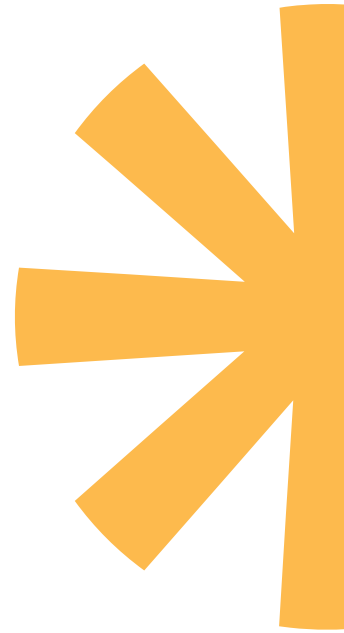# CANADIAN FORUM for SOCIAL INNOVATION 2024

A ROADMAP FOR CANADA'S INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

WORKBOOK

Vision & Backcasting Workshop #1

APRIL 10 2024, TORONTO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORKSHOP HOSTS (Toronto)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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FORUM PARTNERS
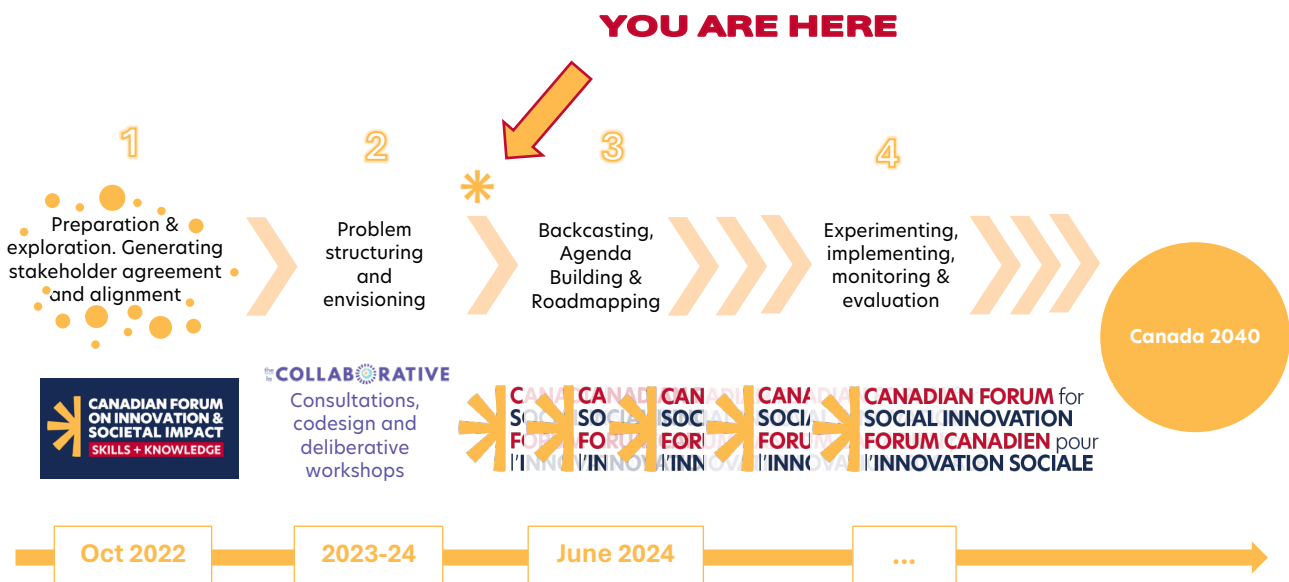
VISIONING AND BACKCASTING PROCESS

On 12-13 October 2022, 125 stakeholders from higher education, the social sector, the municipal sector, national policy, and community nonprofits met at McMaster University for a series of catalyst roundtables, deliberative dialogues, and concertation workshops. The purpose was to determine zones of agreement and explore key actions for the purpose of creating alignment on policies and practices that leverage impact-first training and knowledge mobilization to build capacity for innovation in the social and municipal sectors. The results were shared in the form of a [Consensus Report](#).

Building on this emerging consensus, over the last couple of years our team at The/La Collaborative collected a wealth of additional evidence (focus groups, sense-making, literature review, surveys, inventories) to articulate the challenge.

