

A GUIDE TO EVALUATING PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION

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PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION**

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COI

The National Centre for Public Sector Innovation
Vestergade 18b, 2.
1456 København K
+ 45 61 81 31 10
coi@coi.dk
www.coi.dk

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Authors

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CONTENTS

5

WHEN YOU NEED
TO EVALUATE
AN INNOVATIVE
INITIATIVE

6

INTRODUCTION

12

1-2-3-4
EVALUATE!

14

PHASE 1
CLARIFY!

18

PHASE 2
PLAN!

22

OVERVIEW
OF METHODS

41

PHASE 3
COLLECT,
ANALYSE,
CONCLUDE!

44

PHASE 4
USE IT!

WHEN YOU NEED TO EVALUATE AN INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE

With this guidebook, the National Centre for Public Sector Innovation (COI) aims to help the evaluation process become simpler, more manageable and attractive for those working with innovation in the public sector. This guidebook was created in collaboration with civil servants from state, regional and municipal bodies in the context of COI's working group on the evaluation of innovative initiatives. Read more at www.coi.dk/evaluating.

This guidebook is aimed at those who work with innovation and would like to use evaluation to refine their innovation and demonstrate its value. The target group includes managers, consultants and practitioners. The guidebook has been structured so that the first part is an introduction to the most important things you need to know about evaluating innovative initiatives. The second part contains methods and tools to help in practical execution. The guidebook can be used by individuals alone or as a tool for dialogue with your colleagues and partners.

Happy working!

The National Centre for Public Sector Innovation

INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Innovative initiatives are the concrete actions, methods of organization or products that are used to create value. An innovation must be implemented. Ideas or proposals are not enough in themselves.

INNOVATION

An innovation is a new or significantly changed way of improving the workplace's activities and results. Innovations can be new or significantly changed services, products, processes, methods of organisation or methods of communicating with external parties. The innovation must be new for that particular workplace, but may have been previously used elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN EVALUATING AN INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE

Public sector innovators are interested in evaluation – whether they are employees in day to day operations, in innovation units, among senior management and politicians. COI's innovation barometer shows that 51 percent of public innovations are evaluated (www.coi.dk/innovationsbarometer). And there are good reasons to evaluate: Evaluation can raise your innovation to a higher level and demonstrate its value to decision-makers, colleagues, partners and citizens.

Evaluating innovation demands flexible evaluation models that can encompass the complexity and variability of innovation. That might sound tough but this guidebook will lead you through the evaluation process from start to finish. The most important thing is your curiosity and desire to investigate whether new initiatives create value. The book is a guide that will ensure that you – in a systematic way – make the most important considerations and apply the most relevant methods in evaluating your innovation.

EVALUATING INNOVATION: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

There are several purposes with evaluating innovation. The most obvious is to investigate and communicate the value the innovation has created. At the same time, the evaluation can be used as an instrument for development and regulation and thereby act as “midwife” to the innovation.

Key ingredients are data collection and measurement. The tools for this range from qualitative methods, interviews and observations, for instance, to quantitative methods based on figures and statistics. Both approaches are important in the evaluation of innovation in order to explore the value that has been created. The value of public sector innovation may take several forms. The value of an innovation can have several forms. It may be to redeem political objectives, increase efficiency, achieve higher quality, enhance democracy or increase employee satisfaction.

WHY NOT JUST USE THE OLD FAMILIAR EVALUATION MODELS?

Innovation is, by definition, something new and the route to goal is not always known in advance. Additionally, innovation processes entail ongoing adjustment, while goals themselves might likewise shift along the way. At the same time there is a need to get moving quickly and often to obtain quick results. All these factors make it difficult to apply classic evaluation models, which is why this guidebook offers another approach. But this doesn't mean that you cannot use the methods you may be familiar with, such as theory of change or business cases; what is essential is that you refrain from working with these methods as static tools but can switch and manoeuvre dynamically between them.

WHY SPEND TIME EVALUATING INNOVATION?

Innovation is about doing something new that creates value. Perhaps you have a gut feeling whether the innovative initiative will work or not. But gut feeling is not enough. Frequently, there are many partners involved, the process may change direction, and the context is complex. That is why you need systematic data collection so that you don't evaluate your initiative solely on the basis of your own or others' opinions, hopes or dreams. The evaluation contributes to decisions being made on a qualified basis while at the same time supporting the learning process along the way.

1

Innovation is an investment – what are the returns?

It takes time and resources to develop and work with innovation. Evaluation can reveal whether the investment actually gives returns; whether time and resources were well spent, or whether they could have been used elsewhere. That's why it's important to evaluate early on, continually and systematically so that poor innovation investments can be halted in time.

2

Ongoing inspiration and learning

Innovation processes are iterative (recurring) and their direction is sometimes governed by gut feeling. When we work systematically with and integrate evaluation into the innovation process it becomes possible to involve ongoing learning into the process and make adjustments in line with results. Results can also act as eye-openers and a source of new inspiration for the direction the innovation process should follow.

3

Spreading of successful innovations

When we make our evaluation available for others we highlight the value our innovative solution has created. Evaluation can thereby lead to the spreading of an innovation. When we re-use others' solutions we save on development costs, avoid cul-de-sacs and achieve an impact faster. When we share our own solutions with others we can use their experiences with the solutions to make our own solutions even better.

4

Unhappily in love without knowing it?

While working with innovation you can sometimes fall in love with the good ideas you helped develop, either as participant or facilitator. Critical sense and systematic evaluation make it easier to realise when ideas are not actually working as intended. When you evaluate, it becomes a tool to shut down your non-innovating infatuations.

