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# Improved Innovation Decision Making

An Abridged Toolset and Guide for Decision  
Makers

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Developed by:



**Global Knowledge Initiative**

In partnership with:



Funded by:





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## About YieldWise:

In 2016, The Rockefeller Foundation launched [YieldWise](#), a US \$130 million initiative to demonstrate how the world can halve post-harvest food loss by 2030. This effort currently focuses on four value chains in three countries: maize in Tanzania, cassava and tomatoes in Nigeria, and mangoes in Kenya. To help meet their ambitious target, The Rockefeller Foundation invited GKI to support YieldWise as its Innovation Partner.

## About the Global Knowledge Initiative:

GKI is a non-profit organization with the mission of [developing purpose-driven networks to deliver innovative solutions](#) to the world's most pressing challenges. In its role as the YieldWise Innovation Partner, GKI helps Implementing Partners improve their effectiveness and impact through innovation. In addition to scanning for innovations with the potential to reduce food loss, GKI works with Implementing Partners to address their innovation capacity building goals. This effort builds upon a legacy of work with The Rockefeller Foundation on the post-harvest food loss challenge: [GKI served as the Social Innovation Lab for the Foundation's Food Waste and Spoilage Initiative in 2013-15.](#)





# Introduction

What is improved innovation decision making and why does it matter for global development?

# What is Innovation Decision Making?

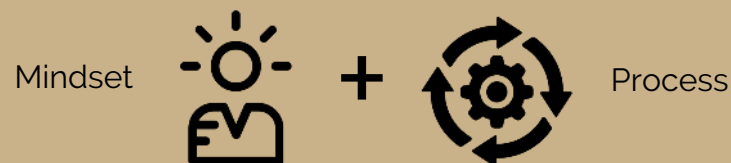
As a term, “innovation” is everywhere. Headlines tout it; commercials advertise it; innumerable companies claim it. It is a term so pervasive that it risks becoming meaningless. According to WIRED contributor Michael O’Byran, “the overuse and generalization of the term ‘innovation’ has led to a loss of understanding of what it is we need when we say we need more innovation” (n.d.).

The hype around innovation has led to a proliferation of shorthand images and explanations that do not do justice to the iterative process by which innovation emerges. Images of shiny products, smart gadgets, and new, efficient processes fill our mind’s eye when we think of innovation. But the truth is a bit more complicated. Innovation is the culmination of a series of decisions – both small and profound– made within a deliberate process of experimentation and design, all in an effort to unlock new value and achieve significant outcomes not achievable through status quo approaches. It takes a particular **mindset** and clear decision-making **process** to effectively translate a novel idea into an innovation with impact.

An innovation decision-making process – and the mindset that enables it – isn’t a highly guarded secret. It is learnable and feasible for individuals and organizations seeking to deliver value, whether in the private, public, or philanthropic sector. Indeed, improved innovation decision making is a skill set *anyone* can develop with the right support and resources (Banjeree & Ceri, 2016).

*Innovation is the culmination of a series of decisions – both small and profound – made within a deliberate process of experimentation and design.*

## Innovation Decision Making



# Why do we need to improve Innovation Decision Making?

The global development community is feeling more intense pressure to solve problems while global challenges become more complex, interconnected, and dynamic. Against this backdrop, organizations race to keep up while pursuing their impact goals. And all of this occurs at a time of global economic recovery, when organizations are expected to do more with less.

It is no wonder then that global development practitioners are increasingly called upon to better integrate and support innovation within their programs and projects. Innovation has incredible potential to unlock new value and deliver impact at a pace and scope far greater than traditional approaches. This is especially true for challenges that persist despite development organizations' best efforts.

So then, the most pressing questions ahead of development practitioners may not be *why* improve innovation decision-making, but **how**. For example:

- How might I improve my innovation decision-making skills amidst other expectations and pressures of my job?
- How do I / my organization get started?
- How might I become an effective innovation decision maker without becoming an innovation expert?

This improved innovation decision-making toolset is meant to be a guide for individuals and organizations asking “how” amidst a growing list of innovation-related questions. Continue reading to learn more!

## The Innovation Imperative:

*Why individuals and organizations seeking development impact should make innovation a core value*

- Innovation helps “bridge the gap between new types of problems and current organizational capacity.”
- Often an underutilized resource, the innovation capacity of an organization’s workforce represents “untapped potential for value creation” and leadership.
- Status quo approaches “encourage solving piecemeal problems but miss opportunities to generate systemic solutions.”
- There is “universal pressure to achieve more with less.”
- Innovation can serve as a way to “reinvent one’s own organization” and become resilient in the face of uncertainty and future unknowns.

*(Excerpt from Banerjee & Ceri, 2016)*



# Who is an Innovation Decision Maker?

**Anyone can be an innovation decision maker.** Truly, the mindset and process for effective, impactful innovation decision making can be learned and exhibited by anyone who dares to try, given the right resources and support.

