Tracking Change

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INTRODUCTION

This document introduces high-level information about tracking indicators. Before you start tracking your indicators, you will need to develop an analysis plan. See the Developing an Analysis Plan section of the toolkit for more information.

REFERENCE POINTS

Indicator measures are most useful when they can be compared to a reference point. There are two types of reference points:

1) **The same population at a different point in time (i.e., change over time):** This typically means collecting **baseline** (starting point) data for your population, and then measuring the change in comparison to the baseline over time to determine the impact of interventions that happen **after** the baseline data is collected. Looking at change over time will provide useful information for all your indicators, so we recommend that you **collect baseline data as soon as possible** after indicators are selected.

   Example
   You collect baseline data for the indicator "Percentage of healthcare workers that have taken cultural safety training" before your government implements mandatory cultural safety training. You then collect the same data annually. In your reporting, you compare the annual data as a percentage change from the baseline: "The percentage of healthcare workers that have taken cultural safety training has increased from 20% to 50% in the last year."

2) **A comparison population at the same time point**: This means comparing the population of interest to a different population. Often the comparison population may be non-Indigenous Canadians in the same community, province or territory, or nation-wide.

   This type of analysis is important for showing where gaps exist and can be very helpful for supporting funding requests. Over time, this type of analysis can also demonstrate that interventions have been successful by showing where gaps are closing.

   In order to do this, the same data must be available for both your citizens and the comparison population! You will need to look to external data sources for data on comparison populations. It is possible the external data source may also have good data about your citizens, but often this is not the case. If good data is not available for your citizens from the external data source, you may choose to collect the data yourself. Ensure that you use the same methodology when collecting data as the external data source so that the data is comparable. This may mean modifying your indicator of interest to align with the indicator in the external data source. Before modifying your indicator, it is important to consider whether the value of being able to compare to another population outweighs the value of using the indicator that works best for your government.

   Example 1
   The indicator "Percent of the population reporting being active or moderately active" is collected through a territorial survey in which most of your citizens participate. You obtain the data from the survey for the territory population as a whole and for your citizen population. In your reporting, you compare the indicator for your citizen population to the territorial population: "The percentage of SGIG citizens reporting being

active or moderately active is equal to the percentage of territorial citizens reporting being active or moderately active."

Example 2

The indicator "Percent of the population reporting being active or moderately active" is collected through a territorial survey in which a small number of your citizens participate. You are able to obtain the data from the survey for the territory population as a whole, but because only a small number of your citizens participate, the survey results are not representative of your citizen population.

Your government collects the data through a citizen census, using the same question and response options included in the territorial survey. In your reporting, you compare the indicator for your citizen population to the territorial population: "The percentage of SGIG citizens reporting being active or moderately active is equal to the percentage of territorial citizens reporting being active or moderately active."

For many indicators, it will make sense to use **both** types of reference points listed above. You will want to look at change over time for all your indicators to see the impact of interventions and events. You may also want to compare to another population in order to show that a gap exists (supporting the need for funding) or to show that a gap is closing (showing that interventions are working).

If you want to compare to a different population, ensure that you have the same data for both your population of interest and the comparison population. If you are collecting data through a survey, use the same survey questions as were used to generate the comparison data set.

Considerations for choosing appropriate comparison populations

Choosing an appropriate comparison population is in part dictated by what data is available or possible to collect for both groups. In addition to the availability of data, it is worthwhile investigating if there are any differences in your comparison population that may influence your comparisons.

Example:

Your government is interested in tracking the health of its citizens in comparison to a neighbouring community. If the neighbouring community is substantially older or younger, the gap between these two indicators may tell you more about the differences in demographics than actual health outcomes. In this case, comparing indicators for subsets of the population who are the same age would be a useful approach.

TARGETS

A target is a result you are aiming to achieve. Your government may define a target as part of your outcomes. For example, the target for the outcome "Health outcomes of SGIG citizens are at least equal to those of non-Indigenous Canadians" would be to see health indicators be equal for the SGIG citizen population as for the non-Indigenous Canadian population.

If you set a target, include progress towards the target in your reporting. You can design targets for indicators associated with the immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes associated with a target and report on measures for each.