

Next Generation Corporate Social Responsibility Guidebook

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About the Author

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Next Generation Corporate Social Responsibility Guidebook

“Is society here for business or is business here for society? We need to better understand the role of business in society.”

- ‘CSR in Canada’ Company Interviewee

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Next Generation Corporate Social Responsibility Guidebook

1.0 Introduction

This is a Guidebook on Next Generation Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It provides signposts for business leaders that seek to achieve greater social impact through their business and to understand how they can evolve their business model to keep abreast of the changing CSR landscape.

The Guidebook is based on research commissioned by the Government of Canada in 2018 which looked at the trends, barriers and opportunities in CSR in Canada ([Link](#)). The research involved interviewing over 30 representatives who worked in CSR roles from a diverse range of businesses, including large and small businesses with provincial and sectoral representation, and national and global companies operating in Canada. The research findings have been adapted into this Guidebook, to take the insights and turn them into actionable ideas for business.

2.0 About the Guidebook

The Guidebook is a resource for businesses, governments, non-profit organizations, industry associations, academic institutions and others who advise or collaborate with business.

Why read the Guide?

Depending on your needs, the Guidebook has different uses. On the one hand, it is a primer for how CSR is evolving within business today. You may wish to read the Guidebook to get up to speed on these trends. On the other hand, the Guidebook acts as a tool with tips, resources and actions to help you and your company further advance your CSR efforts. At the end of each section is a call-out box of actions to guide you on your path. You can use these as a checklist of actions to create a roadmap to accelerate CSR within your company. Quotes from company interviewees from the aforementioned study are also included, labeled as “CSR in Canada Company Interviewee”.

Who should read the Guide?

This Guidebook is written for companies and their leaders who wish to take current CSR practices to the next level. You understand there is a business imperative for improving your company’s CSR and are looking for strategies and inspiration to transition your CSR approach.

Companies who already have leading practices may wish to review the Guidebook to validate current approaches or pick up fresh ideas.

This is not a beginner's guide but a guide for leaders and those who aspire to leadership.

To level the playing field, it starts with a short introduction regarding definitions of CSR and related terms, so that readers can progress through the guide with a common background.

3.0 What is CSR?

In order to pave the way for effective discussions on "CSR", "Environment, Social, and Governance" (ESG), "Sustainability" and "Social Purpose" it is important for business people to understand the meaning of these different terms which are commonly used by practitioners and are defined below.

According to the International Standards Organization (ISO), CSR refers to an organization's responsibility for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior that:

- contributes to Sustainable Development, including health and the welfare of society;
- takes into account the expectations of stakeholders;
- is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; and,
- is integrated throughout the organization and implemented in its relations.

The ISO guidelines suggest that the core CSR subjects include:

- Organizational governance
- Human rights
- Labour practices
- The environment
- Fair operating practices
- Consumer issues
- Community involvement and development

At its simplest, CSR refers to an organization's initiatives and actions to improve their social and environmental impacts and performance, and relations with stakeholders. It typically gets organized into the following focus areas: employees, environment, communities, supplier relations, customers, products and services, and governance (similar to the ISO core subject areas above).

ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) is another term that gets used to refer to the environmental and social performance of companies. This term is typically used by investors to refer to their non-financial considerations in the investment process.

Sustainability is defined by the ISO as the **state of the global system, which includes environmental, social and economic subsystems, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**. The environmental, social and economic subsystems interact and are interdependent and often referred to with phrases such as the three dimensions/pillars/aspects of sustainability.

In common use, it is typically considered to refer to environmental practices. “Corporate sustainability” is often used interchangeably with CSR by practitioners.

Social Purpose is defined as **the enduring humanitarian or societal reason a company exists**. This enduring reason for being goes beyond the company’s product or service – it guides everything it does and influences its goals and strategy. It is placed at the core of its operations, central to the company’s brand proposition, as a focal point, guidepost or “stake in the ground”. This purpose sets the company’s strategic vision and decision-making, determining the significant choices it makes. The purpose acts as a headlamp illuminating the company’s growth pathway. It is the strategic engine of the organization. ([Source](#))

These terms were popularized in different periods, with CSR and corporate sustainability taking root in business in the 1990s, ESG coming on the scene in 2005 and social purpose in business taking off in 2015. Corporate citizenship, triple bottom line, and shared value are other common terms that are often used interchangeably with CSR, although to some people they have different, nuanced interpretations.

