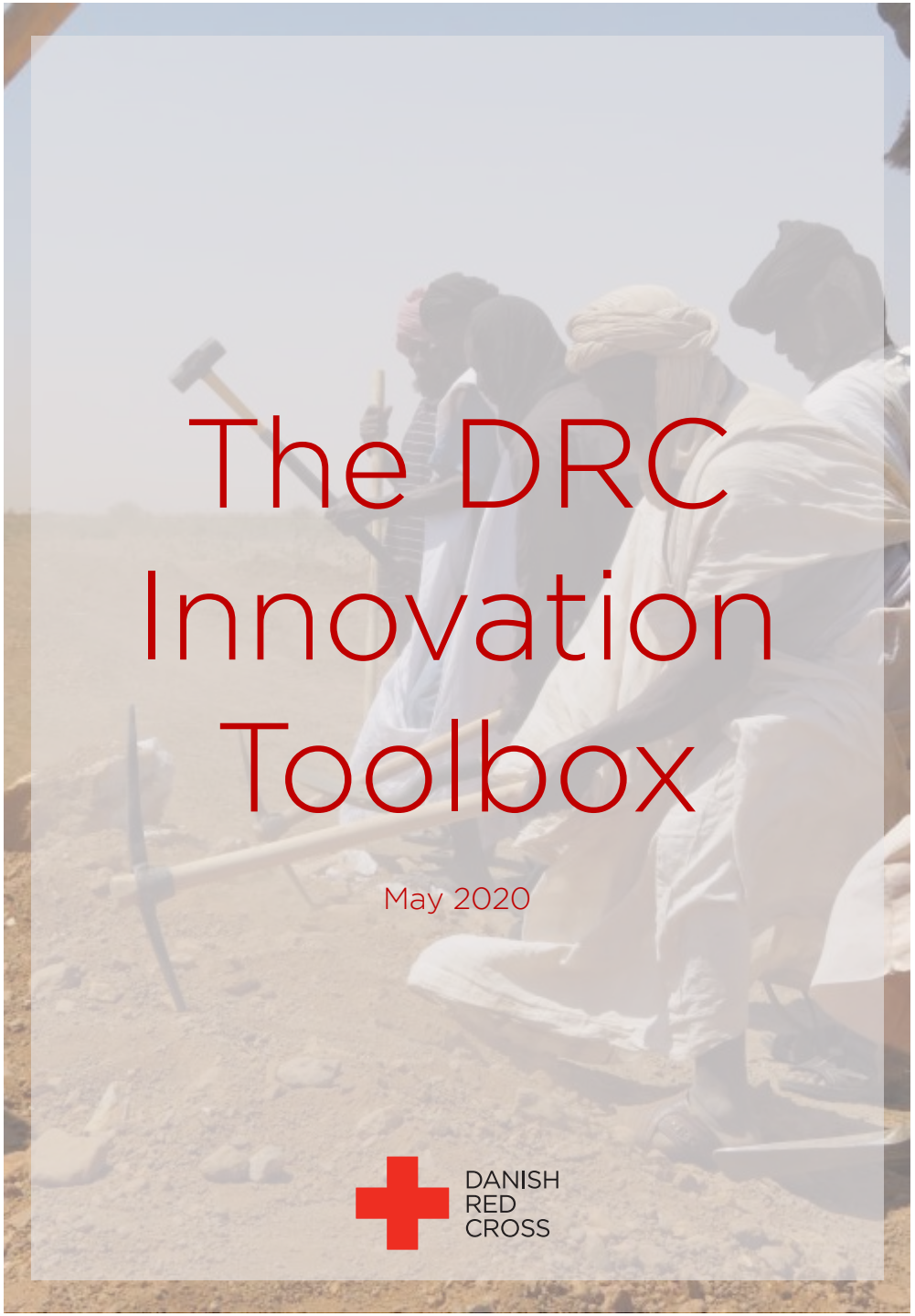

The DRC Innovation Toolbox

May 2020

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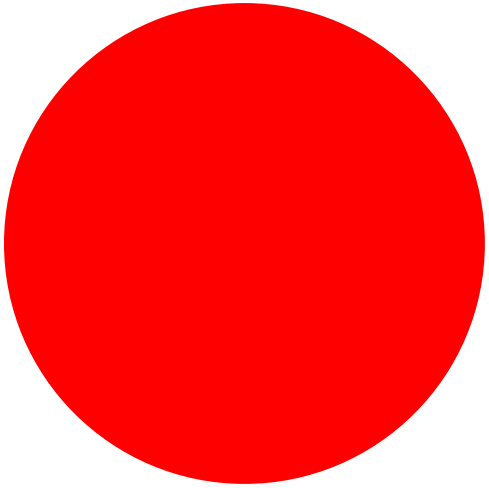
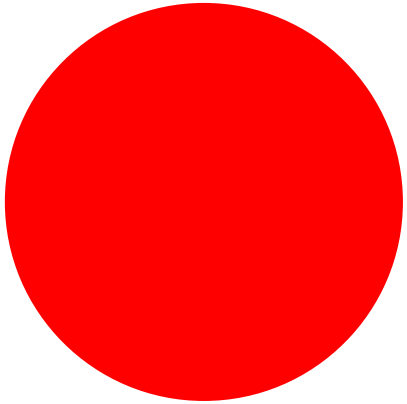
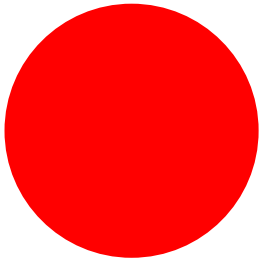




This toolbox is the result of the collaboration between DRC, DareDisrupt and Quercus Group between October 2019 and April 2020, managed by DRC. A big thank you to all the country teams, the technical advisors and management, the DRC Head of Innovation and Head of Digitalisation who have been instrumental in shaping and developing this toolbox. A special thank you goes to the DRC country teams and the teams in Kenya Red Cross, Malawi Red Cross and Ethiopia Red Cross for hosting and dedicating a considerable amount of time to the process, contributing to making this toolbox as relevant as possible. Any questions or requests to the toolbox can be directed to the international DRC Innovation Lead.

Introduction



This toolbox has been developed to offer an easily accessible and relevant set of guidelines and tools on innovation for DRC staff and partners. It was developed as part of the processes of DRC innovation capacity assessment and capacity building. During the assessment, the challenge of how understanding and knowing how to do innovation within the DRC was identified as a key barrier. This toolbox is a response to this particular challenge. However, it may also be used by partners and anyone who may find it helpful.

Please note that this is the first version of a DRC innovation toolbox. It will be updated periodically as we gain more understanding of how the process works, and which tools are most useful for us in our work.

Despite common perceptions, and despite its iterative nature and the fact that all innovations are different, successful innovation often follows certain ways of working, structures and processes. Furthermore, for an innovation to succeed, substantial investments in time and other resources are needed. These investments need to be well-considered and innovation processes need to be made as effective as possible in order to increase the likelihood of success (in the form of improved outcomes).

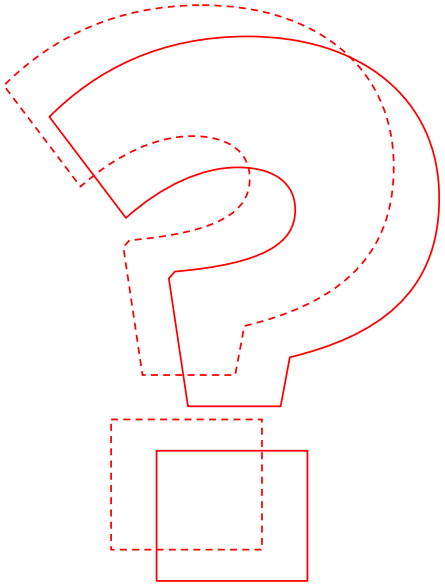
This toolbox is, to a large extent, an adapted version of publicly available innovation guides such as the Humanitarian Innovation Guide developed by the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) and elrha[1], the UN innovation guide by UNSSC, the corporate startup by Dan Toma, Esther Gones and Tendayi Viki, the Lean startup by Eric Reis, The Design Sprint developed at Google by Jake Knapp etc. It has been further informed by the innovation capacity assessment of the DRC conducted between October 2019 and February 2020 (see more in the accompanying Innovation Capability and Assessment Report). The guidance, tools and processes have been selected and tailored to the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relevant to the DRC and its partners.

Learning to innovate is made easier by having guides and toolboxes, but the result is much deeper when theory is partnered with practical experience, and for that you need to practice. Going forward, the DRC will continue to perfect its approach to innovation management by, for example, developing its own templates and SOPs for the innovation process where relevant. Thus, at this time, many different tools and templates may in fact only be a temporary arrangement; however, they offer a foundation of guidance on good practice at the different stages of the innovation process.

Many of the tools in this toolbox resembles techniques commonly used in the humanitarian and development sector where we are used to working with needs-driven and participatory approaches and where we always have the beneficiary at the core of everything we do and sustainable solutions are of essence. We therefore believe these innovation tools will be relatively easy for you to plug and play. For any questions or concerns regarding the tools, the Innovation Lead is there to support you.

1. Humanitarian Innovation Guide available at: https://higuide.elrha.org/

How to use this toolbox



There are different ways of making use of this toolbox, including:

- You can **follow each phase** of the innovation process from search and ideation phases all the way to the scaling phase;
- You can skip some of the earlier phases and adapt others, if you are, for example, planning on adapting an already existing solution into a new context. You should, however, **make sure that you have access to the required outputs in the previous phases** as they ensure the quality of the process.
- You can also **use the tools in the toolbox in your everyday work**, for example by incorporating scouting and ideation in regular programme work, or by incorporating a pilot into a larger programme. For this, refer to the guidance and tools in the relevant innovation phase.

