



Impact Framework

For mission-oriented innovation

November 2024

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Navigating a changing world

The missions are guided by their respective roadmaps, which describe the need for national action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within each mission area towards 2030 and 2050. However, the mission partnerships cannot alone achieve all the goals outlined in their roadmaps. Therefore, when measuring the progress of the work in the partnerships, it requires a systematic approach, which can clarify the contribution of the mission partnerships to the green transition. To address this, Innovation Fund Denmark has established an impact framework to track progress on the green missions. The content of this framework is precisely what is described in this publication.

The transition is not linear and thus, it is necessary to track progress of the missions in other ways than measuring greenhouse gas reductions, which is the ultimate target. Mission partnerships can demonstrate progress towards their goal by continuously gathering learning from their activities and project portfolios and applying this learning in all strategic decisions to propel the missions forward in the most promising direction. This



approach provides the mission partnerships with the best way to navigate a changing world with the uncertainty of what may become possible, and thereby increase the likelihood of achieving Denmark's ambitious climate goals.

Enjoy the read.

Anders Eldrup,
Chairperson of Innovation Fund Denmark

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Mission-oriented innovation – why do we need an impact framework?

In recent years, the idea of mission-oriented innovation has gained a foothold as a popular approach for solving complex societal challenges. With the report "Mission-Oriented Research & Innovation in the European Union: A Problem-Solving Approach to Fuel Innovation-Led Growth", which Mariana Mazzucato wrote for the European Commission in 2018, significant attention was brought to the concept. Since then, the report has inspired national governments, the European Union, universities and cities across the globe to initiate missions and mission-oriented policies with the purpose of solving complex societal challenges. Missions have especially gained a foothold in innovation policies which, among other things, can be seen in OECD's Mission Action Lab where they are working on operationalising and supporting missions on a global scale.¹ Denmark has also adopted missions in research and innovation policies by establishing the four green missions under Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD) in 2021.²

How to plan and evaluate mission-oriented innovation is under development. The challenge is to find the balance between establishing a clear plan for the goals and partial goals of the mission and at the same time maintain the necessary flexibility to experiment and adjust the direction based on learning and feedback from reality.³ Traditional approaches often fail because they are not designed to handle the

unpredictability and complexity that characterise mission-oriented innovation work. Instead, there is a need for a planning and evaluation approach that can handle uncertainty and changeability and ensure that the mission partnership can make informed decisions, adjust strategies, and maintain focus on reaching the long-term goals, i.e. the mission.

To counter the challenges, in this document we present an impact framework for mission-oriented innovation as a suggestion for a framework for planning and evaluation as the mission is on-going. The purpose of the general impact framework is to help decision-makers in missions to:

- **Tie long-term goals to concrete actions.** By making it clear how specific activities and projects contribute to the success of the mission, it becomes easier to adjust strategies along the way and ensure that all parts of the effort are pulling in the same direction.
- **Develop clear measurement points** that are essential to efficient management and evaluation. By having a clear idea of the goal of the mission, continuous monitoring and evaluation can help assess whether the mission is moving in the right direction and document progress.

1.0

- **Support continuous learning and action** which is necessary as missions often evolve over time. This makes it possible to react to new challenges and possibilities in a flexible way which increases the chances of being successful.

The general impact framework is not only a planning tool, but a dynamic framework that supports continuous learning and flexible adaptation. The framework is developed on the basis of the four green missions of Innovation Fund Denmark with the purpose of contributing to meeting Denmark's climate targets. The theory is based on inspiration from Clear Horizon's "Place-based Evaluation Framework".⁴ It is tailored to missions focusing on creating societal changes through partnerships across sectors. The specific characteristics of missions, upon which the general impact framework has been built, is described in Box 1.

With this tool, we hope to enable mission partnerships to navigate in the unpredictable landscape of innovation while remaining focused on their overall goals of societal change.



BOX 1: Specific characteristics of missions

Missions are ambitious initiatives that often aim to solve complex societal challenges through collaboration across sectors. Though, not all missions may necessarily focus on creating in-depth societal changes, e.g. the moon landing project, this is a central ambition for many of them. This ambition forms the foundation for the impact framework that is presented in this document. Specific characteristics of missions include:

