

Better Next Measurement Framework Guide

Corporate social impact professionals can use this guide to apply the framework themselves. Teams that use the framework will improve results, reduce inequities, and increase efficient use of everyone's time.



Better Next Measurement Framework

ASSESS 4 PIPELINES AND 3 PRACTICES TO PLAN FOR 1 YEAR OF PROGRESS

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Better Next created this guide for corporate social impact professionals and teams. They can use the guide to achieve annual improvements applying the measurement framework. The guide summarizes framework concepts. When combined with the team's issue and functional expertise, they create a powerful force for driving change.

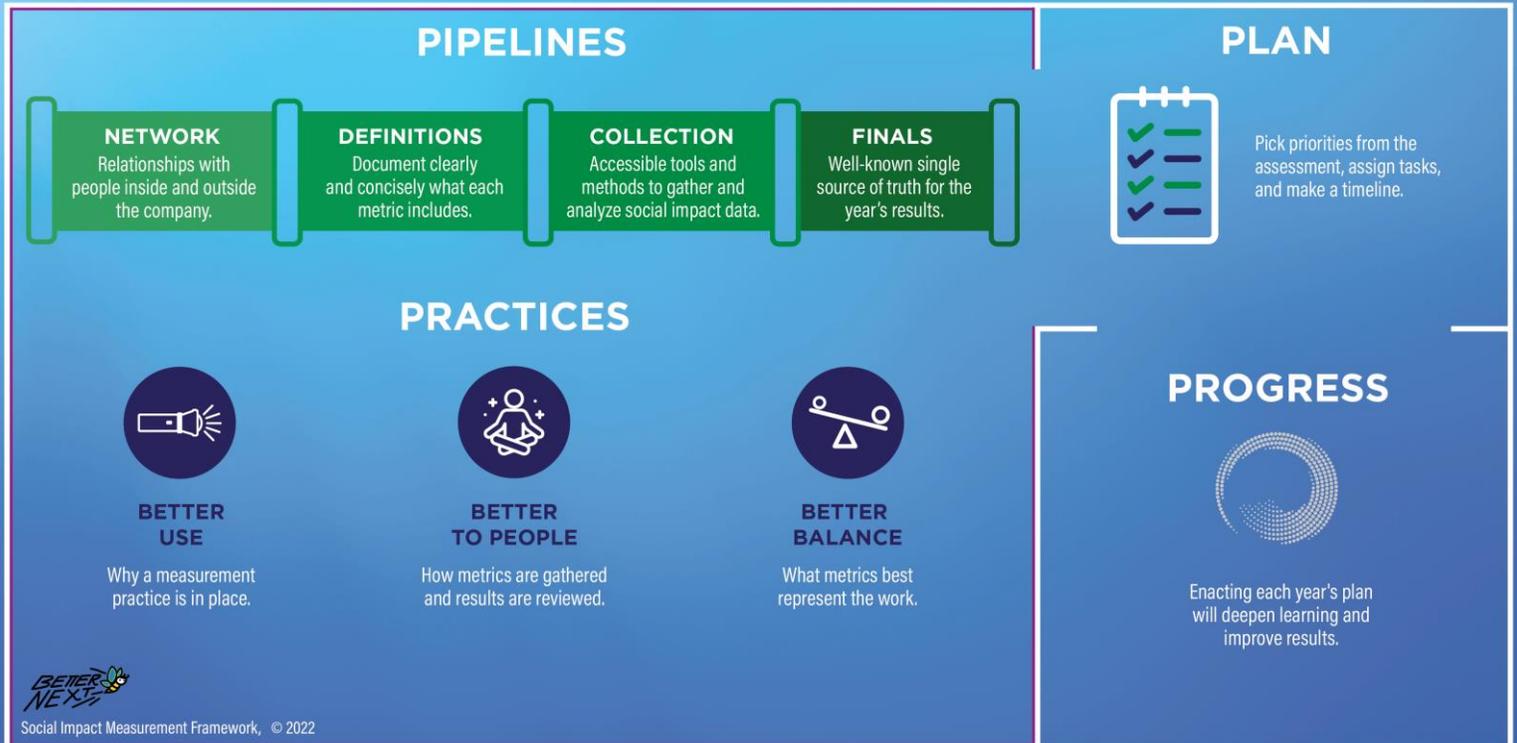


Photo by Flamingo Images from Noun Project

Better Next Measurement Framework

The Better Next Measurement Framework is designed for corporate social impact professionals. Your team can use this modern framework to improve results, reduce inequities, and increase efficient use of everyone's time.

