

THE METRICS CAFÉ'S



Who decides what impact data gets measured?
A guide to bring funders & grantees to the table

D-Lab

MIT



Practical Impact Alliance

FOREWORD

Just over a year ago, a diverse group of practitioners from the MIT Practical Impact Alliance gathered on the first call for working group on measuring impact. Each one of us was grappling with some aspect of impact measurement, and before long, we had long list of questions for the group to tackle. How can we make measurement more relevant to our work? Is it better to develop custom metrics or standardize? And the question that came up over and over: who should decide what gets measured?

We kicked off the year with a workshop to answer that question. The challenge: come up with a set of metrics for a solar lighting venture. The catch: we all played different roles, each with competing motivations. Some of us took on the role of the entrepreneur, others played the part of the investor, and a third group the board member of an NGO. It was illuminating to see how our perspectives changed when we switched hats. The “entrepreneurs” wanted customer data to inform their day-to-day operations. The “investors” needed assurance of financial health and growth. The “NGO board” was looking for evidence of long-term social change. How could a small venture reconcile and manage these competing demands? At the end of the day, whose demands take precedence? How can we bring all the voices to the table?

Over the course of the year, we heard from all of these voices: implementers coping with funder demands, programs adapting to new standardized metrics for their sector, funders trying to make sense of impact across a diverse portfolio, and implementers convincing funders to adopt more relevant indicators. These journeys represent a dynamic system of negotiation, adaptation, and evolution, showing that measurement does not exist in a vacuum of cold statistics. On the contrary, it is alive, complex, and human.

This framework offers a window into these stories, and the lessons that came out of them. We hope it is a useful tool in your work.

Laura Budzyna
MIT D-Lab
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SETTING THE TABLE

Funders need impact data. Grantees do too. So who decides what gets measured?

Funders and grantees don't always see eye to eye. Impact measurement is often the battleground where these differences play out. Grantees gripe about burdensome and out-of-touch reporting requirements, while funders struggle to make sense of a motley mess of data. In the end, everyone comes away unsatisfied.

Funders need to understand and communicate their over-arching impact across a diverse portfolio of grants. They want to be able to compare investments in programs, assess their portfolio in aggregate, and tell a simple and compelling story.

Often, funders need to defend their investments to their own boards, benefactors, governments, or constituents. As a result, funders love consistent and comparable metrics from all of their grantees, without a lot of hassle.

Meanwhile, grantees need to understand the impact of their own work to learn, improve, and attract support. For this to happen, grantees need metrics that are highly relevant, even customized, to their own organizations. These organizations usually have few resources for impact measurement, so every penny they spend on data gathering must

count. They struggle when funders impose metrics that feel disconnected from their mission; this struggle is magnified when different funders require different metrics.

To make matters more complicated, there is no universal standard for measurement in the social sector, especially when crossing sectors and impact areas. That leaves funders and grantees to navigate and negotiate this complex space, usually without much measurement expertise or capacity of their own.


**The heart of the problem?
Funders and grantees need different things from impact metrics.**

The consequences: enormous resources are spent gathering data that is not valued or used, ending with a tangled heap of numbers instead of a unifying story. If funders and grantees

are not reconciling their needs, then the promise of the data-driven impact sector fades into a missed opportunity.


There is the possibility for a win-win. Grantees can benefit from standardization, and funders can learn from grantees' deep experience. Since funders usually hold the power in this relationship, they have the responsibility to start the conversation. To start, they first need to choose the right model to bring both parties to the table:

PRIX FIXE



All grantees report on the same set of standard metrics.

A LA CARTE



Grantees choose from a menu of standard metrics.

MADE TO ORDER



Funder and grantee work together to come up with a set of metrics.

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH



Grantees come with their own metrics.



OPTION 1: PRIX FIXE

All grantees report on the same set of standard metrics.

The guests dine at the whims of the chef. Let's hope she knows what she's doing.

