

# SHARE IT

## *The SHARECITY sustainability Impact assessment Toolkit*

## Toolshed User Guide

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**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

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## 1 Introduction

Welcome to the user guide for the Toolshed section of the SHARE IT toolkit. This document explains what the Toolshed can be used for and how to use it.

### 1.1 Why use the Toolshed?

Sustainability reporting can help you: see if you are achieving your goals; communicate the impact of what you do with those who share food with you; demonstrate the impact of your activities to those who might regulate or fund you; showcase your impacts to attract new food sharers to your activities; inspire others to develop similarly impactful activities in other places. The Toolshed provides a **free to use** resource to help you understand and communicate your impacts on the sustainability of food systems and provides guidance on how you might improve your impact reporting.

### 1.2 Should you use the Toolshed?

If you are an organisation, network or informal group of people who come together to grow, cook, eat or redistribute food as part of your activities then the Toolshed is for you. The Toolshed has been designed particularly for initiatives which may be small-scale or not for profit as these types of initiatives are not well-served by existing reporting frameworks. However, it is freely available and potentially relevant to many organisations and informal groups who participate in the food system.

### 1.3 What the Toolshed can do

The Toolshed is a flexible resource. It does not prescribe how initiatives should measure their impact. Instead, the Toolshed provides a framework for initiatives to understand where they are having impact and to support more robust reporting practices.

### 1.4 How the Toolshed was designed

The Toolshed has adapted and extended international frameworks for sustainability impact assessment in the light of knowledge from the [SHARECITY](#) project, a project funded by the European Research Council, which has mapped and analysed thousands of food sharing initiatives internationally. More detailed information on the Toolshed framework can be found in this open access research paper [link].

### 1.5 Creating a sustainability impact assessment in the Toolshed

You can create your sustainability impact report using whatever data you have collected to date. No questions in the impact assessment area of the Toolshed are compulsory because the tool is designed to be useful for different kinds of food sharing initiatives and not all indicators will be relevant to your activities. You can choose what goes into your impact report by answering the questions given for any of the **34 indicators** in the Toolshed. These indicators are divided into **four pillars of sustainability** – social, environmental, economic and governance. In turn, these pillars are divided into **impact areas** that are represented in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Toolshed impact pillars and impact areas**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Impact pillars Environmental</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>Social</b>
<b>Impact areas</b>	<b>Jobs</b> – creating decent and accessible jobs	<b>Agricultural practices</b> – enhancing biodiversity, soil and ecosystem health	<b>Risk Control</b> - managing risks to the continued operations of the initiative	<b>Accessibility</b> – improving the accessibility of fresh nutritious food for all
	<b>Affordability</b> - improving the affordability of fresh nutritious food	<b>GHG emissions</b> - reducing GHGs from the food system	<b>Strategic sustainability planning</b> - engaging with relevant stakeholders and policy making	<b>Citizen health and wellbeing</b> – improving health and well-being outcomes
	<b>Production</b> - utilising land to produce food and food products	<b>Food waste</b> - reducing food loss and waste	<b>Civic responsibility</b> – helping to tackle wider societal and policy issues	<b>Community integration</b> - increasing community integration through food sharing
	<b>Education, awareness and behaviour</b> - Raising awareness in order to influence behaviour and improve the sustainability of the food system from economic, environmental, governance and social perspectives			

Each impact area has a set of indicators that are available to record and communicate the impacts of your initiative. You can answer as few or as many indicators as are relevant to your initiative. This tool is not designed to reward those who report the most impact areas, but rather to help you and others understand the specific impacts of your initiative. In using the Toolshed you may come across indicators or impact areas you have not previously considered or had time to collect the relevant data for so we have provided guidance on how you can start to collect relevant data to report on that indicator in the future.

## 1.6 Getting started

The first step in using the Toolshed is to create a user profile for the SHARE IT toolkit.