ASSESS 4 PIPELINES AND 3 PRACTICES TO PLAN FOR 1 YEAR OF PROGRESS



Apply the framework to the annual S in ESG metric cycle to track progress, deepen learning from results, and prepare for the data-driven components of communicating impact.

Here's a breakdown of the framework's method statement: ASSESS 4 PIPELINES AND 3 PRACTICES TO PLAN FOR 1 YEAR OF PROGRESS

Assess refers to corporate social impact professionals reconsidering, discussing, and documenting the current state of their measurement practice.

The scope of the assessment is the **4 Pipelines** and **3 Practices**. The assessment will surface potential improvements. Keep in mind while assessing that measurement supports and informs *achievement of a strategy's intended results* through data-driven learning.

The **4 Pipelines** need to be built and maintained so information can flow. The **3 Practices** represent the what, how, and why of our field's new era of human-centered measurement. The **3 Practices** require honesty, comfort with ambiguity, hard work, and a commitment to progress, not perfection. The practices create space for teams to reduce how inequitable systems show up in social impact measurement. The well-known logic model is covered under "Better Balance."

To plan for 1 year of progress refers to corporate social impact professionals pulling up their project management sleeves to bring envisioned improvements to life. Priorities found in the assessment are converted into a measurement action plan. Once implemented, learning improves and results improve (what it's all about!). Most social impact data runs on an annual cycle. Constructing a quarter-by-quarter plan for improvement will achieve clean data years and smooth transitions between annual cycles.

Corporate Social Impact professionals can visit www.BetterNext.co/social-impact-measurement-framework for more info. The guide is helpful for teams that want to apply the framework themselves. Today's the day to get started! Teams that would like facilitation support to apply the framework are encouraged to reach out to discuss their needs. Any questions you have to help your team get started can be sent to: Exchange@BetterNext.co.



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ASSESS 4 PIPELINES AND 3 PRACTICES TO PLAN FOR 1 YEAR OF PROGRESS

Context

The Better Next Measurement Framework **fills three gaps**. One, addressing the operations of the work it takes to produce the data for a metric. Two, lack of clarity on the uses of the insights resulting from the data. Three, narrow guidance that emphasizes only one best practice (most commonly, the logic model).

The Better Next Measurement Framework guide is available at no charge because we are passionate about its **widespread use**.

The system is flawed and social impact data is part of the system. There isn't a finish line or gold standard in a flawed system. Therefore, the best case scenario is to strive for **annual improvements**. The flaws include the subjectivity that influences social impact data when its collected, varying definitions for units of measure, and lack of a widely used, central database that is well-known and accessible to all.



Photo by Jacob Lund from Noun Project



Photo by Daniela Simona Temneanu from Noun Project

The Better Next Measurement Framework is based on **expertise and experience** you can trust. This includes: thousands of hours advising Fortune 500 companies on their social impact measurement practices; a decade studying measurement trends, research, and technology; engagements with Better Next corporate clients; and framework feedback sessions with dozens of cross-sector social impact leaders.

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ASSESS 4 PIPELINES AND 3 PRACTICES TO PLAN FOR 1 YEAR OF PROGRESS

4 Pipelines

Pipelines are a team’s measurement infrastructure. They need to be built and maintained so information can flow. Each of the four pipelines are fundamental to the production and (even more importantly) the *use of* gathered data and resulting insights.



Write Down Your Current Assessment

Definitions

Articulate what’s included in each metric for consistency.

What it could look like: each metric listed in a spreadsheet as the team’s data dictionary.

Collection

Review methods for gathering metrics: survey, interview, software, research.

What it could look like: software business requirements document, survey text, login credentials to online data collection tool.

Finals

Create and circulate a year’s final numbers or a “single source of truth.”

What it could look like: Executive Summary of 12-15 annual metrics in a spreadsheet paired with slides that include a deeper dive into S in ESG data.

Network

Acknowledge the people supporting the flow of information. Relationships in and out of the company.

What it could look like: Project management plan including various regular meetings.

After writing above jot improvement ideas on page 11, Assessment Notes.

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ASSESS 4 PIPELINES AND 3 PRACTICES TO PLAN FOR 1 YEAR OF PROGRESS

3 Practices

Better Use

Why to Measure

Articulate all the ways current data is used. Assess ways to increase the use of social impact metrics and in doing so, increase efficient use of your colleagues' and your partners' time spent on data collection and analysis.

