

TEMPLATE FOR THE GOOD PRACTICE

What is a good practice?

A good practice is not only a practice that is good, but a practice that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience, which has been tested and validated, in the broad sense, which has been repeated and deserves to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt it.

Please follow the instructions included to fill in the template. You can replace the guiding questions for each element with your description.

Mandatory fields are defined by *

Element	Description
Title*	<i>Tracking What Matters: A data framework to drive decisions and prove long-term impact</i>
Name of the VET Provider	<i>Generation</i>
Thematic domain	<p>What is the thematic domain covered by this good practice? More than one domain can be indicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation X • Digital • Green • Inclusion X • Entrepreneurial • Career guidance • Lifelong learning • Creating partnerships/skills ecosystems
Introduction*	<i>Across Europe and globally, vocational education and training (VET) systems operate in a context of substantial public and private investment, yet limited visibility on their long-term effectiveness. Billions of euros are allocated annually to skills development programmes, but evaluation frameworks typically focus on short-term outputs such as enrolment, completion, and immediate job placement. This creates a critical evidence gap: policymakers, funders, and providers often lack reliable insights into whether training programmes lead to sustained employment, income progression, improved job quality, or enhanced well-being over time. The problem is particularly acute for vulnerable populations, such as long-term unemployed individuals and those at risk of social exclusion, where understanding long-term outcomes is essential to designing effective interventions and ensuring efficient use of resources.</i>

At the same time, traditional methods for measuring long-term impact, such as randomised controlled trials or administrative data linkages, are often costly, slow to implement, and difficult to scale across countries and programmes. As a result, much of the VET sector operates without continuous, actionable data on what works, for whom, and under which conditions. This challenge is further compounded by rapidly evolving labour markets, where technological change and shifting employer needs require training providers to continuously adapt their programmes based on evidence.

Generation's data tracking and impact measurement practice was developed to address this gap and has been implemented since the organisation's founding in 2015. Over this period, the system has evolved into a comprehensive, multi-country framework that follows learners from application through to up to five years after programme completion. The initiative responds directly to the need for scalable, cost-effective approaches to measuring long-term outcomes, enabling more informed decision-making, improved programme design, and stronger accountability for investments in skills development.

Stakeholders and Partners

The primary beneficiaries of this good practice are learners participating in Generation's vocational training programmes, particularly individuals facing structural barriers to employment. These include long-term or repeatedly unemployed individuals, young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs), and individuals experiencing poverty or social exclusion. By systematically tracking outcomes over several years, the practice ensures that these learners receive more tailored and effective support, ultimately improving their access to sustainable employment, income progression, and overall well-being.

The users of this good practice extend beyond learners themselves. Generation's programme staff, including instructors, mentors, coaches, and operations teams, actively use the data system to monitor learner progress, identify risks, and adapt delivery in real time. Programme managers and leadership teams rely on dashboards and analytics to make strategic decisions, refine curricula, improve programme design, and adapt delivery. In addition, funders, including private sector partners and philanthropic organisations, use the data to assess the impact of their investments and ensure accountability. Policymakers and external stakeholders also benefit, as the system generates actionable evidence that can inform broader skills and employment policies.

The practice is led and implemented by Generation: You Employed, Inc., which operates across 17 countries and manages the full design, deployment, and continuous improvement of the data tracking system. The organisation integrates a range of technology platforms, such as Salesforce for learner management, Qualtrics for surveys, Snowflake for data warehousing, and Power BI for visualisation, to support implementation. While the core system is internally driven, it is supported by a broader ecosystem of partners. These include employers, who provide input on skills demand and hiring outcomes; and members of initiatives such as the Durability Collective, where Generation

collaborates with other nonprofits, funders, and experts to advance long-term impact measurement practices.

Funding for this initiative primarily comes from private sources, including philanthropic donors and corporate partners, who support both programme delivery and the development of the data infrastructure. These funders play a key role not only by providing financial resources but also by emphasising the importance of measurable impact and long-term outcomes. Through initiatives like the Durability Academy, Generation also engages peer organisations as partners in scaling and transferring the approach, helping to build capacity across the sector and extend the benefits of this model beyond its own programmes.