In the traditional **prix fixe** model, the funder calls the shots, choosing a standard set of metrics that all grantees must report. With standardized data, the funder can compare metrics from grantee to grantee and aggregate up to portfolio-level results. The grantee does not usually have any control over this list; if they have not tracked these metrics before, they must get their systems in gear to do so. On one hand, **prix fixe** can be an opportunity for grantees to build their systems. On the other hand, **prix fixe** can feel more like, “finish your plate, or no dessert!”

WHO SHOULD USE IT?

- **Funders** focused on a specific sector, where all grantees are working toward similar goals
- **Funders** working in sectors with clear standards, or even regulations, for measurement (e.g. social performance in the microfinance industry)
- **Funders** working in a variety of sectors but focused on a specific area of impact (e.g. social enterprise incubators focused on financial sustainability)

IF YOU USE IT

- **Do your homework.** Make sure the metrics you select are vetted, evidence-based, and standard for the sector. Align them with frameworks like the Global Impact Investing Network's (GIIN) Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS) or the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Keep it consistent.** All the benefits of standard metrics are lost if your grantees are measuring or calculating the same indicators in different ways. Provide clear guidance, tools and support.
- **Keep it light.** Four or five standard **prix fixe** indicators are okay. Fifty are not. If you ask for too many, it becomes burdensome and can breed resentment.
- **Remember your mission.** Don't choose metrics just because they happen to be common across your grantees. Make sure they are directly related to your organization's mission and theory of change.
- **Check in with grantees.** Consult grantees about their experience collecting the metrics. Find out whether they are using them for other purposes in addition to reporting to your funding organization. These conversations will help the metrics evolve to be more useful to grantees in the future, or at the very least, uncover issues in your data.

PROS

The funder can easily aggregate high-level impact across a portfolio.

The funder can compare performance from grantee to grantee.

The funder saves time and resources with a simple, streamlined system of data collection, analysis and reporting.

The grantee is able to benchmark against programs that collect similar metrics.

The grantee gains tools and experience in measuring indicators that are standard for the industry.

CONS

One-size-fits-all metrics often fail to tell the full story, much less capture nuance.

Metrics can have different meanings in different contexts. For instance, “scale” has a different meaning for an app than for an agricultural machine.

To grantees, metrics may feel imposed or irrelevant, risking lack of buy-in.

To grantees, reporting can feel like a “box checking” exercise or an administrative burden. This may be a missed opportunity for grantees to think critically about impact.

Grantees' negative experiences with imposed metrics can breed resentment and ultimately hinder a culture of data-driven decision making.

PRIX FIXE SPOTLIGHT CASE: ROOT CAPITAL

Root Capital is a nonprofit social investment fund that grows rural prosperity in poor, environmentally vulnerable places in Africa and Latin America by lending capital, delivering financial training and strengthening market connections for agricultural small and growing businesses. As an experienced lender in the agriculture sector, it has developed a **prix fixe** list of standard metrics deeply rooted in evidence and experience.

During the due diligence process, Root Capital uses the same four metrics for all of its potential borrowers: number of farmers reached, enterprise revenues, payment to farmers, and number of hectares under sustainable cultivation. They also score each potential borrower on a ten-point Expected Impact Rating scale, based on 21 indicators of poverty, environmental vulnerability, and social and environmental performance. Root Capital compares each loan's expected impact rating to its expected financial risk and return to determine which loans to offer.

The use of standardized impact metrics integrated with financial data has promoted more organizational alignment and more strategic decision-making. According to Mike McCreless, Root Capital's Senior Director of Strategy and Impact, "Everybody across our organization is on the same page about what specifically we're

trying to do in the world and what we're looking for in prospective borrowers."

This universal standardization was hard-won. Root Capital conducted studies with more than 30 businesses, interviewing over 3,000 smallholder farmers in order to determine which indicators would be most predictive of impact. "It took a long time to align on our Expected Impact Rating," says McCreless. "It came out of doing impact studies where the same handful of issues came up time and time again."