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Glossary of key innovation terms

- **End user** – those who will be the primary user of the tool (may not be the primary beneficiary)
- **(An) Innovation** - something new or different introduced
- **(An) Invention** - a new, useful process, machine, improvement, etc., that did not exist previously and that is recognized as the product of some unique intuition or genius, as distinguished from ordinary mechanical skill or craftsmanship.
- **Innovation** - the act of innovating; introduction of new things or methods
- **Innovation activity/Innovation initiative** – any activity spent time on in order to directly or indirectly generate innovation; a concrete pilot, project, test or scaling; may also be activities aimed at strengthening enabling factors such as Hackathons, trainings etc.
- **Iteration** - a problem-solving method in which a succession of solutions are launched, each building on the one preceding, and the learnings therefrom are used to achieve a desired degree of accuracy
- **Minimum viable product (MVP) or solution** - the simplest version of a product or solution (and least expensive) that contains all the core components that have been identified as necessary and can therefore be piloted effectively
- **Pilot** – an innovation project focusing on a creating, building, testing, mobilizing and scaling a specific invention or innovation
- **Enabling factor** – all the factors not directly related to one pilot but needed for innovation to flourish in general; the enabling factors are visualised in the figure The innovation Management system on page nine in the DRC Innovation Management Guide
- **Portfolio** – the collected sum of pilot projects (not innovation activities that strengthen the enabling factors); the portfolio often also visualises the invested resources and expected outcomes from the pilots
- **Prototype** - a concept or a solution that demonstrates the functionality of the innovation, but does not have to work at all
- **A proof-of-concept** - evidence, typically deriving from an experiment or pilot project, which demonstrates that a design concept, business proposal, etc. is feasible
- **Pipeline** – the portfolio of pilot projects divided into stages in the innovation process
- **Innovation management** – the discipline of building and maintaining a functioning and effective innovation management system; see the DRC Innovation Management Guide for further explanation of an innovation management system

What is innovation for the DRC?

For the DRC, innovation is about doing something that is new to the context in question and that is expected to create greater value that continuing with 'business as usual', and ultimately, to reach improved operational outcomes. Innovation is not equal to invention, but rather a wider term referring to new tools, methods and processes. It also covers a wide spectrum of solutions from incremental improvement, to applying an existing solution in a new context, all the way to radical solutions that have the potential for bringing about structural change in society.

In the DRC, the current provisional definition of innovation is*:

To **create, try and/or scale** something new in a specific context, in order to seek **improved outcomes**.

The DRC's innovation is primarily focused on three priority areas: health, forecast-based action in disaster-response and management, and innovative financing.

Guiding principles for innovation at DRC

Innovation at the DRC is guided by the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality.

In addition, the Principles for Innovation and Technology in Development function as best-practice guidelines and the principles listed in the document guide innovation in the movement. These Principles were developed by UNICEF in collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SIDA, USAID, Global Pulse, UNDP, WFP, and UNHCR. They are the following:

1. Design with the User
2. Understand the Existing Ecosystem
3. Design for Scale
4. Build for Sustainability
5. Be Data-Driven
6. Use Open Standards, Open Data, Open Source, Open Innovation
7. Reuse and Improve
8. Do No Harm
9. Be Collaborative

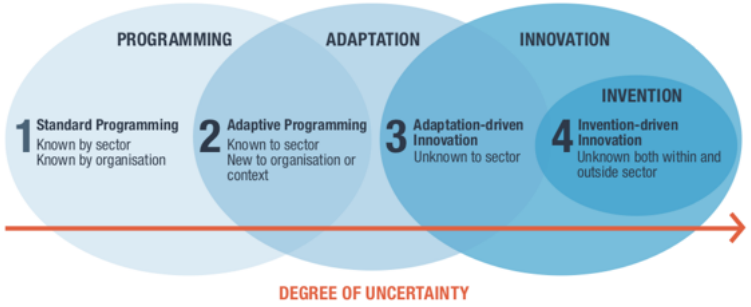
* An organisational definition is to be established during 2020

How is innovation different from standard programming?

In most standard programming, the causal pathway between the activities and the outputs and outcomes are often well-understood and often spelled out in a theory of change. They are based on experience, research and/or evaluations. In an innovation process - since we are doing something new, experimenting - the results are unknown and we might fail. It should be noted that creating something new does not require the invention of something completely new to the world. An innovative solution might very well have been tested elsewhere and proven successful. Applying a tested tool in a new context, if the parameters are significantly different, can still be deemed innovative.

When working with innovation, although we might have ideas about potential results and should create a theory of change around it, we rely on unproven hypotheses until we test them. Therefore, when embarking on an innovation process, we are often faced with the unknown and do not have a guarantee that the idea for improvement will work and achieve the expected results. Instead, we would aim to learn and readjust.[2]

It might sometimes be difficult to distinguish between innovation and standard programming, as the degree to which an initiative is known to have certain results is often more of a continuum than an either/or situation. As the image below demonstrates, in 'adaptive programming', an organisation adapts a solution used by others in the sector. In 'adaptation-driven innovation', a solution that is new to the sector is brought in and adapted to a specific area in the sector. 'Invention-driven innovation' refers to creating something completely new that has not previously been tried out in other sectors, and this method therefore comes with the greatest degree of risk and uncertainty.[3]



2. Obrecht, A. and T. Warner, A. (2016, p. 17-18) 'More than just luck: Innovation in humanitarian action'. HIF/ ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.
3. Ibid.

Different types of innovation

Below is a non-exhaustive list of six different types of innovations. The purpose is to showcase that innovations can be many different things. Please note, that in practice, what happens is that most innovations include several elements, an innovative tool may also incur a new type of service or result in an re-invention of a process etc.

Product innovation

A product innovation refers to a tangible product or offering and may include a completely new product or an improvement of an existing one

Think of an example: Compact food refers to a range of products such as fortified biscuits, compressed food bars and nutrient dense pastes- that are transported easily and can be consumed immediately. These products enable rapid humanitarian assistance without the demanding process of logistics of procuring, delivering and storing traditional commodities such as bagged foods in remote and physically insecure areas.

Process innovation

A process combines the skills, technologies and structures that are used to produce products or provide services. Process innovation generally refers to the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method and is often done to save time, money, or to deliver better service.

Think of an example: The forecasted based action approach is re-inventing the process for emergency response, triggering anticipatory reactions BEFORE a crisis rather than responding to crisis when it has happened.

Service innovation

Service innovation refers to a new or improved service concept. It can be for example a new way to interact with beneficiaries and stakeholders, a new distribution channel, a system that improves the delivery process etc.

Think of an example: The Safe Delivery app is a smartphone application that provides skilled birth attendants with direct and instant access to evidence-based and up-to-date clinical guidelines on Basic Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care.

Business model innovation

Business model innovation is a change in what and how value is delivered. A business model consists of many things such as distribution channels, target recipients, resources used, financing models, value proposition etc.

Think of an example: The Danfoss Life link project included a new business model where beneficiaries paid a price pr. water tapped from the pump rather than having the maintenance of the water pump financed by centralised resources.

Technology innovation

Technological innovation involves new or improved technology, such as new type of machinery or digital tool. Incorporating technology into a process or service may enable automation, lower marginal cost, more efficient use of resources, increased accessibility, more data driven services etc.

Think of an example: The emergency communication tool provided by Linkaiders is based on technology where devices communicate directly with and through each other. This enable emergency responders to communicate to and from areas where no other communication infrastructure is currently working.

Social Innovation

Social innovation refers to seeking improved solutions and ways to address societal challenges. All the aforementioned innovation types can be considered to be social innovations if their objective is to create social change.

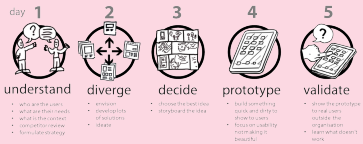
Think of an example: Social innovation can refer to solutions, such as new ways of organising shelters, or more systemic approaches that try to create change at a more structural level, such as cash-based programming.

Different models for innovation

In addition to the DRC process, you might have heard of other methods, models and ways of approaching innovation. Some of your partners might be using Design Thinking, Agile, the Lean Startup Model, Sprint or another approach. Don't let this scare you! Many of the models have similar elements, are overlapping and are most likely compatible and can be aligned with the DRC process model. In case of any questions, you can contact the Innovation Lead.

What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking is an iterative and problem-focused process that puts emphasis on understanding the user, challenging assumptions and redefining problems. It has five phases: emphasize; define; ideate; prototype; and test. Design Thinking makes use of a collection of different innovation tools, such as brainstorming and visualisation. Design Thinking methods are often used in innovation processes to generate ideas.

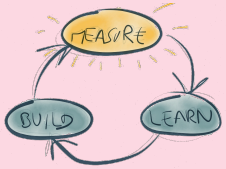


What is Sprint?

The Sprint is a methodology often done in a 3-5-day workshop during which the participants quickly create ideas, develop and hone them into concepts, create prototypes to test things like the feasibility, usability and desirability of the innovations. The name annotates the core idea of the methodology – it is about testing something, fast! In the same way as Design Thinking, Sprint emphasises ideation and testing of these. There are different Sprint approaches, like the Google Sprint, Design Sprint etc.

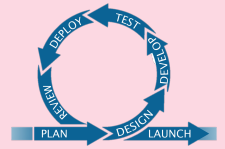
What is Lean Startup?

