

# Evaluating public sector innovation in Denmark



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# Why evaluate?

There is a great potential in the evaluation of innovation.

Evaluations can:

1. help qualify the innovation process
2. retain knowledge and provide reasons for implementing changes during the innovation process
3. identify the value of the innovative interventions
4. make it easier for others to reuse the new solution.

We often find several purposes for evaluating innovation. The main purposes though, are to study and communicate the value, the innovation has created. At the same time, the evaluation is also used as a progress and management tool. The key ingredients here are systematic data collection and measurement. The tools ranging from qualitative methods such as interviews and observation, to quantitative methods based on numbers and statistics. Both approaches are important in evaluating innovation. The value can be found on different bottom lines: It may be to redeem political objectives, increase efficiency, achieve higher quality, enhance democracy or increase employee satisfaction. Evaluations contribute to decision-making on a qualified foundation while supporting learning along the way.

Evaluating innovation requires flexible evaluation methods, which can accommodate the complexity and changeability innovations so often contain. As innovation is per definition something new, and the path to that is normally not known in advance. In addition, innovation processes undergo alterations, causing the end objective to move along the way. There is also a need to get started quickly and often to create quick results. All these elements make it difficult to use traditional evaluation methods.

## DEFINITION OF 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 organization or methods of communicating with external parties.

# Two fields crossing paths

The two fields exhibit rather different mindsets that can be difficult to reconcile. However the two mindsets can fertilize each other.

Our work with experts and practitioners in both fields has shown us that:

- Innovators dream of evaluators exhibiting and practicing a more open and flexible approach to evaluation especially in the early stages of the innovation process.
- Evaluators dream of innovators exhibiting and practicing more curiosity towards defining a purpose and potential effects.

Together the innovators and evaluators can enable each other to have a bigger degree of systematic approach, focus and forward direction in the innovation processes.

**The National Centre for Public Innovation in Denmark aims to**

- increase awareness that the two disciplines are interdependent
- enable evaluation capacity building amongst innovation practitioners in the public sector