Action

Make sure your company leaders, board of directors and employees use similar terminology and define them in the same way. It is also important that your internal stakeholders understand the business case or rationale for pursuing CSR, as differing opinions and beliefs can affect success. See Section 8 for resources on the business case.

4.0 Recent CSR Shifts

CSR is a dynamic business undertaking. No two companies are alike, increasing the degree and nature of experimentation and innovation; the leaders are continuously pushing the frontier such that leading CSR practices are in continual evolution. As businesses come across barriers to CSR implementation in their jurisdictions, within their industry or supply chains, they innovate to work around the challenges. All of this activity drives ongoing prototyping of new solutions, which are then scaled and replicated elsewhere by fast followers and early adopters and by the company itself.

This section explores the recent shifts in the CSR field over the past five years. This will give readers knowledge of emerging best practices and expectations of employees, customers, shareholders and others so they can fit their approach to their marketplace and priorities.

The main shifts since 2015 include a transition from ad hoc, transactional and incremental approaches to CSR to those which are strategic, holistic, social purpose-driven and transformational.

Other top shifts include a focus on embedding CSR into the business model, a shift away from having a CSR strategy to adopting a social purpose business model, and a shift to becoming data-driven and actively measuring, tracking and disclosing social impacts.

Community investment approaches are also undergoing transitions as companies learn from their early CSR experiences: they are leveraging more corporate resources than just grants and employee volunteering and looking to partner strategically with non-profits on higher-impact efforts.

There is a shift from thinking of CSR as the social responsibility of business, to a way of doing business, and along with that a shift from thinking of CSR as a “nice to do”, to CSR is “essential for business success”.

See the chart below for more details on four key shifts.

Four Key CSR Shifts

Social Purpose Business	Carbon and Health and Wellness	Strategic Community Investment	Data-Driven Solutions
Some companies are developing and implementing their social purpose – the company’s humanitarian reason for being – and using this to set their social priorities. These	Many companies are setting ambitious carbon reduction targets, increasing board oversight of climate change risks and opportunities and going beyond carbon neutral to	Companies are shifting from granting programs to strategic hands-on partnering, and providing greater access to resources such as space, employees and other assets. They are	A number of companies are taking a data-driven approach, improving the ways in which they track, measure, and collect data, and using data management to

Business Benefits of Social Purpose:

Builds customer commitment – Attract and retain customers and build customer brand advocacy

Increases employee engagement – Recruit, retain and motivate employees, and build employee brand advocacy

Enhances stakeholder relationships – Strengthen third-party relationships and enable collaboration

Builds social capital – Strengthen operating context and increase trust

Improves financial performance – Enhance financial performance; increase access to capital and manage risk

Inspires innovation generation – Increase innovation; enable business transformation and enhance resiliency

Source: [Social Purpose Institute](#)

companies identify what they stand for and embed this into their business model, developing more intentional giving and partnering than in the past.	developing strategies to become carbon positive. Some companies are focusing on the health and wellness of their employees and customers.	moving away from supporting many non-profits in a non-impactful fashion to partnering with a reduced number of non-profits on higher impact activities.	inform their CSR strategy and priorities. Companies are increasing their CSR data collection to improve reporting on their social impact.
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Action

Review the shifts identified in this section (pages 7 – 8) and see which are at play in your organization. Convene a meeting of your key internal stakeholders to discuss these shifts and determine your company response. A discussion of these shifts can bolster internal support for moving beyond ad hoc, incremental and siloed approaches to CSR to more robust, holistic and impactful strategies.

5.0 Continuum of CSR Practices

There is a continuum of CSR practices, as can be seen from the table below. Business leaders and boards of directors should discuss which approach will help the company protect and create value over the coming years. These are strategic decisions, requiring a strategic decision and response. In practice, these levels – from 1 – 4 – are often pursued sequentially and reflect how CSR has matured in organizations.