- **Common goals:** Missions are designed to handle complex challenges through a common goal which is time-bound and measurable. This goal unites different actors across sectors in a collaboration which is crucial to the success of the mission. In this way, the mission-oriented innovation differs from a programme with a compilation of projects under a common theme by having one common end goal across the actors.
- **Collaboration across sectors:** In order to solve complex challenges, missions require collaboration between a variety of actors, including public authorities, private companies, research institutions, and civil society organisations. This collaboration ensures a coordinated effort towards the common goal.
- **Strategic project portfolio:** A mission differs from traditional programmes by having a clearly defined end goal. The mission's project portfolio is being adapted strategically to ensure that all activities are contributing to achieving the mission's overall goal.
- **Cross-cutting mission activities:** In addition to the project portfolio, the mission includes cross-cutting activities that are needed for generating the necessary preconditions for the success of the mission – the enablers for change. These activities connect and support the projects in the portfolio which create a coherent effort towards the goal of the mission.
- **Non-linear:** Great societal changes are rarely linear. They often occur in waves where a small, gradual progress can result in critical moments – so-called tipping points or inflection points – that trigger large and permanent shifts. Missions seek to navigate in these complex processes by focusing on both short-term results and long-term transformations that may lead to sustainable changes in the way society functions.
- **Flexibility and learning:** Missions provide an overall direction, but do not stipulate fixed solutions. The solutions are developed and adapted continuously as the context changes and new knowledge is acquired. Continuous learning is thus crucial for being able to adapt the mission's cross-cutting activities and project portfolio, so they support the goal of the mission in the best possible way.

These characteristics of missions emphasise their unique ability to unite different actors for a common goal and create changes that go beyond the reach of individual projects.

The success of missions and the need for strategic learning

The ultimate success of missions is measured by whether the mission partnership manages to meet the common long-term goal and solve the identified challenge to the benefit of society. The goal is direction-setting for all activities and is the central ambition which all partners in the mission are working towards. However, steering after the long-term mission alone is not sufficient, as the concrete steps towards the goal are unknown and can change along the way.

To ensure progress towards the goal of the mission, the mission partnership must use a flexible approach where strategy and activities are adjusted continuously as new knowledge is generated. This means that the mission partnership must be ready to adapt their strategy and activities, and maybe partners, based on insights from ongoing initiatives and changes in the surrounding context.

Strategic learning – the concrete tool for adjusting and adapting

The concrete tool enabling adaptation and adjustment is called strategic learning. Strategic learning occurs “when organizations or groups integrate data and evaluative thinking into their work, and then adapt their strategies in response to what they learn.”⁵

Consequently, monitoring and evaluation become part of the strategic arena and are part of an important management tool for the mission partnership both in relation to active, strategic portfolio management, creating synergies across the portfolio, and informing decisions about how to provide the best preconditions for working with a mission-oriented mindset.

Strategic learning ensures that the mission adapts dynamically to the challenges and opportunities that arise along the way

The link between strategic learning and progress in the mission is crucial. The progress of the mission cannot only be measured on whether the mission has affected the long-term goal, because you cannot expect to track changes in this during the early stages of the mission. Progress can be demonstrated through the mission’s ability to learn, adapt and make better strategic decisions which are implemented in practice. The mission’s activities can be optimised through continuous learning which ultimately increases the chances of success. Strategic learning thus ensures that the mission not just follows a fixed path, but also adapts dynamically to the challenges and possibilities that arise along the way.

Progress can be demonstrated through the mission's ability to learn, adapt and make better strategic decisions which are implemented in practice.



Mission investors' role and use of the impact framework for documenting progress

As a public or private investor, the purpose of investing in a mission rather than investing in a portfolio, is to create a partnership consisting of the actors who can propel the societal transformation necessary to fulfil the mission. The mission partnership should feel ownership over the mission and continuously handle the strategic priorities of the funds in a way that ensures the highest probability of achieving the goal of the mission in the long run. The partnership must have the freedom to make the best possible strategic decisions based on continuous learning because it is not possible to predict the future development and there is great uncertainty about what may become possible. The strategic decisions about mission activities and the project portfolio must be based on the long-term goal of the mission and must continuously be powered by learning that is generated from existing activities, projects and the surrounding context in an iterative process. Ultimately, this learning can lead to decisions to discontinue directions that show unfruitful or continue to be implausible.

The impact framework ties the mission actions to the long-term goal and sets relevant measurement points for the conditions you want to learn about in order to support the next decisions. As an investor, when you cannot expect a detailed, long-term plan, this tool will work as a framework for ensuring that the mission funds are used in the best possible way.

The impact framework can thus also be used to document progress in the mission, as exemplified in Box 2. This documentation is not only important to show the investors and external stakeholders the progress, but also to maintain a strong commitment in the partnership. Visualised progress can highlight the potential of the mission, adjust expectations about what is possible to achieve and when, and contribute to maintaining momentum in the mission. This documentation also helps to create the necessary patience both internally and externally which will support the continued commitment to investing in the mission.

BOX 2: Innomissions – the four green missions

The development of the impact framework for mission-oriented innovation is based on the four green missions funded by Innovation Fund Denmark. They have a common goal to contribute to the Danish climate targets of 70% reduction of CO₂ emissions by 2030 and zero emissions by 2050 within each of their respective sectors: carbon capture, usage and storage, green fuels, climate and environmental-friendly agriculture and food, and circular economy with focus on textiles and plastics. They are ambitious missions, which – through four partnerships with many actors – will handle these complex societal challenges.