Lean Startup is a methodology for developing products and businesses with the aim of shortening product development cycles and swiftly testing the viability of business models. Lean Startup combines experimentation driven by hypothesis, iterative ways of developing and testing products and validation of learning. Lean Startup as a model is focused on the development and building of ideas generated.



What is Agile?

Agile refers to methodologies used originally for agile software development. Scrum is one of the most widely used Agile methodologies, but you may also have heard of methods such as KanBan, SAFe or LeSS. It is essentially a way of working iteratively in self-organising teams to move quickly and adapt to change, which has informed the ways of organizing work also in some parts of the non-governmental sector. In Agile, the sprints are also centred around frequent test and feedback of a proposed solution with the intended users/beneficiaries. However, this methodology is more often used in the execution phase of a defined solution. The methodology allow teams to timely change/adapt/modify as per feedback and thereby they avoid losing time and money by continuing down non-value creating paths and discovering it too late.



The DRC innovation process

This toolbox is built up around the DRC innovation process model. The model outlines: a process which innovation initiatives and projects go through; a clarification of roles and responsibilities; and indicators of progress and quality in the process. On the following pages you may, for each of the phases in the process, read guidance on how to manage activities in this particular phase, including:

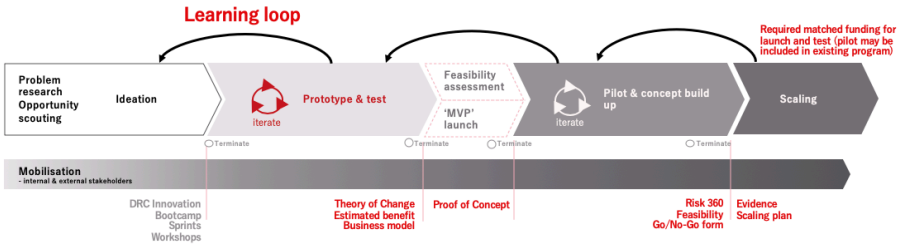
- **What** the activities are
- **Why** they are important
- **When** to perform such activities
- **Who** may be involved
- **How** to do it
- **Tools** to use
- **Output** expected from each phase

You do not always have to follow each step
The innovation process will not always be followed from start to end. By working with partners, the DRC may, on many occasions, only contribute to parts of the innovation process. This may occur when external partners have already invented a new solution and the DRC is onboarded for the feasibility assessment and testing in live context. On other occasions, the DRC may contribute with knowledge and input at an ideation process, but later leave it up to the other partners to take the ideas further.

Regardless of when in the process the DRC is involved, the quality of previous and later process steps need to be considered, along with who will carry them forward, in order to ensure maximum impact of the activities engaged in. The Innovation Lead should always be informed when new innovation initiatives are launched to ensure appropriate support, coordination and learning.

The scope of reporting depend on the innovation
After each phase, there are listed expected "output" to ensure that the innovations fulfil the expected quality to proceed. The scope of work, developing this output and documentation, will depend on the scope and newness of the innovation. That is to say, if you are, for example, re-inventing an internal reporting form by simply adding a question that may hand you some more useful data for decision making. Then, the output generated such as ToC, risk assessment etc. will simply be you reflecting on these topics and perhaps writing a few bullets down in an e-mail. If you are completely re-inventing the way you run programs within a certain field, affecting you relationship with partners and stakeholders, require you to acquire new skills and competencies, using new technologies etc. then your output will need to be compiled in more extensive reporting. It is up to the integrity of the project holder to select an appropriate level. However the Innovation Lead is always available for advise and may also ask for more extensive documentation when appropriate. Guidance for what questions to consider in each gate can be found in the listed tools and forms in this toolbox.

Formats for the different outputs, at the different gates, will be developed (planned for 2020) and will be linked with existing tools and processes to the extent possible.



The model visualisation is linear but the process most often is iterative and projects may also go back (several phases) if needed.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Why is MEL important in innovation?

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action in general is crucial to secure timely and appropriate prioritization of resources, and to improve performance and the impact generated. For innovation activities, it is even more important that continuous and suitable monitoring is undertaken, due to the uncertainty of outcome of innovation activities.

Learning is also an integral part of any innovation process. At its core, innovation is about starting with uncertainty, and trying to do something new. With continuous testing of your innovation, you will learn, adapt and iterate. It is therefore important to prioritise learning across the innovation process. The different outputs in each phase will help you to capture learnings.

Note: For further information, tools and guidance regarding how to continuously build evidence, and on capturing and using learnings throughout the innovation process, see The *Humanitarian Innovation Guide*

You should establish a **baseline** at the beginning of any innovation journey so that you can assess and document the value creation or improved outcomes that the innovation may bring about. This can be based on either primary or secondary data or a combination thereof.

Keep in mind that **any innovation MEL activities should we proportional and appropriate to your particular innovation initiative**. For example, an innovation initiative that seeks incremental improvements needs a leaner baseline and MEL process than an initiative seeking to create radical innovation. In the latter case, a baseline might be difficult to establish and more uncertainty exists in the process itself.

In the following two pages you can read more about how to monitor your innovation project. This is done by looking at the quality of output in each step of the innovation process and the likelihood of success of the innovation project. These considerations will help you to monitor the progression of a specific innovation project and guide decisions of whether to continue the project or not.

Note: Monitoring and evaluation of innovation will be further developed during spring and summer 2020.

Source: Warner, Alexandra T. (2017): Working paper on Monitoring Humanitarian Innovation. HIF/ALNAP.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Quality of output at each phase in the process

The innovation activities within the DRC are measured by the quality of output under each phase of the process. The purpose of quality indicators is to ensure that the output generated at each gate in the innovation process are of high quality and are likely to lead to overall success of the innovation, rather than merely being a tick-box exercise. The quality indicators will show us if we are managing the projects well.

Within each phase, there are expected outputs that need to be in place at the end of one phase before moving on to the next. It is the responsibility of the Country Manager/Head of Region and delegate(s) to ensure the quality of the output in each phase. However, the Thematic Lead, Innovation Lead and the P&C team will also have an overview of the outputs, and can advise when increased quality is needed in coordination with relevant technical advisors.

The quality indicators for each gate of the process are the following:

Gate 1

- The problem and the users' needs being addressed are accurately and well-identified, and backed up by evidence
- The innovative solution/tool/service is described with clear design criteria
- The ToC has been developed and specifies clear indicators for success and/or hypothesizes to validate proof of concept
- The project plan includes clear roles and responsibilities as well as estimated resources vs potential benefits as well as a realistic time plan
- The business model takes into account all relevant elements of the Social Business Model Canvas

Gate 2

- The live tests are conducted in a context that is identical or significantly similar to the context in which the innovation will be used
- The test has shown clear usability, and indicated value and/or appreciation from the intended users
- The ToC and Social Business Model Canvas is re-evaluated and updated if needed
- The pathway(s) to scale and the DRC's future role are identified

Gate 3

- The risk assessment addresses risk of failure as well as potential security, reputational and brand, financial, legal, political, relational, beneficiary-related, and employee risks.
- The feasibility assessment is conducted objectively and legitimately
- The ToC and Social Business Model Canvas are re-evaluated and updated if needed
- Considerations of pathways to scale are outlined
- Funding have been allocated for launching the pilot

Gate 4

- Documented successful launch of the innovation in real life setting
- The comparable value of the innovative solution/approach/service/tool is backed up by objective evidence
- There is a clear and attractive explanation for the concept of the innovative solution/approach/service/tool
- There is plan for scaling including incentives and disincentives to adoption as well as planned ways to facilitate uptake

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

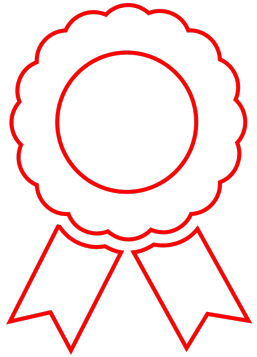
Output success at each phase

The purpose of monitoring output success is to monitor the projects and activities in the process on the likelihood of success. The output success indicators will show us if we are doing the right things.

As the Monitoring humanitarian innovation report by Alexandra T. Warner also states, "indicators of success are unique to each innovation and thus need to be developed for each project". The indicators for success are defined in the draft ToC in phase one. The indicators of success may be formulated as hypotheses that are further confirmed or non-confirmed at each stage as the initiative evolves. Below are some examples of themes, for which indicators/hypotheses of success may be formulated:

- Partner commitment/buy in
- Indication for user adoption/acceptance
- Improvement of humanitarian performance
- Efficiency gains
- Problem relevance
- Validation of solution functionality
- Quality and reliability of solution
- Legal and governmental acceptance
- Fit with current structures, norms and procedures
- Ease of implementation

Some indicators for success may require a baseline to compare against. In some cases, previous baselines and endlines may be leveraged for developing such baselines. When reaching the pilot phase, if relevant, more precise baselines should be developed by collecting data from e.g. control groups not offered the innovative solution, secondary data, or by other means.



How to fund innovation activities

The DANIDA SP funds for innovation, coordinated by the Innovation Lead, are primarily used to finance the three priority areas for innovation and their activities in the beginning of the innovation process (from phase one to phase three). As soon as an innovation project enters the piloting phase, it is expected to be incorporated in existing programmes and/or be financed by a separate project application. The SP innovation funds may still be used to fund e.g. technical capacity development, research and building evidence etc. in relation to an innovation pilot project, but it needs to be matched by other funds for the launch and running of the pilot project. Besides from the SP funds, DRC should continue to identify innovation funding and partnership opportunities from traditional donors and organisations as well as from foundations, funds, and through private sector partnerships.

