



**OPEN FOOD
NETWORK**
AUSTRALIA

ABN 84 160 582 696

Merri-Bek FLAG Collective Impact Framework Brief

Documentation

Relevant documents can be found below:

- [Collective Impact Measurement Framework Background Report](#)
- [Community Guide to the Merri-bek FLAG CIMF](#)
- [Merri-bek FLAG Collective Impact Measurement Framework](#)
- [CIMF Data Input Tool](#)
- [CIMF Data Results](#)

Background

Developing a Moreland Collective Impact Measurement Framework (CIMF) was a recommendation from the Moreland Community Food Hub Feasibility Study. This study recommended working with a group of community food enterprises throughout Moreland to develop a shared collective impact measurement framework.

Open Food Network were engaged to support the FLAG in developing the Collective Impact Measurement Framework (CIMF). We undertook community consultation in the initial food hub feasibility study to lay the groundwork for these measures, and mapped them to global best practice forms of measurement. We engaged with potential audiences and users of the CIMF, such as funders and Council staff who might advocate for investment into a community food hub or funding for food security, to determine what needed to be measured. These baseline components were then workshopped with the FLAG to determine what they saw as the highest priority to measure, and what was feasible to measure based on capacity and data availability.

The Framework was then piloted with food organisations in Merri-Bek and further refined through work with the FLAG impact measurement working group and discussions with initial users.



**OPEN FOOD
NETWORK
AUSTRALIA**

ABN 84 160 582 696

Implementation

Two grant recipient organisations have piloted the CIMF to date, to document the impact of their projects funded through FLAG in 2022. The CIMF was released in October 2022, with data collection intended to cover October 2022 to March 2023.

The pilot organisations were able to identify a series of indicators relevant to measuring the impact of their projects. Open Food Network provided support to grant recipient organisations via a series of discussions to select impact measures, identify existing data sources, and provide advice on data collection.

While grantee organisations found the framework useable and helpful in terms of identifying areas of impact and how to measure them, they encountered significant challenges in collecting and processing data, resulting in less data being collected and input into the shared CIMF Data Tool than originally anticipated.

Open Food Network extended further support to review and extract data from existing records, develop participant surveys and advise on approaches for qualitative data, however captured data remains limited.

Challenges

Lack of time/resources for extracting/processing impact data from existing records

The CIMF was designed to make use as much as possible of data already collected as part of community food organisations' existing operations.

However, while this data often exists as anticipated, it is often in disparate parts of the organisation's records or organised in a way which requires significant time to extract and transform to produce a measure as defined in the CIMF.

Participating organisations, like many CFEs in Merri-bek, are already significantly under-resourced and struggle to find additional time to spend on organising data and entering it into the Framework.



ABN 84 160 582 696

This could be mitigated by supporting users to assess their record-keeping needs and make adjustments to their data processes upon first using the Framework, however this, along with extracting and entering impact measurement data will still require a time investment that can be challenging for users without dedicated resources. Additional resourcing and support for impact measurement is a key need for the CIMF to be effective.

Lack of time/expertise for additional data collection on key impact indicators

Some key indicators in the CIMF, such as those relating to impact on food security for project participants, or the proportion of equity-denied populations served, necessarily rely on gathering additional information from participants or customers which is not usually gathered for day to day operations.

In addition, some important CIMF measures are qualitative, as they relate to the experiences of project participants and customers.

Conducting dedicated data collection for impact measurement, such as customer surveys or focus group discussions has proved time-consuming, which is again a significant challenge for users with very limited staff and volunteer resources. Time to analyse and compile more qualitative data to produce measurements for the framework is also a barrier.

Challenges accessing sensitive or personal data on participants/customer base

Some key indicators in the CIMF rely on data about participants or customers that is seen as personal or sensitive information, such as experiences of food insecurity or socio-economic disadvantage.

Pilot organisations did not always feel comfortable requesting this information and in some cases this could be detrimental to their project or relationships.

Existing record-keeping systems need adjustment to capture data in useable formats

Existing record-keeping systems often contain useable data, however this data is organised and maintained for operational needs, often across multiple systems or



ABN 84 160 582 696

softwares, in ways which may need reorganisation to provide data that can be easily extracted and analysed for impact measurement.

Pilot organisations found it time consuming to find and organise their existing data for the relevant indicators. As local food organisations are often operating with minimal resources for their core business, the time needed to track and organise impact data even where it is already collected is a barrier.

Limited experience with research and evaluation methods

Users may not feel confident or experienced in drafting surveys or discussion questions for data collection. Where possible, the CIMF provides standardised questions for collecting data on indicators, however some more qualitative measures will need a more tailored approach to developing data collection questions, as well as an understanding of how to analyse qualitative data to produce results - this can be challenging for users not experienced in impact measurement and drafting surveys or interviews. Pilot organisations requested support and advice on these aspects of data collection, and it is expected that other users will encounter the same need.

Working Group Support

Discussions with the FLAG Collective Impact Measurement Working Group have identified the need and capacity for ongoing support to CIMF users as part of its wider rollout.

- Establish a CIMF contact email for questions and communications
- Initial meeting with users to review the framework and help organisations to select relevant and feasible measures.
- Discussion of users' current data collection and data management systems to identify how they will extract data and opportunities to align their record keeping with indicators to make data extraction easier and less time-consuming
- Periodic review of data collected to support refinement of the CIMF e.g. removing measures which are not proving feasible or adjusting measures for easier implementation.
- Facilitate student/volunteer support to organisations for impact measurement.



OPEN FOOD
NETWORK
AUSTRALIA

ABN 84 160 582 696

The CIMF Working Group have also identified the potential for further incentivising use of the Framework by local organisations and tailoring communications accordingly.

Next steps

1. CIMF WG to discuss process for facilitating support to user organisations such as data management guidance and student support for data collection/analysis and propose to FLAG.
2. FLAG to determine whether any aspects of CIMF user support/facilitation and communication are to be included in the project officer role.
3. CIMF WG to determine process for periodic review of data and assessment of refinements to the Framework.
4. CIMF WG to discuss with FLAG potential strategies for promoting and further incentivising the use of the Framework e.g. through branding or the development of a Merri-Bek CFE 'Charter of Principles'.
5. CIMF WG to review data collected to date and discuss challenges with pilot organisations, and how to assess future applications & projects via the Framework.