The mission partnerships have each prepared a roadmap that will define a national direction within the particular mission's area. These roadmaps go far beyond what the mission partnerships can implement alone. Based on the national roadmap, each mission has prioritised a number of areas in a portfolio of projects that contribute with research and innovation. The impact framework presented here can be used as the framework to create a clear link between the mission's roadmap and their project portfolio and mission activities.

The success of the missions

The missions have long-term goals, and it is necessary to document the missions' progress and contributions to their roadmap to politicians and other stakeholders. However, the scope of the missions' contributions to the Danish climate targets are influenced by many factors outside the control of the mission. The current public funding of the missions will only suffice until approx. 2030 and does not in any way cover the necessary measures described in the missions' roadmaps which are needed to meet the climate targets. Consequently, the success and progress of the missions cannot solely be measured by focusing on the common Danish climate targets.

The progress of the missions must be demonstrated on the basis of the learning they generate through, among other things, new knowledge and solutions targeted at important tipping points, and how that learning will be embedded in decisions and actions that propel the mission. This occurs both through a targeted research and innovation effort in their project portfolio and by establishing necessary preconditions for implementing new knowledge and solutions in companies, legislation and civil society, and result in real societal change.

Impact framework for mission-oriented innovation

The impact framework for mission-oriented innovation must be used as a framework for developing a specific theory of change for a given mission. This tool contributes to structuring and integrating strategic learning in the mission work which is crucial for ensuring progress and documentation of the continuous work and results of a mission.

The impact framework has been built on six layers each illustrated by their symbol in Figure 1.

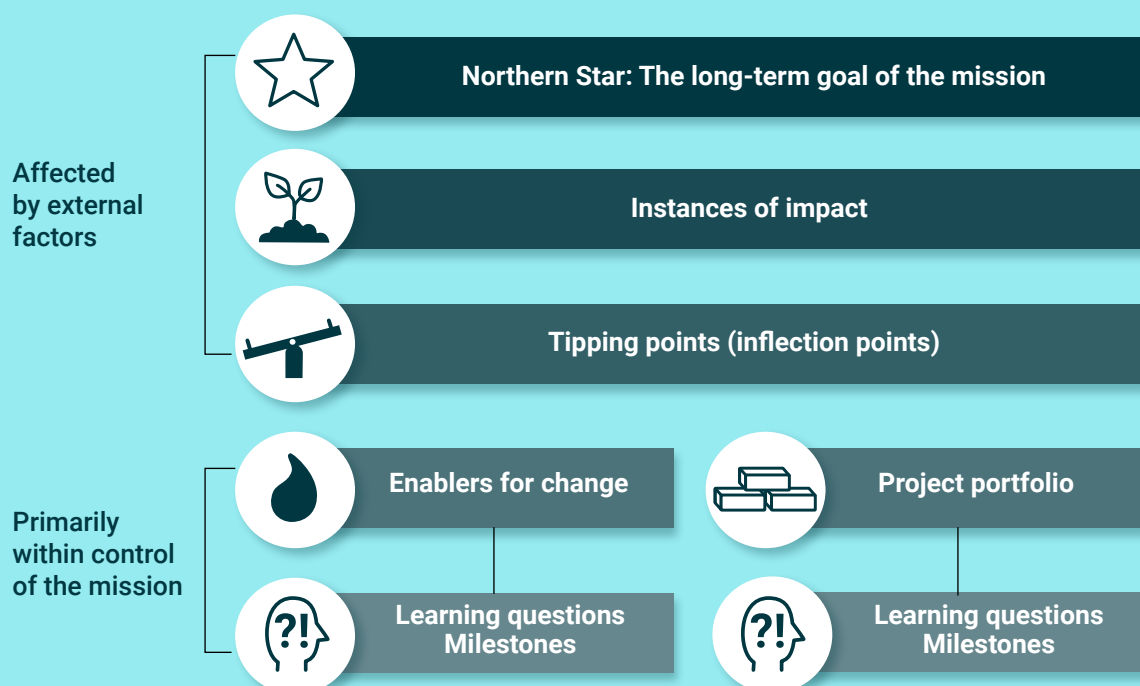
☆ The Northern Star

At the top of the model, we have the Northern Star, the mission's common goals which all partners navigate by. The impact framework is based on the Northern Star and seeks to display how the mission activities and project portfolio works towards this goal. It is essential to have a clear and concrete Northern Star in order to succeed with the mission.

🌱 Instances of impact

The following layer under the Northern Star is called Instances of impact. When the mission is steering in the right direction towards

Figure 1: Impact framework for mission-oriented innovation



achieving the ambitious societal goal, instances that this will be possible will continuously show through e.g. small-scale demonstrations. These instances are great motivational factors both internally and externally in the mission and for handling expectations and building patience. It is an important layer to monitor and evaluate, and consequently, it has been explicitly included in the framework though it does not represent a causal link between tipping points and the Northern star. One example of an instance of impact in relation to a mission about shifting from fossil-fuelled vehicles to electric-powered vehicles could be a small market segment in a local area where the sale of electric cars exceeds the sale of petrol-fuelled cars.

