EUROPA
WERK &
SOCIALE
ECONOMIE

Supporting social innovation in Flanders

ESF Programme 2014-2020

Medegefinancierd door
de Europese Unie

European Social Fund (ESF)

The ESF is Europe's main instrument for **supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens**. It works by investing in Europe's human capital – its workers, its young people and all those seeking a job.

With the resources from this fund, **ESF Flanders** stimulates Flemish organizations to strengthen the labor market and increase the employment rate. This is done by organizing **calls** for which organizations can submit project and receive grants. Special attention is paid to persons with a certain vulnerability or distance from the labor market.

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ESF Flanders Programme

5 priorities

1. Promoting access to the labour market
2. Social inclusion
3. Lifelong learning
4. Investing in healthy jobs and inclusive workplaces
5. **Social innovation**

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Social innovations are innovative solutions for important and complex societal challenges such as health, employment, inclusion, climate change...
This solution can be a **product, service, method**, ...

Examples:
- Peerby, a digital platform to share stuff with your neighbours
- Ray and Jules, coffee beans roasted on solar power
- OpenHiring, a method to hire people without a job interview

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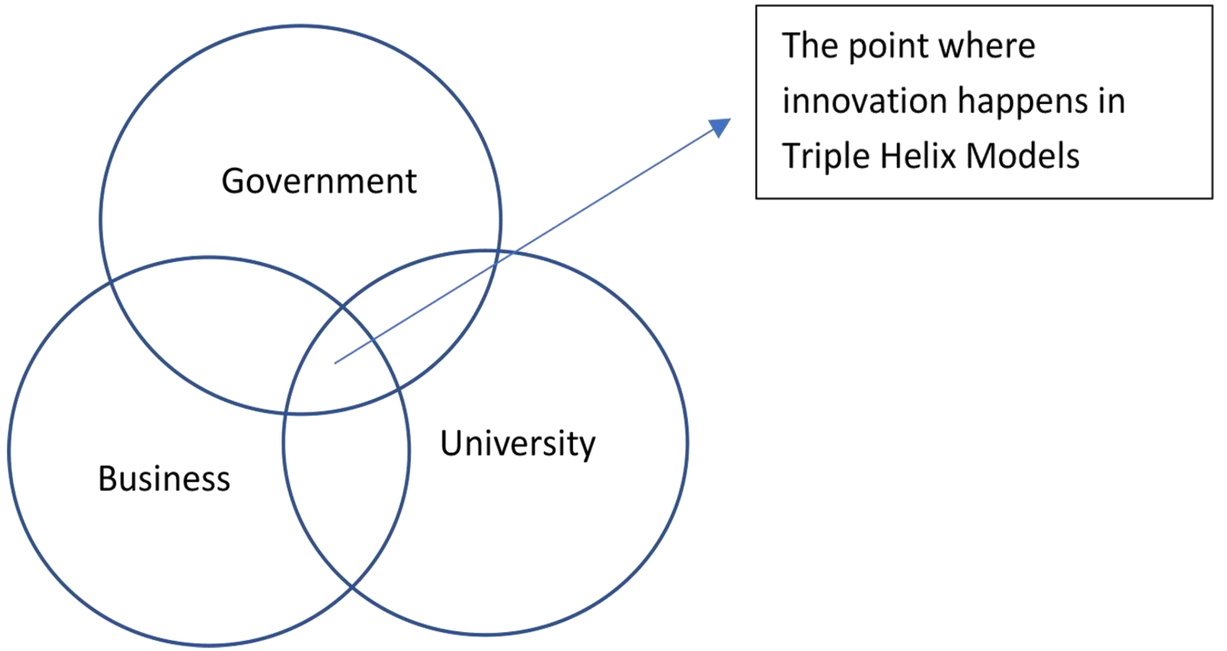
Supporting social innovation at ESF Flanders

Goal: to develop **new services** to strengthen employees and job-seekers on the Flemish labour market

How: **open calls** to all organizations that have a role to play on the Flemish labour market (NGOs, academia, government, companies, …). We welcomed partnerships that unite diverse perspectives (triple helix).

But …

→ Innovation is risky and the result is often uncertain
→ We can not fund based on a well defined output or result
→ So we funded a process.



