



Measuring Sustainable Development Goals: Impact in the Co-operative Sector

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

After decades of work with the United Nations 193 countries including Canada adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice. The development of the SDGs brings a new global framework by which countries, co-operatives, mutuals and traditional businesses as well as communities are figuring out how to measure and report on their impact regarding the 17 SDGs.

The SDGs and Co-operatives Project

The Centre of Excellence in Accounting and Reporting for Co-operatives (CEARC) at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, NS, and Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, have set out to answer the question: How is the Canadian co-operative sector contributing to Canada's measurement and reporting on SDG impact?

The Canadian co-operative sector is broad and diverse, with over 31.8 million member shares held by Canadians. Being deeply rooted in social and community issues, and active in the economic sphere, co-operatives are ideal enterprises to measure their impact in relation to the SDGs. The SDGs are designed to encourage all sectors of society, including co-operatives and mutuals, to make changes improving our world, impacting the environment and people.

Working with co-operatives and mutuals across Canada that are interested in how they can implement the SDGs in their corporate environment, this project will help co-operatives and mutuals understand the impact of, and increase knowledge and action regarding, the SDGs in the co-operative sector. The year-long project will unfold in three phases: SDG indicator alignment, testing, and dissemination of results.

The Participants

We are looking for 30 representatives from co-operatives and mutuals from across Canada, from different industries, of different types, maturity and size, and operating in English and/or French. Participants can, but are not required to, have a role related to accountability, sustainability, impact assessment or leadership. Participants can be from the management team or the board of directors, and will join an SDGs and Co-ops project team. Over the year, participants will join in 3 or 4 one-hour webinars and an ongoing online discussion group, complete a short survey, and beta test the online

measurement tool. The participants who will be involved in this project will have to spend about 10 to 12 hours of their time over a period of one year.

Participants will have the opportunity to:

1. Develop a set of SDG indicators relevant to the co-operative sector;
2. Create a streamlined process for co-operatives to understand their SDG impact;
3. Assess their co-operative's SDG impact;
4. Provide information to the co-operative sector on the SDGs;
5. Network with other sustainability-minded co-operative leaders from across Canada.

To learn more about the project, please contact Dr. Daphne Rixon at Daphne.Rixon@smu.ca or 902-496-8212.