5

Earn the freedom to continue innovating

Evaluation helps to generate attention and a secure foothold for successful new initiatives and it becomes easier to win support for continuing them.

HOW LITTLE IS ENOUGH? EVALUATION DOESN'T HAVE TO BE TOUGH AND RESOURCE HUNGRY

When evaluating innovative initiatives, the be-all and end-all is to clarify the demands of the evaluation with those requesting it and other stakeholders.

When evaluating innovative initiatives, it is useful to aim for “how little is enough” in relation to the specific knowledge requirements and the targets that have been set for the innovation. You can discuss and align evaluation requirements on the following three levels.

EVIDENCE

Evidence is used nowadays in many contexts and, similarly to innovation and evaluation, is ascribed many meanings. Evidence is about finding and isolating a definite impact. Many people understand evidence to be definite knowledge based on major and prolonged, randomised control trials. When you work with innovation, applying such rigorous demands for the foundation of evidence is challenging. If your requirements for the evidence basis are this demanding, it is a good idea to involve an external, professional evaluator.

TENDENCIES

In many cases it will be sufficient, if the evaluation of an innovative initiative can demonstrate tendencies in relation to the value or the results of the initiative. Tendencies are not evidence-based, definite knowledge. But here we're aiming for a high degree of systematisation in the collection and analysis of data. We also emphasise taking account of flawed sources and articulating and reflecting on any assumptions regarding the innovation's value. You use fewer resources demonstrating tendencies than on documenting evidence, while tendencies can provide a sufficient knowledge and decision-making basis for evaluating the innovative initiative.

EXPERIENCES

The lowest requirement for evaluating innovation is that we can demonstrate experiences. Experiences may be taken from an individual or organisational level but, at minimum, are always built upon structured evaluations from personnel, citizens or others who have been involved in the innovative initiative or who are a target group for the initiative. There must be a systematic reflection on their assumptions about the innovation's value. Experiences may be valuable to use when it has not been possible to conduct more ongoing and systematic data collection. In addition, it is usually the instrument we use when we have few resources to devote to evaluation.

VALIDI – PARDON ME?

When you evaluate it's important to consider if you're measuring what you want to measure, i.e. validity. Before starting to evaluate, it's a good idea to consider if there are some obvious things that can heavily influence the results you uncover – and then incorporate this in planning the evaluation. At the same time, you must ensure that you choose the most meaningful methods to obtain answers to your evaluation questions.

The degree of validity depends on whether you are certain that the demonstrated value and results achieved are due to precisely those initiatives you're working with.

Two classic pitfalls are to be too content with gut feeling and “uncritically” to draw on any available data. Gut feelings have a low degree of validity and are not well-suited for evaluation. They are subjective and unsystematic and do not reflect a more holistic assessment of the innovation. It's also important that you look critically at the available data, so that you properly exploit the data that actually says something about what you're evaluating. It's better to go out and collect a small amount of data that actually says something about what you are assessing, than to sit comfortably at home with a huge pile of existing data that says nothing about the object of your investigation.

Evaluating on the basis of tendencies has a higher degree of validity than experiences, while evidence has the highest degree of validity. The most important thing is not to always pursue the highest degree of validity. It is important to pursue the degree of validity that is necessary to answer the evaluation question(s) and assess the value of the innovative initiative that has been implemented.



IT IS THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

An innovative initiative that has not been implemented is not an innovation. And an initiative must also have created value to be deemed an innovation. When you want to discover if your innovation has created value, it's necessary to show that precisely that innovative initiative made a difference. Therefore, you need something to compare to, and there are two fundamental ways you can establish a basis for comparison:

Control group:

You can work with a control group. A control group is a group of persons who can be compared with the target group for the innovative initiative. The control group continues as it always has, while the selected innovation group is subjected to the innovative initiative. Afterwards, you will gather data on both groups so that the results can be compared. Thus you will be able to assess what value the innovative initiative has created after implementation. Consider the time perspective of the innovative initiative and when it would be desirable and probable that the impact of the innovative initiative could be observed.

Actual baseline:

If you're working with an actual baseline, you should take a measurement before commencing your innovative initiative. So then you have a comparison basis and can perform ongoing and concluding follow-ups and assess what value the innovative initiative has created after implementation.

DON'T WORRY – IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Oh no, you might be tempted to think when you have to start planning an evaluation of innovative initiatives. Maybe it wasn't possible to draw an actual baseline before starting the innovation process and now it's too late to set up a control group. Don't worry. If this is the case, you still have some good options:

A probable baseline:

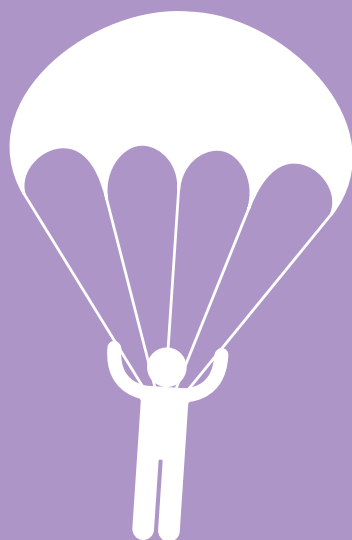
There is often relevant data available which you can draw on to create a probable baseline. So go back and look at the relevant data that's already been collected. Piece the data together in a well-considered and pragmatic way. Now you have a probable baseline.

A “here and now” baseline:

Another possibility is to begin measuring now. Right now. And then this becomes your baseline that you will later use to assess the value of your innovative initiative when it is implemented.