**The evaluator tends to work:**

- retrospectively,
- in a linear manner,
- with a dedication to measuring

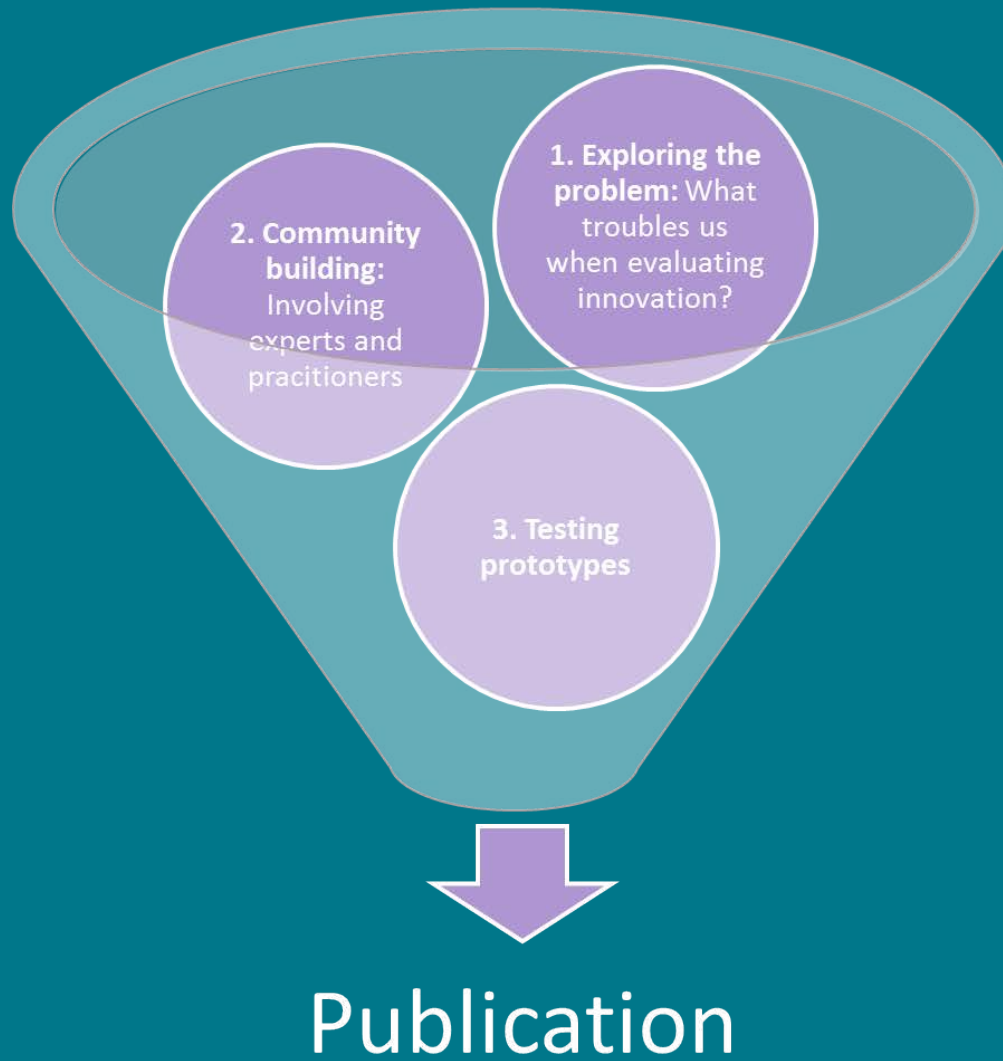
**Evaluation**

**Innovation**

**The innovator tends to work:**

- futurespectively,
- in a circular manner,
- with a dedication to process.

# Our approach



# PRODUCTS AND TOOLS

## Purpose:

To make it easier and more attractive to evaluate public sector innovation

## Target users:

Managers, innovation- and development consultants, practitioners on the "shop floor" of the public sector.

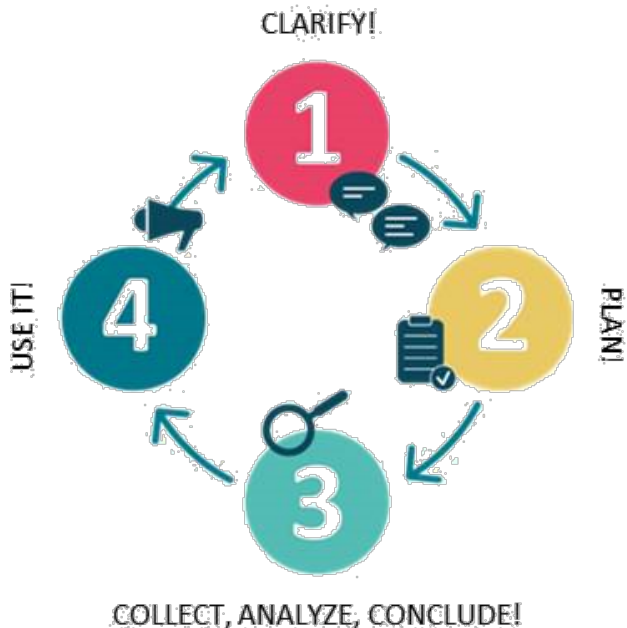
## The combined evaluation kit:

- 50 page **introduction** to evaluating innovation, providing a map of different theoretical approaches and overall guiding practical advice for evaluation. Written by professor Peter Dahler Larsen of Copenhagen University with an introduction by COI.
- 50 **page guidebook** aiding the practitioners through every step of the evaluation. Written by COI in collaboration with experts and practitioners in the fields of evaluation and innovation. See next page for overview of content.
- 10 **separate tools** that guide through specific actions from beginning to end when evaluating an innovative action.



# 4 PHASES WHEN EVALUATING INNOVATION

We could see that there was a need to reduce complexity. Because we know (from behavioral science) that we as humans better can grasp and take on tasks that are divided into smaller bites. Our suggestion for four small bites – phases – are:



## Why these phases?

### CLARIFY: Why evaluate?

Because anchoring an innovative project in the organization is a challenge. The dialogue should start early - and be returned to continually. We should connect innovation and evaluation in the beginning in order to ensure that they do not run off in different directions.

### PLAN: How to evaluate?

Because evaluation is not something that "just" happens. Because the evaluation must be structured and systematic and in order to be able to make a valid assessment of the innovative action.

### DO IT! Create knowledge!

Because we should describe and retain the knowledge we create during the innovation- and evaluation process. We use this to adjust and steer the way. To come to a conclusion on our evaluation: Does the innovation create value?

### USE IT! Use the knowledge

We need knowledge from the evaluation of the innovation for further work. How can this knowledge be spread, used for further learning and communicated to relevant users?

