

European Project Impact-Tracking Template

Independent before-and-after impact measurement for a European project, demonstration or socially innovative action, set up at the start, run while the work is live, closed out with proof.

The gap this template fills

Europe funds innovation at a scale unmatched anywhere in the world, across Horizon Europe, the European Social Fund Plus, the LIFE programme, the Just Transition Fund, the European Innovation Council, Interreg, Digital Europe, the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities and the New European Bauhaus. The funding is excellent. The evidence of what it actually changed, for whom, too often is not.

The difficulty is structural, and it shows up the same way across programmes. The baseline is missing. Methods are inconsistent and incomparable. Output is mistaken for impact. The people most affected are rarely heard systematically. Self-assessment strains credibility. Evidence arrives too late to use.

This template is the measurement architecture, in one document, that stops each of those failures from happening in a specific project.

Set it up at the start, run it throughout, close it with proof

Before, baseline by design. At kick-off the project agrees what it is actually claiming, identifies who should change and how, and captures a real baseline against which everything that follows will be measured. The "before" exists because someone went and recorded it, not because someone remembers it.

During, measurement while it matters. Structured, repeatable readings run through the live phase of the project. Midline findings and lived-experience data are returned to the project team while there is still time to act on them. A midline reading that changes nothing was not worth collecting.

After, a result that holds up. At close the project delivers the endline measurement and the before-and-after comparison, including the parts that are inconvenient. The output is designed to satisfy a funder review, survive audit, and tell the project team something true.

The three dimensions the template measures to

Reach is who is being affected by the project, and who is being left out. Headcount alone is not reach; reach needs to be able to answer who the headcount is.

Depth is how materially the systems, livelihoods or behaviours in question actually change. A workshop attended is not depth; a decision taken differently afterwards is.

Experience is what the change feels like, from the inside, to the people going through it. It is where friction lives, and where the project learns the thing it would not otherwise know.

Every indicator in the companion workbook is tagged with exactly one of these three dimensions. The rollup aggregates by dimension; the end-result claim (a Societal Readiness Level number from 1 to 9) is built on the balance between them.

What is in the companion workbook

Each sheet below carries its own long-form rationale at the top, then the instrument. The workbook rolls indicators up to the three dimensions and to a final Societal Readiness Level claim.

Sheet	What it is for	When to fill it
A1. Project identity	Metadata the rest of the workbook refers to.	Kick-off
A2. Impact claims	The project's promises, written so a reader could disagree.	Kick-off
A3. Impact pathway	Activity → Output → Outcome → Impact, with the assumption named	Kick-off
A4. Indicator set	Three to seven indicators per claim, tagged by dimension.	Kick-off
A5. Baseline	The single most important sheet. Captured before activity.	Kick-off
B1. Midline readings	The same indicators, read at agreed midpoints.	Each midline
B2. Steering log	What the midline is showing, and what was done about it.	Each midline
B3. Lived-experience pulse	A short, repeated survey of the people affected.	Baseline → endline
C1. Before and after	The headline table. Same instrument at baseline and endline.	Close-out
C2. Reading the result	Verdict for each claim, including what is inconvenient.	Close-out
C3. Attribution and honesty	Four questions that make an evaluation an evaluation.	Close-out
D. Design assets	Definitions, sampling, consent. Set once, reused throughout.	Kick-off
E. Roles and cadence	Who runs each step and how often it runs.	Kick-off
Rollup. Dimensions	Aggregates indicators to reach, depth, experience.	Automatic
Readiness. End-result	An SRL 1-9 claim grounded in this workbook's evidence.	Close-out
Example (filled)	A worked example from a satellite-monitoring project.	Reference

End-result: Reach / Depth / Experience, and a Societal Readiness Level

A project's end-result report has three readouts, not one. The Reach column says who the project touched. The Depth column says how much it moved what it touched. The Experience column says what that movement felt like from inside. The three sit next to each other on the Rollup sheet of the workbook.

The Readiness sheet then turns the three readouts into a single SRL claim on the nine-level scale developed by Innovation Fund Denmark and extended by the research literature on societal readiness. The claim is grounded, sheet by sheet, in the specific evidence this template has produced. A level claimed without a pointer to a sheet does not survive review.

Independence is the whole point

The reason to use this template with the Lab is the reason a project cannot do this convincingly itself. The Lab is independent of the intervention it is measuring. It is social and technical at once: it starts from the people a project affects, and it also understands the system being demonstrated. It reports what the data says, including when it is inconvenient.

A result the Lab reports means something a self-assessment cannot.

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transitionslab.org/european-impact-tracking.