"The use of standardized impact metrics integrated with financial risk and return data has promoted more organizational alignment and more strategic decision-making."

McCreless recognizes that focusing their capital in a single sector makes it easier to go with a **prix fixe** model. "It wouldn't fit if we had a more heterogeneous portfolio." He also acknowledges that these

metrics do not capture the unique offerings of some of their investees, like those focused on local value chains or high-yield seed varieties.

Finally, Root Capital's **prix fixe** metrics are focused on predicting rather than proving businesses' impact. "It's a good tool for a specific purpose. But we complement it with impact studies, aggregated donor reports, and storytelling. It's part of a portfolio of things that we do."

Overall, McCreless reflects, "It's very satisfying to be using the impact data we collect to make decisions about loans in a very concrete way every day."

TAKEAWAY

A **prix fixe** list of standard indicators is one of the most common models, largely because it favors the funder's needs. It works best when a funder and grantee come from the same sector and share the same clearly articulated goals.

PRIX FIXE AT-A-GLANCE

Funder resources needed	LOW
Consistency & standardization	HIGH
Relevance to grantee	LOW
Grantee M&E capacity required	LOW
Capacity & learning gained	MED



OPTION 2: À LA CARTE

Grantees choose from a menu of standard metrics.

Diners choose from a range of dishes. There's something here for everyone!

In an **à la carte** model, the funder provides a standard list of metrics, and grantees choose the metrics most relevant to their work. This arrangement allows the funder to compare and aggregate results for similar programs, though not across the whole portfolio. At the same time, it allows for some flexibility and diversity in the ways grantees communicate their impact. In many cases, this model is blended with *prix fixe* common-denominator metrics. In other words, grantees can choose their entrée, but everyone gets a salad on the side!

WHO SHOULD USE IT?

- **Funders** working within a limited number of program areas or sectors
- **Funders** working within a single sector but with grantees who have a variety of goals
- **Funders** working mostly in sectors that have standardized metrics
- **Funders** who want to get grantees started in impact measurement, but lack resources to invest in deep, high-touch capacity building
- **Grantees** looking for tools to benchmark against programs in the same sector

IF YOU USE IT

- **Same advice as *prix fixe*:** Choose a good list, make sure indicators are measured consistently, keep it light, and check in with grantees.
- **Have a conversation.** Use the menu as a jumping-off point for a deeper discussion. Provide guidance, and make recommendations: the way a good waiter would!
- **Ask for feedback.** If you're working many different sectors, there's a good chance some of your grantees are more in touch with their own sector's standards. Let your grantees help you adapt and tweak the list.

PROS

The grantee has more flexibility, choice, and agency. No more reporting on irrelevant indicators!

The funder is still able to aggregate and benchmark across similar grantee clusters (for instance, those within the same sector).

The process of choosing can be a learning and reflection opportunity for grantees new to impact measurement.

CONS

Funders will need to compartmentalize the way they talk about impact into clusters of grantees.

Grantees are still limited to a fixed list; their engagement is more passive without much opportunity to provide input.

Too much choice can be overwhelming if there is no guidance (i.e. IRIS metrics).

It can be hard to incorporate non-traditional, "outlier" grantees into the mix.

À LA CARTE SPOTLIGHT CASE: DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION VENTURES | USAID

Development Innovation Ventures (DIV), part of the U.S. Global Development Lab, is the US Agency for International Development’s (USAID) open grant competition, providing tiered support to breakthrough solutions to the most intractable development challenges. In line with their philosophy of open innovation, their impact measurement approach also started broad. “It follows that we should be open to measuring what our organizations think is important to measure,” says Sasha Gallant, DIV Portfolio Manager.

“We were incredibly open when we started. We had zero mandated KPIs [Key Performance Indicators]. It was – and still is – a philosophical choice around who decides what matters.”

