METHODS FRAMEWORK

# Measurement & Impact Ledger Framework

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|---|---|
| PROGRAM | Lab-wide — governs every public claim the Lab makes |
| STATUS | Published and binding — revised in place, with dates updated |
| PUBLISHED | August 2026, at altruismlab.com/resources |

PURPOSE

This document fixes the rules the Lab must satisfy before claiming impact: the public status vocabulary used across its site and documents, the three-tier evidence ladder, the structure of the Impact Ledger, and what the Lab will and will not publish at each stage. It is published before any outcome exists, deliberately, so that the rules cannot be bent to fit results later.

01

## Why the rules come first

Organizations under pressure to show impact tend to define success after the fact: whatever happened becomes what was intended, and activity gets reported in the vocabulary of outcomes. The Lab's defense against this is mechanical rather than aspirational — a fixed public vocabulary, pre-registered metric definitions, and a ledger that can only fill from the bottom tier up.

THE OPERATING RULE

Activity is not impact. Effort, reach, meetings, publications, and intentions are never reported as outcomes. Where the truthful entry is "none yet," the Lab writes "none yet."

02

## The public status vocabulary

Every program, milestone, and document in Lab materials carries exactly one of four statuses. Their definitions are fixed here; no other status language is used publicly.

| STATUS | DEFINITION | USAGE RULES |
|---|---|---|
| **In Development** | Being designed or researched. Nothing has run; no outcome of any kind may be implied. | Must appear on anything at design stage — including both current programs. |
| **Active** | Currently operating — an open intake, an ongoing research line, a running process. | Describes operation, never results. An active line of inquiry has no findings until published. |
| **Target** | A stated long-term aim. Not a forecast, projection, or promise; carries no timeline or probability. | Must appear wherever a target number appears, alongside the verified-to-date figure — even when that figure is none. |
| **Published** | A document released in the public library, dated, revised in place. | Refers to the document's existence only — publication is not evidence of the effectiveness of anything the document describes. |

03

## The evidence ladder

Outcome evidence, when it exists, is reported on a three-tier ladder. Each tier has an entry requirement; nothing skips a tier.

### Tier one — Planned

A metric with a pre-registered definition: what will be counted, against what baseline, with what exclusions, verified how. A Planned entry contains no value — it is a commitment to

measure, published before measurement begins. Both current programs' measurement plans sit at this tier.

### Tier two — Provisional

A measured value that has not yet cleared verification: internal data awaiting an external check, a count from a partner's records not yet independently reviewed, an estimate carrying stated assumptions. Provisional values are always displayed with their confidence basis and are never aggregated into headline figures.

### Tier three — Verified

A value that has cleared the verification standard named in its Planned definition — third-party records, independent review, or physical inspection, as the metric requires. Only Verified values may appear in summary claims about what the Lab has accomplished.

> CURRENT STATE OF THE LEDGER
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> As of August 2026 the ledger contains no Verified and no Provisional entries. Its contents are Planned definitions only. This is the honest description of a pre-pilot institution, and this document is the standard readers should hold the Lab to as that changes.

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04

## The Impact Ledger

Each ledger entry, at any tier, carries the same structure:

- **Metric and definition** — the pre-registered counting rule, including baseline and exclusions.
- **Value and unit** — absent at the Planned tier; stated with precision limits above it.
- **Evidence tier** — Planned, Provisional, or Verified, displayed on the entry itself.
- **Confidence basis** — what stands behind the value: whose records, checked by whom.
- **Methodology note** — how the count was produced, in enough detail to challenge it.
- **Source** — the document or dataset the entry rests on, linked where publishable.
- **Updated date** — every entry is dated; stale entries are marked, not silently refreshed.

The ledger fills from the bottom tier up: definitions first, provisional values second, verified values last. A ledger that filled any other way would be evidence of the process failing.

05

## Verification and corrections

- **Pre-registration.** Metric definitions are published before counting begins. Definitions changed after data exists are treated as new metrics; the old series is closed, not overwritten.
- **Conservative counting.** Where a judgment call affects a value, the Lab takes the lower figure. Ranges are reported as ranges.
- **Independent checks.** Each Planned definition names its verification standard — third-party records, independent review, or inspection — chosen for the metric, not for convenience.
- **Corrections.** Errors are corrected in place with a dated correction note. Corrections are announced with the same prominence as the original claim, not buried.
- **Negative results.** A metric that comes back worse than hoped is published under the same rules and prominence as one that comes back well.

06

## What the Lab will not publish

- Extrapolations presented as outcomes — no "on track to," no modeled totals dressed as counts.
- Cumulative "reach" or "touched lives" figures without a pre-registered counting rule.
- Counterfactual-free claims — a number with no baseline is a decoration, not a measurement.
- Aggregations that mix evidence tiers — Provisional values never ride inside Verified totals.
- Borrowed credibility — other organizations' results are cited as theirs, never absorbed into the Lab's.

07

## How statuses change

A program moves from In Development only when the thing it was designing actually runs; a Target gains a verified-to-date figure only from Verified ledger entries; a document's revision replaces it in place with the date updated and superseded versions retired. Status changes are announced on the site, and the change history accumulates in the relevant documents rather than disappearing.

This framework itself is revised in place. If a future revision weakens a rule, the revision note must say so explicitly — silent weakening is the failure mode this document exists to prevent.

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