

NEW APPROACHES TO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

HOW PUBLIC EXECUTIVES ADDRESS THE COMPLEXITY OF POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INCREASE
EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY



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MAKING IT HAPPEN

For decades, political scientists have studied and demonstrated the challenges regarding implementation in the public sector. A new approach among public sector executives gives reason to believe that implementation will be more successful in the years to come.

Our Northern European welfare states, regarded as world leaders within the welfare sector, have for a long time viewed implementation as enactment of legislation of high legal standards, communicated top-down to the public and stakeholders.

In other words, applying the strategies labelled by the great implementation scientist Dean L. Fixsen, implementation has been viewed as 'Letting it happen' or 'Helping it happen' (meaning doing little or nothing at all). Still more public sector executives seem to realise that these strategies fall short, and that we need to actively drive implementation – 'Making it happen' in Fixsen's wording.

Ramboll have interviewed 30 public sector executives in Northern Europe about their understanding of how to achieve successful implementation. They confirm the dawning realisation of the necessity of the 'Making it happen'-strategy. Interestingly, this corresponds to recent developments in implementation science.

In this white paper, we try to outline the ecosystem of implementation. We originally set out to provide an applicable best practice model covering

all situations. We have, however, discovered that this is not possible. Successful implementation needs to be guided by a solid understanding of the implementation context and supported by implementation strategies and tools selected and tailored to specific needs and possibilities in a local context. First and foremost, successful implementation requires leaders willing and able to lead.

This white paper consists of guidance and inspiration for how to navigate in this complexity to successfully ensure implementation of policy reforms and policy programmes.

HOW TO MAKE USE OF THE WHITE PAPER

On the basis of the 30 interviews Ramboll has conducted with public sector executives this white paper offers you the opportunity to reflect on what efficient implementation looks like, how it is nurtured, and what your role as a leader might be. You can read the white paper from the top, but it also invites you to find your own path through the text and figures.

IMPLEMENT THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

Implementation is complex and will fail or be seriously delayed if insufficiently prepared. A key point for the executive is to ensure active engagement and support to adopter organisations - in other words: to build adequate capacity within the organisation.

Implementation equals change in procedures and practices, which typically require development of both individual and organisational capabilities.

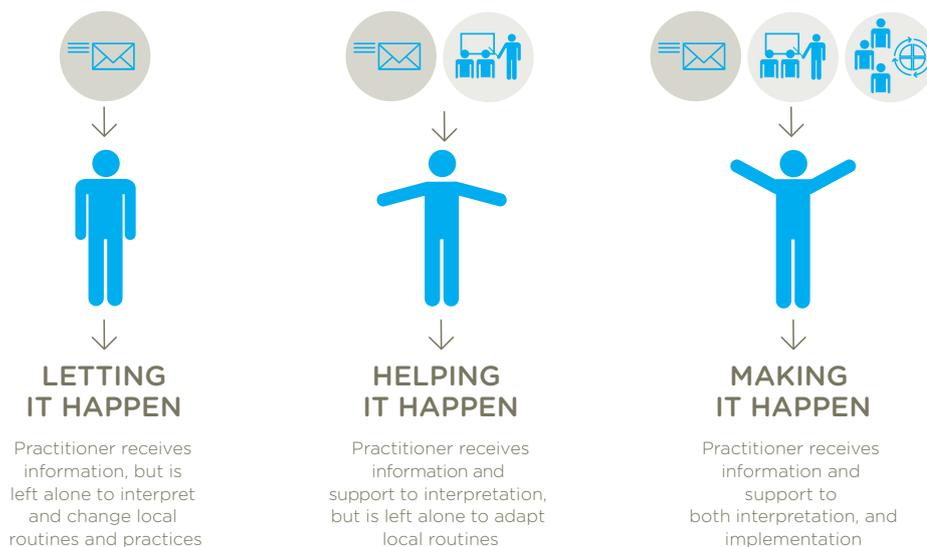
The diffusion and dissemination of promising new practices can last for decades before take-up among practitioners is regular. The phenomenon has been labelled 'the 17-year journey' for new knowledge generated from randomised controlled trials to be translated into practice.

Similar issues with implementation delays are well-known within the broader policy implementation research. So the question is: How can the 17-year journey be reduced substantially?

An answer suggested by Implementation Science is: by means of capacity building. Research has shown that traditional knowledge diffusion strategies need to be supplemented by capacity building. Active implementation is necessary to support the application of new practices.

One way of addressing this is to point to the approach labelled 'Making it happen' by Dean L. Fixsen. The 'Making it happen' approach marks a development from passive knowledge diffusion towards capacity building through systematic training, supervision and follow up.

Avoiding the 17-year journey by means of 'making it happen'



To speed up implementation, practitioners need support to understand and apply new practices in local settings. This has given rise to the notion of capacity building as a way of designing implementation processes. The development and application of new knowledge, practices and procedures need to be complemented by a thorough understanding and respect for existing professional behaviour and local organisational culture and context. Additionally, education and facilitation techniques are also instruments to help inspire and create sustainable buy-in from local stakeholders.

The increased focus on enabling end-users and practitioners to support the implementation of new practices needs further development and could benefit from increased formalisation into the processes that guide policy planning and implementation.

A first step is to design principles based on dialogue and participation that allow policy-makers to take into account observations and the day-to-day experience of practitioners. In addition and in line with much research, a systematic and deliberate design of tailored implementation strategies would be an important next step.

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Implementation Science is rooted in evidence-based medicine and was established in the 1990's to support utilisation and implementation of evidence to reduce the research practice gap. As the investment in evidence has grown through the years, awareness of the implementation delay and under-utilisation of research has correspondingly increased.

Implementation Science offers a range of frameworks taking evidence into practice, thus strengthening the understanding of barriers and enablers when implementing new practices.

In the 30 interviews, we have witnessed a number of ministries and agencies using these frameworks to guide their overall implementation endeavours. In other words, Implementation Science leaves its mark on everyday practices, with this growing body of research shedding new light on and adding valuable insight to public sector implementation.

HOW YOUR PEERS UNDERSTAND IMPLEMENTATION

A classic bureaucratic implementation understanding is that government policy and decisions are transformed into practice through careful legislation processes and communication with relevant stakeholders. Now, public sector executives are realising that implementation requires the complex transformation of decisions into practice.

