

Measuring What Counts in the Social Economy Roundtable

What aspects of the social are captured by
measures currently in use, and to what
effect?

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Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités



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Overview of this Presentation

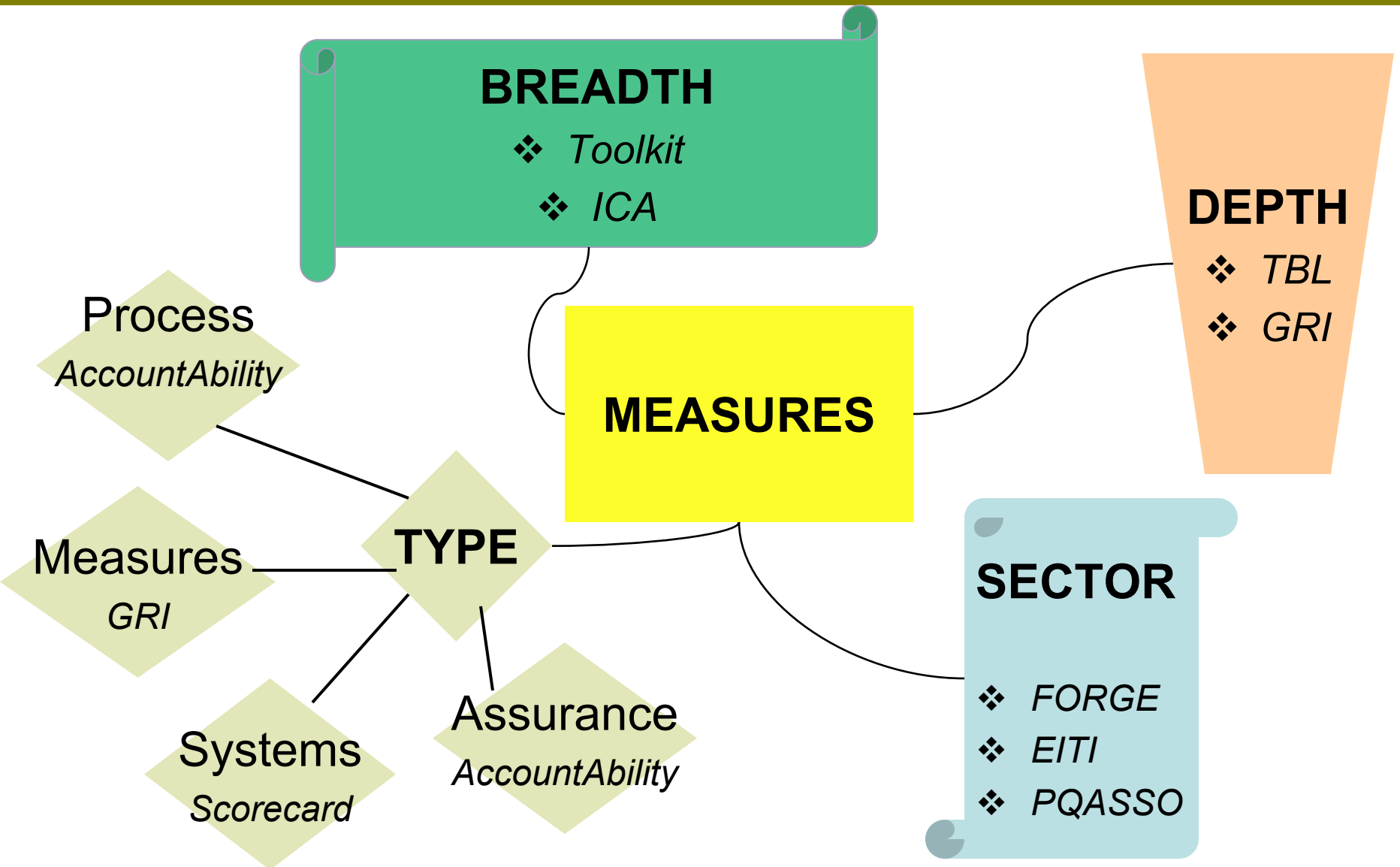
- What aspects of the social are captured by measures currently in use in Canada?
- To what effect?
- Observations & food for thought

Measures of the Social

“The number and variety of tools also plays against clarity for consumers and other potential user organizations. With no clear direction as to what all the instruments are, their applications and use, and how they help improve CSR performance, their potential benefits remain untapped.”