With the support of its valued partners, the guidance of its advisory committee, and the stewardship of McMaster University's Social Innovation and Action Lab, the Canadian Forum for Social Innovation is now gearing up for the third phase of the project: a national dialogue that will leverage prospective co-design and backcasting methodologies to generate a Roadmap for Canada's Innovation Ecosystem. Four workshops will take place in April and May 2024 in Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal and Calgary, and the exercise will culminate with the second edition of the Canadian Forum for Social Innovation in Montréal on 11-12 June 2024.

YOU ARE HERE

1	2	3	4	
Preparation & exploration. Generating stakeholder agreement and alignment	Problem structuring and envisioning	Backcasting, Agenda Building & Roadmapping	Experimenting, implementing, monitoring & evaluation	Canada 2040

Oct 2022	2023-24	June 2024	...

This **WORKBOOK** presents a vision, goals, and milestones that emerge from the evidence we have gathered so far. The pre-Forum deliberative workshops in **Toronto**, Ottawa, Montréal, and Calgary will leverage your input to finalise problem structuration and vision building (step 2). They will also help fine-tune the proposed milestones that will be used to set the agenda (step 3), i.e. create the roadmap for Canada's innovation ecosystem at the Forum in Montreal on 11-12 June. As with all work in the social innovation space, the codesign process is iterative and our strategy is emergent. We are thrilled to involve you in this initiative and benefit from your input.

PREPARING FOR THE WORKSHOP

There are 3 components to the discussion for which we invite you to prepare. Each section lays out the information on which your input will be invited.

Section 1 : The vision for Canada's innovation ecosystem 2040 that will be at the core of the deliberative workshop. At the workshop, you will be invited to provide input on the framing, scope, and focus.

Section 2: The list of proposed milestones and the main goals around which the vision for 2040 is articulated.

Section 3: The foreseeable challenges to realising the vision for 2040. At the workshop, you will be invited to identify challenges that may impede the realisation of some of the milestones.

Please review each section in advance of the workshop. You are welcome to make notes and bring them to the workshop, but you are not required to do so. The deliberation is a crucial part of the process, and the exercise aims to ensure that we learn from each other and come to a shared vision through iterative reflection and dialogue.

Agenda 8 April 2024

9:30	Land Acknowledgement, Welcome by the host (Andrea Nemtin), Context
10:00-10:45	Vision
Break	
11:00-11:45	Goals and Milestones Round 1
11:45-11:30	Goals and Milestones Round 2
Break	
11:45-12:30	Goals and Milestones Round 3
12:30-13:00	Challenges
13:00	Working Lunch
14:30	Eclipse Viewing Party at Union Social (21 St Clair Ave. West)

Participants

Cathy Barr, Director of Research at Imagine Canada
Isabel Cascante, Director of Research at the United Way Greater Toronto
Fiona Cunningham, Director of Research at CIFAR
Tim Draimin, Senior Fellow at Community Foundations of Canada
Robert Luke, CEO of e-Campus Ontario
Brandon Meawasige, Director of Communications at Indspire
Maryam Mohiuddin Ahmed, Social Innovation Canada Fellow, WISER
Andrea Nemtin, CEO at Social Innovation Canada
Naomi Nichols, Canada Research Chair in Community-Partnered Social Justice at Trent University
Vanessa Parlette, Project Manager at the Canadian Science Policy Centre
Luis Patricio, Co-Lead at SDG Cities/Pillar Nonprofit
Mark Patterson, CEO of Magnet at Toronto Metropolitan University
David Phipps, AVPR Knowledge Mobilisation and Director of Research Impact Canada
Jo Reynolds, Director Partnerships & Development at Social Innovation Canada
Tracey Robertson, Innovation Lead, Partnership Investments at Ontario Trillium Foundation
Alex Ryan, Co-Founder and CEO Synthetikos Inc
Pamela Uppal, co-Executive Director at Ontario Nonprofit Network
Justin Williams, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations
Leena Yahia, Lead and Researcher Nonprofit Digital Resilience at Imagine Canada
Rahina Zarma, Senior Policy Advisor at Mitacs