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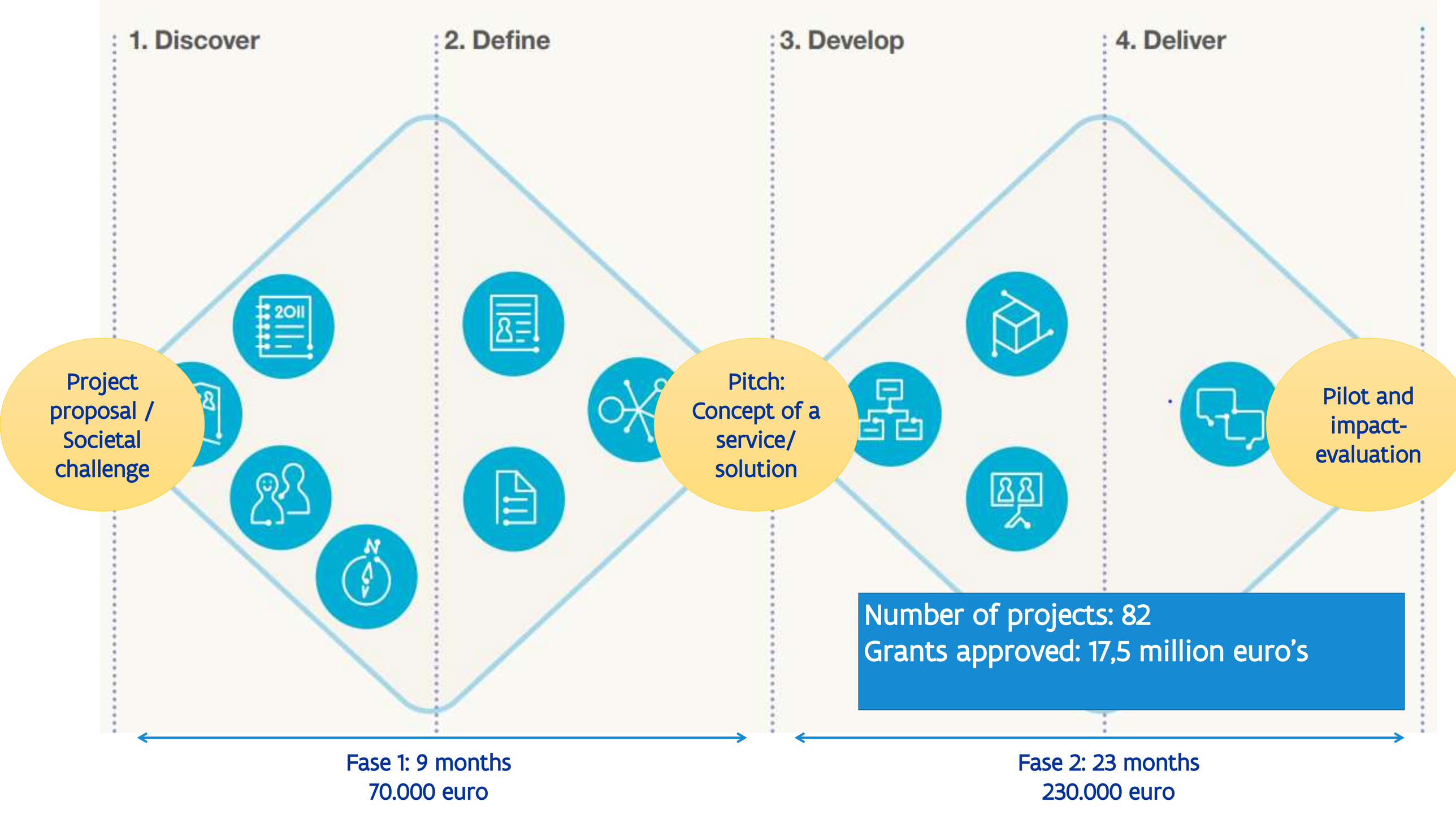
1. Discover
2. Define
3. Develop
4. Deliver
Project proposal / Societal challenge
Pitch: Concept of a service/ solution
Pilot and impact-evaluation
Number of projects: 82
Grants approved: 17,5 million euro's
Fase 1: 9 months
70.000 euro
Fase 2: 23 months
230.000 euro