You can register for SHARE IT by answering a few questions about your initiative [here](#)

Once your registration has been approved by the SHARECITY team, you can complete your SHARE IT profile in the user dashboard and begin creating a sustainability impact assessment report for your initiative using the Toolshed.

We have also provided a short video guide on using SHARE IT and the Toolshed, which can be found [here](#)

The rest of this guide contains materials to help you understand and use the Toolshed including a glossary of important phrases, some additional guidance on data collection, and links to useful resources including calculation tools and some example survey questions that will allow you to report on more indicators contained in the Toolshed.

## 2. Glossary

Some of the phrases used in the Toolshed may not be familiar to everyone or may be used differently in other documents on sustainability impact assessment. Below is a short glossary of important terms we use in the Toolshed and this user guide.

**Food sharing** – Growing, cooking, eating with others or redistributing food to others

**Impact area** – An impact area clusters similar indicators within sustainability pillars

**Indicator** – An indicator can be a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable. An indicator provides a simple and reliable means to capture information at a particular point and which can be used over time to identify changes.

**Initiative** – A food sharing initiative is a group, network or organization which includes specific food-sharing activities e.g. providing opportunities for people to grow, cook or eat together or providing opportunities for people to come together in order reduce food waste by redistributing surplus harvests and food. Initiatives may be not-for-profit or for-profit and adopt a range of institutional structures from co-operatives to social enterprise.

**Participant** – A participant is someone who involved in your initiative's food sharing activities. They can be employees and volunteers.

**Quantitative indicator** – A quantitative indicator can be a pure number, an index, ratio or percentage. Quantitative indicators allow easy comparison of the status of the same indicator at different times and can enable simple comparisons between the performances or achievements of two or more organizations.

**Qualitative indicator** – Qualitative indicators depict the status of something in qualitative terms which involves judgement and or grading. For example, the extent to which participants in food sharing initiatives feel that community cohesion is enhanced by food sharing.

**Stakeholders** – A stakeholder for food sharing initiatives is a person, group or organization that has interest in or influence over their activities, such as volunteers and employees, food retailers, the government (and its agencies), and the community.

**Sustainability** – In the Toolshed sustainability is used to refer to the capacity of a system to survive and persist over time in a place. It draws on the concept of sustainable development, which was defined by the Brundtland Commission as: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

**Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA)** – SIA is an approach for exploring the combined economic, environmental and social impacts of policies, programmes, strategies, plans and activities. Such assessments can also assist decision making and strategic planning throughout the entire policy cycle.

**Sustainability pillar** – Describes the four main elements of sustainability, environment, economy, society and governance.

### 3. Indicators, data collection and useful resources

This section will help you with data collection and impact reporting both generally and for individual indicators in the Toolshed.

#### 3.1 Creating a sustainability impact assessment report

The Toolshed can create sustainability impact assessment reports from any data added by you. Ideally data inputted to the Toolshed should represent a 12 month period so that it can comprise an annual report for your initiative. However, this may not always be possible. Data sets might be incomplete for a twelve month period, your initiative may be less than a year old or you might be required to report over different periods for other stakeholders. This does not prohibit you from using SHARE IT and we provide supports to help you build towards annual reporting.

#### 3.2 Choosing sample sizes when creating surveys

To ensure that the results of any participant surveys you conduct reflects the target population as precisely as possible it is useful to determine how many people you need to interview in order to get results that. You can determine a representative sample by using this [Sample Size Calculator](#). For example, if 1000 participants attend your cooking classes over a year, you may like to know how many participants had increased confidence in their cooking abilities due to attending your class. Rather than surveying all 1000 participants you can determine a reasonable sample size using this calculator to ensure that your smaller survey is sufficiently representative. In this example if you are happy to have a margin of error of +/-5% in the number of participants that answer yes and be 95% confident in this result then an appropriate sample size is 278. We advise that where possible margins of error of 5% or less are used to determine appropriate sample size for quantitative data.