Moderator
Sandra Lapointe, Director of The/La Collaborative, Lead of the McMaster Social Innovation Ideas and Action Lab and co-host of the Canadian Forum for Social Innovation

Facilitators
Akacia Propst, PhD Candidate at McMaster University
Marie-Hélène B. Hardy, PhD Candidate at McMaster University

1 Vision

TALENT AND CONNECTIVITY FOR AN INTEGRATED INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

> Canada has the strategy, policies and programs to bolster knowledge and talent mobilization across disciplines and sectors in a fully connected innovation ecosystem that promotes sustainable social, cultural, environmental as well as economic prosperity.

1. The Canadian research and higher education systems are informed by an **integrated innovation strategy**. Social innovation, societal impact and techno-social transitions are an integral part of Canada's science and innovation agenda.
2. Innovation ecosystems benefit from the **diversity and mobility of its multidisciplinary talent**. Universities generate the human capital that bolsters innovation across all zones of impact.
3. Canada's innovation strategy is **empowered by ecosystems builders and mediators**. Talent and infrastructure are in place to ensure that innovation is supported by connected, open platforms for collective action to streamline design and scaling of innovation across all zones of impact.

CANADA'S INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM. VISION for 2040

In 2040, Canada's innovation strategy, policies and programs have fully integrated and reconciled the objectives of sustainable economic growth, equity-focused social development and agile techno-social transitions. In particular, the social sector (nonprofits, para-public organisations, municipalities) is equipped with dedicated innovation strategies. The social and economic infrastructure has been created to support an ongoing effort to address societal, global and/or systemic challenges. Sustained intentional action focused on human capital, talent mobility and ecosystem connectivity is providing stakeholders across all sectors with access to knowledge and technology they need, and the country is performing well above average on all OECD's innovation indices. Stakeholders' clear understanding of their mutual and reciprocal roles in the innovation ecosystem buttresses connectivity, and leads to new types of knowledge partnerships with higher education institutions. A new wave of highly qualified talent that harnesses the benefits of interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral training is being deployed across the innovation ecosystem. Policies and programs are in place to bolster the role of highly qualified personnel (HQP) in all sectors of activity, and fuel an ecosystem in which human- and community-focused investment boost sustainable social and economic growth.

YOUR INPUT ON THE KEY POINTS OF THE VISION

Focus and Scope

	YOUR COMMENTS	YOUR QUESTIONS
Why consider social innovation as part of the broader, integrated innovation agenda for Canada?		
Why focus the integrated innovation strategy on highly qualified personnel and postgraduate talent (MA and Ph.D.) as opposed to, e.g. knowledge mobilization?		
What does talent mobility that bolsters innovation across sectors look like? What should work-integrated learning (WIL) and experiential learning achieve?		
What does "innovation ecosystem connectivity" look like and whose job is it to build it?		
Something else?		

2 Goals and Milestones

Below are the goals around which the vision for 2040 is articulated, and the associated list of proposed milestones. A milestone is an intermediate step between the starting point and the vision for 2040. It refers to a state of affairs specific at a specific moment in time, not to a process that takes place over a period.

At the workshop you will be invited to identify the milestones that you would like to see modified or amended, as well as one or two that you think are missing.

Goal 1. Canadian R&D Systems Have an Integrated Innovation Strategy.

What is needed for social innovation, societal impact, and techno-social transition to be an integral part of the Canadian innovation strategy?

