

Evidence Generation Plan User Guide

This section of the Evidence Generation and Workplan will help you prepare for the types of information you will be asked throughout your granting period. It will ask you to reflect on how you will capture key information to answer key questions FSC and Blueprint are interested in learning about.

To do this, we ask that you **identify at least one indicator and data collection method** that you will use to gather evidence on each of the questions provided below (table 1). We understand that this is still early in your project evolution – so we understand that this may change throughout its delivery, but we want to make sure that you and your project team has thought about different ways to capture information to answer these questions.

Table 1: Summary of evidence generation questions per theme

Theme	Questions asked in Section
Engagement in sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you capture how different organizations engage with your program? • How will you determine whether your organization or participants face any barriers or challenges accessing your program?
Effectiveness of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you capture the feedback– positive or negative– from organizations or participants who engage in your program?
Impact on organizations in sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you capture the results/impact– positive or negative– your program has on organizations engaged in your program? • How will you capture the potential impact of your program in the sector?
Perceived preparedness for current and future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you determine whether your program helps to address the current needs of your sector? • How will you determine whether your program helps to address the future needs of your sector? • How will you determine whether your program helps to ensure there are people with the right skills to address the current market need? • How will you determine whether your program helps to move Canadians towards a higher quality work?

To answer each question, you will be asked to provide indicators and data collection methods; below is further examples of what this means and what could be included in your online form.

Indicators

Indicators are key information, or observable and measurable things, that are used to determine if your project is progressing as expected and achieving its outcomes. Indicators help ensure

that your project is capturing the information needed for you to effectively answer your evidence generation questions. For example, an indicator can refer to any of the following:

- Observable factors, demographics, or characteristics
- A process (how something is done or delivered)
- A perception/attitude
- An output (direct products of your program activities, such as products created or people served)
- An outcome (a goal or change you aim to achieve through your program)

To help you in this process we have provided a list of potential indicators for each evidence generation question in the table below.

Helpful Hints When Selecting Indicators

When selecting indicators make sure they:

- Are realistic for you to capture within the lifetime of your grant.
- Are specific, measurable, and relevant.
- Provide sufficient information to answer your evidence generation question; you may need multiple indicators to answer each question.

If the sample indicators provided in Table 2 are relevant to your project, please include them in your evidence generation plan.

Table 2: Potential indicators per evidence generation question

Evidence generation questions	Potential corresponding indicators
How will you capture how different organizations engage with your program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of organizations (e.g., non-profit, academic, government, private) engaging with the program • Number of resources/ programming activities accessed by organization by types
How will you determine whether organizations or participants face any barriers or challenges accessing your program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of barriers faced by organizations who attempted to engage in the program • Number of organizations/participants who said they would not participate in the program • Number of organizations who disengaged with the project
How will you capture the feedback—positive or negative— from organizations or participants who engage in your program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of respondents who perceive the program to be effective • Factors that facilitate program success • Challenges or barriers to program success
How will you capture the results/impact— positive or negative— your program has on organizations engaged in your program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organizations who increased the diversity of their staff • % of organizations who report improved performance from their employees

Evidence generation questions	Potential corresponding indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived impact of the program on organizations engaged in the program
How will you capture stakeholder perceptions of your program's impact in the sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders' perceptions of your program's impact on the sector
How will you determine whether your program helps to address the current needs of your sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of organizations with improved sales since engaging with program % of organizations who view the tool /resource as beneficial
How will you determine whether your program helps to address the future needs of your sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder perceptions of the future benefits of the program
How will you determine whether your program helps to ensure there are people with the right skills to address the current market need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers' perceptions of employee skills improvements % of employers who report that candidates applying to their jobs have the right skills for the role
How will you determine whether your program helps to move Canadians towards a higher quality work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer perceptions of the impact of your program on future employment opportunities Employers perception of project leading to improved work conditions Employers perception of project leading to improved earning qualities

Data Collection Methods and Approaches

Now that you have identified the indicators that will use to answer your evidence generation questions, it is time to select the methods and/or approaches that you will use to collect this information. Below is a list of common data collection methods and how they can be used. Feel free to use other methods not listed below if they align better with the indicators you selected above.

Table 3: Data collection methods and approaches

Methods/ Approaches	Description	Uses and Limitations
Secondary data collection (e.g., literature or jurisdictional scan)	Review information from existing sources like practitioner reports, academic articles, policy reports, and datasets. It can also involve research on policies and programs in your local context or other jurisdictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand existing needs/challenges, their effect on stakeholders and target populations, and gaps in responses to those needs/challenges Gather evidence about the program, or components of the program, that you are designing or delivering, and the key

Methods/ Approaches	Description	Uses and Limitations
		<p>outcomes that program has achieved in other contexts</p> <p>Limitation: <i>Findings are limited to what others have already found</i></p>
Administrative data	This is data that is collected by you or a third-party partner during the normal course of delivering your program (e.g., start dates, participant enrollment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track participant progress through a program (e.g., completion rates), outcomes (e.g., credential attainment), and participant demographics Using administrative data can be a good way to leverage data that you or your partners already collect <p>Limitation: <i>Administrative data will not explain why a program achieves certain outcomes, or what opinions respondents hold</i></p>
Surveys	A tool to capture learnings through open- and/or closed-ended questions. They can be used with participants, staff or other stakeholders (e.g., employers, industry).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track perceptions or changes in key outcomes over a program Gather responses on key questions from a large number of stakeholders <p>Limitation: <i>Surveys often do not generate good data about why a program achieves certain outcomes, or why respondents hold a certain opinion</i></p>
Interviews	One-on-one discussions. They can be held with program participants, program staff, and employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer questions requiring detailed responses Interviews are a good way to understand the “why” of quantitative trends from your program, and to detail participant/stakeholders needs, perceptions and experiences <p>Limitation: <i>Interviews can be resource and time-intensive</i></p>
Focus groups	Group discussions, often involving 8-10 participants, to capture learnings and feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional details to support evidence generation findings Focus groups are great for understanding how a group of people perceive or provide feedback on a topic, and can be

Methods/ Approaches	Description	Uses and Limitations
		<p>used to track participant/stakeholders needs, perceptions and experiences</p> <p>Limitation: Focus groups can be resource and time-intensive, and the most influential members of the group can sway responses. Focus groups should generally not be used to collect sensitive information.</p>

Risk Management

Here we are looking for challenges that you may face while designing and/or delivering your program, and while implementing your Evidence Generation Plan. The table below contains some examples that are relevant to evidence generation.

Table 1: Possible evidence generation risks and mitigation strategies

Possible Risks	Potential Mitigation Strategy
Lack of internal experience and capacity to implement the Evidence Generation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build team capacity with training • Leverage external expertise (e.g., Blueprint, partners, stakeholders, consultants) • Establish team roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines, and outline what is expected of each person on the team for evidence generation
Low response rate/engagement for evidence generation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit more respondents than you think you will need, so if some drop out you will still have a sufficient number of respondents • Incorporate evidence generation into program delivery where possible. For example, administer surveys during the program on the first and last day • Consider providing incentives to complete surveys, focus groups, etc. • Do online marketing through social media engagement and optimize website • Recruit participants through sector wide organizations • Incentivize existing program participants to conduct word-of-mouth outreach to networks
Lack of knowledge of population-specific research risks (e.g., vulnerable or Indigenous populations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage external expertise to identify potential population-specific risks • For those working with First Nations communities, attend an OCAP training (https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/)
Delays due to COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a contingency plan should there be prolonged delays (e.g., leverage other partnerships)