But after a few years, as the DIV team began to feel the need to understand their overarching impact, they came up against the limitation of this open approach. “Over time, as a funder, and instead of looking at things as distinct projects, you want to have a sense of what you have supported in aggregate and have a way to talk about your portfolio in a meaningful way.” They also found the need to compare grantees working in similar sectors. “If we don’t even have shared KPIs within a sector,” she stresses, “then there’s no way to do a head-to-head analysis.”

“Instead of something we’re forcing upon them, it’s more of a public good. It’s not just ‘here’s a blank slate;’ it’s ‘here are some lines, now you get to color them in.’”

Having spent years learning and building expertise in different sectors, they realized that they could share this guidance with future grantees. Today, they still determine custom metrics with grantees during the due diligence process, but they also ask for a standard set of **prix fixe** operational, financial, and impact indicators and provide a guiding list of **à la carte** indicators particular to the sector. For instance, their grantees in the alternative energy sector can now report on recommended metrics like annual household carbon dioxide mitigation and annual household savings. DIV provides clear definitions, templates, and support to help grantees track these metrics consistently

and accurately. “You need to make it incredibly easy for the grantee. Wildly simple. Otherwise you just get bad data.”

DIV has found that this technical assistance can be as transformative as the funding itself. For new or small organizations, a structured model can provide crucial guidance on the metrics that are standard for the sector and will help them attract funding in the future. “Instead of something we’re forcing upon them, it’s more of a public good,” Gallant points out. “It’s not just ‘here’s a blank slate;’ it’s ‘here are some lines, now you get to color them in.’”

TAKEAWAY

In this model, there is more back-and-forth conversation. The funder surrenders a bit of control and consistency and gets more nuance. The grantee gets a bit more agency and some guidance as well.

À LA CARTE AT-A-GLANCE

Funder resources needed	MED
Consistency & standardization	MED
Relevance to grantee	MED
Grantee M&E capacity required	LOW
Capacity & learning gained	MED



OPTION 3: MADE TO ORDER

Funder and grantee work together to come up with a set of metrics.

Create the metrics sandwich of your dreams, with all your favorite fixings!

The **made to order** model is all about customization, co-creation, and capacity building. The funder and grantee work closely together to come up with metrics that meet the needs of both. This can take the form of a conversation, a consultancy, or a workshop to design or refine the grantee's theory of change. In some cases, the funder provides an overarching framework to guide the process and ensure that their own needs are also met. The funder will be juggling a hodgepodge of reporting metrics, but those metrics will be highly relevant to the grantees' work.

WHO SHOULD USE IT?

- **Funders** and grantees working in innovative or non-traditional sectors without established metrics
- **Funders** working with a small, diverse group of grantees
- **Funders** committed to close partnership and capacity building
- **Funders** who have a lot of measurement capacity to share (or willingness to learn)
- **Grantees** who have the appetite and demand for measurement

IF YOU USE IT

- **Plan to invest time and resources.** These conversations, workshops, and customizations take time. Build them into the funding package from the due diligence process to technical assistance later on.
- **Build your own capacity.** Develop or draw on existing toolkits to guide grantees through the process of defining their impact goals and choosing metrics. If you don't have the expertise in-house, hire an evaluator to help facilitate the co-design process.
- **Prepare to be surprised.** Learn from the process. You may be able to incorporate the learning into more standardized measurement systems later.

PROS

The resulting metrics and framework are highly relevant to the grantee, inspiring investment in impact measurement.

The funder is much more in tune with grantees' work and is able to incorporate learning centrally.

The collaboration has the potential to contribute measurement frameworks to new, innovative impact areas.

This flexible, customized process can contribute to a better-informed "menu" model later on.

CONS

The process is much more resource-intensive for both the funder and grantee.

Funder may not be able to aggregate data into an overarching impact story.

Funder may struggle to compare programs in its portfolio.

Grantees are not easily able to benchmark against other programs.