Better to People

How to Measure

Assess whether tasks and operations used to conduct measurement live up to modern practices of trust, inclusion, equity, ethics, and purpose. Opportunities to reduce inequities will surface.

Better Balance

What to Measure

Look across all metrics currently in use. Assess and then recalibrate for balance in categories, time horizon, and strategic alignment to improve results.



Assessing the 3 Practices covers important and complex topics. The 3 practices are interwoven; start with the one that is the best entry point for your team. The Practices assessment of your measurement requires comfort with ambiguity, honesty, and commitment to progress, not perfection.

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3 Practices: Better Use

Teams are advised to begin the assessment of Practices by articulating current uses of social impact results. This is important to avoid the pitfalls of measurement for measurement's sake. Learning should be a universal use. It is universal and cross-cutting other uses because it reminds everyone to not use a personal lens of judgment but instead a lens of receiving new information.

Example Uses:

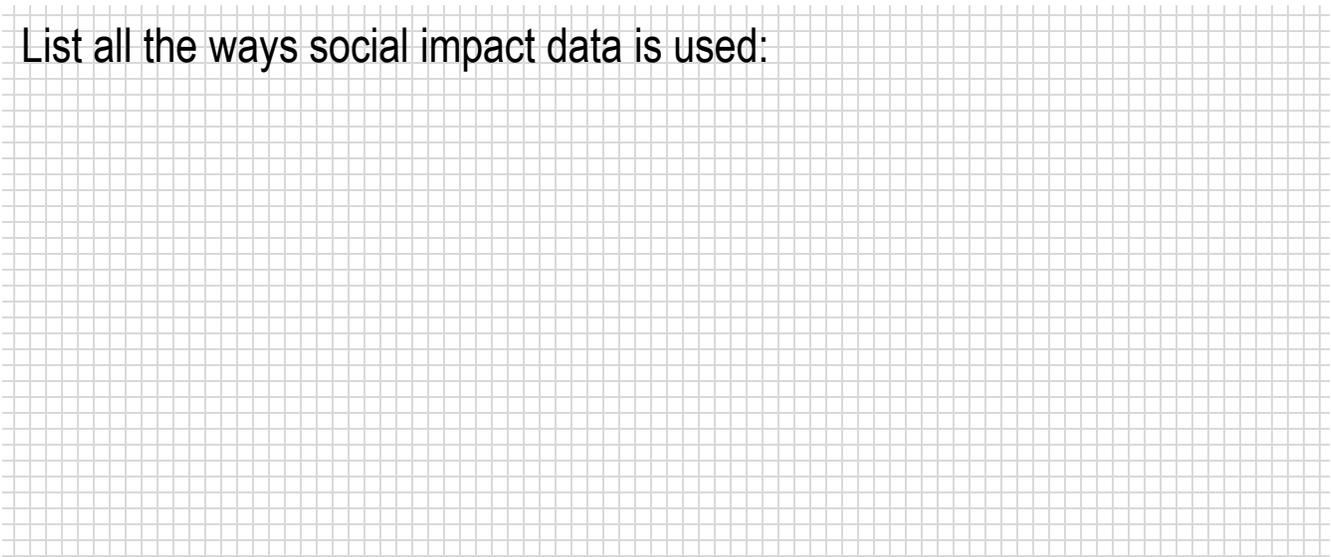
- ▶ Understand better an issue or community
- ▶ Track progress to achieving a goal
- ▶ Quantify volume of results
- ▶ Decide to alter an approach
- ▶ Report externally
- ▶ Inform colleagues
- ▶ Publish insights on an issue
- ▶ Motivate people
- ▶ Project or plan for future outcomes

Example Improvements:

- ▶ Document uses through a team exercise. The discussion will uncover lack of use, new options, and more.
- ▶ Assess frequency metric-by-metric.
- ▶ Increase to whom and how often the data is shared.
- ▶ Benchmark with other data sources.
- ▶ Mine data for insights using new analysts.
- ▶ Cite research that allows for deeper interpretation.

Most social impact leaders want to increase the frequency and the ways their S in ESG data is used. Importantly, new data collection isn't required for many ways to increase use.