JUMP RIGHT IN

Now you know the most important things. The next step is to get started. A lot of people are uncertain the first time they work on evaluating innovation, but there's no reason to be. If you follow the advice above and use the tools we introduce in the next part of the guidebook, you'll be starting from a thoroughly tested and systematic evaluation basis.



1-2-3-4 EVALUATE!

You are now about to start evaluating your innovative initiative. The evaluation has four steps:

- 1 Clarify! Why are you evaluating?**
- 2 Plan! How will you evaluate?**
- 3 Collect, analyse, conclude! Acquire evaluation knowledge.**
- 4 Use it! Use the evaluation knowledge.**

By following the four steps you will link your evaluation to your innovative initiative and obtain a good basis for important decisions and actions in the evaluation of your innovative initiative.

The important thing is to incorporate your evaluation early. When your innovative initiative starts to take shape, and possible (evaluation) questions begin to form that you would like answers to, you should start your evaluation. This will help you to reflect over and make the correct decisions during your innovation process. You must be systematic in your evaluation work. Be systematic in collecting analysing and applying evaluation in the innovation process – this considerably strengthens your knowledge basis for choices you make in the process.

It's possible you may find yourself working through the four steps several times in the course of the innovation process. This will typically be relevant when the innovation process or initiative changes character underway.



1

2

3

4

PHASE 1

CLARIFY!



CLARIFY: OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

When you clarify and align expectations with management and working partners, you establish a solid standpoint from which to launch your evaluation. So you should align expectations on the prioritisation of purpose with the evaluation and on types of data, use of resources, validity and time to delivery. This alignment of expectations helps contribute to clarification of which methods you can use for data collection and thus the evaluation you can conduct.

PRIORITISE THE OBJECTIVES OF YOUR EVALUATION

Before you start, prioritise the purposes of your evaluation with your working partners and management.

- Managing the innovation process
- Demonstrating value
- Learning
- Spreading
- Documenting

At regular intervals during the evaluation and innovation process, return to these goals: are the priorities still correct?

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF YOUR EVALUATION?

Before you start, prioritise the requirements of your evaluation with your working partners and management.

- Which type of data are you expected to use – qualitative or quantitative?
- What is the level of resources available to produce the evaluation – high or low?
- When are you expected to provide the results of the evaluation – sooner or later?



CLARIFY: RECIPIENTS

Various recipients may have differing requirements, expectations and need for knowledge about the innovation's value. If you consider recipients' needs early on, it will help you to qualify your choice of methods and the design of your evaluation. If a stakeholder analysis has been produced, you may use it as a starting point. If not, start with a brainstorming session and include the main recipients in the diagram as you go along. If new stakeholders/recipients arrive later in the innovation process, simply update the diagram.

FOR WHOM ARE YOU CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION AND HOW WILL THEY USE IT?

- What do they need the evaluation for?
- How will they be involved in the evaluation?
- How will we communicate to them the results and value of the innovation?
- How can/will they influence the innovation process in relation to the results and the value of the innovation?



CLARIFY: CONNECT EVALUATION WITH INNOVATION

Try to avoid being so enthralled by your innovation that you forget to link the evaluation to the innovation process. When you link the evaluation to the innovation process right from the beginning, it increases your knowledge level and strengthens thereby your possibility of documenting, learning from and managing the innovation process.

DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE OF THE INNOVATION AND DRAFT THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- What is the general goal you are aiming at with your innovative initiative?
- What question(s) should your evaluation provide answers to?

DESCRIBE WHAT THE INNOVATION PROCESS LOOKS LIKE, WITH WORDS OR A DRAWING, AND SHOW WHEN EVALUATION FITS INTO THE PROCESS

How and when is evaluation connected to your innovation process? Describe with words or a drawing the main, essential steps and phases of your innovation process and show at which points evaluation fits into the process.

LOOK AROUND (REUSE):

- Have others worked with the same innovation or evaluation issues?
- What did they find?
- In what way can it be useful to you?



PHASE 2 PLAN!

2A



PLAN:

VALUE, SUCCESS CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

Setting up orientation points for value, success criteria and indicators will give you a direction for the evaluation process and a really good evaluation basis. The further you travel in the innovation process, the more precise your formulation of success criteria will become. But even at the beginning, think about success criteria and feel free to work with provisional success criteria. Those who perceive the value may be, for example, citizens, personnel or the organisation. If a business case has been made to illustrate the value aimed for and the success criteria worked with, then use it in the evaluation.

DEFINE VALUE, SUCCESS CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

- Who will experience the value?
- What value are we aiming to create?
- What are the success criteria for this value to have been achieved?
- How can we see that value has been created (indicators)?
- Where do we find existing data on these indicators?
- Who has access to the existing data?
- Should the existing data be supplemented with new data? Why?
- Can the value be affected by something other than the innovative process?
What else can affect it?
- How can we measure whether the value is affected by the innovative process
or by something else?
- How can we detect and retain the collateral advantages of the innovative
process that we had not anticipated?



PLAN: A BASIS FOR COMPARISON

A basis for comparison is important for being able to see if the innovative initiative creates positive or negative change – in order to demonstrate the value created.

You can choose either to use the control group or one of the three baselines but you can, of course, combine them also. (See page 10 on bases for comparison).

CONTROL GROUP

If you have a group of persons you can compare with the innovation process target group.

- What are the main characteristics of the innovation process target group?
- How many people does the control group need to consist of, and who can they be?