MADE TO ORDER SPOTLIGHT CASE: MERCY CORPS SOCIAL VENTURE FUND

Mercy Corps’ Social Venture Fund provides early-stage financing and post-investment support to create and grow scalable, self-sustaining businesses that improve people’s lives in an enduring way. Since its launch a little over a year ago, the fund has invested in eight social enterprises across a variety of sectors. As a small, novel fund with a diverse range of investees, a made to order model of impact measurement was the right fit.

“We start from the standpoint of the ventures that need to measure and improve their own performance,” explains Chris Walker, Social Innovations Director at Mercy Corps. “Our philosophy is to start with that. We’re investing in them because they’re committed to impact, and they’re savvy about measuring their own performance by collecting data. That’s the premise.”

The fund’s starting point is the metrics that the investees are already measuring. Next, it compares those metrics to its own internal impact framework to check for alignment. This process ensures that each grantee reports on at least one indicator in each of three categories: breadth of impact, depth of impact, and focus on underserved populations. “It’s important that they measure something in each of those areas, but we

won’t specify exactly what to measure,” explains Walker. The Mercy Corps team drew these categories from Acumen’s Lean Data initiative, anchoring their process in the standards of the sector.

If a venture is still in the early stages of impact measurement, Mercy Corps provides the technical assistance to help them develop a theory of change and clearly define their indicators. This assistance is key to the fund’s offerings. “We’ve gotten a lot of demand from entrepreneurs for our advice. They deeply care about measuring impact, but sometimes they don’t know how best to go about it.”

Walker stresses that this method requires resources. “For this approach, you do need capacity ... You need special expertise on staff or a consultant on call.”

So far, Mercy Corps has faced little pressure from their funders to aggregate data at the portfolio level. This flexibility has allowed them to develop an iterative “learn as you go” model that has served both them and their investees. “We’re collecting data that’s useful for all of us to perform better in the future. If the data’s not helping us and we’re not using it to become more effective, why are we doing it?”

“We’ve gotten a lot of demand from entrepreneurs for our advice. They deeply care about measuring impact, but sometimes they don’t know how best to go about it.”

TAKEAWAY

In this model, co-creation meets measurement. It takes longer, but you’re far more likely to meet the needs of the grantee, and you’ll learn a lot in the process.

MADE TO ORDER AT-A-GLANCE

Funder resources needed	HIGH
Consistency & standardization	LOW
Relevance to grantee	HIGH
Grantee M&E capacity required	MED
Capacity & learning gained	HIGH



OPTION 4: BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH

Grantees come with their own metrics.

Thanks, I'll pass on the restaurant fare. I've got a homemade meal that's much tastier.

Sometimes, the grantee knows best. In a **bring your own lunch** model, the funder agrees to accept the metrics that the grantee has tracked historically. Grantees who are leaders in their sector, or who have highly developed monitoring and evaluation systems, are often best positioned to drive the metrics decision. This arrangement adds no new steps to the grantees' process, allowing them to direct funding toward programs instead of systems.

WHO SHOULD USE IT?

- **Funders** new to the sector or seeking to learn from grantees
- **Grantees** with a clear theory of change and a defined set of metrics
- **Grantees** with strong monitoring and evaluation systems in place
- **Grantees** with a history of reporting on those metrics
- **Grantees** with more monitoring and evaluation experience than the funder
- **Grantees** who are more familiar with the sector than the funder
- **Grantees** working in an innovative, unique impact area

IF YOU USE IT

- **Plan to invest time and resources.** These conversations, workshops, and customizations take time. Build them into the funding package from the due diligence process to technical assistance later on.
- **Build your own capacity.** Develop or draw on existing toolkits to guide grantees through the process of defining their impact goals and choosing metrics. If you don't have the expertise in-house, hire an evaluator to help facilitate the co-design process.
- **Prepare to be surprised.** Learn from the process. You may be able to incorporate the learning into more standardized measurement systems later.

PROS

The grantee has full freedom to report on the impact metrics most relevant to them.

The grantee avoids the hassle of adapting systems to an external framework.

There is no burden on the funder to create a custom monitoring and evaluation framework.