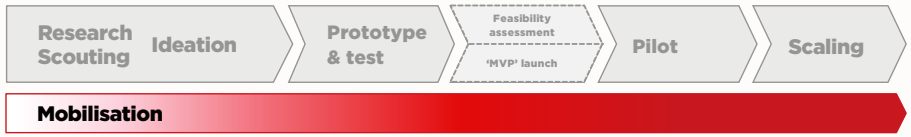
About the internal DRC Innovation Pool

Some of the SP innovation funds are put into an internal innovation pool, to which anyone in the DRC can apply to fund an innovation activity. The purpose of these activities is to learn the discipline of innovation as well as to start initiatives exploring new opportunities. Useful outputs generated during these activities will either be fed into the existing portfolio within Forecast-Based Action, health innovation, and/or new innovative financing mechanisms and business models, or incorporated into non-innovation programmes and projects where relevant.

- See appendix A for a description of the call for applications for the internal DRC innovation pool from 2019

The framework of the international innovation pool is still work in progress and the final format is still to be determined. Please contact the Innovation Lead for any questions or support.

Process phase: Mobilisation



What?

Mobilisation is a crucial element across the innovation process. Mobilisation refers to activities directed at engaging potential and actual partners and other relevant stakeholders in the innovation process. These could be:

- **Problem holders**: those who primarily experience the problem
- **Users**: those who will have 'hands-on' engagement with a product or service solution
- **People affected**: those who are frequently vulnerable and have a significant stake in the problem and solution, whether or not they are users of the product or service
- **Humanitarian practitioners**: those with relevant mandates or specialisms for this area, ideally from a range of organisations
- **Technical experts**: those who have specific expertise in the problem area, as well as those from other sectors or industries who might bring useful knowledge or perspectives to the process
- **Implementing partner(s)**: Local actors such as Host National Societies, other NGOs, private sector partners, or public organisations that may act, implement and launch services and products in the communities where pilots are launched.

It is important to stress that 'Mobilisation' or collaboration is very relationship-driven. The development of embodied knowledge, complex skills, situational awareness and reflexivity cannot be taught; they are learnable (in practice). However, tools can make that journey easier.

Why?

From previous experience of working with innovation in the DRC and among its partners, it has been shown that a key success criterion is a constructive and trust-based collaboration with local community partners, users, and external partners. Piloting together with a local partner or stakeholder is a way to make sure that the innovation approach addresses the right problem, including the root causes of the problem, the stakeholder ecosystem, the (different and potentially clashing) interests, the potential tensions and barriers, the motivations and cultural aspects. Working with the local community minimises the risk of 'solution dropping' and optimises the potential of the innovation to address the real problems. It creates the strongest possible local support, commitment and ownership, even before the solution is identified for later scaling. The earlier the local partners are involved in the innovation-process, the more likely is the relevance and sustainability of the final solution, the more valuable the collaboration becomes, and the less frustration and confusion occurs. In other words, innovation is a two-way street and requires eye-height to ensure that the DRC's innovation approach is not misunderstood as "we know better" among local partners, but welcomed as a "let's co-create for the benefit of local problem solving" support to local communities.

When?

Mobilisation of relevant actors should be a key component of all the different stages of the innovation process. Please also refer to the "Who?" section in each of the phases for guidance on what to take into account.

How to mobilise?

How to mobilise implementing partners and the local community

- Collaborating with Host National Societies is the core of the DRC's activities. In the piloting phase, the HNS would typically be the main implementing partner. Even if the DRC may occasionally be the main driver of innovation activities in the early phases, such as research, scouting and ideation, it is recommended to **involve local partners as early as possible in the process.**
- The most important factor to succeeding with innovation is **a trust-based relationship** between the DRC and local partners. Innovation is, in essence, an experiment with an uncertain outcome, and thus trust is crucial. You should invest time and other resources in the early phases in the building the relationship and commitment among local partners. The right strategy depends on the particular context, but you might, for instance, invest in capacity development of local partners in order to allow them to innovate, for example by sharing knowledge and inspiration.
- Tools and concepts for innovation may not work the same way everywhere in the world. Hence, cultural aspects and different learning styles and tools should be considered from time to time when working with local partners and stakeholders.

How to mobilise users

- When applicable to your innovation, and when possible and ethically wise, you should involve potential users to ensure the sufficient understanding of users' needs, their response the innovation, the context, challenges, etc. Always make sure to manage expectations of the mature solution and the outputs expected.
- You can use tools like empathy maps if it is not possible to access users directly. If possible, it is also better to test a prototype or a minimum viable product or solution rather than simply asking users what they think. Important information that was not recognised in advance is often revealed when users can try out the solution.
- If relevant, you can make use of the Lead User method as a way to mobilise support and adoption by involve those individuals with the highest probability of engagement. Lead Users are usually the most affected users, and are people who "are invested enough to modify existing solutions to make them more fit-for-purpose. For example, those living in an IDP camp that have made a modification to the shelter that they have been provided with". To pursue the Lead User method, you start by identifying who the Lead Users are and what characterises them before involving them, preferably as early as possible in the innovation process[4].

How to mobilize external partners

- Since innovation involves working with new and novel approaches, tools and services, you and your organisation as a whole are not expected to posess all the required capabilities, skills and expertise. External partners can therefore bring valuable experience, knowledge, skills, and perspectives to a certain problem.
- External partners often also serve as a vital muscle across the innovation process, particularly when reaching the scaling phase. In order to tap into these benefits, partners need to be identified and committed.
- You should include your search for potential partners in the search phase.
- Remember that the most valuable partners may not be in your immediate network and thus you need to make sure to research and make contact with a diversity of people.

4. The Humanitarian Guide to Innovation (https://higuide.elrha.org/enabling-factors/)

Remember to sell your idea

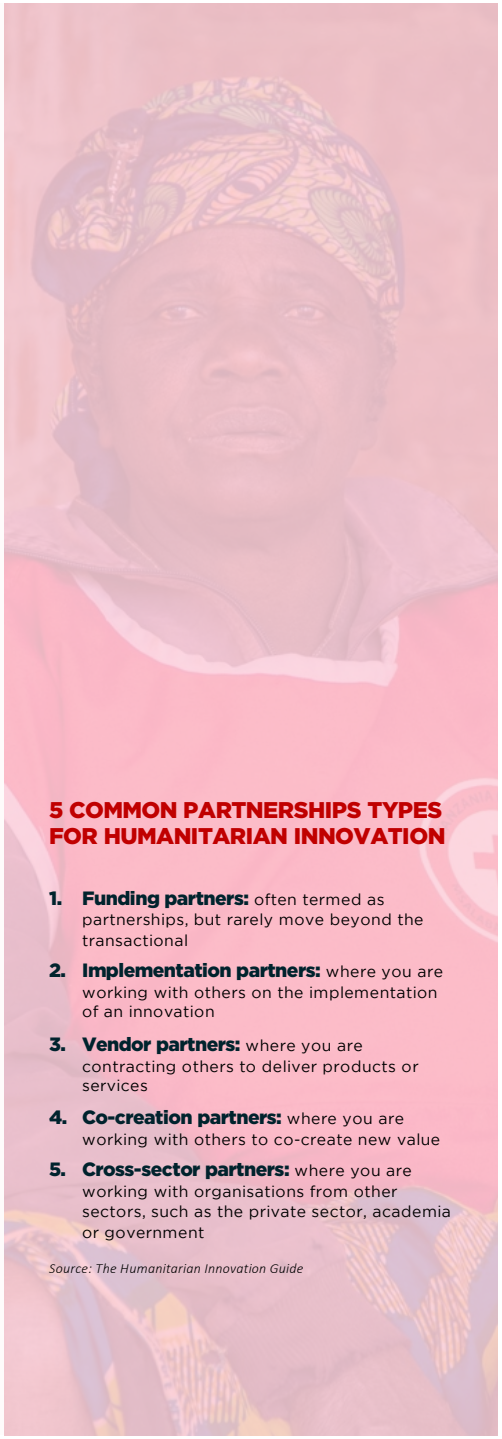
In order to mobilise others to support, embrace or participate in the innovation process, you need to be able to promote your idea. It is not enough only to have strong and scientific evidence; you also need to convey and "sell" it successfully. "Some people and organisations will need to see statistical quantitative data; think of this as 'head' evidence. Others need compelling stories, from case studies or media coverage; think of this as 'heart' evidence. [...] When building up your evidence base, make sure that you are getting the right balance between the two types of evidence – ensuring that you have "key facts" to provide statistical evidence of impact, as well as good stories to create an emotional and psychological connection."[5]

Use the UN Innovation Guide tool and template for Innovation Storytelling to select the right types of communication approaches for various stakeholders to gain buy-in and make more strategic decisions.[6]

Keep in mind that:

1. In recent years, a myriad of user-cantered design methods have been developed and used. Many guides and tools are openly available online. Most of these tools and methods were not created for working with **vulnerable and potentially traumatised people**, and so extra thought and care needs to be taken in designing appropriate activities, on when these are undertaken and who is engaged, and the support structures put in place.[7]
2. Allocate for **resources to facilitate the management of stakeholders** and expectations ,and remember to **reward** the individuals who take the role of **mitigators of unintended consequences**. The role of mitigator is often a thankless one, and anyone taking this position needs the support of colleagues and leaders.