#### 3.3 Information required for using the Toolshed

This section is designed to help you understand what information you will need to create your report in the Toolshed. Table 2 is designed to help users understand which indicators in the Toolshed are relevant to them, the data they might need to report their impact for this indicator and any external resources that may help them with this.

The Table contains:

- A list of all of the indicators contained in the Toolshed
- A short explanation of what kinds of initiatives could be relevant to you
- A summary of the data collection options to report your impact for a particular indicator
- Links to some useful external resources including documents to help with data collection for each indicator

In the Toolshed it is always possible to give a qualitative description of relevant activities and impacts of your initiative for each indicator. This might include relevant testimonies from employees, volunteers, participants or users of any services your initiative provides. For many of the indicators in the Toolshed it is also possible to ask your participants, volunteers or employees specific questions in order to generate useful quantitative data. We have created some surveys with example questions relevant for different indicators in the Toolshed. These can be found [here](#) for surveying participants and [here](#) for questions to ask employees or volunteers who are leaving your initiative.

For some indicators several options for data collection may be available, answering any of the options will allow you to report an indicator in the Toolshed. However, it is possible to answer multiple questions if you have the relevant information.

For each data collection option we have rated the difficulty of collecting the relevant data and calculating your impact for an indicator on a scale from 1-3 as defined below. The higher an option is rated the scale the more time and effort is likely to be involved in reporting an indicator this way. However higher rated options will result in a more rigorous assessment of impact for an indicator.

*Level 1 = data which can be captured or calculated relatively easily, for example counting the number of people who attend an event*

*Level 2 = data which are moderately difficult to capture or calculate, for example inputting the results from a survey of participants with straightforward questions or recording an amount of food by weight.*

*Level 3 = data which are challenging to calculate and/or complex to capture, such as results from a survey of participants with questions involving difficult concepts or which are of a sensitive nature, requiring careful collection and data management to ensure privacy. For example, have participants increased the number of people they can count on for support in times of need as a result of engaging with your initiative?*

**Table 2. A list of all indicators in the Toolshed along with a summary of the data collection options and links to useful resources for each indicator**

Indicator	Relevance	Data collection options	Links to useful resources
1. Increasing appreciation of different cultures across and within communities	Relevant for initiatives that increase contact between different groups within communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a record of people attending events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
2. Improving communication skills	Relevant for initiatives which provide opportunities for people who are not fluent in the national language, or who find communication challenging, to interact with others in their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
3. Fostering a wider food and sharing culture	Relevant for initiatives which are connected to a wider network of food sharing initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record of other initiatives you share knowledge or collaborate with (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of current and former employees or volunteers (or both)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for exits interviews</a>
4. Increased access to and consumption of fruit and vegetables	Relevant for initiatives which increase access to and consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. This can include distributing food directly or influencing people to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculation of fruit and vegetable portion sizes (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2 or 3)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">1-Guidelines on portion sizes for fruit and vegetables</a>  <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>



5. Increased access to and consumption of fresh food	Relevant for initiatives which increase access to fresh or freshly prepared food. This can include giving people access to the tools to grow food or facilities to store, prepare and eat it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of participants using the facilities that are likely to increase access to fresh or freshly prepared food (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
6. Connecting and creating new support networks within communities	Relevant for initiatives which provide opportunities for people to make friends and increase their support network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 3)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
7. Boosting levels of meal sharing	Relevant for initiatives which increase the number of meals people eat together with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a record of who is coming to any canteens or other shared eating events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
8. Increasing well-being through volunteering	Relevant for initiatives which have volunteers who either participate in or help to run activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">2-Volunteer Ireland-Report</a> <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
9. Improving self-confidence and resilience	Relevant for initiatives whose activities help improve feelings of self-confidence, self-worth and happiness among participants through creating social connections or providing training and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 2 or 3)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">3-Bandura Guide 2006: How to measure self-efficacy</a> <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>