That said, the increasing gap between the innovation imperative for global development organizations, and the limited support given to innovation capacity building within these organizations, beckons for a response. This toolset, therefore, takes as its **primary focus** those practitioners whose day-to-day work entails translating ideas into impact for global development programming: **Senior Managers, Program Managers, and Field Officers.** These practitioners are characterized by different roles and responsibilities, but each exhibits the potential for significant influence over global development operations.



## Senior Manager

People in charge of high-level vision, strategy, organizational development, etc.

**Key Responsibilities:** Strategic planning and visioning; Business development and fundraising; Hiring and staff planning; Organizational strengthening

**Key Interactions:** Program Managers, Partners, Donors, Senior Managers of peer organizations, Other stakeholders

**Key Innovation Questions:** How can we support a more innovative culture across our organization? How can we incentivize innovation and remove barriers to collaboration? How can we model, not just mandate, innovation from the top? How can we learn from colleagues working at all levels of the organization?



## Program Manager

People in charge of day-to-day operations, staffing, budgets, etc.

**Key Responsibilities:** Program planning and implementation; Business development and fundraising; Monitoring and evaluation; Communications; Staff capacity building

**Key Interactions:** Senior Managers, Field Staff, Partners, Donors, Other Stakeholders

**Key Innovation Questions:** How can we leverage innovation to more effectively and efficiently achieve sustainable, scalable impact? How can we convene stakeholders and align around shared goals? How can we boost the innovation capacity of our team and broader organization?



## Field Officer

People who oversee and support program implementation on the ground.

**Key Responsibilities:** Program planning and implementation; Community mobilization; Task management and planning; Monitoring and evaluation; Knowledge transfer (internal and external)

**Key Interactions:** Senior Management, Community Leaders, Beneficiaries, Local Stakeholders

**Key Innovation Questions:** How can we better leverage innovation to achieve program or project goals? How can we achieve greater success with the innovations we implement? How can we effectively source and generate innovative solutions?



*“In the last century, the competency of an organization was measured in terms of its operational excellence...In the twenty-first century, it is going to be measured in terms of its **innovation capacity**.”*

*(Banerjee & Ceri, 2016)*







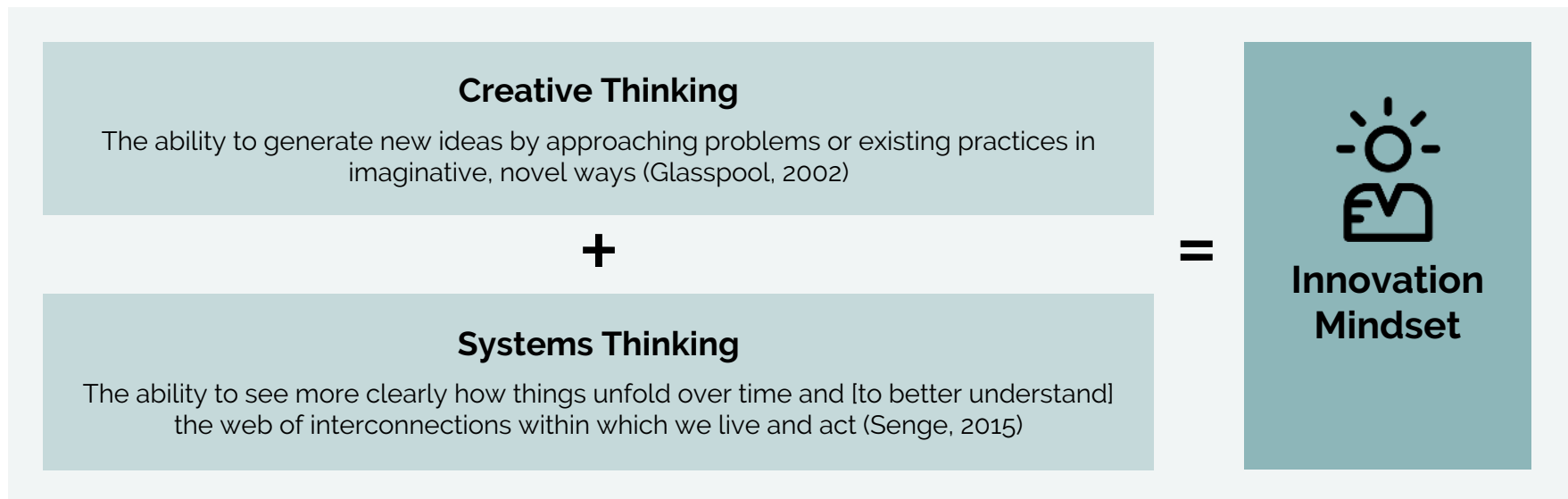
# The Mindset

The “central operating system” of an innovative thinker

# What is an Innovation Mindset?

Mindset is the “central operating system” of the innovative thinker (Horth, 2014). It sets the frame for how an individual approaches a challenge, explores possibilities, engages others, and ultimately determines a course of action. As noted previously, global development organizations increasingly seek to address complex challenges that are multidimensional, oftentimes ambiguous, and constantly evolving. Decision makers within these organizations, therefore, are increasingly expected to innovate amidst complexity, a charge that requires a particularly unique innovation mindset.