5. The Humanitarian Guide to Innovation (https://higuide.elrha.org/enabling-factors/)
6. Downloadable from the UN Innovation Guide at https://un-innovation.tools/ (the Guide is free-to-use but you need to login to access the tools)
7. he Humanitarian Guide to Innovation (https://higuide.elrha.org/enabling-factors/)



5 COMMON PARTNERSHIPS TYPES FOR HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION

1. **Funding partners:** often termed as partnerships, but rarely move beyond the transactional
2. **Implementation partners:** where you are working with others on the implementation of an innovation
3. **Vendor partners:** where you are contracting others to deliver products or services
4. **Co-creation partners:** where you are working with others to co-create new value
5. **Cross-sector partners:** where you are working with organisations from other sectors, such as the private sector, academia or government

Source: The Humanitarian Innovation Guide

Tools for mobilisation

Here is a set of tools and methods to consider for this cross-cutting phase. Please keep in mind that many more exist. Make sure that the tools you use are compatible with the type of innovation and the context that you are in. Refer to the Innovation Lead for advice if necessary.

Stakeholder mapping

- You can use the DYI People and Connections Map (in appendix B) for visualising exactly **who the relevant stakeholders** are for your innovation, and how they relate to your work and to each other:
- If you want to do a broader and more open **mapping of actors in your region**, you may use the Use the UN Innovation worksheet for Ecosystem Analysis (in appendix C) to identify the actors in your innovation ecosystem and determine their comparative advantage. It can also be downloaded in the UN Innovation Guide. The Guide is free-to-use but you need to login to access the tools).

Building partnerships

- Use the UN Innovation Guide worksheet **Prioritising and Selecting Partners**, included in appendix D, in order to assess and select the right partners.
- Use the UN Innovation Guide partnership tool ***Define a Value Proposition*** work sheet included in appendix E, in order to define the value proposition you offer your partner.
- You can make use of the DRC **project agreement** when setting up a collaboration.

Understanding and exploring user's needs

- You may use the DRC User Journey Example (appendix F) to guide you into developing your own **user journey**
- You may use the personas work sheet (appendix G) to **further explore the characteristics of your target group**. It is a good idea to develop more than one persona of your target group since there are likely to be different interests, skills, dreams etc. even within the same target group.
- The Empathy Maps tool is a great workshop tool to **explore user needs** and gain a deeper understanding of users. You can use empathy mapping to refresh your team's understanding before an important decision, or to quickly synthesise your data directly after an observation session. Find step-by-step instructions here.

These are recommended tools but you do not have to use them all. Pick the tools recommended for the activity you are planning to perform

Who?

- The mobilisation phase involves a broad range of actors beyond the specific pilot project. In fact, anyone may contribute to the success of innovation by actively listening to stakeholders and partners on their thoughts and concerns, mitigating misunderstandings, and acting as advocates for the projects. Your stakeholder analysis will inform you who your stakeholders are.
- The technical adviser(s) at DRC HQ and in the field may give guidance and advice on how to collaborate with external partners if you have identified an interesting opportunity.

Process phase 1: Search and Ideate

What?

In this phase, you will search for opportunities, researching the problem you have identified, generate ideas for solutions and develop an initial concept and a plan that you will use in the following phases to test and iterate on the innovation.

In this phase, you will engage in some or all of the following activities:

- **Open scouting:** a set of both organised and casual activities aimed at gaining a broader perspective of the opportunities out there. It is an explorative search that looks at, developments in technologies, methods and ways of working, new actors, ideas and societal developments.
- **Understanding the problem:** identifying a problem to respond to, collecting and assessing readily available knowledge on the issue and context, diagnosing root causes, and properly framing the challenge. At this stage, more focused scouting can be used in a narrower sense as a systematic research of who might have tried to solve the problem before, what they have done and whether they have succeeded. It can also be used to find potential partners interested in collaborating with you.
- **Ideation** is a creative process in which individuals in collaboration or separately generate novel ideas for how to solve one or several problems.

Why?

Both scouting and problem recognition are often key to ensuring that we do not rush to the solution mode and end up coming with poor ideas that only address immediate needs, ignore new methods and tools or re-invent already existing solutions. They can help you to learn from those who have tried to solve the problem before and identify potential partners. Keep in mind that there is often an abundance of ideas for innovations. A systematic analysis should be done to ensure that the ideas you generate in the ideation phase are as relevant, impactful and sustainable as possible.

Scouting can open up your mind to new ways of looking at a problem and solutions or your context in general. For example, new technology might create opportunities for new types of solutions at a structural level that we might not be able to imagine by just looking at a problem and trying to come up with solutions to it.

How could you include research, scouting and ideation **in your daily work**?

When?

This is often the first phase of an innovation process, when you want to explore new ways of improving operations. It can also be a phase you return to later in the innovation process.

- **Research and scouting** – May be as simple as DRC management and staff attending conferences, meetings with external partners, reading trend reports, googling etc. which already occur. Only remember to keep your focus open for new opportunities that could align with your organisational- or operational "future thesis" and not only for the input you came for. As a leader you should encourage informal sharing sessions in your teams and in matrices, where inspired colleagues share what they have seen or heard. Existing baselines, endlines and evaluation reports may also include valuable insights on needs, trends and opportunities that with some focused work could be consolidated into key inspiration for new ideas.
- **Ideation** – Ideation could be included as part of your programme planning procedure as a way to open up for potential new and better way of solving known problems. An ideation session may vary in scope, the earlier you are in your programming process, and the less defined the focus of the project is, the more creative and novel solutions may be allowed. Therefore, you may also want to engage your team in open ideation sessions where a specific donor or funding opportunity might not yet be selected. For some programmes, ideation may even be part of the deliverable as a way of empowering beneficiaries and local partners in designing and identifying ways of solving important problems.

It is crucial that before engaging in ideation activities you invest time in scouting and problem recognition to avoid re-inventing solutions and to ensure that you generate the best possible ideas for innovation. Ideally, you should engage in open scouting for opportunities as part of your programme review and updates.

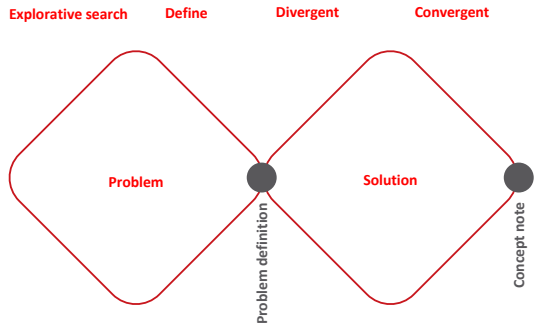
How to search and ideate?

In this phase, you will:

- **Search** for opportunities
- **Select a problem** or problems you want to focus on
- **Research** the problem, potential users' needs, and what has already been done to try to solve them; you need to document the most important findings in this research
- **Generate ideas** for solutions
- **Select the best idea(s)** for innovation and develop them further into an initial concept for an innovation you wish to test in the following phases
- **Involve local partners** in order to secure important input and mobilise for adoption at later stages
- **Map users and primary beneficiaries** and identify potential gatekeepers
- **Develop** a hypothesis for a potential **theory of change** for the innovation that you will test going forward.
- Develop an **initial business model** bases on hypotheses describing how your idea could be made operational and economically viable
- **Clarify roles and responsibilities** for taking the innovation forward
- **Develop a plan** that includes estimated resources vs. potential impact of the innovation and a time plan for testing it.
- **Manage expectations** among partners and stakeholders in order to secure commitment and mandate going forward.
- Be able to apply to either the internal DRC innovation pool or for external inception project funds, in order to **fund your activities.**

An ideation process often follows the double diamond process and includes (most of) the following steps:

1. **Explorative search** to uncover opportunities and problem field
2. **Problem definition** informed by scouting and research
3. **Divergent** phase in which you seek as many ideas as possible – focusing on quantity instead of quality; this can be done in different ways (see the tools below)
4. **Convergent** phase in which you sort out the ideas and select the ones with the most potential
5. Building of a **concept note** for the innovation(s) that you wish to test and pilot in the following phase



Keep in mind that:

- Design the ideation stage and methods to be **suitable for the problem** you are seeking solutions to. For example, user-centred design exercises can work really well when you wish to address a problem involving users but may not be suitable for more systems-level innovation.
- Remember to **share know**ledge gained in research and scouting with everyone included in the ideation stage to make sure you have a shared understanding when you generate ideas.
- Involve **different and diverse actors**, beneficiaries, experts and people who think differently in order to generate more novel and relevant ideas.
- Allow time for **individual ideation and reflection** and do not do everything in a group. This is to uncover all good ideas and not just what you have in common.
- Have a clear process for **how to sort among ideas** – it motivates participants to know their idea was at least reviewed even if it was not selected. Do this by, for example, developing a set of design criteria guided by your strategic focus and select the ideas based on those (See toolbox for ways to rate your ideas). At this stage, your ideas might however be more theoretical ideas than operation concepts. The next step is to start building simple concepts that you can use to gather feedback, test some of your assumptions, learn and iterate.
- Use tools for ideation that take you **outside of your normal way of work** (e.g. Sketching, crafting, working in silence etc.) to stimulate new neural pathways in your brain.
- You can always reach out to the **DRC Innovation Lead** to receive information on what has been done before and what support could you get.

Tools for search and ideation

The recommended tools and methods below can be used in this phase. Even more tools are openly available online. The key is to use the tools that fit your approach (see descriptions below). If you would like advice and/or sparring on how to do scouting and ideation, you can contact the DRC Innovation Lead.

These are recommended tools but you do not have to use them all. Pick the tools recommended for the activity you are planning to perform

Defining/finding the problem and opportunity

- Use the below listed questions in order **to crystallise a better understanding of the problem** and possible solutions out there
  - Who sees this as a problem? (this could be those who will be receptive to a solution)
  - Who is invested in addressing the problem? (these actors could act as partner, advisory group member, etc.)
  - What are the underlying/root causes of the problem?
  - What could the end user needs and incentives be?
  - What kind of solutions have been tried before to address this problem ,and why have they failed?
  - What kind of existing practices there are to address the problem?
- You can use this template to **diagnose causes behind a problem** (appendix H).
- You can also use the popular exercise "5 Whys" in digging deeper into **the causes of a problem**. This exercise works well as a discussion and **workshop exercise** in meetings. Access a template for this here or in appendix I.
- Once you have an in-depth understanding of the problem, you can use the challenge brief template to **distill your knowledge about the problem area, and call to action** for trying to identify or invent a solution (appendix J):

Do not rush into ideation before you really understand both the problem and the opportunities. Otherwise, you will probably miss out on ideas that can really address the problem.