The following quotations are examples of this development. They stem from interviews from all over Northern Europe with executives from central, regional and local governments:

“

We must go from perceiving implementation as actions – when a law was passed we wrote a tutorial and then we considered it implemented – towards perceiving implementation as intentions actually happening. Implementation is when reality really changes.”

*Peter Mørch,
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
Labour, Denmark*

“

Implementation is about executing decisions to the front-line: How does the front-line get the task transferred as they stand out there to do the task.”

*Esben Egede Rasmussen,
CEO of Danish Veterinary
and Food Administration*

“

In my understanding, implementation is delivery”

*Hans-Jürgen Gallenstein,
Head of Department, Labour Market,
City of Hamburg*

“

The Ministry of Social Affairs has gone from only thinking implementation when a law has been passed in Parliament. We have to think implementation before laws are adopted to have a better understanding of what works, what is possible, who are those implementing, what is their reality, what do they demand. Doing this, we make it much easier for ourselves and for those afterwards when we start to implement.”

*Nina Eg Hansen,
former Deputy Permanent Secretary
and Director at Danish Ministry of
Social Affairs, now Director of
Department of Children and Youth,
City of Copenhagen*

“

The accountable authority is offered support from a dialogue team from the Agency. This team is there during implementation and offers support to the accountable authorities needed. Cooperation may last up to three years. The new approach can be described as a new method of implementation.”

*Anders Fredriksson,
Director of Education, Swedish
National Agency for Education*

“ IMPLEMENTATION IS ABOUT ENABLING – INSTEAD OF LINEAR IMPLEMENTATION. THE KEY IS CHANGING ATTITUDES.”

*Pekka Sundman,
Director of City Development Group,
City of Turku,
Finland*

THE PRIMACY OF LEADERSHIP

The executive in charge of an implementation process must develop his or her leadership approach in accordance with the specific situation, its potential obstacles, possibilities and threats. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution.

How can we ensure that an implementation process leads to realisation of the intended changes? There is no simple answer to this question as most implementation processes are complex and difficult to manage.

What we want to implement is perceived differently and transformed differently by the various persons and organisations being our target groups. We have to plan for this variance and contingency. This means, among other things, that we have to build capacity to meet our expectations, to communicate and to involve target groups to establish a process of interpretation and reflection among the stakeholders to reach to conclusions on how to implement our intended actions. This entails that leaders will have to prepare their organisations for the complex change processes ahead. A central prerequisite for success is that the leader is a visible proponent of the implementation. Ramboll recently completed a study on implementation approaches in Danish job centres in which it was concluded that the most important driver for successful implementation is the focus of the immediate manager on the implementation task.

Northern European executives address the complexity of implementation

Based on the 30 interviews conducted by Ramboll, a movement towards realising the complexity of the implementation task can be clearly identified.

Across countries and policy areas, public executives focus on building capacity in handling complex processes. This tendency includes inclusive and curious dialogue with target groups in local governments and among practitioners to design implementation processes that include a certain level of contingency and targeted strategies towards organisations, perceived as unique implementing bodies, not just a mass of uniform organisational entities applying a more holistic and co-creating approach.

“

We focus on change and quality of day-to-day practices. Meaning that everything we do must be coupled to the difference we can make for the citizens. Further, we focus on frontline management. We have to have leadership close to core services. Thus, we have increased the number of professional leaders in the organisation. Instead we have decreased the number of steering committees and project managers, because we risk that steering committees and project managers produce too many papers without us getting closer to core services and the practitioners.”

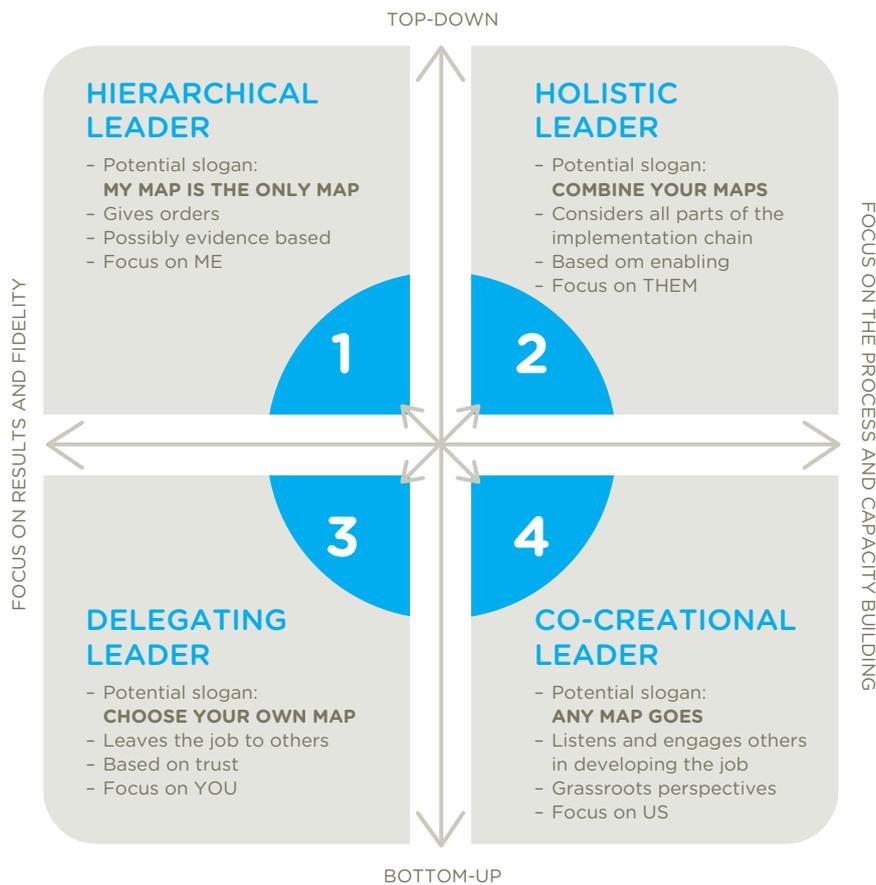
*René Junker,
Director of Department of Families
and Labour Market, City of Odense,
Denmark*

Certainly, this emerging tendency is not fully applied, as many central government leaders also apply more hierarchical implementation regimes. The interviews show that this can be the case in situations where costcutting models have to be implemented, international agreements must be implemented, political pressure for

short-term actions appears important, and where large programmes are to be implemented among an extensive number of local organisations. Other cases can probably be found.