Impact*

Generation's data tracking and impact measurement system has led to substantial positive outcomes for learners, programmes, and the broader vocational training ecosystem. For beneficiaries, the most significant impact is the delivery of more responsive and effective support. By continuously monitoring learner progress, barriers, and outcomes, Generation can identify risks early and intervene in real time, resulting in improved retention, higher satisfaction, and stronger employment outcomes. The system ensures that success is measured not only by initial job placement, but by sustained employment, income progression, and improved well-being over time.

The practice has generated meaningful social impact, particularly for vulnerable groups such as long-term unemployed individuals and people at risk of social exclusion. By tracking outcomes for up to five years, Generation is able to assess whether its programmes contribute to long-term economic mobility and social inclusion. Evidence of this impact is underpinned by the scale and quality of data collected: more than 47 million data points across 17 countries, combined with consistently high alumni survey response rates, reaching up to 90% in the first year and remaining around 60% in subsequent years. This robust evidence base enables reliable insights into long-term outcomes and supports continuous programme improvement.

Economically, the system enhances efficiency and accountability in the use of resources. By providing real-time insights into programme performance, it allows for better targeting of support, optimisation of staffing, adaptation of delivery models, and more effective allocation of funding. The relatively low cost of the system (approximately 1% of the total cost per learner) demonstrates a strong return on investment, as it improves both programme quality and the ability to demonstrate impact to funders. This strengthens confidence among donors and partners, contributing to more informed and results-driven investment decisions.

At a system level, the practice contributes to greater resilience and effectiveness in the VET sector. By providing longitudinal evidence on what works, for whom, and under which conditions, it supports more evidence-based decision-making and encourages a shift toward long-term outcome measurement. While

environmental impacts are not central to the initiative, its contribution to economic resilience is clear: by supporting individuals into sustained employment and improving alignment between training and labour market needs, it helps strengthen workforce participation and productivity over time.

Innovation and Success Factors *

The innovation of this practice lies primarily in its approach and integration, rather than in any single technological component. Generation introduces a structured, longitudinal model that embeds long-term outcome tracking - particularly employment durability, income progression, and well-being - into the core of programme delivery. This represents a shift from traditional VET evaluation models, which tend to prioritise short-term outputs, toward a system that systematically captures sustained impact and uses these insights to drive continuous improvement.

A key innovative element is the integration of data into operational decision-making. Data is not collected solely for reporting purposes but is actively used by staff at different levels to monitor performance, identify issues, and adapt programmes in real time. This creates continuous feedback loops that improve learner support, refine curriculum design, and strengthen overall programme quality. The model also combines multiple data sources (quantitative and qualitative, short-term and long-term) into a coherent framework that enables both granular programme management and broader strategic oversight.

Another important aspect of innovation is the model's replicability and accessibility. It relies on widely available digital tools and requires a relatively modest financial investment, making it feasible for other organisations to adopt. In addition, Generation actively promotes knowledge transfer through initiatives such as the Durability Collective and the Durability Academy, supporting other organisations in building capacity for long-term impact measurement and contributing to broader sectoral change.

For successful replication, several conditions need to be in place. Institutionally, organisations must demonstrate a strong commitment to embedding data into core operations, with leadership support and clear processes for data collection, management, and use. Technical capacity is required to manage data systems, but the necessary tools are widely accessible and do not constitute a major barrier. Economically, organisations need to allocate modest but sustained resources to maintain the system and ensure data quality.

Social factors are equally important. High-quality longitudinal tracking depends on maintaining engagement and trust with learners over time, which requires consistent communication and a learner-centred approach. Finally, the broader labour market context should enable alignment between training and employment opportunities, as this strengthens the relevance and usefulness of outcome tracking.

Overall, successful replication depends less on technology itself and more on fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making, continuous learning, and long-term accountability within organisations.

Constraints*

The implementation of this good practice has involved several operational and strategic challenges, primarily linked to the complexity of collecting, maintaining, and using high-quality longitudinal data at scale. One of the most significant challenges is sustaining engagement with learners over multiple years after programme completion. Tracking outcomes up to five years requires continuous communication and follow-up, which can be difficult as individuals change jobs or contact details. This has been addressed through a diversified, multi-channel engagement strategy that includes SMS, messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, emails, voice calls, and alumni events. By maintaining regular and meaningful contact with graduates and designing user-friendly surveys, Generation has been able to achieve consistently high response rates and ensure data continuity.