MILESTONES	YOUR INPUT
1. Incentives for R&D and innovation (e.g. R&D tax credit equivalents) have been extended to all sectors.	
2. Frameworks used to guide action for economic and societal prosperity across sectors take into account social and societal impact in all its forms.	
3. Academic cultures embrace practices that leverage interdisciplinary scholarship for innovation and societal impact.	
4. Canadian universities (and colleges) provide the HQP talent that Canada needs.	
5. Social/community innovation is funded through research and development programs and not just community development.	
6. Indigenous knowledges and other ways of knowing frequently contribute to innovation.	
7. Research funding programs incorporate a solid understanding of the balance between investigator-led and mission-driven research.	
8. Research funding programs are designed to foster inclusive and diverse interdisciplinary cultures that value both academic excellence and innovation/societal impact.	
9. Models of "resources flow" for innovation used by policymakers take into account investment and impact in both economic and social sectors.	
10. Canada's innovation strategy is aligned with sustainable development goals.	
11. Universities' impact strategy is aligned with sustainable development goals.	
12. Canada has developed meaningful metrics for both economic and social/human impact.	
13. The principles underpinning the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) are incorporated in all aspects of impact assessment in research.	
14. Dedicated innovation infrastructure ensures that innovation is supported by intersectoral platforms for partnership and collective action for economic and social impact.	
15. Funding organizations and universities create incentives and rewards (e.g. criteria that guide their merit review and hiring processes to increase their community impact and innovation 'score')	
What did we miss?	

Goal 2. Innovation Ecosystems Benefit from the Diversity of its Empowered Multidisciplinary Talent

> What would it take for universities to increase access to human capital that bolsters innovation? What are the hold-ups and specific challenges in industry vs the public and social sectors?

MILESTONES	YOUR INPUT
1. Postsecondary institutions and other knowledge stakeholders deliver programs to build the skills and expertise and produce the talent Canadians need to support innovation-driven social and economic prosperity.	
2. Those holding postgraduate degrees find employment across the ecosystem where they can laterally transfer skills for inclusive and collaborative innovation.	
3. Incentives exist for employers that deploy resources to foster talent for innovation.	
4. The specific needs of each sector have been identified and universities are tailoring talent and knowledge mobilization strategies accordingly.	
5. Talent development programs for transversal skills are intentionally built in all universities to streamline the design and scaling of innovation across all zones of impact.	
6. University-grown talent is intentionally built to support social innovation and accelerate techno-social transitions.	
7. Training is designed to support connectivity, and talent is equipped to address complexity and issues that emerge at the system-level.	
8. Graduate training is intentionally designed to prepare for both academic and non-academic employment.	
9. Community impact and innovation is an explicit aspect of talent building in all fields of study.	
10. Complexity is a foundational aspect of graduate training in all fields of study.	
11. Skills for collaborative and inclusive innovation are part of graduate training in all fields of study.	
12. Design-, Ideas- and Living Labs have the resources to support experiential learning for emerging researchers and HQP.	
What did we miss?	

Goal 3. Innovation Ecosystems Have Fully Enabled Builders.

What talent and infrastructure are needed to ensure that innovation is supported by open platforms for collective action and streamlines the design and scaling of innovation across all sectors?

MILESTONES	YOUR INPUT
1. The social sector (nonprofits, para-public organizations, municipalities) is equipped with a dedicated innovation strategy and can access the talent it needs to advance community development and buttress social innovation.	
2. Canada has the expertise and infrastructure to respond in an agile manner to challenges and opportunities incorporating social innovation and transitions.	
3. All levels of public organizations, including municipalities, play a role in fostering connected, and innovating communities.	
4. Universities are connected to communities and play a role in fostering social innovation locally, nationally, and globally.	
5. Evidence supports and science advice are available to community organizations, including nonprofits, para-public organizations, and municipalities.	
6. Innovation infrastructure is designed to increase connectivity and support campus-community and cross-sectoral collaborations in all sectors of activity.	
7. The human and financial costs of network-building are explicitly factored into project development and grant funding.	
8. Funding and resources are available for Design-, Ideas- and Living Labs that support cross-sectoral social innovation in all sectors of the ecosystem.	
9. Universities offer specialised training around social innovation, knowledge mobilisation, tech transfer, and system mediation to ensure expertise across the innovation ecosystem.	
10. Connectivity is driven by a widespread understanding of systems dynamics and complexity in all sectors.	
11. Community nonprofits, para-public organizations, and municipalities are hiring highly qualified personnel to support their participation in the innovation ecosystem	
What did we miss?	

3 Challenges

Goal #	Milestone #	What Challenge do you foresee?

GLOSSARY

Capacity: The ability of an organization to perform work, or the level of an organization's capability to deliver services, programs, and products as part of fulfilling its mandate or mission.

EDI: An abbreviation for: 'equity, diversity and inclusion'.