The bulk of innovation literature emphasizes **creative thinking** as a central feature of the innovation mindset. When dealing with complex challenges, GKI believes that **systems thinking** is also warranted. “Creative thinking” and “systems thinking” often are treated in isolation because they have emerged from different schools of study and practice. GKI argues that pursuing innovation amidst complexity beckons for a hybrid of the two. The approaches in this toolset invite development practitioners to employ both creative and systems thinking as a cohesive innovation mindset that exhibits the characteristics highlighted on Page 14.



# What characterizes an Innovation Mindset?

Much has been written – and much will be written still – about the characteristics of an innovation mindset. While there is no ultimate authority or definition, the following table highlights some of the well-established characteristics of an innovation mindset, as understood as the **integration of creative and systems thinking**. (List informed by Senge, 2011; Horth & Vohar, 2014; Banerjee & Ceri, 2016; Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2016)

## Creative Thinking

### Key Principles:

- Innovation emerges from a creative process in which ideas are generated and transformed into something that shifts or disrupts typical practice
- Emphasizes generating many, diverse ideas before evaluating them in order to identify high-potential innovation opportunities

### Key Characteristics:

- Empathetic; Takes a human-centered approach
- Optimistic; Asks “What if…”
- Proactive; Is future-oriented
- Avoids making quick judgements; Remains open to unexpected possibilities
- Embraces potential risk and failure

## Systems Thinking

### Key Principles:

- Complex challenges emerge and persist in systems; to have any chance at addressing such challenges, we must have insight into the system in which it manifests
- Emphasizes the importance of flexibility and feedback loops in program design and implementation

### Key Characteristics:

- Holistic; Aims to understand the full system (e.g., interactions within, functions of)
- Expects non-linearity; Assumes an unpredictable future
- Embraces complexity; Focuses on clarifying interactions
- Seeks out patterns and feedback loops; Anticipates unintended consequences

## Shared Characteristics

While often treated as distinct, creative thinking and systems thinking share a number of characteristics, which highlight their complementarity and “fit” within a cohesive innovation mindset.

- Reflective; Surfaces and tests assumptions
- Open to ideas; Emphasizes co-creation with others who offer diverse perspectives
- Flexible; Embraces ambiguity and can sit with unknowns
- Balances synthesis with analysis
- Exploratory; Acknowledges multiple possible solutions
- Curious; Emphasizes continuous learning and idea refinement
- Multi-faceted; Works on multiple levels and timeframes



## How is an Innovation Mindset distinct?

Innovation decision making is not meant to supplant the traditional planning and implementation practices of global development organizations. No doubt, people make decisions every day. Rather, this toolset and the mindset it beckons are meant to improve the degree to which decisions elicit better innovation outcomes. That said, savvy innovation decision makers are able to move flexibly between an innovation and “business as usual” mindset. They understand that particular scenarios and circumstances call for different types of mindset and approaches for decision making. It is worth noting how an innovation mindset is distinct from “business as usual.”

<b>“Business as usual” Mindset</b>	<b>Innovation Mindset</b>
Emphasizes logic	Emphasizes intuition
Asks “How do we know?”	Asks “What if?”
Jumps quickly to decisions	Considers multiple options and reserves judgement
Asserts “Right” or “Wrong”	Asserts “There is a better way”
Avoids ambiguity	Embraces ambiguity
Seeks to clarify the immediate decision-making context	Seeks to understand the full system
Expects linear cause and effect	Anticipates nonlinear interactions and unintended consequences
Set it and forget it	Ongoing, iterative planning
Learn than execute	Continuous learning and refinement of ideas

*Table modified from Horth & Vehar, 2014 and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2016*



# How might you develop your Innovation Mindset?

As noted, **anyone** can develop an innovation mindset. To be sure, practice makes (close to) perfect. There are many ways to strengthen an individual's innovation mindset, whether in terms of generating more, creative ideas, or in finding connections in seemingly unconnected things. The approaches listed below aim to develop a way of thinking that can inform innovation decision making, no matter the organizational contexts or specific challenge to be addressed. While you may start by trialing one or two of these approaches in your work, the idea is that eventually they become habit, a regular way of thinking and operating, such that an innovation mindset becomes second nature.

## Connect What's Not Connected

Practice connecting the dots between ideas that seemingly have nothing in common. **Pick a random input**, like a picture, or a word plucked out of a dictionary, and tell a story about how it connects to the problem you seek to solve. **Create a visual mind map** by writing a few key phrases on a blank sheet of paper along with anything else on your mind; connect what is on the page as much as possible.