BASELINE

I can measure before I start working on my innovative initiative here.

PROBABLE BASELINE

I am already working on my innovative initiative and I have data from before I started.

- Where do I find data from before the start of the innovation process?
- Does this data give enough information for a probable baseline, or do I need to supplement it with new data?

HERE AND NOW BASELINE

I am already working on my innovative initiative and am now starting to measure.



PLAN: ROLES

The risk that evaluation tasks are not carried out at the right time and in the right way is exacerbated if it is unclear who has which roles and responsibilities in the evaluation of your innovative initiative. You also risk using a lot of time to clarify who does what instead of actually performing the evaluation.

WHO WILL HELP YOU CONDUCT THE EVALUATION?

- **Who is the coordinator of this evaluation?**

The coordinator's job is to make sure that all are aware of what is to be evaluated, how and when, and that the evaluation is actually carried out.

- **Who is in charge of collecting data?**

The data collector's job is to make sure that the evaluation methods are used and that the actual data needed for the evaluation is made available.

- **Who is in charge of analysing data?**

The analyst's job is to make sure that the data collected is processed. Their responsibility is to find the right thematic information and results across the data.

- **Who is in charge of communicating the results of the evaluation?**

A communicator is in charge of spreading the results of the evaluation, in order for all relevant stakeholders to have access to them. There is no need to wait for the project to be completed before communicating – the evaluation results can be spread during the process.



PLAN: CHOICE OF METHOD(S)

Your evaluation gains greatest validity when you choose the method(s) that provides the best data for answering your evaluation question. Therefore, you should make a decision on method based on which methods are most appropriate and which requirements you have regarding types of data, use of resources and time to delivery in your evaluation.

WHICH METHODS WILL YOU USE AND WHO WILL DO WHAT?

- Who will experience the value to be measured?
- What indicators do we measure?
- Which is the best method to collect the data we need?
- Why do we choose this method over another?
- Who will collect the data?
- Who do we collect data from/about?
- How many do we collect data from/about?
- When do we collect the data?
- Who will analyse the data?
- What is the expected time frame for the collection and analysis of the data?

OVERVIEW OF METHODS

In this guide you'll find eight methods that may inspire you in your data collection. Perhaps you already have other methods in your data collection toolbox. You may of course choose to use them primarily or as a supplement.

Maybe you already know some of the methods we present here. Just use the methods that make most sense for you – and that are best suited to the given situation.

The methods are both classic evaluation methods and methods that you may be familiar with as methods in an innovation process.

CONTENTS

OBSERVATION	24
INTERVIEW	26
USER JOURNEYS	28
RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIAL (RCT)	30
TALLYING	32
VOX POP	34
QUESTIONNAIRES	36
ANALYSIS OF REGISTRY DATA	38

QUALITATIVE METHODS

INTERVIEWS

VOX
POP

USER
JOURNEYS



OBSERVATION



QUANTITATIVE METHODS

TALLYING

ANALYSIS OF

DATA



RECT

QUESTIONNAIRE



METHOD: OBSERVATION



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

Observation is a method for capturing behaviour and the method can therefore be used to compare situations from before and after an innovative initiative. Observation may be done with or without interaction with the surrounding environment. You may choose to supplement observation with interviews to gain knowledge of why the observed subjects do what they do.



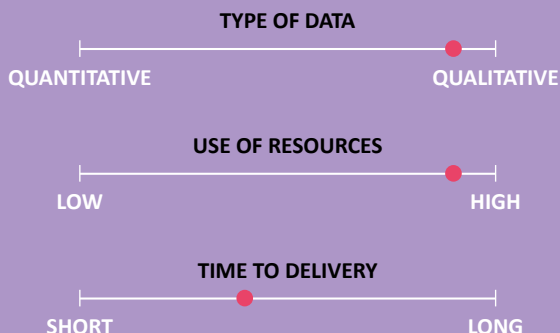
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

Through observation we can see how things are done instead of just talking about how things are done. Observation is therefore both good at validating hypotheses about persons' behaviour and assertions and to expand upon assertions with more detail and context. What we say we do does not always agree completely with what we actually do.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Remember that observation can easily become “loaded” so always choose an observer who is an “outsider” to the context and can therefore view it as neutrally as possible.



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Find out what you want from the observation – which situations can tell you something about the behaviour you wish to affect with the innovative initiative?
2. Determine when and where observation will return most value. Prepare an observation log: Sketch two columns in a notebook – one for observations and one for your own reflections on what you see.
3. Before you throw yourself into observing, you should assess if you are the right person to be doing it. If you're too “known” for example, your presence may affect the situation and behaviours and therefore you will obtain less valid data.
4. Carry out the observation and note what happens in your observation log, what happens, what is said – preferably as literally and in as much detail as possible, so that you do not just weigh up what you want to see or hear.
5. Make sure to do several observations and ideally at the different times to lend your data greater validity.

Analysis: Pattern recognition

1. Read the observation log
2. Write down the most important observations – e.g. something that happens several times – on Post-it notes.
3. Sort the most important observations into groups – patterns – which thematically have something to do with each other and assign them a memorable heading.
4. What are the most important points across the patterns?

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

Qualitative data that says something about actions and behaviours, which can function as a potent supplement to interviews, for instance. Because, while interviews furnish you with an insight into post-rationalisations and opinions, observations give you a snapshot of what actually happens.

WHAT DO I NEED?

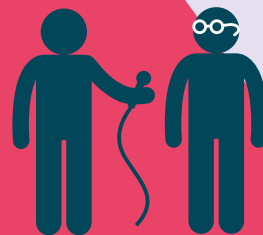
Data collection:

A notebook with two columns – one for your observations and another for your reflections – and a pen.