Open scouting and searching

- Sign up for **newsletters and attend conferences** and networks to hear about developments in different fields, including technology, even if it is not directly related to your work and use your curiosity.
- Use the lightning demo exercise to **inspire your team** with products or services that they think they can use as inspiration for their ideas. Find the step by step instructions here.
- Give **time for reflection** and try to finish the following sentences as many times as you can *"How might we...?"* or *"What if....?"* to reflect and apply what you learn into your field and research
- Remember that existing **baseline, endline and evaluation reports** may also include valuable insights on needs, trends and opportunities for innovation.

Understanding the end-users and primary beneficiaries

- Use the target group work sheet (appendix K) when you want **to think about the perspectives of key stakeholders** so that you can identify what you know and what you don't know about their particular needs, aspirations and experiences.
- If possible and applicable, you can also use the "observe the problem" method and practice **field-based observations** about existing services or experiences **from the perspective of the user** (front end) or service provider (back end). You may find more guidance on how to observe the problem here.

Generating ideas

- **For creative workshops or individual reflection**, you can also use the method of drawing your ideas and the Crazy 8s. It is a great method for activating new parts of your brain and getting innovative and concrete elements that you can later on combine and build upon. See the step by step instructions here and her.
- In order to **stretch your thinking** by getting you to look at the problem and think of solutions from different perspectives, you can use the Mission Impossible game and/or the Flip It exercises.
- You can also source ideas from external actors, by using problem solving platforms, organising a challenge competition or a hackathon.[7]
- **Discuss the ideas** generated with the constraint that you may never so "no", or "but". Every sentence should start with "Yes, and...".

Selecting ideas you want to focus on

- You can use the Importance/Difficulty matrix to **prioritise among your ideas**. See step-by-step instructions her.
- You can also use the dot voting method to **identify the most popular ideas**. See more her.

Defining your idea

- Use the concept capture work sheet (appendix L) to **develop a concept** note while keeping in mind the particular vocabulary and approaches of your own sector.
- Make use of, the Social Business Model Canvas (appendix M) to develop a **draft business model** for your idea/solution.
- You may use this this template (appendix N) when defining the **first version of your ToC.**
- The guiding example of the ToC for project superwoman can be used as **guidance for you ToC**
- If you want more guidance you can also use this guideline to develop a systems-view of how you believe your solution will contribute to change.

Who?

- At this phase, make sure to draw on a **diverse set of inputs** – including technical experts, other innovators, those familiar with the humanitarian context and potential end users – also welcome those who might be sceptical to your idea and let them challenge you.

Output from search and ideation

After the completion of this phase you may have one or more concrete ideas that you wish to test. To do that, you need to develop **a concept note**, that includes the following:

1. **A basic Theory of Change** (ToC) based on hypotheses of the impact that the innovation might bring about with clear indicators for success and/or hypotheses that can be validated in following phases.
2. Description of the problem and users' needs identified and backed up by initial evidence.
3. Description of the innovative solution with clear design criteria.
4. **Initial business model** hypothesis describing how your idea could be made operational and economically viable using the Social Business Model Canvas.
5. **Clear roles and responsibilities, including an assigned Country Manager/Head of Region** who is responsible for taking the innovation initiative further.
6. An **estimated resources vs. potential benefits** and a realistic time plan that takes into account the iterative nature of the innovation process.·

7. For more about using problem-solving platforms to crowd-source single-provider solutions that may have already been developed and tested see: https://higuide.elrha.org/toolkits/search/search-for-ideas/crowd-source-individual-ideas/
For more about using collaborative ideation platforms to crowd-source ideas in a public forum and use the 'wisdom of the crowd' to hone and develop them see: https://higuide.elrha.org/toolkits/search/search-for-ideas/crowd-source-group-contributions/
For more about organising a challenge competition or a hackathon see: https://higuide.elrha.org/toolkits/search/search-for-ideas/organise-a-challenge-competition/ and here: https://hackathon.guide/ .

The DRCY mobilisation and ideation sprint

At the Danish Red Cross Youth, a mobilisation and ideation sprint has in recent years been a core approach to ensuring involvement and ownership amongst stakeholders, while stimulating innovative and relevant ideas and project. The DRCY sprint is particularly developed to promote youth engagement and social entrepreneurship. It is a fast and engaging method, designed to kickstart an innovative process. The sprint takes shape as a workshop, and the DRCY has developed several tools and guides on how to design your own sprint. These resources will soon be available in English. DRCY has worked with sprint as an approach to community engagement and innovation in Denmark and in partnership with DRC partners such Ukraine, Malawi, Lebanon, Greenland etc.

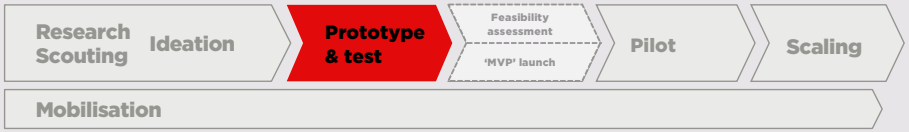
Through a sprint-workshop, young people/or other groups are involved in the identification of challenges, needs, stakeholders and resources in their local communities, as well as the production of innovative ideas and solutions. Whether it is with the purpose to engage local youth departments in the development of a novel national youth strategy or the purpose is to engage volunteers in identifying and responding to needs in their local communities in an innovative way.

A sprint workshop can be designed as a one or several days intervention and has shown to be an effective way to mobilise a broad range of actors in the ideation and prototyping stages.
A DRCY sprint can be designed in many ways, but it is usually based on the following seven steps:

1. Creative start: consist of various approaches to inspire the involved stakeholders and establish a point of departure for novel thoughts and ideas.
2. What's your problem: a set of easy, fast and engaging tools developed to understand the challenges, needs and opportunities in the local community.
3. The fountain of ideas: Fun and fast exercises with the purpose to ideate/generate as many new ideas as possible
4. What, why, who, where, when: Simple templates that support the analysis of opportunities, stakeholders and needed first steps in a potential project idea
5. Let's go higher: simple templates and exercises that pushes the involved actors to challenge their own ideas with the aim to optimise them.
6. Kick-Off: a public project pitch/presentation of the selected mini-prototype, which provides direct feedback, and allows it to be further developed in collaboration with others.
7. Move on: Reflection on important new insights and learnings + prioritisation of next steps.

Contact the DRCY for more info.
Links to sprint resources in Danish: https://www.urk.dk/urk-sprint
Sprint resources in English are underway

Process phase 2: Prototyping and testing



How could you include prototype and test **in your daily work**?

What?

In this phase, you will test the initial viability of your innovation by doing a set of quick and small scale tests in which you assess whether the innovation is worth continuing further into a longer piloting phase. You can do this by creating a prototype[8] or a minimum viable product or solution[9] of the innovation and test it. You should also be in this phase if you wish to bring an existing innovation into a new context. If the innovation shows viability in testing, this phase will result in an initial proof-of-concept that can lead to piloting. It could also result in termination of the innovation initiative.

Why?

The purpose of this phase is to test your innovation using as few resources as possible in order to see whether a larger piloting of the innovation is justified. You will also gather important learnings for iterating on your innovation in this phase. the concept in this phase.

When?

You will be in this phase when you have a well-defined concept for an innovation and would like to move on to testing out the idea in the real world. In innovation practice in general, this phase is incorporated as part of the piloting phase. However, for the DRC and similar organisations, piloting phase involves a higher level of commitment and investment. It is therefore crucial that before engaging in longer-term piloting projects or even before investing in a feasibility assessment, a prototype of the innovation is developed and tested at a smaller scale.

You might also be here if you are planning to adopt a solution developed elsewhere into a new context. You should test it out at a smaller scale to see if it is worth investing in.

Testing of prototypes may sometimes be included as elements or single activities in larger programmes. Prototyping and testing is a good practice to test any type of solution, innovative or not, and get a quick verification of it's potential in a certain setting.

Testing prototypes may sometimes be funded through inception projects. Just remember to manage the expectations of the donor, since your innovative solution has not yet proven its worth nor that it works at all. Often, if there is an external partner providing the "invention" they may be able to do the small scale testing of a prototype.

8. "A prototype is used to test the desirability of a solution to the user or problem holder... It is a quick and iterative process that should be used to test all major assumptions, components and touch points for your proposed solution." (HGI)
9. "A minimum viable product or solution is the simplest solution (and least expensive) that nevertheless contains all the core components that have been identified as necessary and can therefore be piloted effectively." (HGI)

How?

Before proceeding: You need to have a concept note with a theory of change explaining the potential for improved outcome from the idea(s), a business model and an Country Manager/Head of Region before proceeding to do a feasibility assessment and risk assessment.

