version 3.0**, which will reflect what we hope is an evolution in impact measurement practice towards greater engagement with those most affected.

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Other expressions of the essential practices which the Common Foundations drew upon:



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