Vital Signs Data FAQs

for Canadian community foundations

2024

We are a small CF (in terms of geography), will we have enough data for a platform?

Most Vital Signs data comes from Statistics Canada surveys and sources. While not all surveys and sources have data at smaller geographies, efforts have been made to ensure all Vital Signs thematic areas have at least a few indicators available at the Census Division (CD) level, as opposed to just Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Census Agglomerations (CAs). For CFs participating in the 2024 Vital Signs without CMA or CA boundaries, a list of expected data will be provided to help you make an informed decision on whether or not to have a platform. There is, however, no limit to how many or few indicators you need in order to have a site.

What skills are required to manage a Vital Signs Tracking-Progress platform?

The Tracking-Progress platform is designed to require no previous user experience with website design or data visualization. The training sessions and materials provided are intended to provide you with all the resources you need to manage and customize the site. However, those familiar with WordPress, Excel, QGIS and/or using different image types (png, jpeg and svg) will likely pick up the training quicker.

We want to have the Vital Signs platform, but is it possible to include our own indicators ?

Yes, it is possible to include your own indicators on your Vital Signs platform. IISD will cover how to create your own indicators and how to edit existing indicators on your site. It is also possible to change the thematic categories of the data, although we ask that you wait to do this until all the data has been uploaded for that data collection year.

How much time does it require to manage a Vital Signs Tracking Progress platform?

There is no single answer as to how much time it takes to manage a tracking progress. The time required will depend on the degree to which you want to incorporate the Vital Signs platform into your CFs work. The platform can be used to showcase your own custom indicators, as a primary communications tool, or even as your CFs main site. If you plan on exploring these or any other activities, you can reach out to the IISD who can use their experience to approximate a more customized expectation of time requirements.

However, there is a minimum amount of work required to take control of the Vital Signs platform. Although the IISD will upload all the Vital Signs indicators to the platform, including descriptions, visualizations and connections to the SDGs, it is up to CFs to set preferences for this data (e.g. manually choosing between bar graphs or line graphs), and to populate the site with their own branding and content. To develop a minimum viable product, CFs should expect to spend anywhere between 40-80 hours (in addition to online training).

How can I ensure the platform's success beyond 2024?

There is no single formula for ensuring the platform's success and uptake in the community. However, our experience has taught us that the most determining factor in a platform's success is whether or not a member of the CF is willing to be a champion for the platform. If at least one individual is willing to embrace the platform as part of the CFs work, it will be far more successful than having numerous people aware of the platform, but no one championing it.