Project proposal: criteria

- Relevance of the societal challenge (cost of the challenge, number of people targeted, disadvantaged target group, …)
- Feasibility of the approach to find an innovative solution (diverse perspectives, are crucial stakeholders involved, capacity of the team, …)
- Responsible project management (orderly plan with crucial milestones, senior management involved, …)

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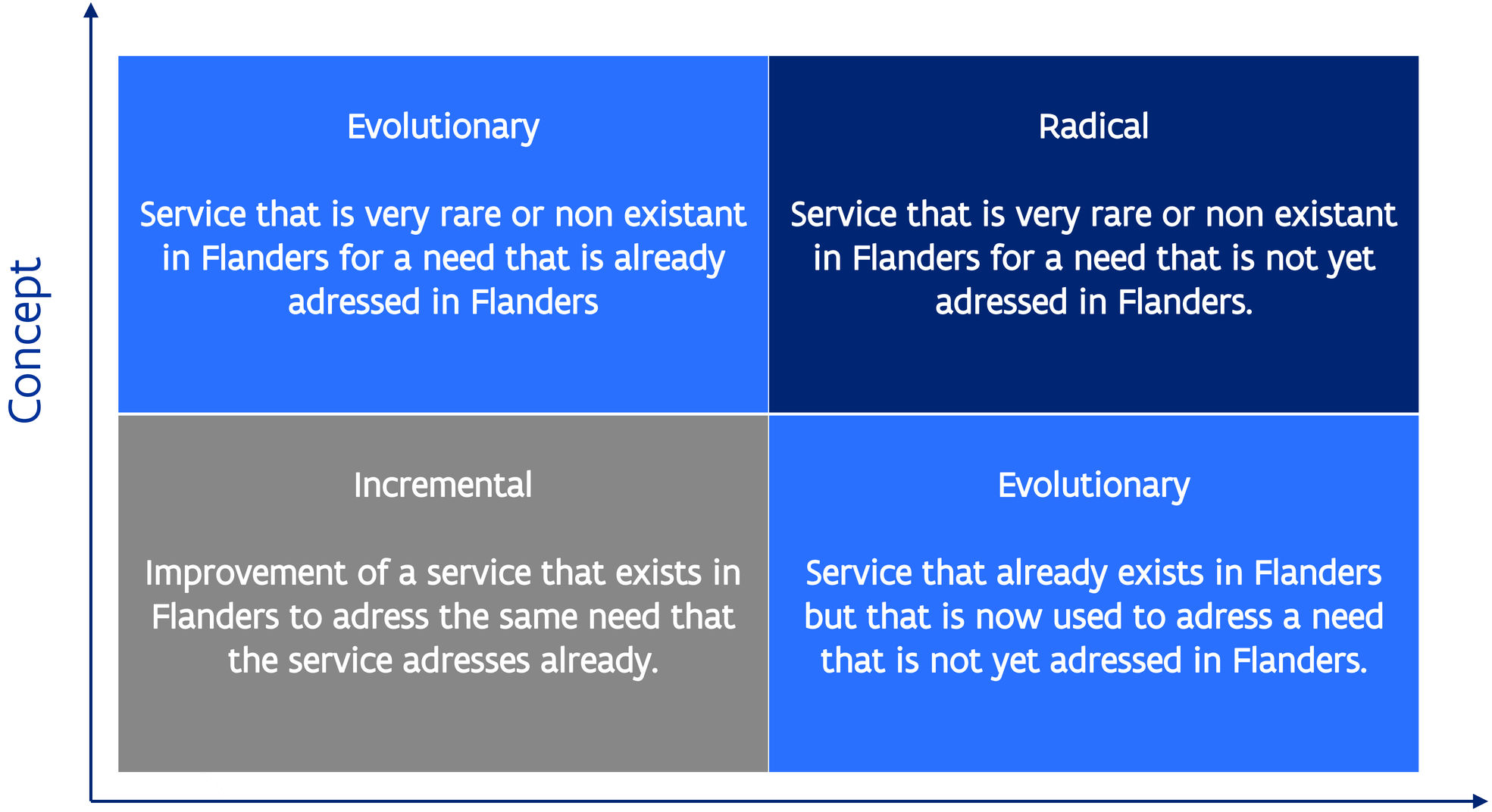
‘Is it innovative enough?’



