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Evaluation Framework

Executive summary

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Designscapes evaluation framework. An executive summary

Designscapes (funded by Horizon 2020, project number 763784) seeks to encourage the take up and scaling of design enabled innovation by enterprises, start-ups, public authorities and other stakeholders. The aim is to improve performance and efficiency and ultimately competitiveness and make Europe a leader in the field.

Context and focus of Designscapes

The project is implemented against the backdrop of a wider EU policy context which, since the mid-2000s, recognises and pursues a 'broad based approach to innovation' [European Commission, 2006] which includes more demand and user-driven innovation. Design-enabled innovation is a further development of this concept and has gained political significance with the emergence of studies pointing to the business benefits of using design processes for innovation. A number of practical initiatives have followed since, at EU and national level, to promote and encourage the take-up of design as an enabler of innovation.

Within this dynamic environment, Designscapes seeks to occupy a unique space. The project focuses on the specific innovation enabling potential of the urban environment which results from the concentration of relevant industries, modern infrastructure, concentration of resources in cities coupled with a concentration of challenges creating pressures to innovate. Designscapes will fund and support over 50 initiatives in European (and possibly other) cities to develop, pilot and potentially scale design enabled innovations addressing pressing social, environmental and economic challenges. In doing so, the project aims to understand the connections between practice, policy and research as well as their impact on the success and sustainability of design enabled innovation to feed this into awareness raising and wider dissemination activities.

Understanding 'what works': the role of evaluation in Designscapes

Even though design enabled innovation has now been promoted by policy makers for a number of years, evidence about whether and how this method works remains under-developed [NESTA, 2014].

In Designscapes, evaluation is an integral part of project activities. Its remit is to:

- Gather data and metrics concerning the impact of design-related policies and programmes in terms of user benefit and business impact;
- Develop a transferable methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of design in the innovation process;
- Develop a common impact evaluation methodology and indicators that can be applied across sectors and is scalable to organisational, regional, national and European level.

Specifically, the evaluation component of Designscales is expected to support the H2020 call impacts in two main ways:

- Provide the Designscales project with a framework, approach and tools to enable it to capture and understand whether and in what ways it has achieved its own and the Call's objectives;
- Produce outputs that are transferable beyond the project and which contribute to the Call's objectives.

The Designscales evaluation therefore has ex ante, process, summative and learning components.

In order to achieve these objectives, Designscales evaluation activities have been embedded in an overarching conceptual framework which mirrors the central ideas underpinning the project. Most notably this is the idea of Designscales as an 'innovation ecosystem': interactions between different actors and their environment in response to changing internal and external forces at city level (and beyond) produces change. From this follows that the project has aspects of complexity in that processes of change are unlikely to be linear (action x will not lead straight to result y), will be contextualised by the actions and interactions of local actors (who are likely to respond autonomously to the stimulus provided by Designscales) and hence emergent (both at pilot level and at Designscales project level overall).

From this follow the four key methodological pillars on which the Designscales evaluation rests: theory of change, participatory evaluation, behavioural additionality and replication analysis.

How evaluation will be implemented in Designscales

The above characterisation of Designscales means an experimental evaluation is unsuitable to assess the impact of pilots and the project overall. We have therefore chosen a **theory based** design, where an initial development and continuous refinement of the Designscales theory of change will inform and feed into all evaluation activities at ex ante, process, summative and learning stages.

Assessment of Designscales impact will use a contribution analysis methodology to assess the change in what those involved in the project are doing as a result of participating in the project (**behavioural additionality**). Case studies and a longitudinal survey of call applicants will be core methodologies at process and impact evaluation stages. **Stakeholder involvement**, not only in the successive theory of change building but also in learning from and through implementation (ex ante evaluation) and in a joint sense-making of the data collected (process and summative evaluation) adds the multiplicity of voices that need to be heard in order to continuously improve delivery and draw the 'right' conclusions about results. Finally, **replication analysis** (as part of the learning dimension of the evaluation) will identify 'what works' and the transferrable components of the pilots funded by Designscales via a cross-case thematic analysis.