List all the ways social impact data is used:



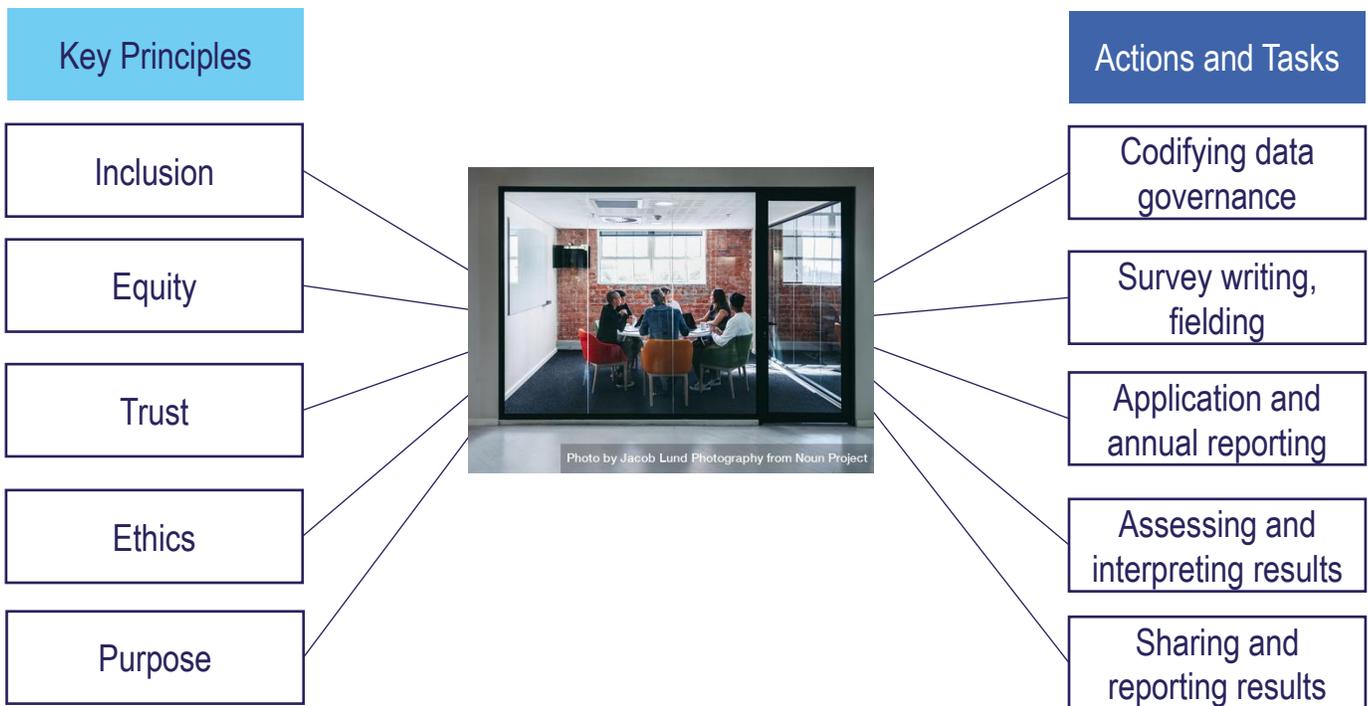
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3 Practices: Better to People

Becoming more human-centered in measurement practices requires team to assess the “how” of measurement. Measurement’s daily actions and tasks can improve how they live up to modern practices of trust, inclusion, equity, ethics, and purpose. Social impact data is about people and faces even higher standards of remaining human-centered compared to other types of data.



There aren't easy instructions that work for every company on the practices of “Better to People.” That must not stymie making improvements! Corporate social impact professionals can draw upon their expertise to assess how well the key principles listed on the left apply to their approaches to the tasks and operations of measurement on the right. Doing this assessment will enlighten potential improvements and once implemented, these have a chance to reduce inequities.

Gather an intentionally diverse group for a team exercise to launch the assessment. The exercise should guide individual reflection and group discussion on how systemic problems in America (which the key principles on the left seek to fix) have influenced the company's current measurement practices. For example, white culture values of urgency,

perfectionism, and quantity can influence how social impact results are judged or reviewed. Patriarchal culture may influence behavior that encourages dominance in partnerships.

The depth of the exercise is at the discretion of the team and is influenced by bandwidth. One action that could result from a “Better to People” assessment could be to always pause before new data collection to consider equity and ethics. Another tactical example is thinking about who on the team has analyzed social impact data. If it has been the same individual for many years, think about asking a new colleague to initiate an inclusive process of drawing conclusions on what the team can learn from the data. The “Better to People” practice relies the most on a commitment to progress, not perfection.