The interviews give rise to the identification of four distinct leadership approaches:

Leadership approaches that fit the situation





THE HUMAN SIDE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation processes will meet resistance no matter how good the intentions and the preparation. The executive in charge must be ready to deal with variety of types of barriers to change.

The multitude of potential barriers to implementation within technical, cultural and management domains could seem overwhelming. A common reaction is that people prefer to leave things as they are and do what they always do.

Experience suggests that the most necessary determinant is leadership when barriers to implementation needs to be addressed. Management must focus, prioritise and insist on the implementation; they must lead the way and address the value added to the actual change. It is also the responsibility of the executives to handle possible barriers that emerge.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to how to overcome these barriers. Every

implementation process needs careful consideration in terms of which tools and leadership approaches to apply.

Sometimes the best solution can be not to implement a full intervention programme because of the complexity required from this type of change. Instead selected elements can be implemented, providing a much higher and quicker take-up of those elements. This balance between fidelity and adaptation is tricky and remains one of the central puzzles within implementation research and practice. One way to handle this is to define the intervention's hard core that is the irreducible element of the intervention itself and the soft periphery consisting of adaptable elements, structures and systems which give flexibility for local entities to adapt.

In this way, you can select which evidence-based elements to implement: practices, methods, technologies or policies.

Resistance against implementation

MANAGEMENT BARRIERS, E.G.:

- Lack of focus, prioritisation and articulation
- Fear of time and resources
- Lack of clarity of the objective

CULTURAL BARRIERS, E.G.:

- Lack of a co-ownership
- Fear of loss of control
- Insecurity of new role
- Old habits
- Lack of motivation

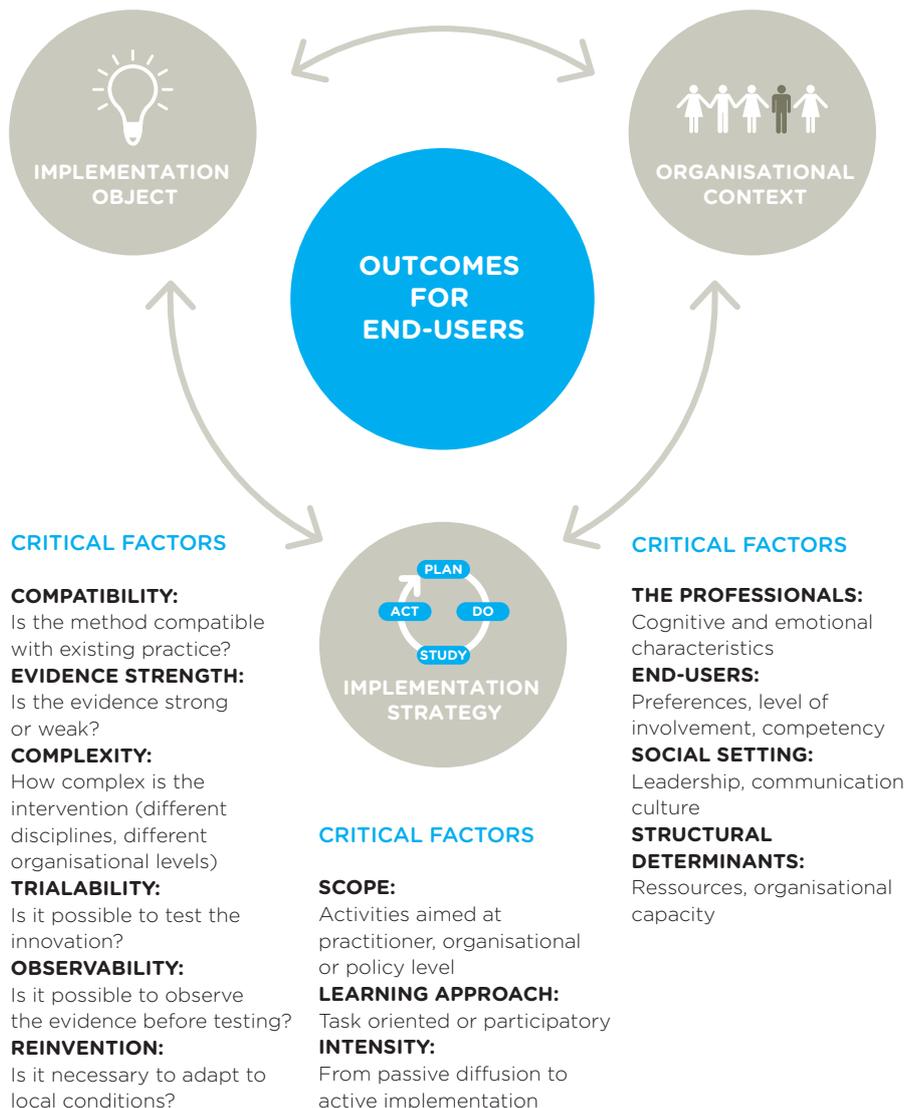


No Generic Approach is Sufficient

To secure successful implementation, you need to calibrate your implementation strategy to both the specific innovation and to the organisational context where implementation takes place. Implementation happens in the interplay between professionals, end-users, the organisational setting (culture, leadership, etc.), and wider structural and societal determinants.

No generic approach or recipe is adequate to deal with the demands arising from the specific characteristics of a given reform or practice and the varying levels of organisational readiness for change. Implementation processes are defined by interactions between stakeholders and embedded systems that interact in both stable and unpredictable patterns. In other words: There are no quick fixes!

No quick fixes - or why every process is unique for each organisation





UNDERSTAND THE BEHAVIOUR YOU WANT TO CHANGE

Any implementation strategy needs to be calibrated to both the specific innovation and the organisational context. First and foremost, it is a question of understanding the behaviour you want to change.

When you embark on an implementation process, it is a presupposition for success that you understand the behaviour you want to change. The purpose of the assessment is to clarify the potential match between the new practice and the organisational capacity and readiness for change.

Many analytical tools and frameworks have been developed to guide this assessment – for instance:

- Consolidated framework for advancing implementation science (CFIR)
- Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Systems framework (PARIHS)
- The Behaviour Change Wheel, Organisational readiness to change assessment (ORCA)
- The Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS).