Analysis:

Post-it notes and pen.

METHOD: INTERVIEW



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

In an individual interview there is the possibility of digging deeply into a topic as viewed from a single perspective. The data you get from an interview depends, among other things, on creating a secure atmosphere in the interview and asking the right questions. Interview data combines well with observations that give you knowledge of how persons actually act.



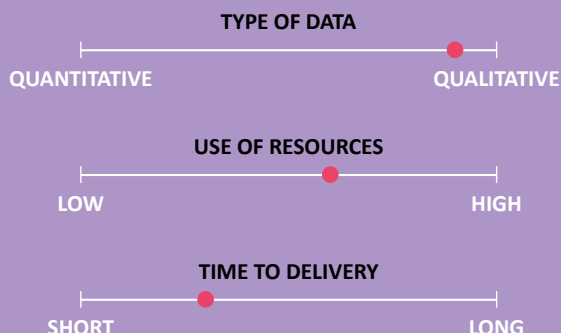
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

Interviews are particularly good when there are personal or sensitive topics you would like to have elucidated. And when there are things that persons might not be expected to have reflected on beforehand.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Remember that you will obtain knowledge of the interview subject's thoughts and considerations, not necessarily knowledge about their actual actions.



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Find the most important people you wish to gain knowledge from.
2. Prepare a question guide based on the topic you wish to uncover in your evaluation.
Formulate open questions and ask about the specific examples the interview subject tells you about. In this way, the interview subject can touch upon things he/she considers important and you can get him/her to be specific about things you want to know about.
3. When interviewing single subjects you can explore his/her perception of a concrete situation in depth. When interviewing more than one subject at a time, you can explore their various perspectives of a situation.
4. Make an interview appointment with the person. Think about whether you create the best interview space by having the subject come to you or if you go to them.
5. During the interview, guide the conversation through the question guide so that you shed some light on all relevant topics. If you wish, summarise the answers you get and ask the subject to confirm or deny or elaborate on what you've heard. This increases the validity of your data.
6. Take ongoing notes of the interview subject's answers – as faithful to the spoken word as possible. You may record the interview so that you can listen to it afterwards for more detail. Ask for the subject's consent if you wish to record the interview.

Analysis: Pattern recognition

1. Read the interview notes/listen to the interview.
2. Write down the most important quotes – e.g. something that is said several times – on Post-it notes.
3. Sort the most important observations into groups – patterns – which thematically have something to do with each other and assign them a memorable heading.
4. What are the most important points across the patterns?

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

An in-depth qualitative insight into the interview subject's thoughts, experiences and reflections on your evaluation topics.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection:

- An interview guide
- Notebook and pen or computer
- Possibly a recording device

Analysis:

Post-it notes and pen

METHOD: USER JOURNEYS



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

User journeys are a method of mapping one or more users' experiences of a specific service. This is done by way of an interview in which the subject and interviewer together map the user's journey and sketch it onto a timeline. The interview may be supplemented with data from your own systems. User journeys give an outside in perspective on the service and services your organisation provides.



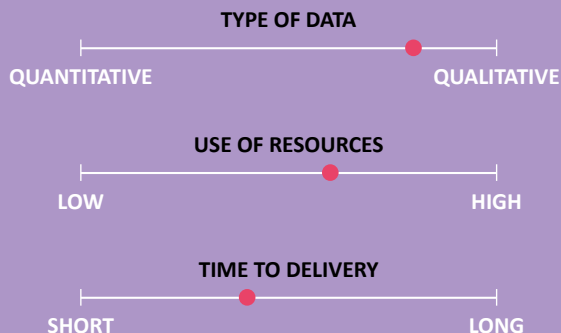
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

User journeys are especially good at viewing the evolution in users' perceptions of a service in the context of an innovative initiative, as the mapping makes it easy to compare before and after.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Note that this method works best when you can supplement the user's experience with data from systems about the service.



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Find out which experience or service you want to map and which users can provide information about it.
2. Sketch a timeline and prepare interview questions for the subject about how he/she perceived the progress of the service over time, which persons and organisations he/she contacted in connection with the service, and which communication channels he/she used in connection with the service.
3. Find interview subjects and invite them to an interview. Set aside approx. one hour per user journey interview.
4. At the interview, use the timeline to give structure to the conversation and fill out the timeline in response to what the subject states. Ask very specific questions and ask the interview subject to recount their experience in small steps from start to finish. Conclude the interview by having the subject point out two/three situations/experiences that were most decisive: What “Yes!” (+) or “Oh, dear...” (-) experiences does the subject point out?
5. Feel free to add data from your own systems on the interview subject’s encounter with the service. Focus, for example, on how many subjects could be said to have experienced the same.

Analysis: Condensation

1. If you have done several user journeys, try to identify the pattern running through the user journeys: Where do they overlap?
2. Sketch a condensed user journey. Mark “Yes!” and “Oh, dear...” experiences clearly.
3. What are the most important points across the user journeys?

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

In-depth and concrete qualitative data on users’ own assessments of the experiences that are mapped.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection:

A3 paper, pencil/eraser or pen to sketch the user journey.

Analysis:

Make a “clean copy” of the condensed user journey on paper or digitally, depending on what you need.