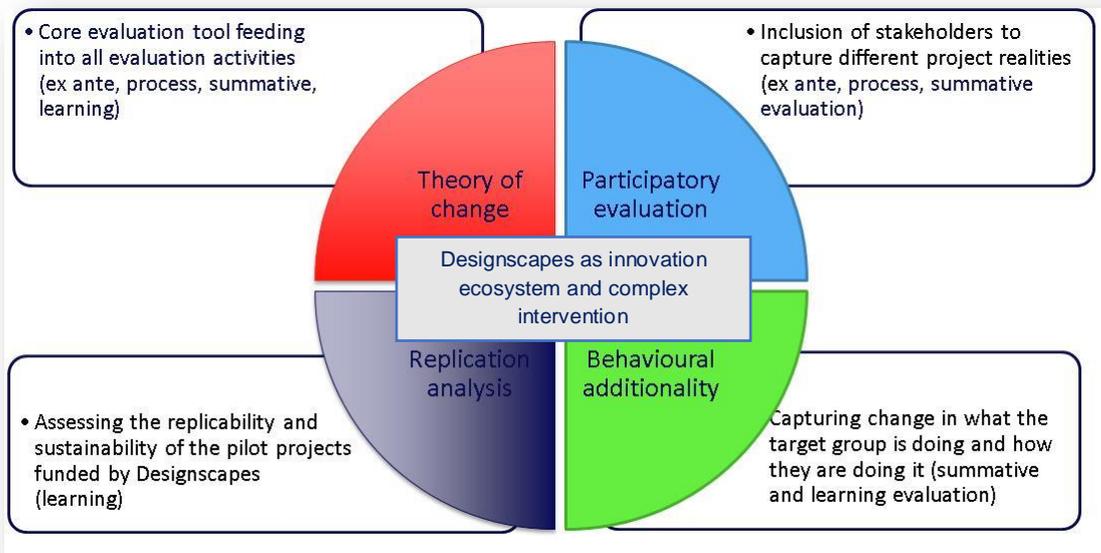


Figure 1: Designscales evaluation framework

With the help of this approach we will answer the following high level evaluation questions:

- Does design-led innovation improve performance and efficiency in the commercial and public sector- by addressing the challenges cities face now and in the future - and hence improve competitiveness?
- Does Designscales support inclusiveness, and reduce inequalities in citizens' access to innovation?
- Does Designscales support co-creation, and does co-creation in turn lead to successful innovation?
- What additional contribution does the urban context make to improving performance and efficiency in the commercial and public sector through design-led innovation?

Developing indicators

An important remit of the Designscales evaluation is the creation of data, datasets and metrics to evaluate impact regardless of sector. This requires the careful creation of indicators that can be used and tested at both pilot and programme level.

The approach to constructing these involves identifying the 'big wins' at project end (impacts and associated **key results indicators**) and the **critical success factors** needed to make them happen. We will define **key performance indicators** to tell us how the project is progressing on the journey towards achieving the desired results. KPIs will be defined at both Designscales project level and at pilot level in order to

ensure they are sufficiently contextualised. Indicators will be underpinned by the Designscape theory of change, and in particular the mechanisms assumed to produce the intended change.

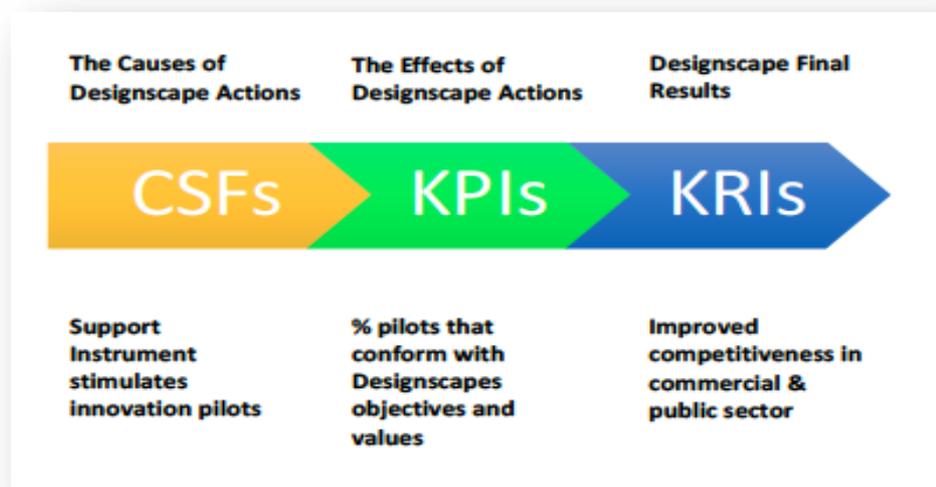


Figure 2: CSFs, KPIs and KRIs

Next steps in the evaluation development

This overarching evaluation framework will be followed with a toolkit which will provide the key research and engagement tools to be used during the evaluation.