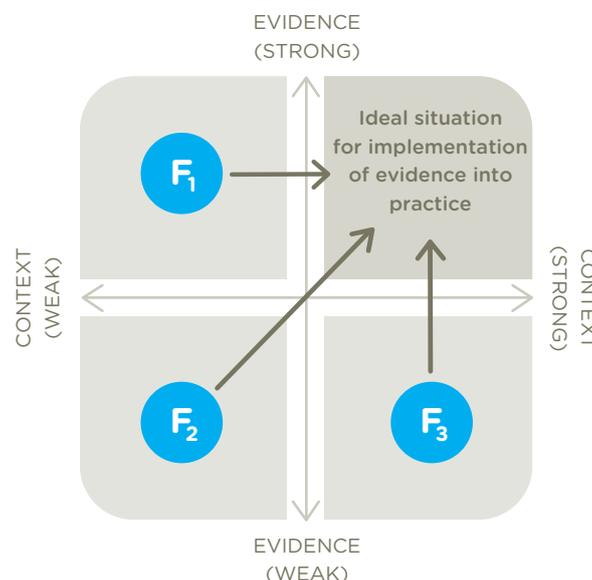
Implementation is not only an analytical task, though. You should also involve practice experience through facilitating discussions and focus groups among administrators, practitioners, end-users, and perhaps experts with knowledge about the new practice and implementation.

In addition, in large-scale implementation efforts pilot projects are a valuable source of information about how the implementation process is actually unfolding in varying local contexts.

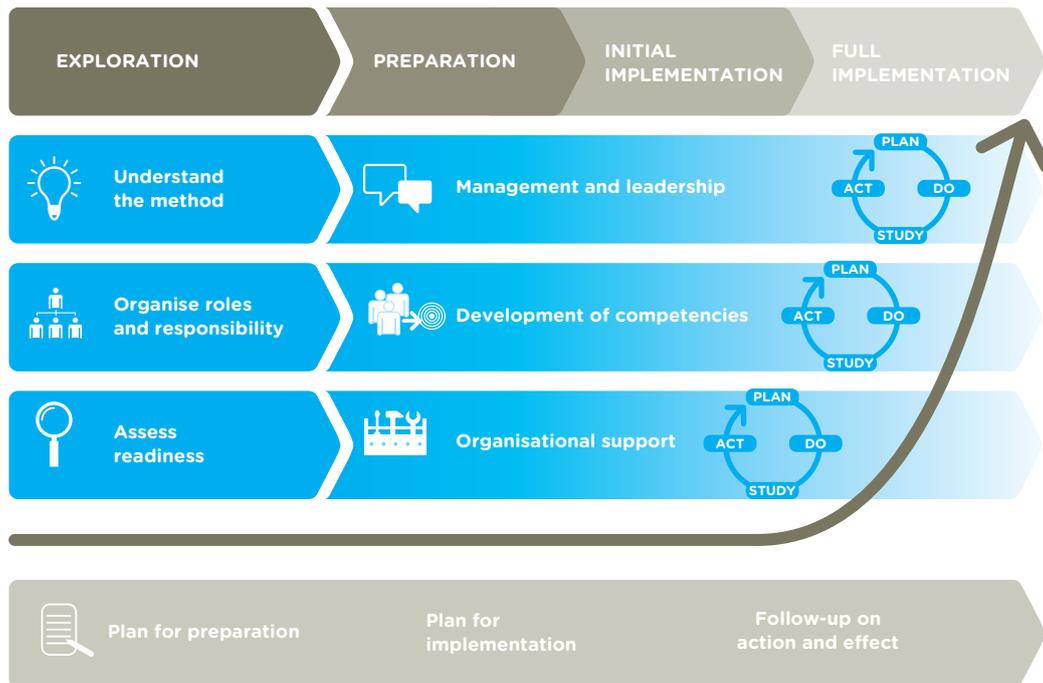
Different Contexts Create Different Scenarios for Implementation

The interplay between different practices and organisational capacity creates different scenarios to inform the development of implementation strategies.

The ideal situation for implementation might allow 'Letting it happen' strategies. But a less favourable context and more demanding practices need active implementation strategies that focus on individual learning and sensemaking as well as creating organisational culture and capacity for change.



Four phases of implementation



Complete the implementation through four phases

Implementation is a dynamic and often iterative process with different logics. To simplify, you can distinguish between four different phases from the initial reflections on implementation to the initial and full-scale implementation involving all members of the organisation.

In **the first phase**, the aim is to analyse whether or not the new practice fits the competencies and workflows of the organisation. This explorative phase leads to the development of the implementation strategy.

Second, **the preparation phase** is where the organisation adapts the existing structures and routines to make them fit the needs of the new way of doing things. This phase incorporates a considerable set of activities which demand both time and attention.

The third phase is **the initial implementation phase**. This phase is without a doubt the most demanding where new sets of approaches, structures and everyday practices are introduced. The introduction calls for great efforts, and typically members of the organisation at all levels will experience the transformation as demanding. Former routines are left behind, yet the uncertainty of the new way of doing things still clouds future gains to come.

Last, the fourth phase is **the full implementation phase**. The organisation reaches this final level of maturity as processes and new methodology lead to the expected results and overall quality.

Do not be surprised if it takes two to four years to achieve full implementation!

THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WHEEL

One of the tools and frameworks that supports you to understand the behaviour you want to change is the Behaviour Change Wheel, developed by Susan Michie, Lou Atkins & Robert West. The Behaviour Change Wheel makes it possible to understand routines and behaviour and the context in which it unfolds to a far greater extent than previously. The key assumption is that behaviour is shaped by:

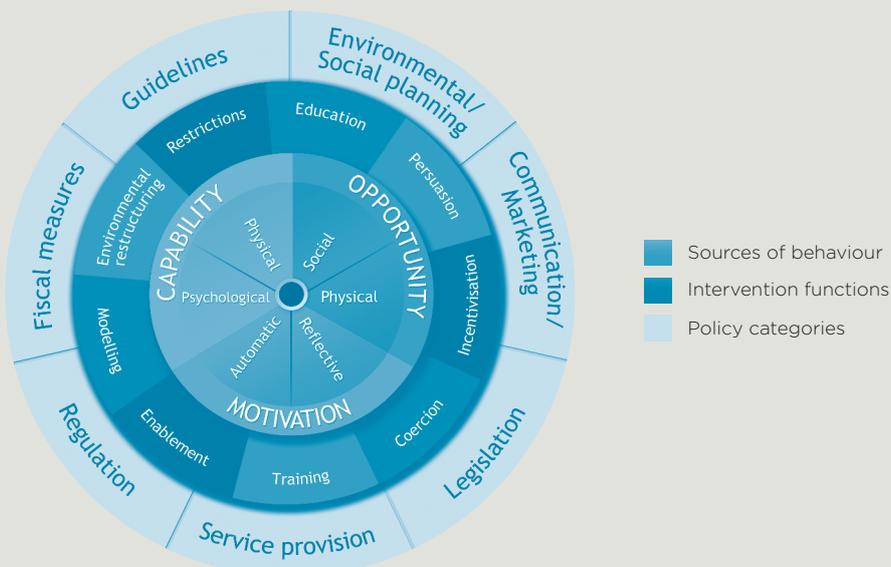
- Individual **motivation** (conscious and unconscious processes that energise and direct behaviour)
- **Capability** (psychological and physical capacity to conduct the activity)
- **Opportunity** (both physical and social incentives and constraints of certain behaviour).