## Take a Different Perspective

Push yourself to get in the habit of engaging others to explore nascent ideas, or evaluate possible options. **Ask different people**, even individuals outside your organization, what they think. **Consider the problem from multiple vantage points** (e.g., from that of a single mother, a recent college graduate, a community leader) to refine your understanding of a problem, and its possible solutions

## Disrupt Thought Patterns

Find specific ways to break out of “business as usual” thinking. **Challenge your assumptions** about why a specific problem exists or why a current practice persists. **Reverse your thinking**: instead of thinking about how you might double the number of beneficiaries served by a program, think instead about how you might reduce beneficiaries by half. The flip side of *those* ideas might just lead you to a novel approach to your original problem.

## Get in a Positive Headspace

Innovation is an inherently optimistic endeavor. It stands that an innovation mindset should be similarly positive. **Believe in yourself** and your ability to think and act differently. **Remove distractions** and **give yourself space** to think and daydream; **Change your surroundings**, such as by going outside or to a place that inspires you. **Lighten the mood** by doing something that is active or makes you laugh.

*Content informed by: Mind Tools, n.d.*



# How might you maximize your innovation talents?

To be sure, the characteristics of an innovation mindset listed previously set a high bar. It is hard to imagine any single individual exhibiting *all* of those characteristics at a level sufficient to effectively innovate amidst complexity. This is one of the reasons why **teams** have been increasingly important within the innovation space, especially when trying to address multidimensional, quickly evolving challenges.

Not all individuals are endowed with the same proclivities or natural talents for creativity, risk taking, information synthesis, etc. While one person on a team may easily generate many possible solutions to a problem, another may struggle to come up with even one unique idea. However, that person may be brilliant at building upon others' ideas once they are on the table. Understanding the inherent strengths and weaknesses for innovation within yourself and your teammates serves as an important step in leveraging the full breadth of resources at your disposal.

Innovation and creativity expert Min Basadur presents four personas that map to a generic innovation decision-making process: The Generator, The Conceptualizer, The Optimizer, and The Implementer. Each of these personas exhibit particular natural talents and preferences that can be strategically leveraged as a team journeys from idea to impact. A deep-dive into these four personas and how individuals can maximize their natural talents and preferences for these roles falls outside the scope of this toolset. For more information, and to assess your own innovation persona, visit: <http://www.basadur.com>.

## The Generator

- Often plays the role of "getting things started"
- Loves identifying problems and collecting information pertinent to that problem
  - Option creators

## The Optimizer

- Often turns abstract ideas into concrete solutions & plans
- Loves to select an idea and plan next steps
- Serves as an idea evaluator and easily offers feedback

## The Conceptualizer

- Likes defining the problem
- Often performs the function of "putting together ideas and solutions"
  - Also adept at option creation

## The Implementer

- Known for "getting things done"
  - Loves to take action
- Can also serve as an idea evaluator

*Basadur, Applied Creativity, 2004*



*“Innovation is not something you can turn on and off.  
To dramatically improve your performance,  
you must make it routine.”*

*- Min Basadur, The Power of Innovation*



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# Enabling Environment

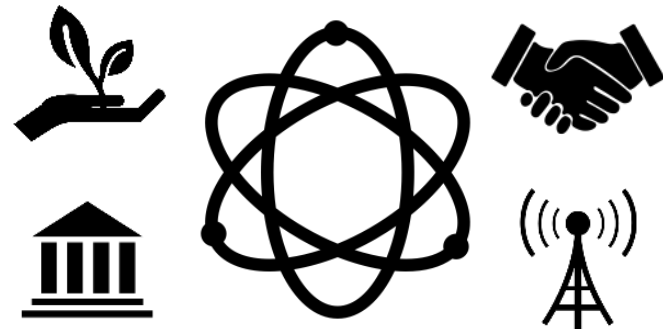
Decision areas that typically fall outside a decision maker's sphere of influence

A decorative footer consisting of several horizontal bars of different colors: a light beige bar on the left, a yellow bar on the right, a light grey bar below the yellow bar, and another light beige bar on the right below the grey bar.A decorative footer consisting of several horizontal bars of different colors: a light beige bar on the left, a light grey bar below it, and another light beige bar on the right below the grey bar.