The funder can crowd-source expertise from grantees.

CONS

The funder may not be able to tell an overarching impact story.

It may be more difficult for both funder and grantee to compare and benchmark.

For the funder, the reporting process is much less streamlined.

This may be a missed opportunity to gather important, but excluded, data.

The grantee may not actually have a good system!

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH SPOTLIGHT CASE: AUTODESK FOUNDATION

Launched in 2014, the Autodesk Foundation supports organizations using design for positive social and environmental impact. As a young funding organization working in the evolving social design sector, Autodesk Foundation couldn't rely on standardized metrics; they didn't exist. Moreover, in its first year, the tiny team lacked the capacity to create its own impact framework, much less advise grantees on best practices in impact measurement.

Zoé Bezpalko, Autodesk's Design + Impact Lead, saw this as an opportunity. "Because of our design focus and the variety of the organizations we work with, there is the potential to crowdsource ideas about the best way of measuring impact."

"Because of our design focus and the variety of the organizations we work with, there is the potential to crowdsource ideas about the best way of measuring impact."

The team took a design thinking approach. What are people already doing? What do they need? Where are the gaps? "Tapping into different organizations having different angles to design is a very interesting way of doing it," says Bezpalko.

Autodesk's first grantees came with their own metrics, and the foundation began to draw from their knowledge. "Because we are such a new foundation and some of these organizations have been in the field doing this work for way longer, we recognize that they have expertise that we don't," Bezpalko explained. Grantees with particularly sophisticated frameworks, like D-Rev

and KickStart International, served as inspiration for Autodesk's own understanding of impact. "On the flip side," cautions Bezpalko, "we cannot aggregate this data. She also warns that a **bring your own lunch** model will yield differences in quality of measurement across a portfolio: some organizations are doing it very well, and others have very limited capacity.

Now, the Autodesk Foundation is using these lessons to pilot its own impact framework, evolving toward a made to order model. This framework focuses on the impact of design, with metrics linked to effectiveness, efficiency,

and scalability. They are also providing more guidance and training to grantees. They hope to move toward a more constrained set of **prix fixe** metrics in the future, but they are unlikely to replace the crowdsourcing

spirit entirely. Says Bezpalko, "I don't think I will ever get rid of the fact that I want our grantees to come with their own metrics."

Ultimately, this approach has allowed Autodesk Foundation to contribute to the conversation about how impact should be measured in design. "It's an opportunity to build our own or be part of the conversation toward how we should do it," says Bezpalko. "It's not static; things are evolving, and we are moving with it. Hopefully we are also a driver of how it's moving."

TAKEAWAY

As long as you are confident in the grantees' sector expertise and M&E processes, this may be the perfect, most efficient solution. Over time, the collective wisdom of the grantees can inform the funder's understanding of impact.

MADE TO ORDER AT-A-GLANCE

Funder resources needed	LOW
Consistency & standardization	LOW
Relevance to grantee	HIGH
Grantee M&E capacity required	HIGH
Capacity & learning gained	HIGH

CONCLUSION

FUSION FARE

To reconcile the competing needs of standardization and customization, many funders will find that a blended model works best. This blend could take a few different forms; for example:

- **A funder can require a few standard *prix fixe* indicators but allow flexibility for additional custom metrics.** For instance, DIV requires certain metrics related to scale and financial viability, but they also work with grantees to choose custom metrics during the due diligence process.
- **A funder can apply different models for different grantees, depending on their sector or capacity.** Some of Autodesk's grantees have impact frameworks sophisticated enough to use as is, and others require more technical assistance build out a measurement strategy.
- **A funder's model can evolve as they build expertise in the sector.** Across all four cases, we saw that funding organizations transition over time from broader, more open processes to guided customization to standardized metrics.

None of the funders we spoke to used one model exclusively; most mixed and matched or developed their approach over time.

A PERFECT PAIRING

Both funders and grantees have a stake in what gets measured. This framework aims to make sure that they both have a voice, too.