Once you understand the behaviour of the practitioners and the context, you are able to design your implementation strategy. Central to the framework is the initial analytical and explorative assessment that leads to a 'behaviour diagnosis'.

According to the framework of the Behaviour Change Wheel, this behaviour diagnosis is decisive for selecting intervention functions (training, incentives, etc.) and policy categories (legislation, communication, guidelines, etc.) to support the intervention.

Learn more about the Behaviour Change Wheel here:

www.behaviourchangewheel.com



QUESTIONS THAT HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE COMPONENTS OF YOUR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

When you plan to launch an implementation process and design an intervention, consider making assessments of both the intervention and the context. Below you will find selected examples from the *Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research*.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTERVENTION AND RELATIVE ADVANTAGE

- 1. Is there a strong need for this intervention?**
 - a. Why or why not
 - b. Do others see a need for the intervention?

- 2. How essential is this intervention to meet the needs of the individuals served by your organisation or other organisational goals and objectives?**

- 3. How do people feel about current programmes/practices/processes that are available in relation to the intervention?**
 - a. To what extent do current programmes fail to meet existing needs?
 - b. Will the intervention meet these needs?
 - c. How will the intervention fill current gaps?

QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPATIBILITY

- 1. How well does the intervention fit with your values and norms and the values and norms within the organisation**
 - a. Values relating to interacting with individuals served by your organisation, e.g. shared decision-making vs. being more directive.

- 2. How well does the intervention fit with existing work processes and practices in your setting?**
 - a. What are likely issues or complications that may arise?

- 3. Can you describe how the intervention will be integrated into current processes?**
 - a. How will it interact or conflict with current programmes or processes?

- 4. Will the intervention replace or complement a current programme or process?**
 - a. In what ways?

See the full version here: www.cfirguide.org/tools

HOW YOUR PEERS WORK WITH IMPLEMENTATION

The interviews with 30 executives of central, regional and local governments all over Northern Europe leave no doubt that a major shift is underway, regarding how to lead implementation processes – a change that has been called “the enabling approach”.

The enabling approach can be seen in these statements by interviewed executives:

“

Our interventions are based on science and proven experience. The theoretical models of implementation that are being used in science and social studies are the basis of the agency’s actions.” And “For us it is of great importance that all supporting products should be easy to use. It should be easy to identify the status of the products, whether they are merely supporting or recommending.”
Ulrika Freiholtz, Head of Knowledge Based Practice, the National Board of Health of Welfare, Sweden

“

We have designed our implementation strategy from the point of departure that those people out there know best how they will succeed in achieving their targets. They are educated well, so we should use them to make sure they achieve the goals. This goes for teachers and for school leaders and for administrators in municipalities. It is a local ecosystem that we believe has the capacity to succeed.”
Jesper Fisker, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality, Denmark

“

Our raison d’être is to collect useful knowledge that, when applied, can foster change. So evidence is a necessity, but it cannot stand alone. We have to work with the other half, being dissemination. The knowledge we have has to be infused with other types of knowledge so that the knowledge in total becomes action-oriented. Then we can change things.”
Morten Binder, CEO at the National Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment, Denmark

“

We cannot just go for having the reform passed in Parliament without supporting the implementation. We must take responsibility for supporting implementation in the long process of transforming schools.”
Jesper Fisker, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality, Denmark

“ AS A MINISTRY, WE NEED TO LISTEN AND ENTER INTO DIALOGUE. NOW WE INVITE MUNICIPALITIES IN EARLY ON AND DURING A REFORM PROCESS. WE HAVE ALSO HEAVILY INCREASED COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP NETWORKS.”

*Nina Eg Hansen,
former Permanent Secretary and Director
at Danish Ministry of Social Affairs,
now Director, City of Copenhagen*

CASE: IMPLEMENTATION OF JOB-FOCUSED COUNSELLING

Everyone from decision-makers to end-users must be involved and engaged to achieve successful implementation. This conclusion stems from the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) which rely heavily on implementation strategy and practice skills.

As part of the social security reform the implementation unit in STAR headed the implementation of new approaches to job counselling. The approach involved support to adopter organisations:

"It is not enough just to make our own legislation. We have to reach the point where front-line staff changes behaviour. We must support municipalities so that they actually are able to implement it", explains Ditte Ehrenreich, Head of Department and Head of the Implementation Unit.

In 2014, in connection with the social security reform, the implementation unit played a major role in a project supporting the implementation process. Its task was to prepare a road map to open up for new and improved practices in the Danish job centres and create improved effects for citizens.

Transforming from client to participant

An important aim with job-focused counselling was to foster ownership and empowerment among job seekers, hereby making them take more responsibility for their own job seeking.

The jobseekers represented only one of many players in a complex implementation chain though, and fulfillment of the objectives required well-prepared and accomplished changes at different levels:

- Job-seekers who to a lesser extent were to act as clients and to a greater extent as participants in their own job hunt.
- Staff at the job centres expected to find a new balance between acting as an authority and as coach.

- Management of job centres expected to lead the way in creating a culture prioritising involvement, co-operation and dialogue.
- Local labour market offices guiding job centres and now facing completely new types of questions.
- The Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment wanting to extend the responsibility even more than before, so the new way of working with focus on empowerment could gain acceptance, also among the job centre staff.

Connects policy to professionals

The establishment of the implementation unit was a central part of an increased focus from STAR on connecting policy to professionals, e.g. supporting job centre implementation processes in general and bringing the intentions of the social security reform to life as planned. This does not entail a one-size-fits-all approach though, in fact quite the contrary:

"We have one overall model for implementation, but not one single formula that works for everything. We design our measures in accordance with the particular reform and what is needed for ensuring implementation", says Peter Mørch, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Denmark.