In this phase, you will:

- Make sure to have clarity on what you need to have **validated** in order to justify a larger pilot project.
- You should have concrete **indicators of success** for different aspects of your innovation that you will be testing.
- **Create a concrete** plan for prototyping and testing the innovation before starting.
- You will create a **prototype or a minimum viable product** (MVP) of your innovation and conduct small tests in live settings in the real context.
- **Manage expectations** among partners and stakeholders in order to secure commitment and mandate going forward.
- Consider your users' robustness for non-successful launches of tools and services as well as the likelihood of the success of your innovation ad **involve users when time is right.**
- After the completion of this phase, you should have initial evidence of whether the innovation could be viable in a real life setting. You might even have some initial evidence to demonstrate that the innovation presents a comparative improvement over existing approaches. This is called **proof-of-concept**. It is most likely not a full evidence report that can convince others for adoption at this point. Remember, sometimes building a proof-of-concept can take years and several iterations but try to keep the investments low at this point.
- Be able to apply to either the internal DRC innovation pool or for external inception project funds, in order to **fund your activities**.

Keep in mind that

- Keep in mind that a **prototype** should be created for testing purposes and should therefore not be the same as developing a fully functioning or all-encompassing solution. You will use the prototype to test the relevance and functionality of the innovation and can adjust it as you learn in an as agile manner as possible.
- It is a good practice to carry out **several rounds of testing**, in order to gather feedback and make modifications and improvements to your design. In this way you will carry out many tests of aspects, of your prototype, evaluating, learning and making changes as you progress.
- If possible, test your innovation with the **intended target group** as early as possible. User-tests often generate fundamental insights that may inform the way you build your service or solution. Perhaps you can even build a mock-up version of your innovation and test it with some of the users before you start your pilot project.
- **Small tests** are often far less resource-heavy but may generate enough learnings in the testing phase. Think of how you can test your solution in small scale, either by small sample groups of users or by limiting the test to only some of functionalities/services.
- Apply **ethical considerations** on whether and how to engage beneficiaries and ensure expectation management.
- Make sure to be able to incorporate **learning loops** into the process. You might need to go back to ideation as you learn more about your innovation, potential users and the context.

Tools for Prototyping and testing

For a hands-on step-by-step guide as well as some tips on how to test a prototype in simple ways for building a prototype, see the extract from the design for public service toolkit in appendix O.

There are no universal success indicators or guides for a **proof of concept** as it is often very solution specific and technical. You need to identify what constitutes a proof of concept for your innovation and offer the justification and necessary evidence to support this definition

Who?

- The **Country Manager/Head of Region** and **Delegate(s)** of this initiatives should manage the prototype and test phase.
- Make sure to **share learnings** generated with anyone who this could be relevant to. You can for example use the relevant thematic matrixes to disseminate and activate. You can contact the **Innovation Lead** to get input on who to connect with to learn more about a specific project.

Output from Prototyping and testing

- In this phase, you will have **tested the innovation live** in a real life setting.
- After this phase, you should have enough evidence in the form of **validated and documented value and usability for users**, tested in real user contexts to argue for the investment in doing a longer-term and higher investment pilot project. There might also be a decision to terminate the initiative or put it on hold

Remember termination!

What is often forgotten in the testing phase is the importance of terminating and cancelling projects that does not prove viability. Terminating a project may release resources to work on other projects with higher potential. The concept of 'failing fast', often referred to when discussing innovation practice, comes from the notion that the faster an innovation can be proven viable or not, the less resources we may spend on the unsuccessful innovations.

Furthermore, just because a test of a prototype did not work the first time does not necessarily mean that the innovation will not work. Especially in the development and humanitarian sectors, unforeseen problems may occur that can be solved by continuous iterations and development of the solution.

For further reading on how to decide on whether or not to continue testing and five different potential pathways you might take, please read here.

Process phase 3: Feasibility assessment

What?

A feasibility assessment is a realistic assessment of your plans going forward, the resources that will be required to carry them out and the risks related to these activities. It builds on the outputs developed in previous phases and prepares you for adapting/building and testing the solution at a larger scale. The scope and size of the feasibility assessment is up to the discretion of the Country Manager/Head of Region and delegate, However, the thematic lead(s)/relevant technical advisors should be consulted to advise on the scope and size of the assessment. The key is to consider the feasibility of your concept and key risks related to continuing the innovation process.

An MVP may have been launched in the previous phase (prototype and test). If not, it may in some instances, e.g. in product innovations, be relevant to launch an MVP(s) and make the 'MVP test results' part of the feasibility assessment.

Why?

Assessing the feasibility and potential risks in involving in developing a solution is important both in traditional programming as well as in innovation. Furthermore, engaging in new approaches, arenas, methods or tools may involve new, unknown risks and unintended consequences. This might affect the reputation of DRC and the wider RCRC movement. Also, innovation initiatives can affect beneficiaries in unknown and unintended ways.

When?

Before this phase, you should make sure that you have the output from phase 1 and 2 in order. That is to say; you know what your concept is and how you want it to work, and you have made a small-scale test of it already. You might also need to return to this phase later, in case you make significant alterations into the innovation in the following phases based on learnings accumulated.

Data for the feasibility assessment can sometimes be collected and analysed in combination from previous review and endline studies. Just remember to do a proper risk assessment before launch your pilot projects.

Tools and practices for feasibility assessments may also be used for non-innovation projects where you would like to assess the feasibility and probability of positive impact in a certain context, before launching a larger program. Under **How** and **Tools** you may find guidance for how to conduct a feasibility assessment.

How could you include feasibility assessment **in your daily work**?

How?

Before proceeding: You need to have a concept note with a theory of change explaining the potential for improved outcome from the idea(s), a business model, an assigned Country Manager/Head of Region and a successful live testing of your prototype before proceeding to do a feasibility assessment and risk assessment.

In this phase, you will :

- **Assess the feasibility** of your proposed concept, tool and/or solution.
- Conduct a **risk assessment** that addresses risk of failure and potential security, reputational and brand, financial, legal, political, relational, beneficiary related and employee-related risks.
- Consider the **estimation of the resources** needed to roll out the innovation with the expected impact of the innovation (often called the business case in innovation practice).
- **Manage expectations** among partners and stakeholders in order to secure commitment and mandate going forward.
- **Take stock and assess** your partner(s), hereunder the HNS, incentives and disincentives for engaging in the innovation initiative.
- **Consider your options for terminating** a pilot project if it is not successful. How do you navigate donor expectations, can you split up the project into several phases?
- Make sure to fill in and submit **the DRC Go/No-Go Assessment Form** in the end of this phase before moving into piloting.
- Consider **funding** by developing further your draft business model, including a fundraising and/or partnership plan. You should also test the assumptions in the business model as well as **mobilise potential partners/donors**.
- Be able to apply to either the internal DRC innovation pool or for external inception project funds, in order to **fund** a feasibility assessment.
- In some innovation projects, such as software development ones, you might have developed an MVP in the previous phase that you will **launch** in this phase. The data collected in testing the MVP can feed into assessing the feasibility of your solution. Remember, however, to always assess potential risks and consider ethical considerations related to your innovation.

Keep in mind that

- Testing innovative and novel solutions in and services in real world settings, in order to measure its outcome, you are in fact conducting social experiments. Thus, you are responsible for ensuring that the experiment is conducted in an **ethical manner**. In risk assessment, make sure to assess both a) risk to the success of an innovation, and b) risk to people affected by the innovation.[11]
- The **size and scope of this assessment** depends on the innovation and the context you are working in. Consider whether you need an external feasibility assessment and a risk assessment or whether you will do it internally by using some of the tools described below.
- In addition to a risk assessment at this phase, you should make sure to be responsible and open towards identifying new risks arising **throughout the whole innovation process** and responding to them appropriately when needed.[12]
- Make sure that the feasibility assessment is as **objective** as possible by considering the interests of the actors conducting it.

11. Obrecht, A. and T. Warner, A. (2016, p. 17-18) 'More than just luck: Innovation in humanitarian action'. HIF/ ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.
12. ibid.

Tools for Feasibility assessment

The recommended tools and methods below can be used in this phase. Even more tools are openly available online. The key is to use the tools that fit your approach (see descriptions below). If you would like advice and/or sparring on how to do scouting and ideation, you can contact the DRC Innovation Lead.

These are recommended tools but you do not have to use them all. Pick the tools recommended for the activity you are planning to perform

For assessing the feasibility of your plan

- You may use the feasibility blueprint from the service design toolkit (appendices P and Q) to **outlines the steps in the delivery** of the service and think through what parts of the service you will want to implement and evaluate through the pilot(s).
- You may use the operational checklist to **evaluate whether your project delivery, research budgets and plans are feasible**, based on the operations capacity you have available to you. Ideally you would carry this out as a meeting in part of your planning process.
- You may use these guiding questions when **assessing your assumptions** and how desirable, feasible and viable they are.

Risk assessment

- Use the **DRC Risk Management Form** for Programmes.
- You may use the Humanitarian Innovation Guide **risk log** (appendix R) to continuously follow up on risks. For further reading on how to iteratively manage risk throughout the innovation process by building and monitoring feedback loops, please read here.
- The **DRC Go/No-Go form**

Who?

- The feasibility phase should be managed by the Country Manager/Head of Region and delegate(s) of the project.
- If relevant and possible, you might consider hiring external consultant(s) to conduct the feasibility assessment depending on the scope of the tests.
- The feasibility assessment should always be quality assured by the Country Manager, P&C team and risk advisors, and the Innovation Lead.

Output from feasibility assessmemt

- Feasibility assessment of your plans, the resources required to carry them out and the risks related to these activities. It needs to be conducted objectively and legitimately.
- A holistic risk assessment
- A completed DRC Go-No-GO Assessment form submitted to the relevant HQ Partnership Advisor

Photo: Tine Engedal

Process phase 4: Piloting

What?

You will start this phase when you have decent evidence that the innovation can be tested for a longer period. In this phase, you develop the actual solution and test in in a real life context longer term. You will generate evidence and learn, based on which you can improve the innovation. If the innovation is deemed successful during piloting, at the end of this phase, there should be enough evidence and a proof of concept to argue for the investment in scaling solution.