10. Increasing movement and exercise	Relevant for initiatives that engage participants in growing or other activities which can contribute to the amount of moderate exercise people are getting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a record of people who engaged in exercise (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">4-Moderate Exercise, Health Essentials from Cleveland Clinic</a>  <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
11. Increasing access to health and well-being services	Relevant for opportunities for charities and other groups to encourage people (particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups) to access important services for health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of participants who gained greater access to health services (level 1 or 2)</li> </ul>	
12. Thinking about issues beyond price when buying food	Relevant for initiatives which help participants make informed choices when buying food beyond its price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	
13. Increasing engagement in growing food	Relevant for initiatives which inspire people to grow more of their own food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of participants who grew their own food (level 1 or 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
14. Increased confidence and participation in cooking	Relevant for initiatives which support the acquisition of cooking skills and increase the confidence of participants to cook for themselves and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of people to come to your cooking events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
15. Discovery of new fresh foods	Relevant for initiatives which support people to eat fresh foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of people to come to your food tasting events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>

16. Diverting organic waste from landfill	Relevant for initiatives which divert organic material from landfill through composting or other relevant activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimate of how many tonnes of organic waste your initiative diverted from landfill (level 1)</li> <li>Track the number of people to come to your composting events (level 1)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">5-Farming Concrete, Data Collection Toolkit</a> <a href="#">Guide on composting food waste</a>
17. Water recovery	Relevant for initiatives which implement techniques to reduce water use or which demonstrate the effectiveness of these techniques to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of people to come to your water recovery events (level 1)</li> <li>Estimate the annual recovery of water (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">5-Farming Concrete, Data Collection Toolkit</a> <a href="#">6-Rainwater Harvesting</a> <a href="#">7-Greywater Reuse</a> <a href="#">8-Stormwater Tools</a>
18. Maintaining and improving soil quality	Relevant for initiatives which manage green spaces and play a role in maintaining and improving soil quality on their land to preserve its potential for producing food and providing other vital ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tests of soil quality conducted on growing sites</li> <li>Describe any techniques you use to improve soil quality on land</li> </ul>	<a href="#">9-How to Correct Soil Compaction</a>  <a href="#">10-Waste Management for Nutrient Recovery</a>  Advice on testing for soil pollutants:  <a href="#">11-Growing Gardens in Urban Soils</a>

19. Maintaining and improving biodiversity	Relevant for initiatives which own or manage green spaces in their community can make a positive contribution to biodiversity in the surrounding area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct biodiversity monitoring study</li> </ul>	<a href="#">12-Introduction to garden biodiversity</a>  <a href="#">13-A Simple Guide to Conducting a School Biodiversity Audit</a>
20. Food waste reduction	Relevant for initiatives that divert food surplus away from landfill to be consumed by people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count the number of people to come to your food waste reduction events (level 1)</li> <li>Track the amount of food wasted by you initiative (level 2)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">14-Less Food Waste More Profit (for catering)</a>  <a href="#">15-WRAP Food Waste Measurement Toolkit (for larger food businesses)</a>  Other useful links: <a href="#">Stopfoodwaste.ie</a>  <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>

21. Reducing the carbon footprint of the food system	Relevant for initiatives that reduce the direct carbon footprint of their operations and influence people to reduce their carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of people to come to your carbon footprint events (level 1)</li> <li>Calculate the figure for carbon emissions avoided through your initiative's activities (level 3)</li> </ul>	<p>16-<a href="#">Food's Carbon Footprint, Green Eat</a></p> <p>17-<a href="#">Climate change food calculator, BBC News</a></p> <p><a href="#">Carbon emissions of self-grown food</a></p> <p><a href="#">Carbon emissions of food waste</a></p>
22. Increasing preference for vegetarian meals	Relevant for initiatives which are encouraging people to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables and less meat are having a positive effect on the environmental sustainability of food systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count the number of people to come to your food choice events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2 or 3)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
23. Reducing food packaging	Relevant for initiatives that support reducing waste through food packaging in their activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of people to come to your food packaging and/or reduce waste events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2 or 3)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
24. Training and jobs	Relevant for initiatives which run formal training or employment schemes that can help people find routes to formal qualifications and ultimately secure jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track number of participants who have come through formal training schemes run by your initiative and have found work afterwards (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of current and former employees/volunteers (level 2 or 3)</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Wage calculator</a> (level 2)</p> <p><a href="#">See form on guidelines for exits interviews</a></p>