Development practitioners regularly work amidst a set of system features and dynamics that impact their ability to innovate. These system realities form an enabling environment around innovation efforts, and can involve anything from governmental or organizational policies, human capital, infrastructure, market conditions, and structures and processes through which knowledge is shared. Learning how to effectively contend with these broader system features stands as an important opportunity for those seeking large-scale impact through innovation. Improved innovation decision making activities aim to help practitioners navigate the systems – both within and outside their organizational contexts – that influence their work. Three critical opportunities include:

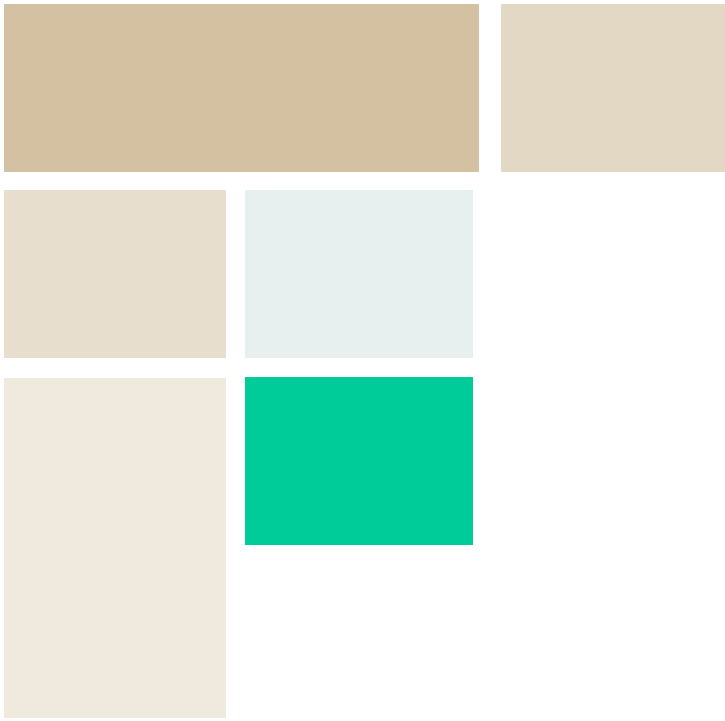
- **Cultivate:** How might we cultivate an innovative culture across an organization? How might we better understand how each member of an organization can contribute and improve innovation decision making?
- **Resource:** How might we take stock of the resources we have, and those that we need, to innovate effectively?
- **Network:** How might we build networks equipped to tackle complex challenges and deliver on proposed solutions?



Why are these critical? They represent opportunities to exert some influence within the environment in which we work. The tools presented in this section will help decision makers innovate more effectively within their environments.

*Learning how to effectively contend with system features stands as an important opportunity for those seeking large-scale impact through innovation.*





# Cultivate

These tools help decision makers assess and align their organization's culture with their innovation goals

# Cultivate

**Key Questions:** How might we cultivate an innovative culture across an organization? How might we better understand how each member of an organization can contribute and improve innovation decision making?

## Developing Culture



### Why Cultivate?

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For many organizations in a growth stage – whether spanning across sectors or driving further impact on a particular challenge – organizational culture can be a predictor of long-term success. In a dynamic, ever changing environment, the ability for individuals and teams to adapt quickly and take on different leadership roles is imperative. Yet in many institutions, creativity is left for those at the top of the hierarchy, with major decisions being handed down to implementers. For instance, a field officer may receive feedback that a new process for identifying local market needs is ineffective, but lack the license to identify new approaches.

Cultivating innovation mindsets and skills across full organizations allows us to better adapt to increasingly fast paced workplaces and high expectations for achieving impact. As Aristotle stated, “we are what we repeatedly do.” Creating a culture that elevates a collective capacity to pursue innovation requires engaging everyone from the field to the C-suite in the decision-making process and recognizes the unique capabilities each team member can offer.

### What Do We Gain?

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#### **Cultivate tools help us:**

#### **Better Measure Innovation Awareness in the Workplace:**

- Understand the entrepreneurship, creativity, learning, and risk tolerance within an organization
- Relate to an organization’s motivation for, involvement in, and adaptation to innovation