CSR Continuum

Level	Level 1 CSR	Level 2 CSR	Level 3 CSR	Level 4 CSR
Focus	Operational approach	Strategic approach	Integrated approach	Social purpose approach

In the 1990s companies focused on operational CSR – mostly doing no harm by reducing their negative environmental and social footprints or impacts from their direct operations. In the late 1990s and early 2000s companies began to identify strategic opportunities to grow the business through CSR investments, and recognized the importance of having medium to long-term goals and targets to direct investments and energy. They also began to take responsibility for their supply chains and customer use of their products – beyond their direct control. This led to strategic CSR. In the mid 2000s to 2015 (approximately), the leaders realized that their CSR strategies were not affecting all departments,

“We don’t have a formal “CSR” approach. We probably had a CSR approach in the early and mid-2000s, when we had a “community leadership strategy,” but we now understand that we don’t compartmentalize our work and we don’t need a stand-alone CSR strategy.”

- ‘CSR in Canada’ Company Interviewee



functions and decisions in their companies and that the CSR strategy was siloed from the rest of the business, so they moved to an integrated model in which CSR is embedded across the enterprise. More recently, between 2015 – 2020 leaders and stakeholders began to ask why the company existed – beyond generating profits for shareholders and owners. This has led to companies refreshing their reason for existence as having a societal or humanitarian dimension, called a ‘social purpose approach’ in this Guidebook. Now, for a number of companies, CSR is seen as an outdated and no longer relevant or useful term. They consider themselves “post-CSR”.

The following chart provides an overview of different practices along the CSR continuum.

CSR Continuum

Level 1 CSR	Level 2 CSR	Level 3 CSR	Level 4 CSR
Operational approach	Strategic approach	Integrated approach	Social purpose approach
<p>Community investment practices include corporate donations, sponsorship, in-kind contributions, surplus good donations, employee and skills-based volunteering, customer enabled and product-based giving, matched donations, cause-marketing and flagship/signature programs.</p> <p>Environmental practices include conducting an environmental audit to identify and reduce the company’s top carbon, air quality, water, waste, toxin, biodiversity and other negative environmental impacts.</p>	<p>Company identifies the long-term sustainability mega-trends that will affect the business, its value chain and operating context and prioritizes those that will create risks and opportunities. These are addressed in the company’s CSR strategy including vision, goals, targets and metrics. The strategy may be long-term with ambitious visionary goals. The CSR strategy addresses impacts along the value chain, up- and downstream of its operations. The company adheres to industry standards and certifications on CSR, which they help establish if they don’t exist.</p>	<p>Company embeds CSR considerations into all its business decisions, corporate culture, and corporate strategy and scorecard. CSR is included in incentive compensation, board oversight, workforce development and performance management, policies, projects, functions, teams and marketing. CSR alignment and competencies are a factor in hiring and onboarding, leadership development, succession planning, and job position profiles. Emerging CSR risks and opportunities are identified and addressed in risk mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>This is an extension of Level 3, but in addition to integrating CSR factors in the business, the social purpose company embeds its <i>social purpose</i> into everything it does. It identifies the societal reason it exists and mobilizes its resources and relationships to achieve its ambition – in ways that help the company grow and succeed. The social purpose is not a separate strategy or set of targets but is infused in the culture and corporate strategy. The company pursues thought leadership in its industry and ecosystem to advance its social purpose priorities.</p>

Ten years ago, a company beginning this journey might have focused on getting its house in order operationally, and then identifying strategic social and environmental issues it could tackle to manage risks or grow returns. As it matured on this path, it would see a need to embed its CSR principles fully across the organization to foster take-up and generate the desired impact. Finally, this company would come to the point of recognising that to fully realize its ambition, it would need to refresh its corporate purpose as a social purpose. A company today has more choices on this path. It can start at levels 2, 3 or 4, depending on its market position and leadership aspirations.

“We look seven generations ahead on how to make things better. Our guiding question is: “who is left out, why, and how to change that”, that is our purpose and identity. Our company is the vehicle for change and profitability is the fuel.”

- ‘CSR in Canada’ Company Interviewee

Innovations and ground-breaking ideas

The research into leading CSR practices reveals companies are experimenting with different approaches to advance and scale-up their social impact. Here are a few examples for consideration in your strategy.