Another key challenge relates to data quality and consistency across multiple countries and programmes. Operating in 17 countries with different contexts, systems, and teams introduces risks of fragmented or inconsistent data collection. To mitigate this, Generation has developed standardised data collection frameworks, clear protocols, and centralised data management systems. These are complemented by training for staff and regular quality checks to ensure that data is reliable, comparable, and actionable across locations.

A further constraint is the operational burden associated with data collection and analysis. Integrating data gathering into programme delivery without overloading staff or learners requires careful system design. Generation has addressed this by embedding data collection into existing programme touchpoints, such as application processes, training assessments, and alumni engagement activities, rather than treating it as a separate exercise. In addition, the use of automated tools, dashboards, and streamlined processes reduces manual effort and allows staff to focus on interpreting and acting on insights rather than collecting data.

There are also technical and organisational challenges related to building and maintaining a robust data infrastructure. Integrating multiple platforms and ensuring smooth data flows can be complex, particularly at scale. This has been addressed through the use of widely adopted, interoperable technologies and the development of internal technical expertise to manage and continuously improve the system.

Finally, a critical challenge lies in fostering a culture of data use. Collecting data alone does not generate impact unless it is actively used to inform decisions. This requires ongoing capacity building and leadership commitment to ensure that staff at all levels engage with the data and apply insights to improve programme delivery. Generation has addressed this by embedding dashboards

into daily operations, incorporating data review into regular management processes, and aligning performance management with data-driven outcomes.

Overall, while the implementation of this practice involves significant complexity, these challenges have been systematically addressed through a combination of technological solutions, standardisation, staff training, and sustained learner engagement strategies, enabling the model to operate effectively at scale.

Lessons learned *

Several key lessons emerge from the implementation of this good practice, particularly for organisations seeking to strengthen impact measurement and improve programme effectiveness in the VET sector.

First, the experience shows that long-term impact measurement is both feasible and essential. While it is often assumed that tracking outcomes over multiple years is too complex or costly, Generation's approach demonstrates that it can be implemented at scale with a relatively modest investment. More importantly, it highlights that short-term indicators alone provide an incomplete picture; understanding sustained employment, income progression, and well-being is critical to assessing whether programmes truly deliver value.

Second, a central lesson is that data only creates value when it is actively used. Collecting large volumes of information is not sufficient. The real impact comes from embedding data into decision-making processes. By integrating dashboards and feedback loops into daily operations, organisations can move from retrospective reporting to real-time improvement, enabling faster responses to challenges and more effective programme design.

Third, the practice underscores the importance of designing systems around the learner journey. Capturing data at multiple stages (before, during, and after training) provides a holistic understanding of participant needs and outcomes. This allows for more personalised support and better alignment between training delivery and labour market realities, ultimately improving results for diverse learner groups.

Another key lesson is the need to invest in engagement and trust to sustain longitudinal tracking. High response rates over several years are not achieved through technology alone, but through consistent communication, relevant support, and strong relationships with learners. Maintaining this engagement is essential for ensuring data quality and for generating reliable insights over time.

Finally, the experience highlights that scalability depends as much on organisational culture as on tools and systems. Successful implementation requires leadership commitment, staff capacity, and a shared focus on continuous learning and accountability. Organisations that foster a culture of data-driven decision-making are better positioned to replicate and sustain this model, adapt to changing conditions, and maximise their impact.

In conclusion, the key message is that shifting from output-focused measurement to a long-term, learner-centred approach to impact can significantly improve both programme effectiveness and system-level accountability, while remaining practical and scalable for a wide range of organisations.

Replicability and/or up-scaling

The potential for replicating and scaling this good practice is high at local, regional, national, and international levels, as it is built on a clear, structured approach that combines widely available tools with a strong methodological framework. The model does not depend on proprietary technology but rather on how data is systematically collected, integrated, and used to inform decision-making. This makes it adaptable to different institutional and geographic contexts, including public VET systems, private training providers, and non-profit organisations. Through its implementation across 17 countries and its active dissemination via initiatives such as the Durability Collective and the Durability Academy, the practice has already demonstrated its capacity to be transferred and adapted across diverse labour markets and operating environments.

Scaling this approach more widely would enable training providers and policymakers to move toward a shared standard of long-term impact measurement, improving the overall effectiveness and accountability of skills investments. At a national or regional level, the framework could be integrated into funding requirements or performance monitoring systems, encouraging providers to track not only immediate outputs but also sustained outcomes such as employment stability and income progression. Internationally, broader adoption could contribute to a more consistent and comparable evidence base across countries, supporting better policy learning and resource allocation.