Tipping points

Tipping points – also known as inflection points – constitute the third layer. Tipping points are critical moments in a change process that result in major changes. In relation to innovation and change, tipping points can refer to moments where new technologies, ideas or practices gain a certain critical mass or acceptance which trigger a broader and faster adoption or transformation in society or in the market. These points mark the transition from a gradual development to a fast and in-depth change. A recent example of a tipping point is the adoption of electric cars. For many years electric cars were a product for a niche market limited to a small number of enthusiasts. However, during the last decade we have seen a tipping point in the adoption of electric cars, where several factors such as technological advancements that prolongs the battery range, the decrease in battery prices, increased focus on climate change, the perception of electric cars as being luxury cars, broad prevalence of charging stations, and low registration tax

have generated a critical mass of consumers and manufacturers. Electric cars have thus changed from being the exception to being well on the way to becoming the rule.

Project portfolio and Enablers for change

Under Tipping points, there are two juxtaposed layers that are both related to the concrete activities of the mission. We distinguish between the mission's project portfolio that consists of the concrete project activities within the mission's prioritised areas and the mission work that generates the preconditions for working with a mission-oriented mindset. They are referred to as Project portfolio and Enablers for change, respectively.

Learning questions and Milestones

The purpose of the bottom layer is to list Learning questions and Milestones for the mission based on the prioritised tipping points and concrete activities. By mapping out the expected connection between milestones in the project portfolio and the long-term goals, clear partial goals appear that can be documented in order to investigate the progress. At the same time, the underlying assumptions are exposed which can be subject to learning.

The three top layers – the Northern Star, Instances of impact and Tipping points – are all influenced by external factors that are beyond the direct control of the mission. On the other hand, the Enablers for change, the Project portfolio and the Learning questions and milestones are primarily within the control of the mission which allow for active management and adjustment of these elements as the mission evolves.

When a mission prepares its own theory of change, it is most desirable to start from the top of the framework and work your way down. The work begins by defining the Northern Star and ensuring consensus for the common goal which the mission partners must navigate by. Next, the central tipping points that mark a significant shift in the progress of the mission are identified. Based on these tipping points, the most important activities in the mission and focus areas of the project portfolio are prioritised. And based on these activities and focus areas, concrete learning goals are devised which should guide the mission partnership in continuously evaluating progress, adapting strategies and adjusting activities.

While the Northern Star is fixed, the other parts of the model are dynamic. As the mission partnership acquires new knowledge and experiences, the project portfolio and the mission measures that are supporting the mission work can be adjusted and adapted. Similarly, as the mission draws closer to a tipping point or acknowledges that it is no longer relevant, new tipping points that are crucial to the realisation of the mission are identified and prioritised.

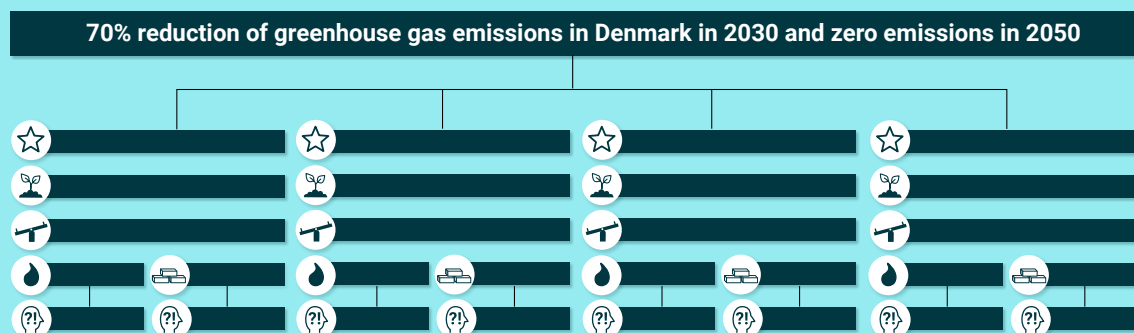
The Northern Star: The long-term goal of the mission

The Northern Star is an ambitious and overall goal which is time-bound and measurable. It works as a focus point for the mission partnership and is used as navigation in all important decisions and when dilemmas or challenges arise. The Northern Star defines the mission and is fixed, but strategies for how to achieve the Northern Star can be adjusted continuously as new knowledge is acquired.

The participants that should be part of the partnership are also determined based on which partners are relevant at a given time in order to achieve the long-term goal, and it is crucial that all partners are buying into the Northern Star. It should generate an authentic commitment from all partners and motivation for the time-consuming coordination work in the partnership. The Northern Star should be easy to communicate, and it should build the common understanding in the partnership as well as position the mission partnership in the ecosystem.

The common Northern Star of the Innomission partnerships is to contribute to a 70% reduction of CO₂ emission by 2030 and zero emissions by 2050 within each of their sectors.