Experiential Learning: The acquisition of knowledge and skills through practice and upon reflection of a period of engagement, observation, and/or immersion. 'Experiential learning' and 'work-integrated learning' are often used interchangeably. An experiential-learning partnership is a community-based collaboration between an organization and a higher education institution that revolves around the hosting, facilitating, and supporting of one or more students involved, for instance, in program, service, or project delivery.

HQP: Highly qualified personnel in this context refers to those having received advanced training at the graduate, MA, or Ph.D. level in any academic discipline.

Innovation Process: A series of actions or steps designed to create, improve, or implement ways of doing, framing, knowing, or thinking, intended to create new value.

Innovation: innovation is the outcome of knowledge use: at the most general level, what leads to innovation is a series of actions or steps designed to create, improve, apply, or implement knowledge, research, evidence, and/or expertise to new ways of doing, framing, knowing, or thinking, and intended to create new value.

Innovation ecosystem: The multilayered and multifaceted collection of interconnected institutions and organizations through which the resources, talent, and information that support, interact with, and affect innovation flow.

Knowledge Mobilization: Knowledge mobilization is an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of activities relating to the production and use of research results, including knowledge synthesis, dissemination, transfer, exchange, and co-creation or co-production by researchers and knowledge users (source: SSHRC). In practice, it overlaps in substantial ways with other types of activities traditionally associated with teaching and learning, such as service learning and experiential learning (see, Methodology: Charting, infra). SSHA: Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts disciplines. Statistics Canada groups all non-STEM disciplines together: Business, Humanities, Health, Arts, Social science, and Education (BHASE).

Research and Development (R&D): The planned creative work aimed at new knowledge or developing new and significantly improved goods, programs, and services. This includes both basic research and applied research and development; the latter is the use of research and practical experience to produce new or significantly improved goods, programs, services, or processes.

Resilience: The ability to effectively respond to and adapt to systemic change, seeking a balance of social, environmental, and economic needs.

Skill: An aptitude, competency, or ability broadly construed.

- Foundational skill: A broad range of abilities and knowledge understood to be essential to employability and citizenship, and generally associated with social and emotional intelligence as well as cognitive literacy. They include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, self-management, intercultural competence, and effective communication.

- Technical skill: a domain-specific skill that is usually associated with applied training.

Social enterprise: A business model with the dual focus of social (and/or environmental) and economic gain.

Social finance: any type of financial service that utilizes private funds to support social goals, address social problems, and/or facilitate social change. According to Economic and Social Development Canada, social finance is the practice of making investments intended to create social or environmental impact in addition to financial returns.

Social impact: is predicated on specific activities or outputs (e.g. programs, services) and their outcomes. An organization's social impact is the measurable outcome of its products, programs, services, etc. that are created and delivered to address a specific social need.

Social innovation: The phrase "social innovation" is used in multiple contexts to refer to new ideas, services, processes, or frameworks intended to meet social needs or create impact for the public benefit as well as those involved in addressing wicked problems that are rooted in systemic issues. Here we make a distinction between **innovation for social impact** in the social sector that follows traditional logics and **innovation for social transformation**, which targets systemic societal issues.

Social transformation: is a matter of collective, intentional, systems-level change. Social transformation is an intentional process through which transformational change is effected across social systems to address emerging social crises and global challenges. Social innovation happens as a result of coordinating the actions of multiple stakeholders in a system toward a collective goal.

Social research and development (social R&D): Evidence-based methods and practices intended to acquire, absorb, and/or utilize knowledge, often to create or improve processes, products, and/or services in the social sector.

Social sector: An umbrella term denoting the activities of organizations that identify with and operate for the public benefit, including co-operatives, non-profits, registered charities, social enterprises/B corporations, or unincorporated grassroots or community groups. It is sometimes referred to as the "third sector", in contrast to what has traditionally been labeled the private and public sectors. Recently, the emergence of "social enterprise", i.e., a for-profit business model embracing social and/or environmental goals, has made traditional boundaries between sectors in mixed economies more porous.

Talent: in this context, 'talent' means the same as 'HQP': those with skills acquired as part of advanced (graduate, MA, Ph.D.) training in any academic discipline.