However, successful replication at scale requires several conditions to be met. First, there must be institutional commitment to long-term impact measurement, including leadership support and a willingness to embed data-driven practices into core operations rather than treating them as an external reporting requirement. Without this alignment, the system risks becoming a compliance exercise rather than a tool for improvement. Second, organisations need to establish robust data governance and standardisation frameworks, ensuring that data collected across programmes and locations is consistent, comparable, and ethically managed.

Third, while the financial cost of implementation is relatively low, sustained investment in capacity and systems is necessary. This includes not only digital infrastructure but also staff capabilities in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Organisations must be able to translate insights into actionable changes in programme design and delivery. Fourth, learner engagement mechanisms are critical to maintaining high response rates over time. Replication efforts must therefore prioritise building trust with participants and

developing communication strategies that are adapted to local contexts and preferences.

Another important requirement is the need to adapt the model to the specific labour market and policy environment. While the overall framework is transferable, indicators such as employment quality, wage benchmarks, and success metrics should reflect local economic conditions and policy priorities. Strong engagement with employers and alignment with labour market demand are also essential to ensure that tracked outcomes remain relevant and meaningful.

Finally, scaling the practice benefits from collaborative ecosystems and knowledge-sharing platforms. Initiatives like the Durability Academy illustrate how structured capacity-building can support organisations in adopting and adapting the model, reducing barriers to entry and accelerating uptake. At larger scale, partnerships between providers, funders, and public institutions can further support harmonisation, data sharing (within privacy constraints), and collective learning.

As such, the practice can be successfully replicated and scaled if organisations go beyond adopting the technical components and instead embrace the underlying principles: a focus on long-term outcomes, integration of data into decision-making, and a commitment to continuous improvement. When these conditions are met, the model has strong potential to transform how impact is measured and managed across the VET sector.

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URL of the practice *<https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/social-innovation-match/case-study/tracking-what-matters-data-framework-drive-decisions-and-prove>*
<https://www.durability.net/>
<https://www.generation.org/news/europe-impact-report/>
<https://www.generation.org/alumni-survey-2025/>

Related resources that have been developed *Several supporting resources have been developed as part of this good practice, aimed at both enabling internal implementation and facilitating knowledge sharing and replication across the wider vocational training and social impact sectors.*

A central resource is Generation’s Alumni Survey framework, which forms the backbone of its longitudinal impact measurement approach. This includes structured survey instruments, methodologies, and reporting tools used to track employment status, income progression, job quality, and well-being outcomes for up to five years after programme completion. The findings from this system are regularly synthesised and shared externally, for example through publicly

available reports such as the *Generation Alumni Survey 2025*, which provides detailed insights into long-term learner outcomes across countries and sectors. This resource can be accessed here:

<https://www.generation.org/alumni-survey-2025/>

In addition, Generation publishes regional and thematic reports that illustrate how data is used to drive impact and inform decision-making. The *Europe Impact Report* is a key example, presenting aggregated results, programme performance, and insights on employment and social outcomes for learners across European operations. It serves as both an accountability tool and a practical example of how longitudinal data can be translated into actionable insights. The report is available at:

<https://www.generation.org/news/europe-impact-report/>

At a broader ecosystem level, Generation is a founding member of the *Durability Collective*, a collaborative platform that promotes the measurement and adoption of long-term impact (“durability”) across the social sector. Through this initiative, a range of resources has been developed, including shared frameworks, learning materials, and practical guidance for organisations seeking to implement similar systems. A key component is the *Durability Academy*, a structured capacity-building programme that provides participating organisations with training, tools, and coaching to operationalise long-term data tracking and analysis. More information can be found at:

<https://www.durability.net/>

Beyond these externally accessible resources, Generation has also developed a range of internal materials that support implementation, including data collection guidelines, dashboard designs, quality assurance protocols, and staff training materials. While these are not all publicly available, elements of these tools are increasingly being shared through partnerships, learning initiatives, and sector collaborations.

Overall, these resources ensure that the good practice is not only implemented effectively within Generation, but also documented and shared in ways that enable other organisations to learn from, adapt, and replicate the model in their own contexts.