Figure 2: A common Northern Star across the four green Innomission partnerships



Instances of impact

The long-term goal of missions often involves solving complex societal challenges. These solutions have a long-term time horizon and can be difficult to measure and ascribe solely to the work of the missions.

However, if the missions are steering in the right direction, instances of impact will show earlier in the process. This includes examples demonstrating that it is possible to achieve the long-term goal in a limited field in a limited scale. A demonstration showing that the new is probable and shifting the understanding from the new being “implausible” to being “possible”. Instances of impact are graphically placed above tipping points, but could also show before tipping points are achieved.

These early instances of impact play an important role in the long-term work because they show that the partnership is steering in the right direction. External communication of these examples contributes to ensuring continued support from relevant stakeholders and attracting continued and further funding. Within the partnership, they support momentum and commitment and can be used strategically to prioritise a specific promising direction or back away from a direction where there are no instances of impact at the expected point in time.

For Innomissions, these instances of impact are particularly important. For instance, early instances of impact can be demonstrations of technologies or practices that reduce CO₂ emissions in a small scale which indicate that the long-term goals are achievable. A concrete example could be the project PERMA which has shown that it is possible to remove methane from the air in a stable.

Tipping points

The road to the societal changes that the mission programmes seek to achieve is not linear. Within each mission sector, there are some critical points after which significant changes occur and typically accelerate an irreversible development. Within innovation these are known as “inflection points” or “tipping points”.

Tipping points can have different characteristics. They can be technological, market-related, regulatory, systemic, or cultural⁶, and in some instances a combination of multiple tipping points is necessary to activate large changes.

- **Technological tipping points** are new technologies that allow for solutions which were previously impossible. It could be the development of a cheap and efficient battery technology that makes it possible for electric cars to take over the market from fossil-fuelled vehicles, or new technologies that makes it possible to store energy from renewable energy sources so they can constitute an increased part of the energy mix.
- **Market-related tipping points** include changed market dynamics, competitive conditions or new players. This could be the point where renewable energy becomes cheaper than fossil fuels or the shift from physical commerce to e-commerce.
- **Regulatory tipping points** refer to new legislation and regulations that change the general conditions fundamentally for an industry or an area of society. One example could be the introduction of a CO₂e tax that forces companies to switch to more sustainable production methods or the adoption of GDPR regulations.

4.3

- **Systemic tipping points** include changes in the structures and processes that support a system or sector. For instance, this could be the development of smart grid technologies that allow for a more flexible energy distribution or the distribution of charging stations for electric cars.
- **Cultural tipping points** refer to significant shifts in views, values and norms in society. For instance, an increasing awareness of climate changes among citizens that prompts both consumers and companies to prioritise sustainable choices, e.g. that the demand for plant-based foods reaches a level where large-scale production becomes possible.

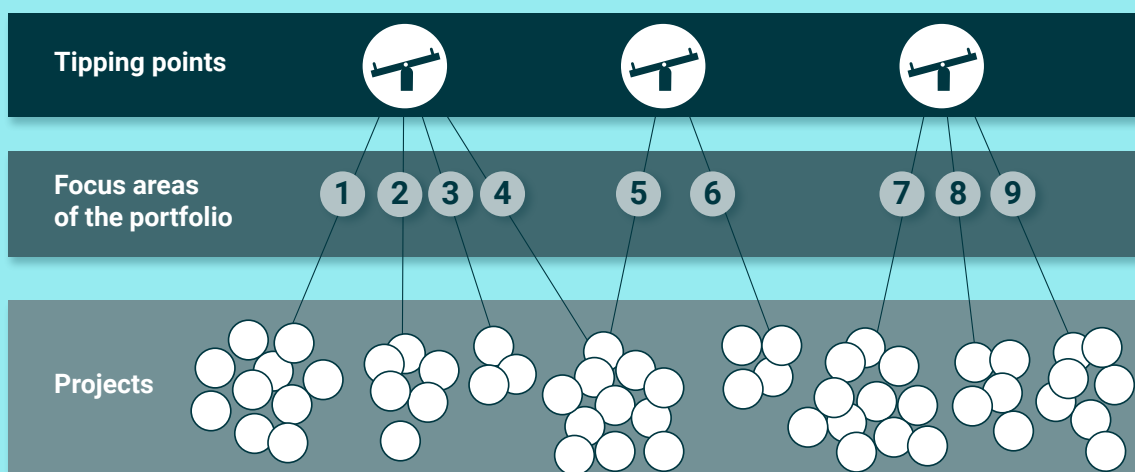
The tipping points will be closer in time than the long-term goal. It is important to track the progress towards the chosen tipping points and utilise the learning about the progress or lack thereof for strategic portfolio management of projects and prioritisation of mission activities. The learning can also result in a reprioritisation of which tipping points the mission partnership finds the most promising to

steer towards, and the chosen tipping points are thus not necessarily fixed over time.