- **Inclusive Business:** Include vulnerable populations as trainees and employees; include vulnerable populations as suppliers and product distributors to help the company enter hard-to-reach markets or access scarce resources; make your products accessible to underserved (vulnerable) segments of the population through low-cost or free services.
- **Social Products:** Leverage your products to contribute to your social goals; have products which enable social progress and are environmentally sustainable; partner with non-profits and non-governmental organizations to design socially useful products.
- **Industry Leadership:** Lead establishment of an industry CSR benchmark or standard so your entire industry can advance together; act as a thought leader in your industry so that your bold goals are replicated by other companies, including peers and competitors; share the CSR tools and insights you learn on your journey with others in your industry and beyond.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** To achieve your CSR or social purpose goals, collaborate with all levels of government, academia, civil society and your industry (including suppliers and competitors). Join or lead multi-stakeholder collaborations to jointly address barriers and opportunities and share risks and costs.
- **Customer Engagement:** Develop a plan to engage your business or retail customers on your CSR or social purpose ambitions. Engage customers in solutions development, social innovation and prototyping to test and iterate your social innovations. Engage customers as champions and amplifiers of your CSR or social purpose.

“We consider ourselves a social change organization using our products to effect those changes.”

- ‘CSR in Canada’ Company Interviewee

- **Social Technology:** Leverage digital technologies to design social innovations to further your CSR. Create new technologies that can be used for social good and partner with government and civil society to ensure the technology achieves its social ambition. Develop ethical policies to steward your approach to digital innovation so your technology becomes a force for good without generating unintended negative consequences.

Social Purpose Company Profiles:

“We haven’t used the term CSR for a long time. We are a social purpose business. The difference between a social purpose business and a business with a CSR program is that a CSR program can be seen as bolted on. CSR programs thus have an indirect connection to the business whereas social purpose businesses have mechanisms that address social purpose holistically. All our programs are tied into supporting that social purpose which is generally geared towards improving the community or society and that’s how we operate. Our social purpose is linked into our mission and our value statement, the overlap is pretty much the entire thing. So, everything is aligned that way.”

“Essentially, our purpose is not to earn profits and then do good social projects. We want to earn profits by doing good things in the first place. Our purpose is to grow prosperity. In this way, everything we do needs to be good for the customer, the environment, and society. We think of ourselves as a social enterprise, which is not just a term for non-profits.”

“Our approach to CSR is centered around our company’s purpose. We have three areas of focus, and we feel that if we source our products responsibly, protect the environment and from across Canada, then we feel we can contribute positively to Canadians’ lives daily and in the future, and in the products we provide. We prioritize things within those three pillars: environment, sourcing and community. We look at urgency of the issue, relevance to our company, can we actually move the needle and the needs of our consumer. We have several inputs too: we look at benchmarking, look at what our competitors are doing, we look abroad as well, and we do our own CSR research every day, and with our customers and the customers of our competitors. We combine that with our strategic business imperatives and long-term trends. We post our results online, and we message through press releases and signage up in stores, etc. That’s how we communicate to our consumers.”

Action

Go through the CSR Continuum and note where your company sits. Ask senior leaders or your board to undertake this exercise as well. [Here is another tool](#), although focused on philanthropy, it makes a similar point. Then, consider where you would like your company to be and how you could get there. Develop a roadmap to move your organization toward “next generation” CSR.

6.0 Activating on the UN SDGs

Leading Canadian companies are also helping to accelerate achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals, explained below.

In 2015 Canada and 192 other UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is a 15-year global framework centred on an ambitious set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and over 230 indicators. It envisions a secure world free of poverty and hunger, with full and productive employment, access to quality education and universal health coverage, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and an end to environmental degradation.

The Canadian government is pursuing domestic and international policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda: eliminating poverty, building economic growth, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and taking action on climate change, clean energy, and oceans.

To further progress on the SDGs, the government is leading the development of a 2030 Agenda national strategy by engaging all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, municipalities, civil society, the private sector and the public. The national strategy seeks to create a common understanding and vision of Canada's path towards implementation and identify actions to be taken to advance progress on the SDGs. These resources provide further background information: [Canada takes action on the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development](#) and [Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy](#).

Government Budget for SDG Activation in Canada

In Budget 2018, the Government of Canada committed funding over 13 years:

- \$49.4 million to establish a SDG Unit within Employment and Social Development Canada and fund monitoring and reporting by Statistics Canada to effectively measure progress. This will enable better coordination among all levels of government, civil society organizations and the private sector on Canada's efforts on the 2030 Agenda;
- \$59.8 million (\$4.6 million annually) for an SDG funding program to support implementation of the SDGs in Canada.