METHOD: RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIAL (RCT)



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

Here you have an innovation group that is subject to an innovative initiative and a control group that continues as usual. This allows you to identify a specific, measurable result of the new initiative. By exposing several innovation groups to separate innovative initiatives, you can identify the most effective initiative. It is essential that both groups are randomly selected (randomised) and resemble one another. These two demands may seem difficult but don't give up – team up with someone with these skills and jump in.



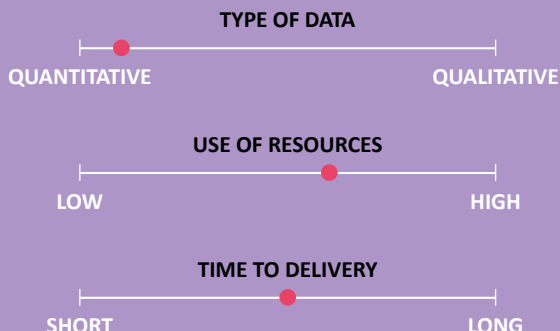
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

Because you're working with a control group, you can take into account whether factors other than the new initiative have influenced the results. Therefore, you can say whether the results would have been the same without the initiative.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

It's important to incorporate randomisation right at the start in designing the trial, and to clearly define the factors the result will be measured upon.



HOW DO I DO IT?

You can use this method both in lab experiments and field experiments.

If there are several initiatives to compare, an innovation group should be set up for each initiative.

Data collection:

1. Identify one initiative to be compared.
2. Define which parameters the result should be measured upon and how these will be measured in the trial.
3. Select how randomisation will be achieved – at an individual or institutional level?
4. Determine how many persons will be needed to give a robust result – the more persons, the better insured you are against the effect being purely incidental.
5. Test the initiative on the innovation group.

Analysis:

1. Gauge the results and decide on their significance for the initiative.
2. Adjust the innovative initiative so that it reflects the results of the RCT.

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

You gain an insight into what works and what doesn't. You ensure that the result is viewed in the context of the status quo.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection and analysis:

An overview of previously collected data, e.g. via an existing monitoring system or qualitative analyses.

Access to many persons in a lab or field environment. Professional skills to design a good randomised control trial.

METHOD: TALLYING



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

Tallies can use time records, number of inquiries, how many times someone does something or something entirely different. It's easy to compare registered records from before and after an innovative initiative and thereby demonstrate if the initiative has created value. These registrations can be done as part of an observation process or, for example, by an employee close to the target groups you want to know about.



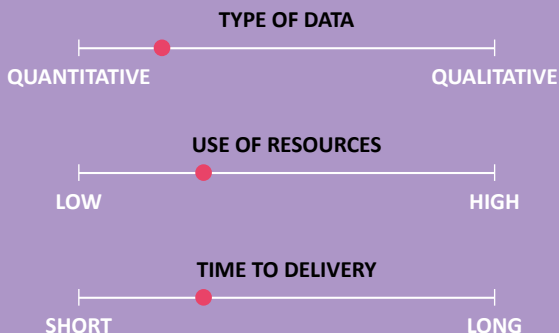
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

Tally counts are especially good at generating quantitative data in a short period



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Remember to do tallies of all important factors so it can later be shown that it actually was the innovative initiative that made the difference.



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Find out what you want to tally and make a simple schematic in which it is clear how and when the count will be done.
2. Decide on how long you will collect data and whether you will do the tally yourself or whether you will have, for example, employees close to the relevant users to do it.
3. Record the tallies in your schematic or issue the schematic to those who will perform the tally and agree when and for how long they should count and when to return the schematics. Ensure that the tallies are as precise as possible on specific items in order to obtain the most valid data.

Analysis:

1. Collect the returned schematics.
2. Collate all tallies in a single schematic to give you the overall overview. If possible, use a statistical test to see whether differences before and after are incidental or statistical variations.
3. What are the most salient points from the tallies?

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

Registration records give quantitative data that can be easily compared across several measurements.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection:

A schematic to register in.

Analysis: A schematic to collate the tallies.

METHOD: VOX POP



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

A vox pop provides an opportunity to get quick and immediate judgements on a topic, e.g. through the use of smileys. There are few limits to using this method. As long as it fits the target group, it can give you fast answers to relevant questions in your evaluation. It reflects persons' assessments in the moment they submit their vote.



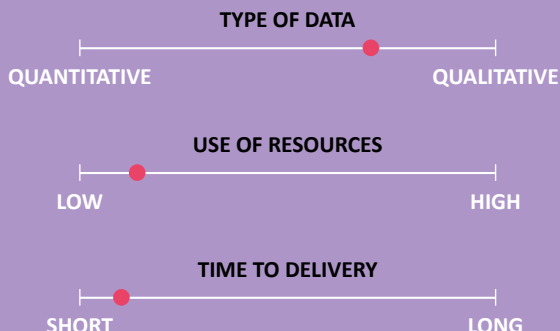
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

Vox pops are good at providing data and indications quickly that can help you to identify tendencies which can then be qualified or supplemented with data from other methods.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Remember that data from a vox pop only shows a here and now picture. In addition, this method is best at handling a single factor and therefore you only get a very specific, narrow expression of opinion.



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Decide which situations you want to assess and formulate the relevant questions to cover that situation.
2. Find out how many people you want data from and over how long a period you will gather the data. Data collection can be done over a short period if there are many participants or over a longer period if there are for example, only two persons a day that are likely to respond.
3. Decide how the selected persons will express their opinions. The important thing is that this can be done quickly and that all options are clear and are presented equally. Also ensure, as far as possible, that opinions can be expressed anonymously.
4. Prepare your vox pop with survey questions and response options.
5. Allow the selected persons to express their opinion.