The basic idea of embedding tipping points in the impact framework is to create a closer relation between the long-term goal of the mission and the concrete mission work. The tipping points occupy a central position in the framework as they function as strategic indicators ensuring that the missions stay focused, dynamic and able to adapt to new challenges and possibilities. By utilising the tipping points as guiding principles for the strategic management, the mission partnership can also achieve a more focused effort.

Within Innomissions it is important to identify central tipping points in order to efficiently propel the green transition in Denmark. With the public investment that Innomissions has received, it is not possible to pursue all parts of the national roadmaps. The effort should thus be focused and prioritised. Each tipping point functions as an anchor between the missions' roadmap and the chosen focus areas in their project portfolio, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: An example of the connection between tipping points and the project portfolio



4.4

Project portfolio

The portfolio mindset is central to mission-oriented innovation. A broad portfolio of projects allows you to diversify the risk by exploring multiple competitive solutions at the same time and develop solutions that are mutually dependent on each other. This is particularly important in complex missions where different projects address different parts of the prioritised activities in the mission. The portfolio projects should be carefully chosen in order to ensure that they contribute to the overall goals and create synergy across focus areas.

The goal of the projects should point to one or more tipping points which makes it crucial to ensure collaboration, synergy and accumulation of learning between projects that are working towards the same tipping point. Continuous learning about the projects' progress towards the tipping points can inform decisions to scale the most promising projects, phase out those that do not meet expectations, or initiate new projects within the area. It is also important to include flexibility in the portfolio in order to be able to adapt to new insights and changing circumstances.

For Innomissions, the main part of the public funding has been directed towards initiating a comprehensive portfolio of research and innovation projects. These projects cover a wide range of competing and complimentary projects that address different parts of the missions' roadmaps. A crucial next step is to gather the learning and results and utilise the collected knowledge for adjusting and adapting the project portfolio strategically, so unexpected challenges and possibilities are accommodated, and the mission's resources are optimised and used efficiently.

4.5

Enablers for change

In order to succeed in the mission work, it is necessary to create the conditions for change. The enablers for change can be viewed as the mortar that holds the bricks in the project portfolio together. Consequently, they each form important partial goals and in different ways support the mission's progress towards the tipping points. Especially in the early stages, the progress of the mission can primarily be tracked through the successful establishment of the enablers for change, and learning about this progress or lack thereof can support the priority of the mission activities.

Central enablers for change in the mission work include:

Strategic learning is a crucial precondition for the missions' ability to continuously adapt and adjust actions and activities. This requires systematic collection and analysis of data and utilisation of the insights from that in a way that improve the strategic decision-making.

Multi-sectoral collaboration and knowledge exchange across partners, projects and even missions play a crucial role for the likely success of the missions. The coordination in the ecosystem and bringing together the partnership across the quadruple helix help to enable the trans-disciplinary collaboration between different research-based disciplines and companies and to include authorities and civil society. The mission is propelled by productive interactions in the partnership, so this is a necessary enabler in order to succeed, which David Budtz, amongst others, also emphasises in his "Mission guidebook".⁷

4.5

Authentic engagement from all parties in the mission propels the efforts, and it is thus a precondition that all parties involved are committed, ready to invest in the mission themselves, and feel real ownership of the mission's goals and priorities. This also means that the mission partners are willing to take responsibility and make the difficult decisions e.g. to discontinue less promising activities and projects.

Transparent and inclusive governance support the legitimacy of the mission and the trust in the mission's secretariat and board. It is an important precondition for investments in the mission partnership. In addition, it strengthens the partners' commitment and collaboration, and it thus supports progress in the activities.

Capacity development by the mission secretariat and relevant partners is a precondition for their support of and ability to power the mission-oriented innovation work. It is about developing and attracting the necessary resources and qualifications.

Particularly for Innomissions, the preparation and updating of roadmaps also constitute an important enabler for change both for the mission's own work and also in a wider perspective to succeed with the goal of the mission on a national level.



Learning questions and milestones for the mission work and project portfolio

In order to tie the mission activities and the project portfolio together with the long-term goal, learning questions are listed for the enablers for change and focus areas in the project portfolio. The mission must consider:

Which specific knowledge must we acquire to create the enablers for change in order for the mission to work?

Which questions do we seek answers to in the project portfolio in order to strengthen progress towards the critical tipping points?

The resulting learning questions from the above questions must be sufficiently important in order to achieve the long-term goal. For each learning question, central milestones are listed for both projects and the mission work which mark the important steps on the way to answering the question. This ensures that learning will be installed as an integral part of the mission work, and the continued learnings can both be used for documenting progress and adjusting the portfolio and the mission activities.

It can be difficult to limit the number of learning questions, as more aspects may be interesting to address. Nonetheless, as a rule, we recommend that only one learning question is stated for each of the enablers for change and focus areas in the project portfolio. In our experience, when the learning questions are well-chosen and limited, the results from monitoring and evaluation can more easily be translated to action. In addition, the risk that the monitoring work will be overwhelming is reduced. As the mission partnership familiarises itself with the approach, a natural need for adaptation and adjusting for the concrete mission will arise.