Resources:

[Apply for funding under Sustainable Development Goals Funding Program](#)

[Funding for projects under the Sustainable Development Goals Funding Program – Applicant Guide](#)

Canadian businesses and the private sector around the world are encouraged to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, which are listed in the following chart.



In Canada there is a continuum of corporate action on the UN SDGs, from no impact to high impact, as set out in the table below.

Continuum of UN SDG Activation				
No Activity on the SDGs	Assess Alignment on the SDGs	SDGs Inform CSR Strategy	SDGs Inform Corporate Strategy	SDGs Inform Corporate Purpose and Business Model

No impact ←————→ High impact

The following is a summary of the different approaches to activating on the SDGs. Consider which approach makes most sense for your company.

1) Assess alignment of your CSR strategy to the SDGs

Identify the links between your CSR strategy and priorities and the SDGs by cross-referencing your current approaches to the Goals. By going through this exercise, you can communicate to stakeholders how your existing CSR efforts are related to the SDGs.

2) Use the SDGs as a lens to set priorities for your CSR strategy

Use the SDGs as a lens to prioritize your CSR initiatives. Conduct a mapping exercise to identify what you can do to support the SDGs and set company targets that can help you achieve the global targets.

Start by building internal awareness and acumen of the Goals, then map your positive and negative impacts against the Goals. Following this step, you can identify opportunities where you can have the greatest impact. Use this information to inform the development of your CSR targets.

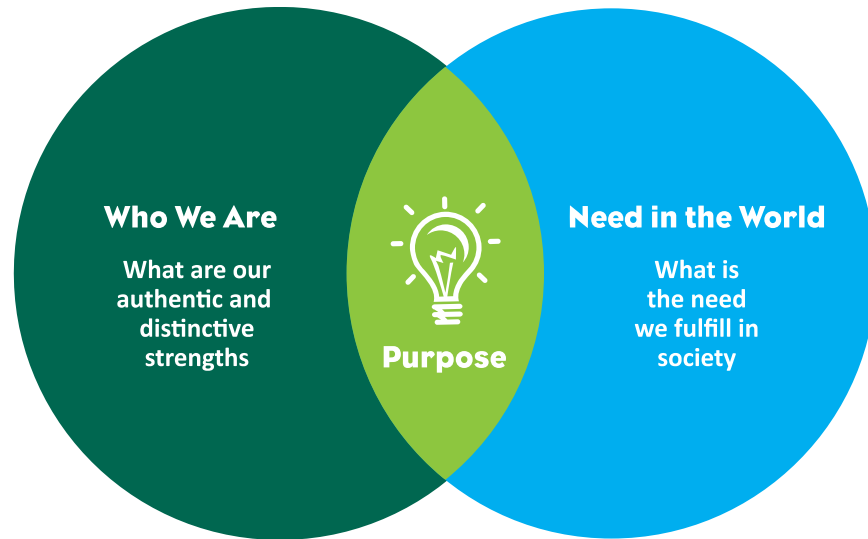
3) Use the SDGs to inform your corporate strategy

The SDGs can be a source of information to inform your company's strategy. They can be incorporated into your environmental scan or other research that is conducted to identify the changing business and market context for your company. One approach is for business leaders to review the Goals from the perspective of whether any of the Goals have the potential to create risks or opportunities for the company if they are – or are not – achieved. Here is a resource you can use for this task: [Tool](#). Once you identify the business risks or opportunities, initiatives to address them can be incorporated into your company strategy.

4) Use the SDGs to inform the creation of your company's purpose

For companies developing or refreshing their core purpose, the SDGs can be used to inform this exercise. As they represent the world's social, economic and environmental ambitions, they can be the basis for identifying which of the Goals can be impacted by the company's societal ambition. As shown in the diagram below, the intersection of 'who we are' and 'the need we fill in society' reveals the company's higher purpose. The SDGs are a resource to determine the societal issues the company can target through its business model. The United Way in Greater Vancouver has created the Social Purpose Institute to help companies with this exercise. More resources are on their website at: [Social Purpose Institute @ United Way Website](#).