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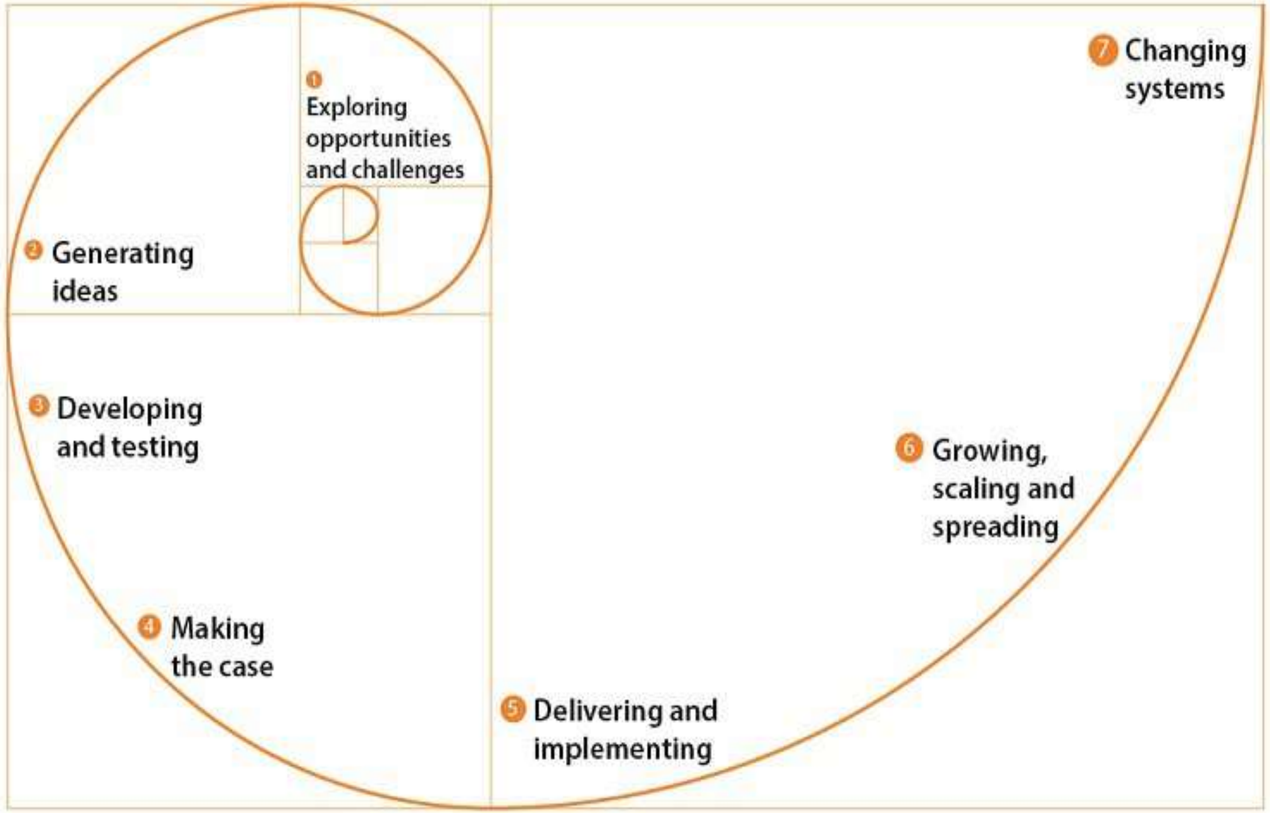
Lessons learned

- Capacity building is needed when it comes to service design/human centered design
- It is not given that innovations with impact also scale
- You can not change the world with building new services alone
    - How to change mindsets, culture, rules, …?



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Toolkits, publications, …

- Toolkit for Supporting Social Innovation with the European Social Investment Fund. (ESF Flanders) (http://www.latitudeconsulting.eu/images/toolkit_innovatie.pdf)

- Scaling-up social innovation. Seven steps for using ESF+. (European Commission) (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1f092971-e08c-11ec-a534-01aa75ed71a1/language-en)

- Design Kit: The Human-Centered Design Toolkit (IDEO) (https://www.ideo.com/post/design-kit)

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