25. Fairly paid work	Relevant for initiatives that have an economic and cultural impact through providing stable and fairly paid employment in the food sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count number of your employees paid at a rate of 10% or more or equal to the hourly legal minimum wage in your country (level 1)</li> <li>Count number of your employees paid at full time living wage in your country (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Wage calculator</a> (level 2)  <a href="#">See form on guidelines for exits interviews</a>
26. Contribution to food production	Relevant for initiatives which increase food production, particularly in towns and cities, which can provide people with a greater sense of connection to food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the food produced by your initiative (level 1)</li> <li>Track the amount of newly secured land (level 1)</li> <li>Calculate the amount of food produced per m2 (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">5-Farming Concrete, Data Collection Toolkit</a>
27. Reducing pressure on food budgets	Relevant for initiatives which have an impact by providing low-cost or free food to people who need it. Initiatives can also have indirect impact through spreading knowledge of realistic strategies to relieve pressure on food budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 2 or 3)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Healthy Food Basket, Summary Sheet</a>  Example for average costs of a healthy diet in <a href="#">Australia</a> or <a href="#">Canada</a>  <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
28. Sharing specific skills and knowledge about the food system	Relevant for initiatives which provide specific knowledge and skills relating to the food system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the number of people to come to your food system events (level 1)</li> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
29. Formal qualifications	Relevant for initiatives that run or contribute to training or educational programmes which lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count the number of people who gained formal qualifications (level 1)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">18-Employability Skills Survey</a>

	to formal qualifications such as diplomas or industry recognised certificates for the participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of current and former employees/volunteers (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">19-Measuring Employability Skills</a>  <a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
30. Contributing to policy development	Relevant for initiatives which contribute to consultations and policy development or which encourage participants to engage with relevant political issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of participants (level 2)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">See form on guidelines for survey of participants</a>
31. Sharing knowledge and good practice	Relevant for initiatives which actively promote the practices and techniques they are using to tackle important issues in the food system	<i>Solely qualitative data collection</i>	<a href="#">20-Creating Environmental Synergies With Community Gardens</a>
32. Strategic planning and sustainability	Relevant for initiatives which want to formally state their goals and focus attention on the most important outputs	<i>Solely qualitative data collection</i>	<a href="#">21-Creating Your Sustainability Plan</a>  <a href="#">22-Integrated Community Sustainability Planning</a>
33. Stakeholder engagement	Relevant for initiatives which want to identify, engage with and manage any conflicts that might emerge with other stakeholders	<i>Solely qualitative data collection</i>	<a href="#">23-10 key principles of stakeholder engagement</a>  Example of a stakeholder engagement plan:  <a href="#">24-Aiming for Zero Waste</a>

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34. Risk control	Relevant for initiatives which wish to plan for and take measures to minimise any risks with respect to long term viability	<i>Solely qualitative data collection</i>	<a href="#">25-The Wheel - Stronger Charities, Stronger Communities</a>  <a href="#">26-Sustainable communities: a funding handbook for community-led groups</a>
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### 3.4 Links to useful resources

Please find below a list of links to useful resources that we have provided to help you use the Toolshed:

1) [An example survey questionnaire for participants in your initiative.](#) The questions in this document match up to data you can report for specific indicators in the Toolshed. This resource is a word document so you can edit it and ensure it only contains questions related to the relevant indicators for your initiative

2) [An example set of questions to ask volunteers and employees when they leave your initiative.](#) The questions in this document match up to data you can report for specific indicators in the Toolshed. This resource is a word document so you can edit it and ensure it only contains questions related to the relevant indicators for your initiative

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**Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.**

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**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
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