Finding your company's higher purpose using the SDGs



Source

Action

Determine which of these different SDG approaches make most sense for your company in setting its strategic priorities. The simplest step you can take is to review the Goals to see which you are already advancing. From this “current state”, you can consult business leaders to see if advancing along the continuum would bring greater value to the organization and its stakeholders.

7.0 Evolving Your Non-Profit Partnerships

As companies move along the CSR continuum their non-profit partnerships also evolve. Companies often start with providing grants, sponsorships, in-kind donations and employee volunteers to non-profit organizations. The relationship may last for a few years and is largely transactional. Further into their journey, companies often seek greater impact and benefit from their partnerships. They look for volunteering opportunities that can build their employees' skills, seek to build the capacity of their partners, and invest in long-term outcomes-based collaborations with them. Next, they realize they have other resources and assets they can bring to the partnership: their sourcing, products and customer relationships, for example. So other departments become engaged, such as procurement, product development, marketing and sales. Finally, companies – typically social purpose companies – begin to collaborate more intentionally and holistically with their non-profit partners. Social purpose companies know they cannot achieve their purpose on their own, so they set up long-term partnerships with community or national non-profit organizations to advance the work together. These companies co-locate with their partners, embed them into their operations (e.g. by offering free space for the partner to engage with the company's customers) and co-innovate their

products, services and solutions that address society’s needs. Social purpose companies shift from reacting to non-profit proposals and requests for funding to proactive engagement with partners on shared goals, typically addressing big, systemic issues that derive from their purpose.

The continuum below provides a summary of this evolution. Not included in the continuum, but a viable choice for innovating, high impact companies, is the option to create their own charity or non-profit organization they can partner with, where none exist.

Partnership Contributions Continuum

Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Nature of corporate contribution and level of collaboration	Ad hoc grants and sponsorships Employee volunteering In-kind product and service donations	Multi-year strategic partnerships with impact goals Skills-based volunteering Capacity building	Social procurement Tailored, discounted or free products Customer access	Co-location Strategic integration/embedment Co-innovation

As you think through your approach, here are some criteria for selecting strategic non-profit partners. Does the partnership:

- Align with your company’s vision and values
- Contribute to your company’s social goals or social purpose
- Demonstrate relevance to your business and industry
- Provide a range of benefits to the company

“We don’t want to be seen as a charitable partner, but as an ally or collaborator.”

- ‘CSR in Canada’ Company Interviewee

These are some of the benefits you can achieve from advanced partnering:

- Improve the employee experience
- Offer professional development to employees
- Attract more aligned partnerships from your elevated brand
- Tap into partner expertise, learn from diverse perspectives and gain insights
- Increase sales, connect to and attract and retain customers
- Advance your company’s social goals or social purpose
- Collaborate on research and development; foster innovation

These benefits go beyond “the right thing to do” and “give back to the community”, which are the motivations for Level 1 activity.



Here are some other partnering trends you can leverage to achieve your CSR or social purpose goals:

- Collaborate with your suppliers, business customers and industry peers
- Collaborate with government and engage at a policy level
- Partner with start-up companies that produce economic and social benefits and have a double mission
- Harness your CSR data and become evidence-based in your decision-making

Here is a [case study](#) of a company that pivoted a non-profit partnership relationship from transactional to transformational which you can read for further ideas, insights and inspiration.

One unique type of partner is an intermediary such as incubators and accelerators, that provide collaborative working spaces, learning platforms and social innovation assistance. Advanced CSR companies may seek out the support of intermediaries to advance their goals. These intermediaries can offer:

- Incubator space / co-location facilities to foster innovation and cross-pollination
- Innovation assistance (e.g., with pitches, pilots, live demonstrations)
- Industry resources, networks and collaborations; sector CSR programs and resources
- Facilitation skillsets, credible and neutral convenor role
- Policy and advocacy work, connections to government policymakers
- Standards, benchmarks and measurement methodologies
- Information, research and data analytics
- Audit and evaluation assistance
- CSR best practices, expertise and subject matter experts, help developing a social purpose
- Asset brokerage services (e.g., surplus goods management)
- Training and employment services to help the company hire people with employment barriers
- Granting services

Action

Review the partnership continuum to see where your company lies and where you would like it to be. From the ideas in the continuum and this Guidebook, determine the social goals / impact you would like to achieve over the next five years and identify a list of organizations who can help you achieve them and the role they can play. Make a plan to engage them.