Why?

Before moving on to scaling, this phase should allow you to show that the innovation has demonstrable impact that offers a comparative improvement over existing approaches. You will also be able to make iterations into the innovation to improve it as you gather learnings during this stage. This stage is perhaps the longest and most resource intensive of them all and will prepare you for the scaling of the solution.

When?

You can begin the pilot when you have decent evidence that the proposed innovation can be tested for a longer period and in a real-life setting.

Running pilots and building up the capacity of solving problems in new ways, are not that different from normal programming, and thus it is recommended that innovation-pilots to a large extent follow normal programme procedures and processes in DRC. The only difference is that evidence is built up successively during the project, the only evidence provided at the start is a feasibility assessment and a proof of concept from a small scale test.

How could you include piloting **in your daily work**?

How?

Before proceeding: You need to have a concept note with a theory of change explaining the potential for improved outcome from the idea(s), a business model, an assigned a Country Manager/Head of Region and a successful live testing of your prototype. You also have a comprehensive risk assessment and an approved Go-decision from the relevant HQ Partnership Advisor.

Lastly, you are required to have received funding also from non-SP innovation funds. This might mean that the pilot projects are incorporated in other, larger programme frameworks, funding applications or that funding have been applied for specifically for lunching the pilots only.

- Prepare a solid and concrete **piloting plan** before starting this phase. It should both provide structure but also offer flexibility to adapt the solution as you learn about the context, users, incentives and responses to the innovation.[11]
- Need to have a **business model**, including a fundraising/partnership plan, in place to begin this project.
- The piloting phase should be either **fully or partially funded with additional funds** other than the internal DRC innovation pool
- Make sure to incorporate **learning loops** and **iteration** into the piloting project. Evaluate the innovation and adjust or rebuild the solution. Test your business model and adjust or change it. You might need to return to ideation several times and even conduct another feasibility assessment if changes have been substantial.
- Develop a **concept** of the innovation to a degree that other internal or external actors can take over and implement the solution in the scaling phase.
- **Manage expectations** among partners and stakeholders in order to secure commitment and mandate going forward.
- **Mobilise local partners** to adopt a solution or service and build the necessary skills for this
- Build on **reliable evidence** for the impact and improved outcome of the innovation at hand.

11. More than Just Luck: Innovation in Humanitarian Action, by Alice Obrecht and Alexandra T. Warner
12. Humanitarian Innovation Guide available at: https://higuide.elrha.org/
13. ibid.

Keep in mind that

- Running pilots and building up the capacity of solving problems in new ways, are not that different from **regular programming**, and thus it is recommended that pilots to a large extent follow normal program procedures and processes in DRC. The key difference is that evidence is buit up successively during the project and iterations are done into the solution as the project proceeds.
- The piloting phase is much more **complex,** challenging and involves higher risk than the previous phases. In order to pilot an innovation in real life context, you should have in-depth **understanding** of the operational environment, collaboration and integration with relevant stakeholders. You should also keep in mind how to resource iteration, monitoring and learning in this phase.[13]
- To make a pilot project **successfu**l, the Humanitarian Innovation Guide states: "A successful pilot will provide evidence that the innovation had demonstrable impact and, ideally, that it offers a comparative improvement in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and/or quality over existing approaches. It will also generate new learning on what works, what doesn't and why. However, these are not easy questions to answer and, in most cases, you may need to run a number of pilot tests over a period of months, or even years, to generate sufficiently robust evidence".
- You should make sure to carry out **several rounds of testing**, in order to gather feedback and make modifications and improvements to your design. In this way you will carry out many tests of aspects, of your concept, evaluating, learning and making changes as you progress.
- **Learning** is a key part of this phase. Make sure to capture and share all relevant learnings into both the adoption of the innovation as well as to DRC programming in general.
- Always apply **ethical considerations** on whether and how to engage beneficiaries and ensure expectation management.
- Keep in mind that the challenge is that there is often a lack of adequate **performance data** on current humanitarian practices and approaches to compare with. If your innovation relates to a problem previously addressed by DRC or its partners, you may draw on previously conducted baselines and end lines as a benchmark. Remember that the comparative improvement may relate to many different aspects such as coverage, timeliness, relevance, connectedness, coherence, effectiveness and/or impact etc.

Tools for Piloting

Here is a set of tools to consider for this phase. Please refer to the Innovation Lead for advice and questions.

- The **DRC project description** template
- The **DRC project management annex**
- The **DRC budget template**
- The **DRC evaluation report**
- The **DRC interim report template**
- For further guidance on how to build evidence and on capturing and using learnings throughout the piloting phase, see the Humanitarian Innovation Guide.

Who?

- The **Country Manager/Head of Region and delegate(s)** of initiatives should manage the piloting phase.
- Make sure to **share learnings** generated with anyone who this could be relevant to such as regional managers, local partners, technical advisors, relevant matrices etc. You can contact the **Innovation Lead** to get input on who to connect with to learn more about a specific project.

Output from piloting

- After the completion of this phase, if the innovation has proven viable in a real life setting, you have shown value for users and the innovation has also shown **demonstrable outcome that offers a comparative improvement** over existing approaches. There should be enough evidence, based on live tests in relevant settings argue for the investment in scaling of the solution.
- You should also have **documented evidence** gathered in the piloting phase on lessons learned and distributed it to relevant thematic matrixes within DRC as well as others in the sector.

Please note that this phase requires funding from other sources that the SP-innovation funds and thus the reporting requirements from other donors need to also be followed.

Process phase 5: Scaling

What?

The final phase of the innovation process is scaling the innovation. It is important to note that scaling includes several different approaches. The purpose is to scale the impact of the innovation and this may be done by handing it over to a local partner who offer it to a larger number of beneficiaries in the community. It might be a private sezctor partner who, through a sustainable business model, continues to offer the service. Scaling may also imply to copy the proven viable innovation to other countries and regions and adapt it to several contexts. Lastly, a scaling strategy may expand the innovation into other problem fields.

"Some solutions may be context specific or only designed to address a small problem, and in these instances the scope for scale might be limited."[14] In these cases, the last phase will be focused on the effective implementation of the tool or service in the context it as developed for. Do however remember, that innovations that are not geared for scale also limit the impact and return for investment in innovation.

Why?

Reaching scaled impact is the whole purpose of the innovation process. It is at this phase all previous hard work and investment are rewarded and we may significantly improve the lives of the beneficiaries.

When?

In the piloting phase, you have already built up evidence and have started mobilising relevant actors to prepare for scaling. However, scaling the actual innovation should not begin until you have a solid proof-of-concept and a plan on how to scale the innovation.

Scaling will most often be an activity included in a new project application. At this stage, the solution have proven evidence for its comparative improved outcome and, hopefully, donors will be willing to contribute to expanding the solution to either new regions, more beneficiaries, or to sustain its maintenance going forward by handing over to local partners or build a business model around it. Like any other project, considerations about the DRC's role and potential exit strategies should be taken on board.

How?

Before proceeding: You need to have documented evidence and demonstrated comparative improvement of outcome from the innovation compared to existing practices.

In scaling, you will:

- Develop a **scaling plan** and define your trajectory for scaling. In the table on the next page[15], you can see different trajectories for scaling that may guide your activities. The approaches may overlap but you are recommended to focus on one dominant approach relevant for your innovation.
- **Mobilise and potentially hand over** to relevant actors such as local partners, private sector partners, public and academic institutions etc.
- Define the **final business model**.
- Pitch your innovation for further adoption.
- **Possibly initiate further programmes** and projects to launch the project in other areas.

14. Humanitarian Innovation Guide available at: https://higuide.elrha.org/.
15. ibid

Tools for Scaling

The recommended tools and methods below can be used in this phase. If you would like advice and/or sparring on, you can contact the DRC Innovation Lead.

- You can use this template (appendix S) for **documenting scale aspirations**.
- You may use this Response Innovation Lab tool (appendix T) to find advanced evaluation resources. These will help you to **assess and demonstrate the scalability of your innovation**. It is available for download here.
- If you plan on scaling the solution to more than one location, you may use the UN Innovation Guide **From Pilot to Scale tool and worksheet** (appendix U and V).[16]
- For further reading on how to scale innovation you may read here.

Who?

- The concept-building and preparation for scaling is the responsibility of **Country Manager/Head of Region** and, if relevant, **the delegate(s)**.
- Make sure to liaise with the **Innovation Lead** and/or the **Thematic Leads** in this phase to ensure you have considered all opportunities when preparing for scaling.
- Inform relevant **internal stakeholders** such as Country Managers, Regional Directors, HQ Partnership Advisors etc.
- It is highly recommended to involve **external actors** such as academics, researchers, other humanitarian actors or consultants in order to get through and objective analysis of the outcome and evidence.

Output from scaling

- You develop **a plan** for scaling activities including incentives and disincentives to adoption. It will also include planned ways to facilitate uptake.
- A clear pitch and **description of your innovative solution**.
- A solid **evidence report** showing the comparable improved outcome from your innovation.

ENDGAME	DESCRIPTION
Open source	Solution is free for others to adopt and integrate
Replication	Solution is easy for other organisations to adopt and deliver
Government adoption	Solution is integrated into government service delivery/provision
Commercial adoption	Solution has commercial value and so could be delivered for profit
Mission achievement	Solution has eradicated the problem, and does not need any organisation to continue to support/deliver it
Sustained service	Solution is being delivered primarily by your own organisation

16. These can be downloaded in the UN Innovation Guide at https://un-innovation.tools/ (the Guide is free-to-use but you need to login to access the tools).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