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3 Practices: Better Balance

Improving balance focuses on assessing what metrics or indicators the team uses. Gather the whole list of metrics currently in use. After assessing for imbalances, add or subtract metrics to improve balance in categories, time horizon, and strategic alignment. Choosing what to measure is informed by the learning goals and the strategy.

Seek balance in: **Categories**

Metric Category	Includes	Included in your team's Social impact metrics (Y/N)? How many?
Social Results	Issue-specific indicators	
Operational Excellence	Programmatic achievement	
Best Practices	Internal progress	
Business Results	Value produced for the enterprise	

Seek balance in: **Metric Time Horizon**

- ▶ Time horizon refers to the steps in the logic model well known to focus strategy and define indicators.
 - ▶ Activities, outputs, and outcomes are commonly the types of metrics used.
- ▶ Is there balance in terms of the timeline on which the result occurred/will occur?
 - ▶ It is not always appropriate to measure changes in individuals (outcomes) if the partnership was not of an adequate amount to produce outcomes.
- ▶ Given that most teams have a portfolio of partnerships that vary in timeline and amount of resources, balance can mean outcomes for deep/long-term partners only.

Seek balance in: **Strategy Alignment**

- ▶ At the highest-level, if someone reads the strategy and then looks at the metrics, will they identify how the metrics track progress on the strategy?
- ▶ The number of metrics should increase or decrease as the volume of resources used to enact the strategy increases or decreases.
- ▶ There are many resources available to teams to help identify issue-specific indicators that are relevant for the social issues addressed in the strategy.

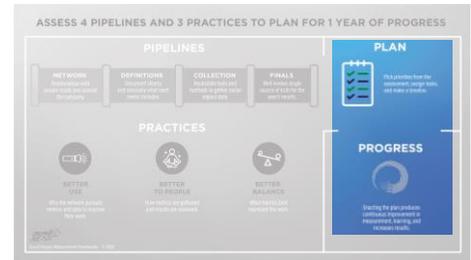
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Plan for Progress

The Plan component of the Better Next Measurement Framework will delight project managers. Documenting a plan is often skipped but crucial to make sure improvements are no longer just ideas, but instead tasks with owners and deadlines. The plan starts with prioritizing the potential improvements sourced from assessing the 4 pipelines and 3 practices. Quarterly meetings at minimum must be in the plan attended by a core team and others relevant for each session. An example assignment of topics and tasks is below.



Measurement Improvement Plan

First line is meeting topic, second line is tasks.

Q1

Business results.
Debrief previous year,
note issues.

Q2

Social results.
Finalize action plan,
socialize, begin.

Q3

Best practices.
Work on action plan,
maintain momentum.

Q4

Operational excellence.
Celebrate progress,
finish action plan.

Lever the familiarity of quarterly planning to create momentum for measurement.

- ▶ Quarterly meetings of a core team to review a subset of final metrics.
- ▶ Build incentives into the quarterly plan to maintain momentum for the year.
- ▶ Quarterly meetings invite different dotted-line colleagues based on topic.
- ▶ Each meeting topic can feed the action items of the following quarter.
- ▶ Action in Q1 should address the team's observations from previous year-end.
- ▶ Completing improvements in Q4 is imperative so changes are made before the next annual data cycle begins.

The same central location where Pipelines documents are saved can also house the Plan. Having a central location (i.e., shared folder) that is well-known improves implementation of the plan and usage of social impact data. Data governance documentation established in the Pipelines component will be accessed frequently in the tasks outlined in the annual action plan.



Photo by Jacob Lund Photography from Noun Project

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Assessment Notes

This page is a quick method to show how the guide can move corporate social impact professionals from assessment to action.

Add ☆s above to indicate priorities. Assign each priority to a quarter below.

Measurement Improvement Plan

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

List people who will contribute to implementing the plans:



Better Next Measurement Framework

Start today!

About Better Next

Better Next is a social impact special projects firm with extraordinary expertise in measurement. Corporate leaders use Better Next's services as an advisor, facilitator, innovator, researcher, implementer, and strategist for their S in ESG efforts.

About the Better Next Measurement Framework

The Better Next Measurement Framework is a call to action to improve measurement practices. Corporate social impact professionals applying the framework will improve results, reduce inequities, and increase efficient use of everyone's time. The framework's guidance is informed in a multi-faceted way: thousands of hours in consultation with corporate leaders, deep knowledge of the field, research, and feedback sessions on beta versions of the framework.

Contact: Exchange@BetterNext.co