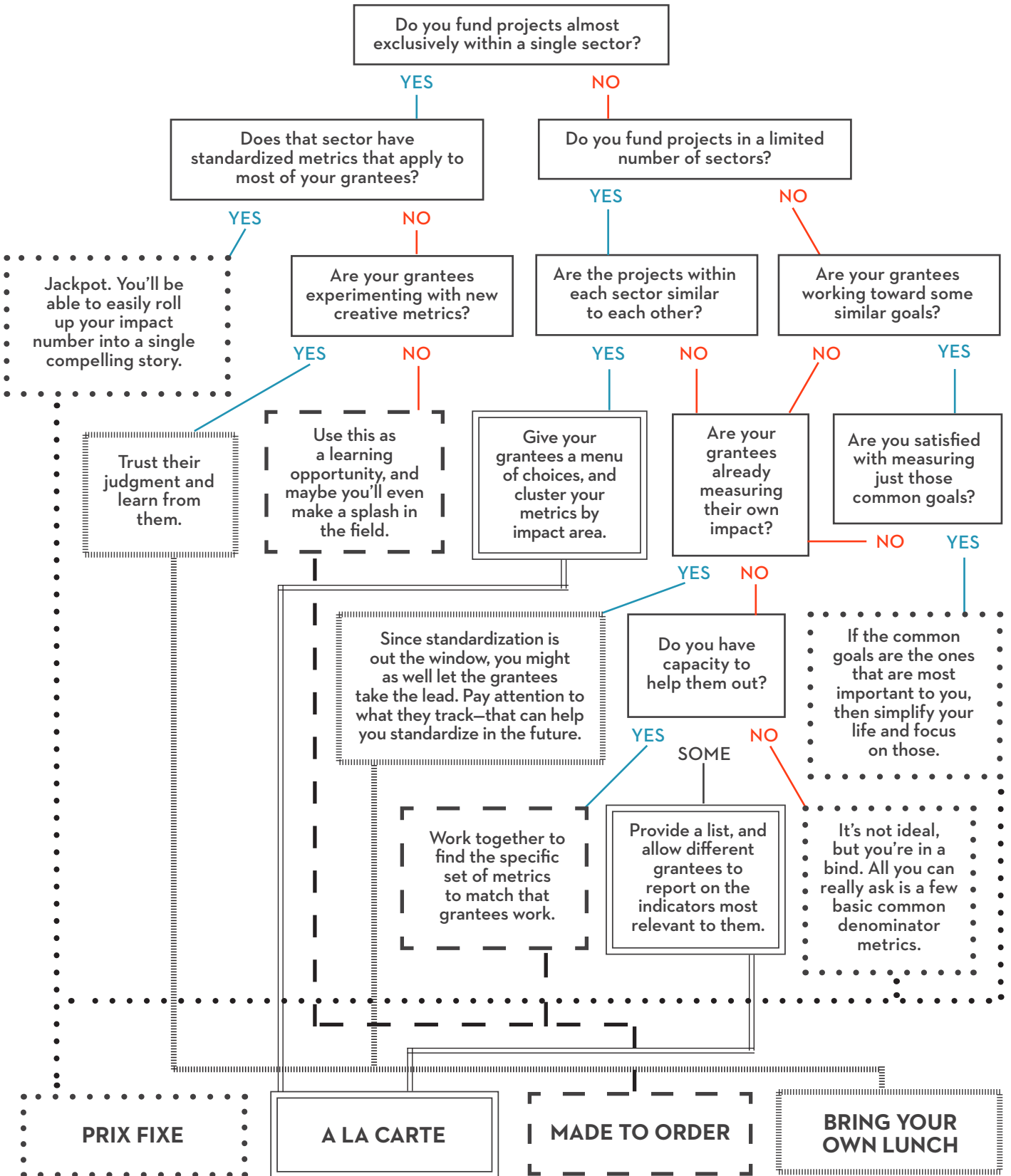
By using this tool, we hope funders will deliberately consider the needs of the grantee in addition to their own, aligning metrics to achieve more win-wins and produce less waste. A thoughtfully chosen model can change the conversation, improve data quality, strengthen relationships, and turn a mess of metrics into genuine learning.