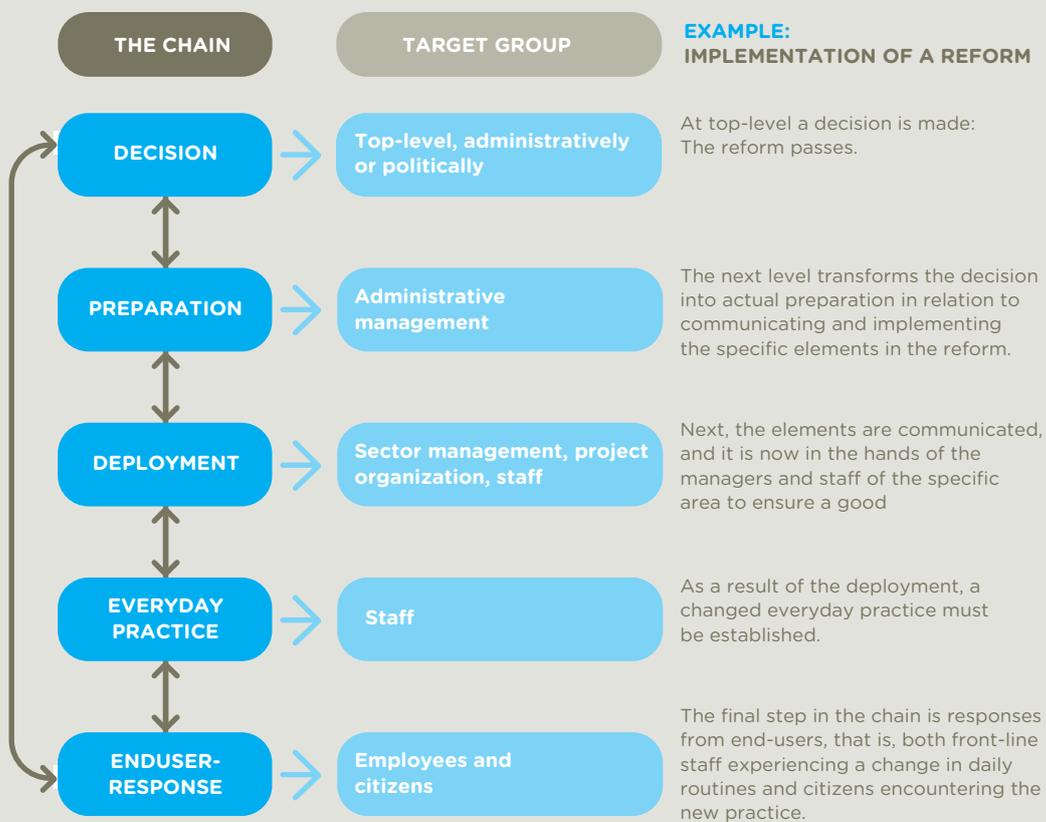
The mindset combines an overall strategy with an everchanging focus from time to time, depending on the target group, the context and the specific task at hand, elaborates Ditte Ehrenreich, Head of the implementation unit:

"We focus on the implementation chain. Our attention is out there where front level staff changes their practices. Implementation is change of practices in municipalities."

IMPLEMENTATION IS AS STRONG AS THE WEAKEST LINK

Implementation runs through a chain of interconnected links. And as far as experience from the implementation unit is concerned, the chain is no stronger than the weakest link.

The implementation chain



Responses from end-users are the litmus test showing whether the implementation was successful, thus if the reform is effective.

With reference to the figure above, the natural conclusion is that implementation always begins with a decision. However, the pointer from end-users and upwards illustrates that implementation may also emerge from below when a need is recognised, articulated and addressed by decision-makers.

It is also true that you usually reach a gradual higher level of insight in the subject of the implementation and the process en route. Therefore, in optimal processes there is room for feed-back from lower levels and upwards with a view to learning and adjustments. Implementation is more like a process than an event, and the chain is neither by definition linear nor reflecting top-down thinking.

CALIBRATE YOUR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Once you understand the behaviour you want to change, the next step is to develop and calibrate the implementation strategy to the specific context and practice. You also need to tailor your implementation activities to make it happen.

Not all implementation processes are extremely complex or situated in challenged organisations. In fact, implementation may be simple, and sometimes the implementation process benefits from a readiness among members of the organisation to learn and change.

Implementation strategies should be tailored to match different situations. The question is: How should it differ?

In order to answer this question, you need to describe how the implementation relates to organisational scope and learning approach:

- **Organisational scope**

If the organisational context is challenged by a lack of leadership and organisational support, you need to broaden the scope of the implementation strategy to address these issues as well. When the organisational context is favourable to implementation, your strategy could adopt a narrow scope focusing on the individual practitioner.

- **Learning approach**

If the new practice is difficult to learn, accept and apply you need to adjust your implementation strategy accordingly. A simple logic of transfer and adoption through distribution of information will not do in these circumstances. The simple logic may work fine, though, if the new practice is easy to learn, accept and apply.

These two dimensions give rise to four basic implementation strategies in the model (next page).

It follows that the deliberate choice about implementation intensity is central. In conducive environments you might succeed in applying low intensity strategies. Here you could focus on developing guidelines and support the spread of new practices through emerging and adaptive patterns based on early adopters, learning collaboratives, knowledge seminars, etc.