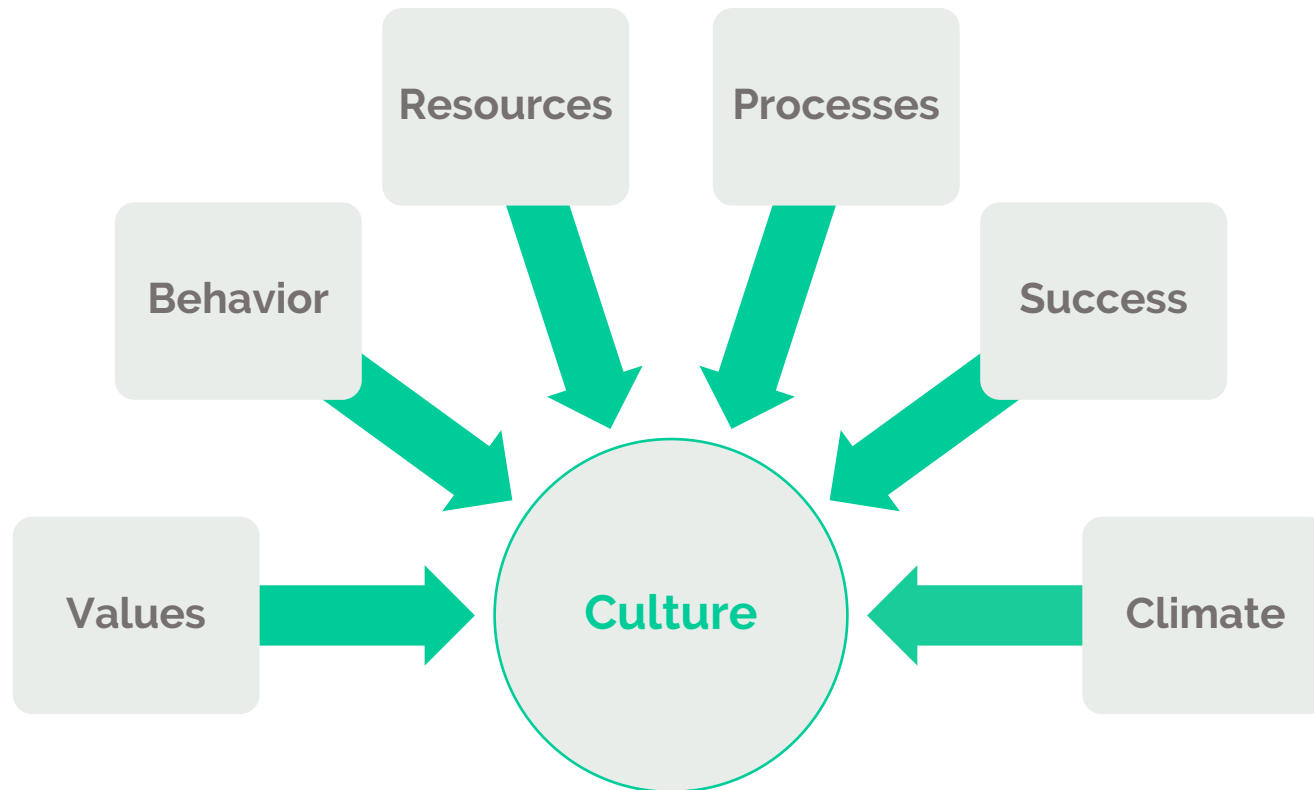
#### **Better Understand our Challenges:**

- Figure out how we might view and measure innovation success within the organization
- Relate to the people, tools, and networks dedicated to innovation within an organization



## 6 Building Blocks of Organizational Innovation Culture

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# Cultivate

## Innovation Decision Making

Decisions that fall within the Cultivate category are critical for sourcing strategic inputs needed for the innovation journey. These decisions generally come into focus while we are attempting to identify the partners and resources needed to address a problem.



### Program Manager

#### Sample decisions:

- How do we develop a stronger ecosystem of innovation?
- How do we develop appropriate measures to track progress?
- What internal policies will attract international talent, young entrepreneurs, and investors?



### Field Officer

#### Sample decisions:

- How do we keep pace with the moving targets of new technologies and market opportunities?
- How do we nurture an environment that strives for and values collaboration?

## Tools

Here are some tools that innovation decision makers can use to improve their ability to cultivate an innovative organization.

### Innovation Culture Assessment:

Tool to assess how conducive your organization's culture is to innovation.

**Uses:** Helps us

- Secure a data-based foundation to guide culture change within your organization
- Quantitatively assess your organization's current culture of innovation
- Anonymously solicit the opinions of a large, diverse group within your organization

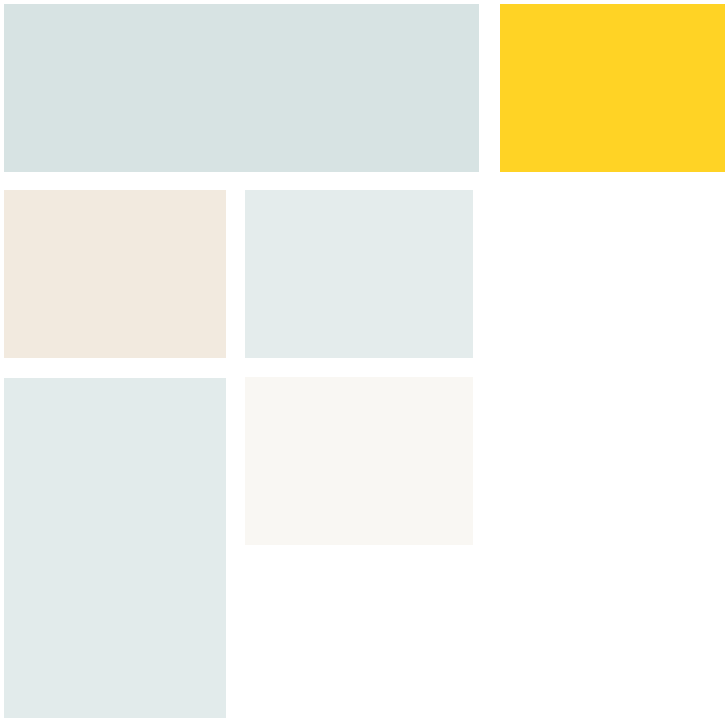
### Culture Map:

Tool to explore how your organizational culture and norms influence behavior.