For Innomissions, the tipping points should be sufficiently important for achieving the long-term goal about reducing CO₂ emissions for the answer to be worth the taxpayers' money. At the same time, achieving an answer within the framework for the given investment horizons in the mission should be realistic. For instance, if a focus point in the project portfolio is to develop tasty and nutritional plant-based foods, a learning question could be: "How do we ensure that the price of these foods will match similar animal foods?"

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1. Identify which strategic decisions must be supported by learning
 2. Define clear learning questions
 3. Identify concrete measurement points
 4. Analyse data and integrate learning in decision-making



Strategic learning in practice

A central concept in this document is strategic learning. But how do you perform strategic learning in practice in mission-oriented innovation initiatives?

As previously mentioned, strategic learning is about translating experiences and data in a systemic way from concrete actions to knowledge that can improve decision-making and mission management. Consequently, it is not sufficient to collect and communicate learning; the central point is that the new knowledge will be operationalised and implemented. Progress will not be evident until learning results in new actions. Progress does thus not mean that you know that the mission goal is closer, but that you, based on new knowledge, have adapted your strategy or concrete actions with the long-term mission in mind.

In order to track intentional selections and de-selections as well as staying on course towards the long-term goal of the mission, the way in which learning is translated to action must be documented. This documentation works as the project's collective memory and can also be used to communicate progress and install patience both internally and externally.

Strategic learning in practice can be divided into four steps:

1. The first step is to identify which strategic decisions must be supported by learning.⁸ This will typically be the continued focus on the chosen tipping points, focus areas of the project portfolio, and the overall priority of the mission activities that create the enablers for change. Identifying the significant decisions ensures that the learning effort is targeted and relevant for the decisions that must be made, and that the learning will be embedded in the strategic management. Once you know which decisions the learning must inform, the mission partnership can focus the learning activities on the most relevant areas and increase the chances of a successful implementation of the mission strategy.
2. Then the mission partnership must define clear learning questions based on the strategic focus areas in the project portfolio and the mission activities, which were identified during the first step. The questions must focus on what should be learned and why this knowledge is important for the success of the mission. This forces the partnership to relate to the purpose of the learning while avoiding that data are being monitored and collected without a clear end use.

3. Using the learning questions as a starting point, concrete measurement points which the mission should monitor are identified. The measurement points work as indicators for whether the mission is moving in the right direction. Then the methods and tools that will be used for collecting the necessary knowledge are selected. All possible sources of information may be relevant, but are carefully chosen with the question in mind in order to avoid being overwhelmed by information. Examples include classic quantitative and qualitative data collection, cross-cutting gathering of intermediate results from the project portfolio, experiences and reactions. The most important thing is that the methods are adapted to the specific learning needs and measurement points, so they contribute with useful insight.

4. The last step includes analysis and integration of learning, so the mission's decision-makers will embed data and evaluative thinking in their work. When the data is being collected, it is continuously analysed in order to identify patterns, trends and insights that can answer the listed learning questions. The new knowledge will be integrated in the strategic portfolio management and in working with establishing the necessary preconditions for the success of the missions. Through continuous integration, strategic learning will be an iterative process where the mission strategy will be continuously adapted and stay relevant.

Working with strategic learning in mission-oriented innovation is complex and uncharted territory to many. Since all missions have their own unique challenges and goals, it is crucial that the mission partnerships evolve and continuously adapt their own tailored models for strategic learning.

The impact framework for mission-oriented innovation presented in this document will hopefully form a meaningful framework for strategic learning in the mission work and create the overview that will tie the goal of the mission closer together with current activities and decisions. How to employ this framework in practice will be interesting work ahead, and exchange of experiences with this will most likely form the foundation for adjustment.