# Guidebook: Content



## Why evaluate innovation?

- Provide arguments and definitions



## What are the external requirements?

- Define levels: Evidence, tendencies, experiences



## Important terms:

- Validity, baselines and controlgroups



## Methods:

- Qualitative and quantitative

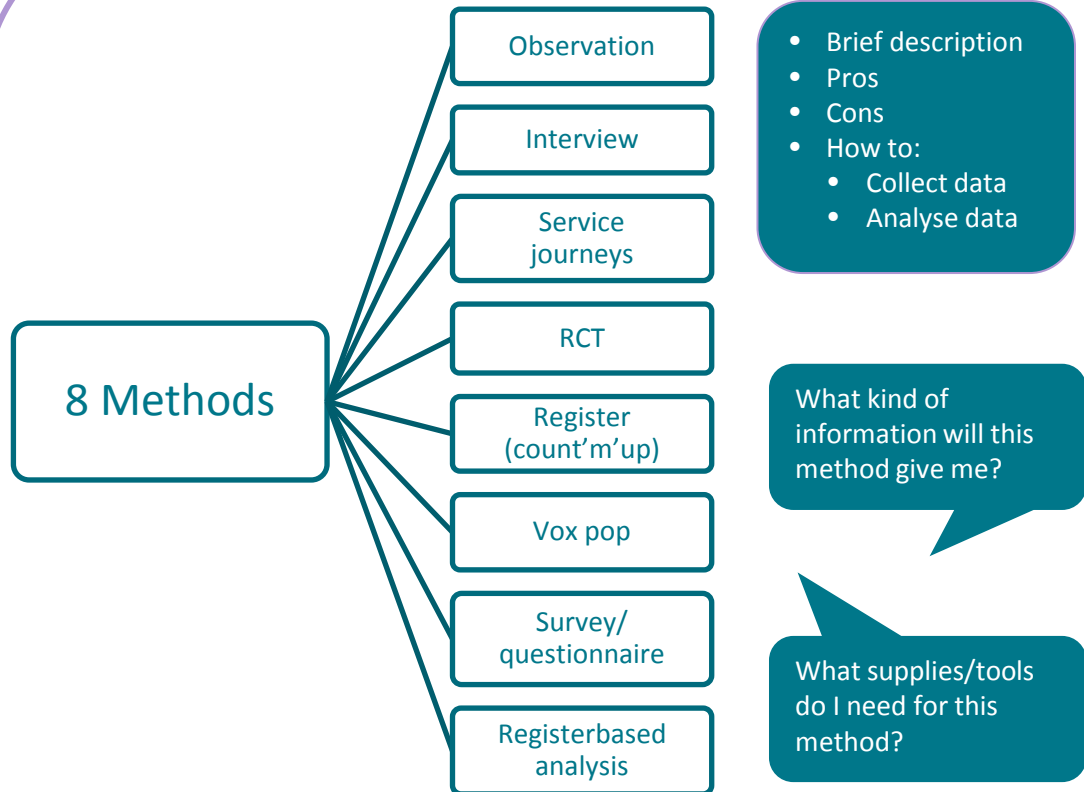
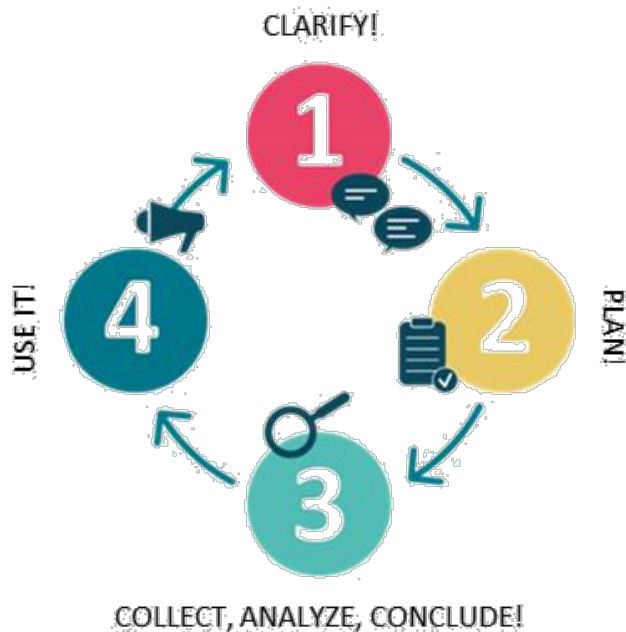


## Tools:

- Phases, questions and actions

# STRUCTURE & METHODS

The 4 phases:





# CLARIFY!

## CLARIFY! helps you:

- to clarify and balance expectations for the evaluation with the management and collaborating parties
- to clarify and consider the needs of those receiving the evaluation
- to clarify how evaluation and innovation should be coupled.



# PLAN!

## PLAN! helps you:

- to plan value, success criteria and indicators
- to plan and select a base for comparison
- to plan and specify roles and responsibilities
- to plan and choose the methods that are most appropriate for you to use.



# COLLECT, ANALYZE, CONCLUDE!

**COLLECT, ANALYZE, CONCLUDE!** helps you:

- to describe the knowledge you have gained for each of the methods used
- to conclude across the methods: What value has your innovation created?



# USE IT!

## USE IT! helps you:

- to get your new knowledge in to the game
- Management: What are the next steps?
- Learning: What have you learned?
- Documentation and spreading: Who ought to know?



# Ressources



Our tool kit is available for download – in Danish:  
[coi.dk/evaluering](http://coi.dk/evaluering) .

We tweet in Danish:  
[@offentliginno](https://twitter.com/offentliginno)

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