BON APPÉTIT!

THE METRICS CAFÉ: AT-A-GLANCE

	PRIX FIXE	À LA CARTE	MADE TO ORDER	BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH
DESCRIPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All grantees report on the same set of standard metrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grantees choose from a menu of standard metrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funder and grantee work together to come up with a set of metrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grantees come with their own metrics.
WHO SHOULD USE IT?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single sector or impact goal - Sector or impact goal has standard metrics - Funders focused on metrics common to all sectors - Funders with low capacity for customization and technical assistance - Grantees without their own metrics and looking to benchmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited number of sectors - Single sector but diversity of goals - Sectors have standard metrics - Funders with some capacity for technical assistance - Grantees looking to benchmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New or non-traditional sectors - Small but diverse group of grantees - Focus on partnership and capacity building - Funder with strong M&E capacity - Grantees with M&E demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New or non-traditional sector unfamiliar to funder - Grantee has strong theory of change, metrics, M&E systems and record of reporting and evidence
PROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy aggregation across a portfolio - Ability to compare grantee to grantee - Simple, streamlined data system - Grantee can benchmark against other programs - Grantee gains experience in measuring standard indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy aggregation and comparison within grantee categories - Grantee has flexibility to choose most relevant indicators - Learning /reflection opportunity for grantees new to measurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for capacity building, collaboration, and learning. - Metrics highly relevant to grantee - Funder can incorporate learning centrally - Potential to contribute to innovative impact areas - Can lead to a better “menu” model later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metrics highly relevant to grantee - Less hassle for grantee - Funder does not need a custom M&E framework or dedicated M&E staff - Funder can crowd-source expertise from grantees
CONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-size-fits-all metrics miss nuance - Metrics can have different meanings in different contexts - Metrics may feel imposed, irrelevant, burdensome to grantee - Low buy-in, resentment may hinder data usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to compartmentalize impact by cluster - Input from grantees still limited, passive - Choice without guidance can be overwhelming - Difficult to incorporate non-traditional grantees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource-intensive process - Difficult to aggregate, compare, and benchmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult to aggregate, compare, and benchmark - Less streamlined reporting process for funder - Might miss out on data not asked for - Not all grantees have a good system
TIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose standard, vetted metrics - Ensure consistent definitions - Keep the list short - Ask for feedback from grantees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose standard, vetted metrics - Ensure consistent definitions - Keep the list short - Ask for feedback from grantees - Make recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan to invest time and resources - Develop a process or toolkit - Learn from grantees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set expectations for quality - Learn from grantees
Funder resources needed	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW
Consistency & standardization	HIGH	MED	LOW	LOW
Relevance to grantee	LOW	MED	HIGH	HIGH
Grantee capacity required	LOW	LOW	MED	HIGH
Capacity & learning gained	MED	MED	HIGH	HIGH

THE METRICS CAFÉ WHICH MODEL IS RIGHT FOR YOU?



MIT D-Lab

MIT D-Lab works with people around the world to develop and advance collaborative approaches and practical solutions to global poverty challenges. The program's mission is pursued through interdisciplinary courses, research in collaboration with global partners, technology development, and community initiatives – all of which emphasize experiential learning, real-world projects, community-led development, and scalability.

MIT Practical Impact Alliance

The MIT Practical Impact Alliance harvests the power of collaborative learning and action to increase, accelerate, and sustain impact on global poverty. Organized by MIT D-Lab, PIA is a membership organization of leaders from diverse organizations with aligned missions who learn, collaborate, and develop best practices together. PIA working groups focus on addressing a knowledge gap of the group and in the field, with the goal of generating outputs that will serve as relevant, practical tools for PIA members and a broader audience.

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