(European Commission, 2004, p. 5)

Measures of the Social



Measures of the Social

➤ **Emerging leaders:**

- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) – sustainable measures and reporting
- AccountAbility - process standards

➤ **Resources:**

- Enterprising Non-profits - “The Guide” & “Demonstrating Value Project
- Comparing Proving & Improving Approaches Toolkit
- CSR – The Co-operative Difference (ICA)
- Other reviews and overviews of tools

Measures of the Social

Some Observations

- A trend toward partnerships / convergence among tools developers.
- Aspects of the social emerging in common to most tools could lend themselves to standardization.
- Engaging stakeholders in the development of measures is the preferred process.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE GROUND IN SE ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA?

Reports Analyzed

Sustainability Solutions Group (worker co-op)

<http://www.sustainabilitysolutions.ca>

Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (Non-profit)

<http://www.plan.ca>

Alterna Savings (credit union – Metro Credit Union)

<http://www.alterna.ca>

All have done >1 report; All plan more reports

To What Effect – Some Commonalities?

- Changes in the process and methodology of accounting and reporting over time reflect their experiences and feedback from stakeholders and others
- The material in the reports informs strategic planning and communications with members, staff, and other stakeholders – e.g. the findings guide the next year's planning and other activities, and inform changes in both policies and practices.
- Performance benchmarks can be useful, whether from within the non-profit sector, or outside it, and targets are important in driving organizational change.

To What Effect – Some Commonalities?

The decision regarding what to measure, and how, is extremely important – organizations orient themselves toward these measures!

Some More Observations

- Common practice in our cases seems to be to have a combination of tools informed by such standards as GRI and AccountAbility, while still emphasizing indicators developed internally.
- There is an emerging consensus that SEAR is desirable and even necessary for any organizations committed to social goals

Food for Thought

"At present this field is frankly a mess--the reader has no idea what procedures have been carried out, what is covered, and how far the data can be relied on." Paul Scott

Next steps.....

Website References

- **GRI:** www.globalreporting.org
- **AA1000:** www.accountability.org
- **BITC:** www.bitc.org.uk
- **CRI:** www.corporate-responsibility.com.au
- **UN Global Compact:** www.unglobalcompact.org
- **ISO14001:** www.iso.org
- **ICA Global 300:** www.global300.coop
- **Goodcompany:** www.cbsr.ca
- **Social Accounting Toolkit:** www.volunteerscount.net
- **Balance Scorecard:** www.balancedscorecard.org/BSCResources
- **SROI:** www.neweconomics.org/gen/newways_socialreturn.aspx
- **KSCPI:**
ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/200604-se-etg2-t1an.pdf

Website References

- **Greening Retail Engaging the Retail Sector in Sustainability:**
[www.trca.on.ca/Website/TRCA/Graphics.nsf/Graphics/trca_living_city_retail_greeningretailreportphase1_pdf/\\$file/GreeningReportPhase1.pdf](http://www.trca.on.ca/Website/TRCA/Graphics.nsf/Graphics/trca_living_city_retail_greeningretailreportphase1_pdf/$file/GreeningReportPhase1.pdf)
- **The State of Sustainability Reporting in the Trade and Retail Sector:**
www.environment.gov.au/settlements/industry/finance/publications/trade-retail/index.html
- **Canada's Sustainability Reporting Toolkit:**
<http://www.sustainabilityreporting.ca/home/default.asp?lang=e>
- **Comparing Proving & Improving Approaches Toolkit:**
www.proveandimprove.org/new/tools/documents/pdf