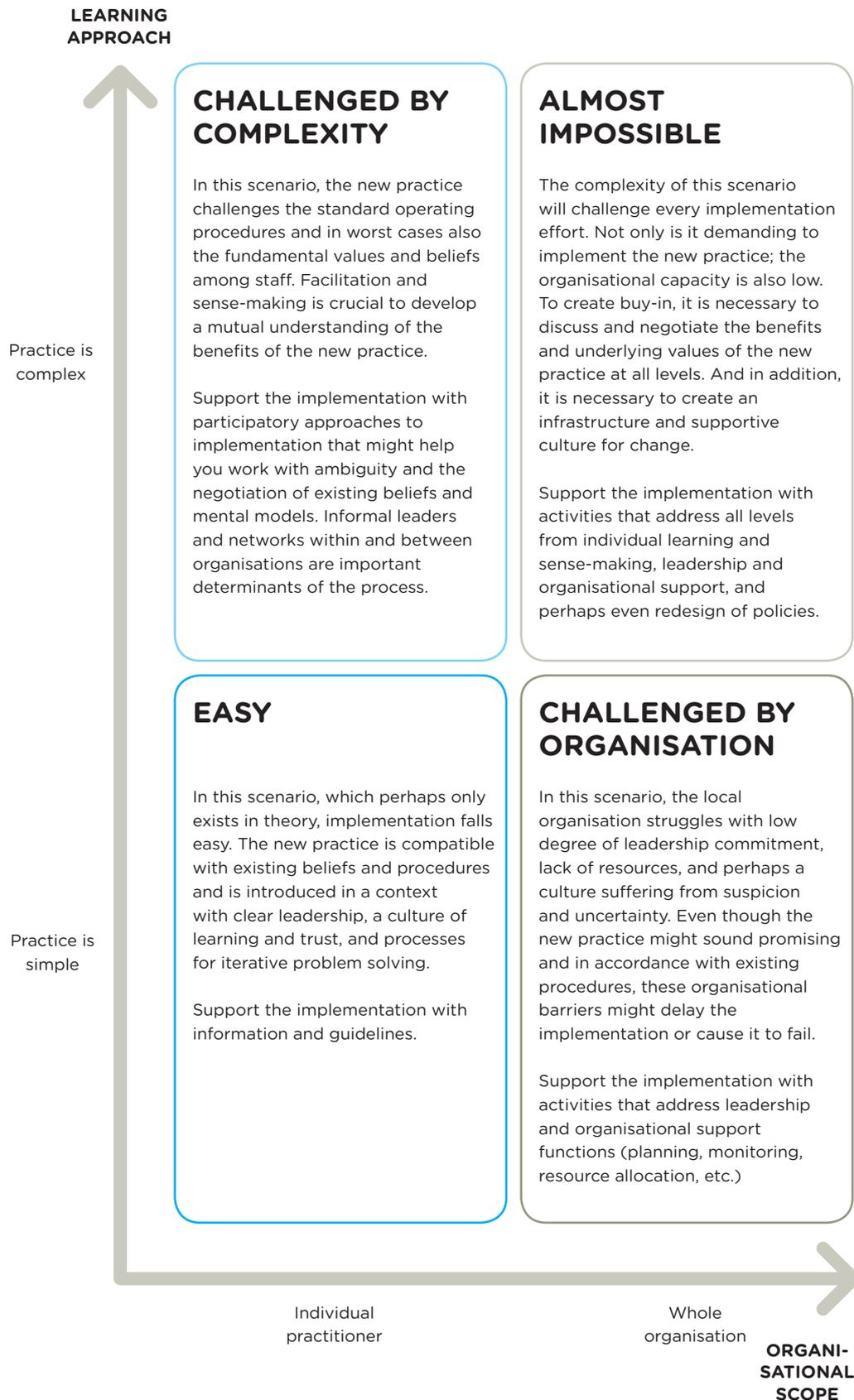
The premise of this thinking is that new practices is able to spread and grow through simple diffusion. By applying this strategy in selected cases you create room for focused investments in the hard cases where practice is complex and the environment less supporting.

High intensity strategies is broader in scope and addresses individual and organisation levels. As we suggest on the following pages you need to consider a range of more dynamic implementation activities aimed at both practitioners, leaders and organisational support units. Training should be dynamic and based on adult learning theories promoting active learner engagement in the learning process. To secure transfer you need to supplement training with work place activities like coaching, feedback and formative assessments of programme adherence.

Leaders should foster commitment and the right climate for change through both technical and adaptive leadership. Small scale tests and problem-solving goes hand in hand with engagement, information sharing, and collaborative work with change champions. Your organisational support units needs to develop implementation plans, schedule meetings and organise systems and procedures that monitors processes and outcomes and gathers end-user feedback.

Finding the right balance between high and low intensity strategies is important. Knowing the possible activities and instruments is another. On the following pages you find inspiration to implementation activities.

Varying degrees of intensity



A CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A checklist may come in handy when engaging in an implementation process. The list is not absolute, but it gives hints and inspiration as to where to begin. The list is inspired by B. Powel et al. (2015) and outlines activities to support the development of implementation strategies that are tailored to specific practices and contexts.

EXTERNAL PROVIDER

01

IF YOU ARE...

...in charge of the implementation process as an **external provider** (purveyor).

02

CONSIDER TO...

- Assess for readiness and identify barriers and facilitators
- Tailor strategies to the context
- Redesign policies.

03

MAKE USE OF INSTRUMENTS LIKE...

Identify early adopters at the local site to learn from their experiences with the practice innovation.

Conduct educational outreach visits

Have a trained person meet with providers in their practice settings to educate providers about the innovation with the intent of changing the provider's practice.

Create a learning collaborative

Facilitate the formation of groups of providers or provider organisations and foster a collaborative learning environment to improve implementation of the innovation.

Stage implementation scale up

Phase implementation efforts by starting with small pilots or demonstration projects and gradually move to a system wide rollout.

COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

01

IF YOU ARE...

...responsible for an implementation process by means of **competence development**.

02

CONSIDER TO...

- Develop educational materials
- Conduct local consensus discussions
- Conduct ongoing training
- Make training dynamic.

03

MAKE USE OF INSTRUMENTS LIKE...

Audit and provide feedback

Collect and summarise performance data over a specified time period and give it to administrators to monitor, evaluate, and modify provider behaviour.

Provide supervision

Provide ongoing supervision focusing on the innovation. Provide training for supervisors who will supervise the staff who provide the innovation.

Provide facilitation

A process of interactive problem solving and support that occurs in a context of a recognised need for improvement and a supportive interpersonal relationship.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

01

IF YOU ARE...

...responsible for engaging **local leadership** in an implementation process.

02

CONSIDER TO...

- Identify and prepare the future champions
- Identify and make alliances with ambassadors
- Inform local opinion leaders.

03

MAKE USE OF INSTRUMENTS LIKE...

Conduct cyclical small tests of change

Implement changes in a cyclical fashion using small tests of change before taking changes system-wide. Tests of change benefit from systematic measurement, and results of the tests of change are studied for insights on how to do better. This process continues serially over time, and refinement is added with each cycle.

Promote network weaving

Identify and build on existing high-quality working relationships and networks within and outside the organisation, organisational units, teams, etc. to promote information sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and a shared vision/goal related to implementing the innovation.