Analysis:

1. Collect the responses.
2. Calculate how many have selected each response option.
3. What are the most salient points from the totals?

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

Through vox pops you can acquire quick data on some persons' unmediated opinions. A vox pop should not be used alone but can provide some valuable, fast pointers to whether something is working or not.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection:

Something that is easy to work with – both for you and the persons who express their opinions. For instance, smileys, materials in various colours that correspond to different response options or similar.

Analysis:

Something that makes it easy to totalise and summarise the vox pop responses. Maybe you need to maintain the original vox pop with a photo. Perhaps you also need to work with the results in a table or text format.

METHOD: QUESTIONNAIRES



THE METHOD IN BRIEF

A questionnaire can be an effective method for getting the viewpoints and/or experiences of a large number of persons. Questionnaires can provide quantifiable knowledge about what people think and/or have experienced. You cannot use this method to test hypotheses or ask questions about “something” that respondents have not thought about, but which they need to reflect on.



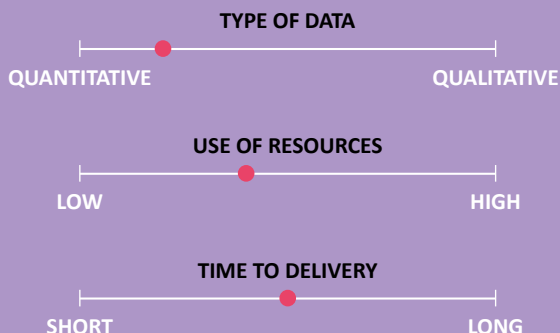
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

This method is particularly good at handling large numbers of people and gives you an opportunity to quantify qualitative knowledge.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Formulate questions that respondents know something about or have experienced. Avoid asking about opinions or expectations. Don't ask questions which require respondents to guess or choose an opinion. Ensure that you formulate the response categories so that you get some distribution in the responses.



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Decide what you want to elucidate through your questionnaire and generate questions that cover your topic. Be careful not to formulate questions in the direction you would like to receive answers. Try instead to be as neutral as possible. The easiest way to process and quantify most questions is with limited response options, but it may be a good idea to include a couple of open response options so it is possible to express deeper opinions or to elaborate and explain.
2. It will subsequently reinforce your analysis if you include background information on gender, age and occupation.
3. The questionnaire can be either physical or digital. If you're using a digital platform, it's easy to send the questionnaire to many recipients and there are usually various easy options to summarise and analyse the data. If you're using physical questionnaires, it is easy to collect responses from persons who lack digital access and you can collect the responses locally – here and now.
4. Identify the persons who will participate to ensure you obtain enough data to fulfil your quantity requirements.
5. Send or deliver your questionnaire to the potential respondents.

Analysis:

1. Collect the responses.
2. If the data is not already digitised then you must summarise the data yourself.
3. Display your data in the form of tables, columns or graphs – all depending on what the data represents. You can use a statistical test to see whether various responses may be incidental or statistical variations.
4. What are the most important points from the questionnaire?

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

If you're working with many responses and a majority of closed questions, questionnaires can provide a lot of quantitative data using relatively few resources. The method is good at giving an overview of averages and distributions.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection and analysis:

A questionnaire – possibly use an online service.

METHOD: ANALYSIS OF REGISTRY DATA

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THE METHOD IN BRIEF

Analysis of registry data covers extracting quantitative registry data from administrative systems. The public sector documents its work and in its documentation systems you will find a host of available data. This requires access, special processing of the data and particular skills to extract and analyse the data. But don't despair – partner with someone with an insight into systems and data analysis and there is a treasure trove of evaluation material to be found in the analysis of registry data.



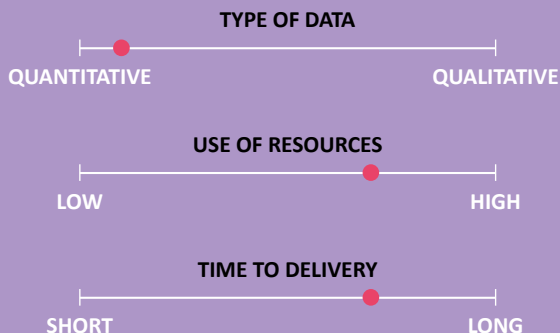
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR

The enormous data quantities permit analyses based on all citizens or representative sections of citizens and allow you to see changes over time and in variations between sub-groups.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Even though you obtain data over time and from large groups, causal connections can be difficult to identify. You should also cast a critical eye on the submission of data. Are there (recognised) sources of error that you need to take into account? Has data submission changed over time as a possible consequence of legislation, new practices etc.?



HOW DO I DO IT?

Data collection:

1. Find out what you want to know from the registry data.
2. Find the persons who can tell you what is available in the administrative systems in your own organisation. Initiate a dialogue with them on whether there exists administrative data in your organisation that can shed light on the questions you have.
3. Ensure there is consent for sharing the data and that the data is anonymised.

Analysis:

1. Data analysis requires both knowledge of the area and of data processing.
2. Remember to continually validate your data analysis.
3. The analysis will result in revealed correspondences – if you observe causal connections these must be grounded thematically/scientifically.

WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?

You will get closer to demonstrating valid connections and possible effects of the innovative initiative that are not due to other factors.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Data collection and analysis:

- An overview of the administrative data.
- Data-analytical and professional skills.



PHASE 3

COLLECT, ANALYSE, CONCLUDE!



COLLECT, ANALYSE, CONCLUDE!

