

Diagnostic Checklist

The aim of Developmental Evaluation (DE) is to support social innovators tackle complex challenges. The following assessment tool will help you assess DE is a good fit for your situation.

The tool is comprised of three checklists that ask you to answer a series of questions in the following areas:

- Developmental situation – is the context in which the group truly adaptive, requiring new and constantly adapted approaches, or it a more conventional situation requiring relatively established responses?
- Adaptive capacity – do the decision-makers, and those supporting them, have the capacity and interest to work in the adaptive way required for social innovation and working with complex issues?
- Readiness for learning & evaluation – are the innovators ready to embrace evaluative feedback and data to help make decisions?

Before you begin the assessment, keep the following things in mind:

1. The 'group' refers to the would-be innovators (e.g. project team, the board and staff of an organization, members of a collaboration) who are interested in DE.
2. 'Intervention' refers to any project, program, strategy or model that is in some form of adaptive development (something innovative is being created, constantly adapted or radically restructured).
3. The checklist operates as three 'stage gates': if a situation is not developmental, there is no need to assess the group's readiness for adaptive leadership; similarly, if a group demonstrates weak adaptive leadership, they will not make productive use of evaluation feedback. If a group feels that its work is developmental, that they are adaptive, and they will use evaluative feedback, then DE is a fit for them.
4. We do not describe how to gather the data or assess the data you might use to answer these questions (we have plans to introduce this shortly). We do encourage you, however, to be thorough, reflective and clear about the data you are using when you rate each statement.

Is it a developmental situation?

	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The challenge we want to address is difficult to define (e.g. poverty).	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
2	There are multiple, often unknown, causes underlying the challenge that interact in difficult-to-predict ways.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
3	The stakeholders involved (directly and indirectly) have diverse values, interests and perspectives.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
4	The group is experimenting with different ways to turn their idea 'theory of change' into reality, (e.g. a grant program, a training course) but this idea or theory is not yet developed or tested.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
5	The results of our efforts (types, scale, speed) are (apt to be) uncertain and/or unpredictable.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
6	The context in which the group is operating (e.g. funding, partners, demographics, stakeholders) is rapidly changing and may require the group to make changes to their work.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
7.	The group is working in multiple different contexts or across multiple scales (e.g. organization, city, region, states), requiring some 'adaptation' of intervention.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Sub-Total						
Total						

Results

-11 to -14	Accountability Situation	Your intervention is very well developed and may be working in a stable environment. You may be seeking evaluation feedback for accountability which aims to find out if you are implementing it with fidelity to a well laid out and proven model.
- 6 to -10	Effectiveness Situation	Your intervention is very well developed. You may be seeking evaluation feedback to judge the model's effectiveness (aka summative evaluation).
+ 6 to -5	Improvement Situation	Your intervention is relatively stable and/or operating in a stable environment. You may be seeking evaluation feedback to improve the model (aka formative evaluation).
+ 7 to +14	Developmental Situation	Your intervention is developing or emerging. You may be seeking evaluation feedback to develop the model.

Do you have adaptive Capacity?

	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	We have a history of innovation and tackling complex challenges.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
2	We are comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty, and the tension of adaptive work.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
3	We are motivated to try something new and committed to a systematic process of innovation.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
4	We have sufficient resources to carry out its work, and can invest more if/when promising new avenues emerge.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
5	We are willing to “learn-by-doing”, allowing the intervention to emerge over time, rather “plan the work and work the plan”.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
6	We have the flexibility and authority to change the emerging intervention to reflect new learnings and shifts in the environment.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
7	We have permission and room to make “safe-to-fail” errors and mistakes in search of what does and does not work.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
8	We are more interested in learning and getting results, than being perceived to be “right”.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
9	We have time and patience to experiment with new approaches and generate results.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Sub-Total						
Total						

Results

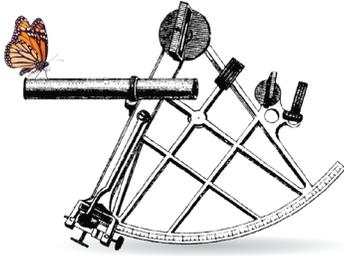
-9 to -18	Non-Existent	Your group is working with a fairly rigid context which does not allow it to engage in an authentic process of exploration and innovation.
0 to -8	Low	Your group’s ability to work adaptively is very limited. You should proceed with extreme care (if at all) and work hard at addressing your weak areas before or during the innovation process.
1 to 11	Good	Your group has the adaptive capacity to move forward, though some areas may need extra attention before or during the innovation process.
12 to 18	Excellent	Your group is in an excellent position to innovate and/or work on complex issues.

Are you Ready for learning and evaluation?

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	We are hungry for evaluative feedback on our work.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
2	We understand that we all operate with cultural and cognitive biases which “shape” the way we interpret the feedback on our work.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
3	We have a history of gathering, analyzing and making sense of data (or is fully prepared to going forward).	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
4	We have a culture of curiosity, inquiry and critical reflection.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
5	We have a demonstrated commitment to “data-based” decision-making.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
6	We’ve had positive experiences with evaluation (and evaluators) in the past.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
7	We understand and broadly support developmental evaluation.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
8	We are prepared to commit time and resources to the developmental evaluation.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
9	We have someone (internal or external) in the role of developmental evaluator.	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Sub-Total						
Total						

Results

-6 to -18	Poor	You require significant work to improve the conditions for developmental evaluation before you move forward.
-5 to 0	Low	Your group readiness for developmental evaluation is limited. Proceed with caution. Address short-comings before you begin and/or intentionally approach the work moving forward as an opportunity to strengthen your capacity for developmental evaluation. Be prepared for the fact that you may choose to discontinue developmental evaluation mid-way through the process, or you may say you are doing developmental evaluation when you are in-fact using evaluation in more of a formative or summative mode.
1 to +10	Medium	Your group is sufficiently ready for developmental evaluation to begin, though it should keep on an eye on its weaker areas of readiness and/or identify measures to strengthen them as you proceed.
+ 11 to +14	High	You group is an excellent candidate for developmental evaluation.



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Sources

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