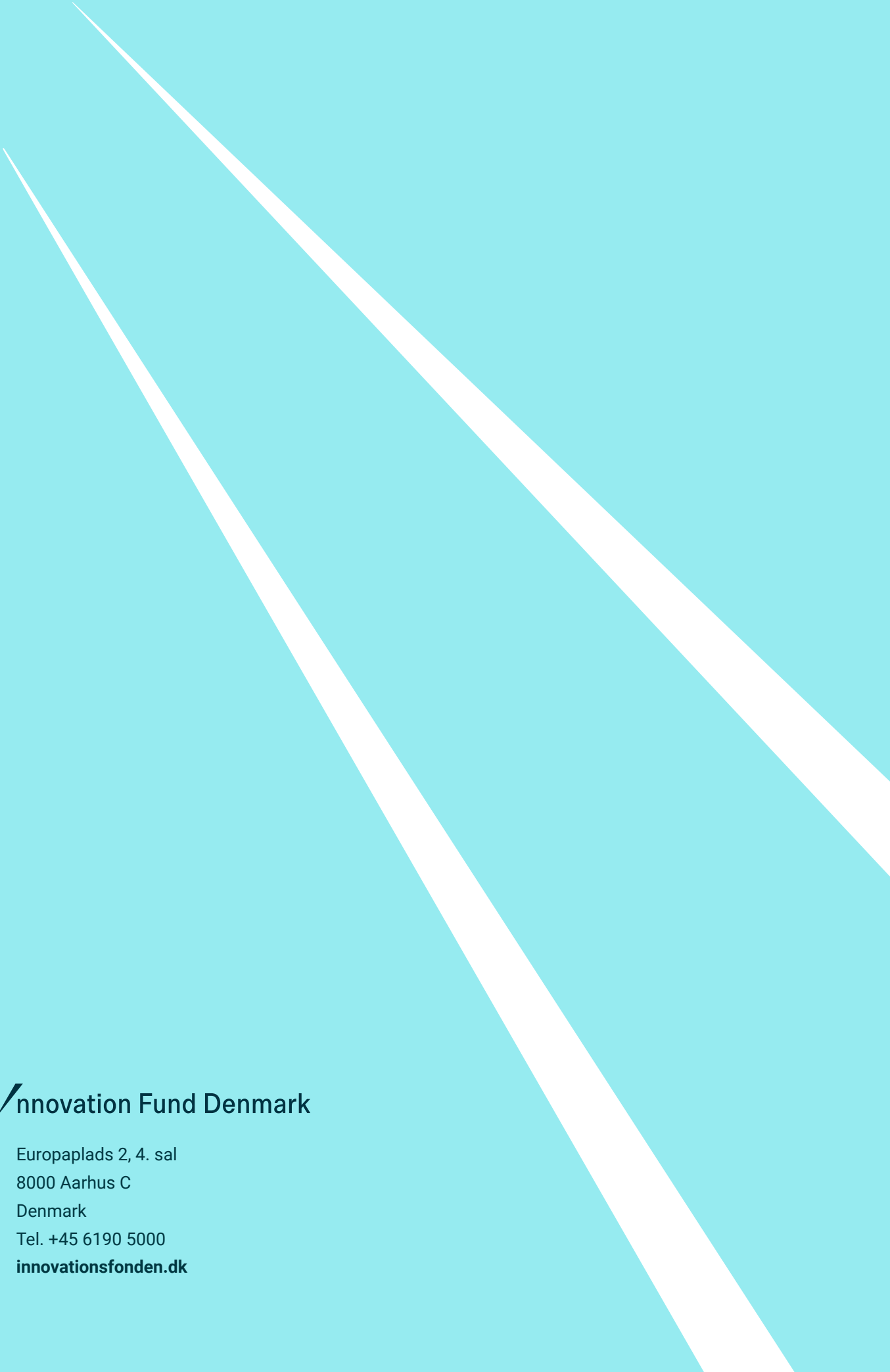
The creation of the impact framework

This impact framework has been prepared by Innovation Fund Denmark with the help from Pluss Leadership and has been qualified by representatives from secretariats, boards and partners from the four green missions during a workshop in June 2024. The framework draws on recommendations from the Innomission's Mission International Advisory Board and the generic theory of change in Clear Horizon's "Place-based Evaluation Framework". See endnotes for references.



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1. www.oecd-missions.org
2. Read more about Innomissions and the establishment of the four green missions on the Innovation Fund Denmark website: www.innovationsfonden.dk/en/p/innomissions
3. In her blog post “13 reasons why missions fail” Piret Tõnurist, Innovation Lead at the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) and member of the OECD Mission Action Lab team, emphasises that there is still a long way to go for mission implementation and that there is a need for more knowledge of the tools needed to plan (e.g. theories of change and roadmaps), implement (e.g. portfolio strategies and knowledge infrastructure), and evaluate (e.g. systemic evaluation methods).
4. The overall structure of the general theory of change and particularly enablers for change are inspired by the generic theory of change in Clear Horizon’s “Place-based Evaluation Framework” first published in Jess Dart, 2018: “Place-based Evaluation Framework: A national guide for evaluation of placebased approaches”, report, Commissioned by the Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors and the Australian Government Department of Social Services, page 23, figure 5. The three layers of results: Mark Cabaj also refers to long-term mission goals, systemic tipping points, and strategic learning in his article “Evaluating systems change results” from 2019.
5. Julia Coffman and Tanya Beer, 2011: “Evaluation to support strategic learning: principles and practice”. Center for Evaluation Innovation. Definition of Strategic learning, page 1.
6. The choice of Tipping points or Inflections points as the middle layer is based on recommendations from Mission International Advisory Board who advises Inno-missions. In addition, we have taken inspiration from Donella Meadows, 1999: “Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system”, and the idea of positive social tipping points described in Global Tipping Points <https://global-tipping-points.org/>.
7. David Budtz, 2024: “Mission Guidebook”. On page 41, the productive interactions are selected as one of three key progress indicators for missions.
8. Julia Coffman and Tanya Beer, 2011: “Evaluation to support strategic learning: principles and practice”. Center for Evaluation Innovation. Page 2.



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