8.0 Overcoming Barriers to Advancing CSR

As companies move along the CSR continuum, they can face barriers and challenges, primarily internal. The most typical barriers to advancing CSR relate to getting organizational buy-in, including boards, leaders, middle management and employees; lack of business metrics; and traditional mindsets on the role of the firm. These are inter-related issues: if you had metrics on the business benefits of CSR, and an openness to new ideas on the role of business in society, your advanced CSR projects would naturally be included in the corporate strategy, the incentive plan, and training and development. This would generate the buy-in and take-up you need across the organization.

Here are some steps you could take to close these gaps:

Promote education for the board of directors on its role providing oversight of the company's purpose, CSR and corporate sustainability and support the governance team to enhance the board's CSR oversight. ([Resource](#)) Communicate CSR as a route to addressing the company's social and environmental threats and risks to its future success. ([Resource](#)) Adopt CSR targets, key performance indicators (KPIs) and strategies that help the company navigate the turbulent times ahead. This makes CSR more relevant to the company and likelier to be embedded in the corporate strategy, driving incentives, departmental deliverables, individual performance goals, and training. Including CSR in the corporate strategy and reward systems will signal the company's commitments and intentions to the employee base. Integrate CSR in the company's competency models and training plans so that employees understand how CSR relates to their role and function ([Resource](#)). Share stories of your CSR successes and how CSR has created value for the company ([Resource](#)). Create CSR champions and establish a senior-level cross-functional team to steward the CSR strategy. Develop a CSR lens for projects and decisions: if the initiative or decision does not advance the company's CSR priorities, it should not be prioritized, thereby making room for other initiatives that do.

It is interesting to note that the companies which adopt a social purpose as their core reason for being run into less internal resistance for advancing on societal goals. It still takes time to align the organization around the social purpose, but social purpose business leaders need less convincing about the merits.

Advanced CSR companies run into barriers creating the systems-level changes they seek. They might lack the scale, influence or know-how to shift the system to more beneficial environmental or social outcomes. This is the point at which partnerships and collaborations become relevant, whether with suppliers, customers, peers, competitors, governments, academia or non-profits. Companies seeking large-scale change will need external collaborations to create the critical mass for social change. Here are some resources for this challenge:

- [Multi-stakeholder collaboration](#)

- [Customer engagement](#)
- [Value chain influence](#)
- [Public policy advocacy](#)

It continues to be the case that knowledge of the business case for strategic and integrated CSR and social purpose will help business leaders understand the benefits of more advanced practices. Here are two resources, the first for advanced CSR (or sustainability) and the second for social purpose.

- Business case for advanced CSR (sustainability): [Sustainability Advantage](#)
- Business case for social purpose: [Social Purpose Institute](#)

9.0 Conclusion

Whether you seek a CSR tune-up, aspire to accelerate CSR in your company or simply want to understand the changing field of CSR, this Guidebook and its recommended actions can help you on your path. The ideas and inspirations from over thirty Canadian companies shared in this resource show you how other leaders are advancing and evolving in their CSR journey. By equipping yourself and your organization to understand the changing CSR landscape, and setting a strategic course, you can position your company, customers, industry and Canadian communities for a more secure, resilient and thriving future.

Appendix

Resources

The Federal Government has a number of CSR resources on its website, some are listed below:

CSR Implementation Guide for Canadian Business

https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/h_rs00599.html

CSR Toolkit

https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/h_rs00599.html

SME Sustainability Roadmap

https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/h_rs00174.html

Employment and Social Development Canada funded Canadian Business for Social Responsibility to produce a Guide on the Qualities of a Transformational Company:

How to Become a Transformational Company

<http://transformationalcompany.ca/>

The United Way's Social Purpose Institute provides resource materials on Social Purpose Business:

Definition of a Social Purpose Business

<https://socialpurpose.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/08/social-purpose-business-definition-080719.pdf>

Social Purpose Business Case

http://socialpurpose.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2015/12/spi-social-purpose-business-case-2.2.pdf?utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&utm_campaign=business-case

The Embedding Project provides resources for embedding CSR and Sustainability:

Resources for Embedding Sustainability

<https://www.embeddingproject.org/resources>