Obtain and use feedback

Develop strategies to increase end-user feedback on the implementation effort.

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

01

IF YOU ARE...

...responsible for setting up **the organisational support** of the implementation process.

02

CONSIDER TO...

- Organise implementation team meetings
- Develop a formal implementation blueprint with scope, timeframe, milestones, measures and strategy.

03

MAKE USE OF INSTRUMENTS LIKE...

Purposely re-examine the implementation

Monitor progress and adjust practices and implementation strategies to continuously improve the quality of care.

Develop and organise quality monitoring systems

Develop and organise systems and procedures that monitor processes and/or outcomes for the purpose of quality assurance and improvement.

CONSIDER A PREDEFINED FRAMEWORK

If you seek inspiration to the development of your implementation strategy in a predefined framework, you are faced with a variety of options. In the following we introduce the Active Implementation Framework (AIF).

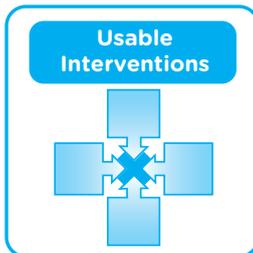
The Active Implementation Frameworks (AIF) was developed by the National Implementation Research Network on the background of a synthesis of research on implementation. You can learn more about the Active Implementation Framework here www.implementation.fpg.unc.edu

At the center of attention in the AIF is the ambition to create sustainable practice change through an active approach to implementation, enabling practitioners to learn and adopt the necessary skills to apply new innovations and practices.

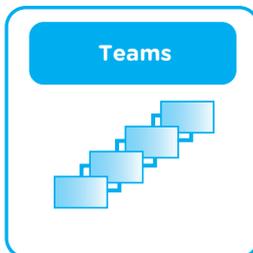
The approach is structured in five distinct principles or frameworks specifying guiding perspectives and a number of underlying implementation tools and activities. The wording in the framework is targeted educational domains.



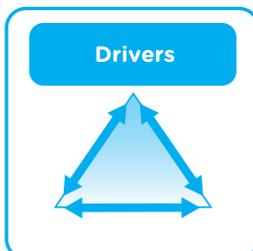
The Active Implementation Frameworks



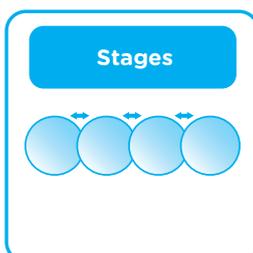
Usable Interventions are effective and well-operationalised. Well-operationalised interventions can be taught and coached so educators can use them as intended (with fidelity). An intervention needs to be teachable, learnable, doable, and readily assessed in practice if it is to be used effectively to reach all students who could benefit.



Implementation Teams support the full, effective, and sustained use of effective instruction and behaviour methods. Linked Implementation Teams define an infrastructure to help assure dramatically and consistently improved student outcomes.



Implementation Drivers are the key components of capacity that enable the success of innovations in practice. Implementation Drivers assure development of relevant competencies, necessary organisation support, and engaged leadership.



Implementation Stages outline the integrated, non-linear process of deciding to use an effective intervention and finally having it fully in place to realise the promised outcomes. Active implementation stages are Exploration, Installation, Initial implementation and Full implementation.



Improvement Cycles support systematic and intentional change. Improvement Cycles are based on the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) process for rapidly changing methods, usability testing for changing interventions and organisation supports, and practice-policy communication cycles for changing systems to enable continual improvement in impact and efficiency.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TOOL BOX

The figure below illustrates how the composition of implementation tools is about choosing tools and the degree of intensity of such tools.

As an example, a ministry can choose to apply education as an implementation tool. Having chosen this tool, the ministry also has to choose the degree of intensity in terms of how to regulate or support local governments and/or practitioners in the field.

At a low level of intensity, the ministry can choose to develop and provide training material that local governments or education institutions can use. The ministry can choose to develop and offer an education in the field. Or the ministry can even choose to demand a certain education or certification of personnel practicing in the field, to control the level of quality of practitioners.

Implementation toolbox





BE AWARE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION FALLACY

Lynn Freedman, Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health at Columbia University, warns about the implementation fallacy: That technical input, political will and money will create functioning services. Freedman used the analogy of following a recipe, launching a rocket to the moon and raising a child as three problems with different levels of complexity. Implementation processes typically fall into the most challenging category, and it is important not to take successful implementation for granted as a result of mere technical inputs, political will and money. It demands not least capacity building among the target groups.

Three levels of implementation complexity

Following a Recipe	A Rocket to the Moon	Raising a Child
SIMPLE (Puzzle)	COMPLICATED (Problem)	COMPLEX (Mess)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recipe is essential • Recipes are tested to assure replicability of later efforts • No particular expertise; knowing how to cook increases success • Recipe notes the quantity and nature of 'parts' needed • Recipes produce standard products • Certainty of same results every time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulae are critical and necessary • Sending one rocket increases assurance that next will be ok • High level of expertise in many specialised fields + coordination • Separate into parts and then coordinate • Rockets similar in critical ways • High degree of certainty of outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulae have only a limited application • Raising one child gives no assurance of success with the next • Expertise can help, but it is not sufficient; relationships are key • Cannot separate parts from the whole • Every child is unique • Uncertainty of outcome remains

INTERVIEWS

Ramboll conducted 30 interviews with public sector executives in national ministries, regional and local governments in Northern Europe in order to describe their approaches to and experience with implementation.

Their input is of crucial value for our understanding of emerging approaches to implementation.

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Additionally, we have interviewed a number of Norwegian leaders in public sector, organisations and companies in the field of new legislation of Sunday opening hours of shops, as well as flight passenger tax. They all requested to be anonymous.

THE ENABLING APPROACH: TRANSFORMING MINDSET AND PRACTICE

Public sector executives from all over Northern Europe currently push forward in a transformation of mindset and practices regarding the implementation of evidence-based knowledge, reforms, and legislation.

In this white paper, we present reflections on the matter from the executives themselves and offer you an introduction to new perspectives of the concept of implementation.

However, implementation is complex and there is no best practice model to apply. What we can do is to guide and inspire you to navigate in the complexity of public sector implementation by providing a number of tools and techniques to support your efforts in driving the desired change.

We hope you enjoy the reading and feel inspired to brake new grounds.

Please, do not hesitate to reach out to our subject matter experts presented below.



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