DESCRIBE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

To keep your evaluation on track and link your evaluation knowledge to your innovative initiative, it is important that you maintain an overview of what you have done and what knowledge you have acquired from the individual methods used in the evaluation. So describe your data collection and the most salient points for each of the methods you chose.

WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO YOU POSSESS NOW AND HOW DID YOU ACQUIRE THAT?

- Who will experience the value to be measured?
- Which indicators will be used for measurement?
- Who collected and analysed the data?
- Where can I find the supporting documents of the study?
- Describe how valid you assess the data to be.
- What are the essential informations contained in the data collected?
- What knowledge has the data collected given us?
- What can be done with this essential information?
 - Is more data needed? (if yes, choose methods again and proceed to collect more data).
 - Is an adjustment of the innovative initiative needed?
- Who could we already be discussing this information with?



COLLECT, ANALYSE, CONCLUDE! CONCLUDE

In order to translate and mediate the knowledge gained from evaluation of your innovative initiative, it is important to create an overview of the methods and data collection. When you have reached saturation point and no longer acquire new knowledge from the individual methods, it is time to take a cross-sectional look at the methods and indicators (diagram 3A) and to describe the overall results of the evaluation of the innovative initiative. If you have previously prepared a business case before launching the innovative initiative, re-visit the business case and follow up on whether the expected value has been realised.

WHAT OVERALL KNOWLEDGE HAS YOUR EVALUATION PROVIDED YOU WITH?

- Who will experience the value
- What value are we aiming to create
- What was the essence of what we were trying to achieve by this innovative initiative?
- What worked?
- What did not work?
- What value has the innovative initiative created?

WHAT DO I DO IF MY ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT MY INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE HAS NOT CREATED VALUE?

Start by looking at your data. Did you collect the right data or are there issues with validity? Consider which data you need and which method to use for data collection this time, and conduct a new data collection.

If you decide it's good enough: You have the correct (and valid) data and the analysis shows that the innovative initiative has not created value: Congratulations! You've just become so much smarter! Take what you have learned, tweak your initiative and start over in your innovation process.



PHASE 4

USE IT!

4

USE IT!

MANAGING, LEARNING, DOCUMENTING AND SPREADING

Don't waste the valuable knowledge you now possess on your innovative initiative. Share the knowledge with those people who have been waiting for it. And with those who don't yet know that they need it. Tell them about the value your innovative initiative has/has not created and carry the knowledge forward in your continuing innovation work.

HOW SHOULD YOU USE THE EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE ABOUT YOUR INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE?

MANAGING

- What do you need to know now?
- What changes have been created:
What did you do before? What do you do differently now?
- What are the next steps in working with this innovation?

LEARNING

- What have we now learnt about the innovative initiative?
- What is the most important lesson you have learnt from this innovation process?
- What knowledge, produced by the evaluation process, must you now make sure is passed on to others in your organisation?

DOCUMENTING AND SPREADING

- What can you now tell the recipients of your evaluation (diagram 1B) about the innovative initiative?
- Who else ought to know about this innovation?
(use COI's guide to spreading innovation coi.dk/spreadinginnovation)

GET YOUR RESULTS OUT INTO THE WORLD

Adapt your communication of the innovative initiative to the target groups that may be interested in it. Very often a 50-page wordy memorandum is not something people have the time or motivation to read – not even when you are communicating with management or politicians.

RE-VISIT YOUR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS. ARE THERE ELEMENTS FROM YOUR EVALUATION AND INNOVATION PROCESS THAT YOU CAN USE IN YOUR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION?

- Make your communication livelier by using direct quotes from citizens, employees, experts you interviewed or observed. Remember to anonymise the citations or get consent to use them.
- Visualise the knowledge from questionnaires, records or registry data in diagrams, graphs or info-graphs.
- Illustrate the course of user journey(s) or the variations that your RCTs reveal.
- If possible, use photos you have from the evaluation and innovation process to concretely represent situations and experiences.

DO YOU HAVE THE OPTION TO COMMUNICATE YOUR RESULTS OTHER THAN IN WRITING?

- Use audio and video clips to render citations from your evaluation and innovation process more vividly.
- Gather all the stakeholders who have been involved in the innovative initiative in a workshop, in which the value and future direction can be discussed.
- Enter into a dialogue with stakeholders from other organisations on what is needed for them to also benefit from the results. COI's guide on spreading innovation can provide some inspiration for this dialogue.

Read more about our guide to spreading innovation on the next page.



DEFINITION OF SPREADING

Innovation is spread when a solution which is implemented and has created value in one situation, is implemented and creates value somewhere new. Spreading is different from implementing because implementing is only about the process from development to entry into service. Spreading also differs from scaling, because scaling is taking something that is successfully implemented in one part of an organisation, and introducing it in several places within the same organisation with the same leadership.

GUIDE TO SPREADING INNOVATION

Use COI's guide to spreading innovation when you are ready to move on to spreading your innovation. Find it at www.coi.dk/spreadinginnovation.

On the basis of insights from research and practice, COI has developed its guide to spreading innovation to help public sector workplaces to share their own innovations and to re-use others'. The guide contains six phases with associated tools to assist in structuring dialogues along the way. You can find it here and share your innovation with others.



The guidebook is a helping hand for conducting evaluations of innovation in the public sector. The guidebook is aimed at management, consultants, practitioners in the field, in brief, anyone who works with making innovative initiatives happen.

The background for the guidebook was based in COI's three working communities, in which consultants and practitioners from municipalities, regions and state bodies participated. Many thanks to all who contributed!