**Uses:** Helps us

- Understand how your organization's culture positively or negatively impacts your work and the goals you're trying to achieve
- Gauge whether a new project or initiative will face barriers to its success given your organization's values
- Change your organization's culture so that it better aligns with your organization's strategic goals





# Resource

These tools help decision makers take stock of the resources they have, and those they need, to innovate effectively

# Resource

**Key Question:** How might we take stock of the resources we have, and those that we need, to innovate effectively?

## Align and Leverage



### Why Resource?

GKI believes it is not a failure of intellect, nor a lack of resources, that keeps us from solving complex, global development challenges. Rather, the failure often lies in how we connect committed individuals, organizations, and their resources to fill these gaps.

Resources are commonly defined in terms of finances. However, money alone will not transform systems. Distinguishing what resources – technologies, policies, experts – are available versus needed positions decision makers to be more specific and creative in fostering change. Additionally, taking a broad-based perspective on resources allows decision makers to see more clearly where new investments should be used to plug holes and catalyze, not duplicate, efforts.

Resource tools expand our perspective on the resources we have and need. This section focuses on the process of taking stock of available and existing resources, and how we might align and leverage resources across strategic partners to achieve greater impact.

### What Do We Gain?

#### Resource tools can help us:

#### Expand our Perspective on Resources Available for Our Work:

- Identify existing resources and clarify resource gaps
- Get creative about using a broader range of resources to achieve our innovation goals

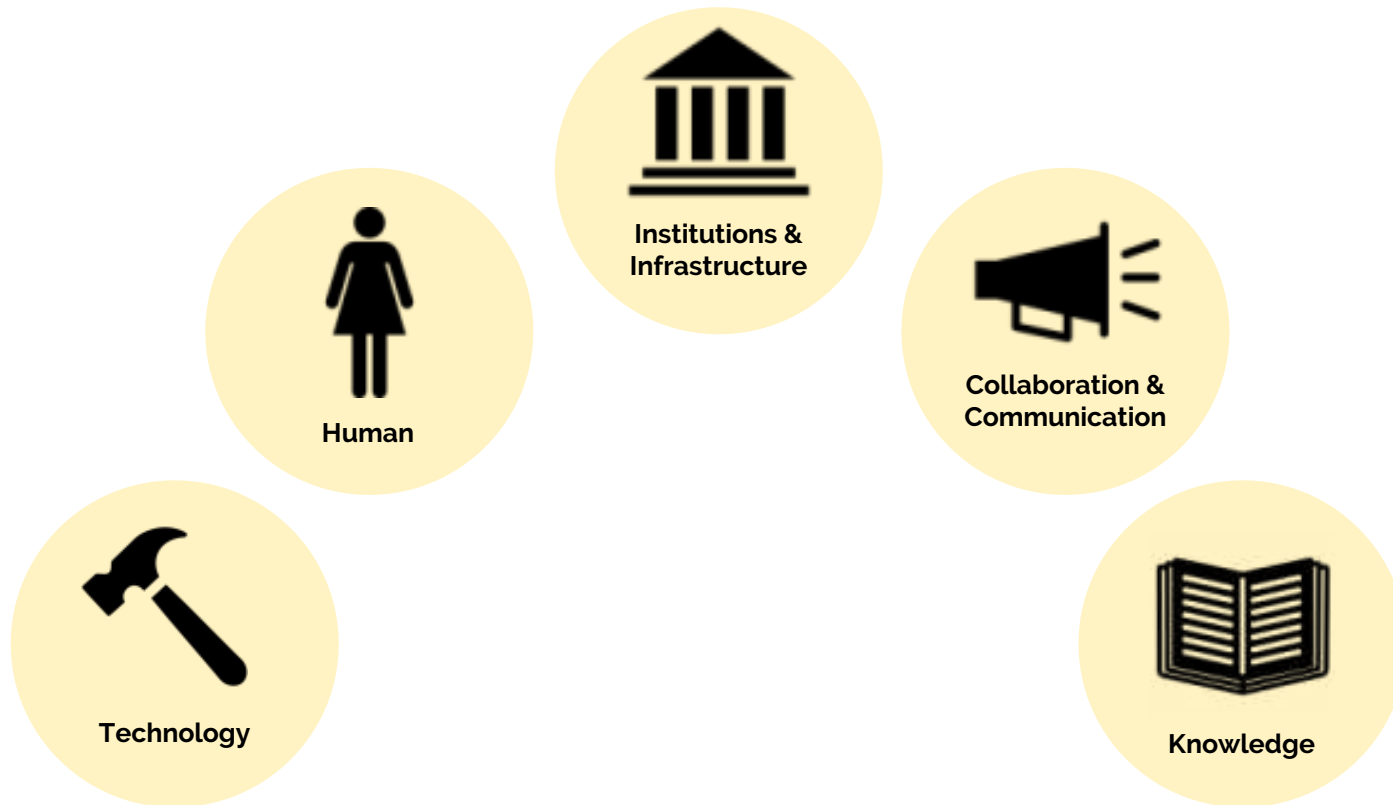
#### Leverage Resources within the Broader Global Community:

- Understand where resources exist within the broader community and how they might be leveraged to achieve impact at scale
- Identify and offer a rationale for strategic partnership opportunities



## Examples of Resources

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# Resource

## Innovation Decision Making

Decisions that fall within the Resource category can play a critical role in sourcing strategic inputs needed along the innovation journey. These decisions generally come into focus while we are attempting to identify the partners and resources needed to address a complex challenge.



### Program Manager

#### Sample decisions:

- If we had the funding we needed for our programs, what non-financial resources would we acquire with them?
- How do we identify partnership opportunities that are strategic to reaching our program objectives?



### Field Officer

#### Sample decisions:

- What existing resources can we leverage to realize our project goals?
- How might we integrate good local knowledge and practices into our programming to increase impact and sustainability of our interventions?

## Tools

Here are some tools that innovation decision makers can use to identify the resources needed and available to address their challenges.

### Resource Stocktaking:

Tool for taking stock of the resources we have and those we need to address our challenge.

**Uses:** Helps us

- Identify existing and needed resources for tackling a challenge
- Clarify priority partnership objectives

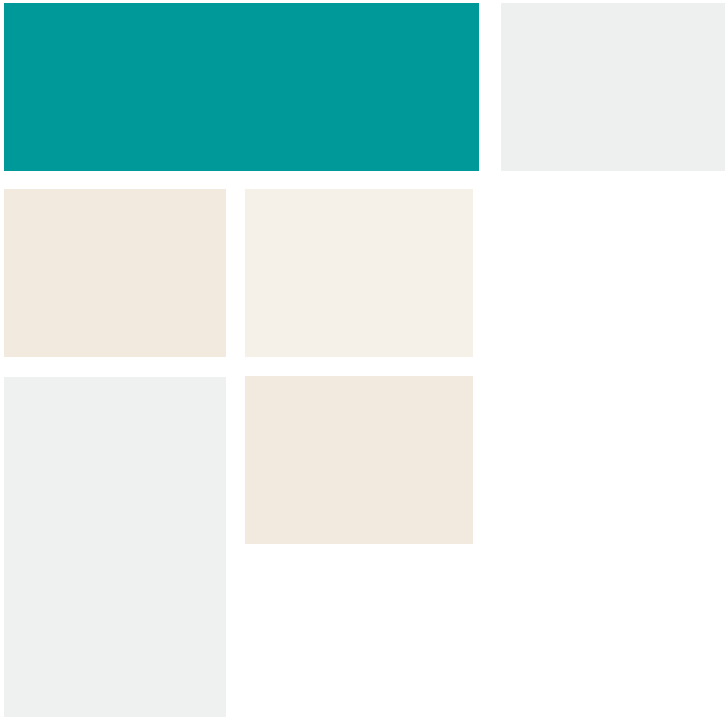
### Network Resource Diagram:

Tool for visualizing the resources available and needed within our network.

**Uses:** Helps us

- Identify available resources and resource gaps within a network
- Initiate preliminary discussions on potential partnership opportunities





# Network

These tools help decision makers build networks equipped to tackle complex challenges and deliver on proposed solutions

# Network

**Key Question:** How might we build networks equipped to tackle complex challenges and deliver on proposed solutions?

## Maximize Impact



### Why Network?

As noted previously, global development challenges are typically complex and extensive in scope. They often eclipse single-actor attempts to address them. Lessons from development practice continue to show how the sharing of knowledge, resources, perspectives and capacities among actors can improve our abilities to develop innovative, scalable solutions. This is spurring a paradigm shift among development practitioners toward greater collaboration across different domains – geographic, disciplinary, and sectoral. Increasingly, practitioners attempt to figure out how they might extend their networks to leverage resources and improve the scale and impact of their activities. Networks – whether informal or formal – can also provide important spaces through which to share experiences and ideas.

The Network section offers an opportunity to take a more strategic approach to identifying potential partners. It focuses on helping us consider areas where we might work with other actors to maximize our collective abilities to achieve impact.

### What Do We Gain?

#### Network tools can help us:

#### Identify Potential Partners:

- Clarify who exists in our network and who might be missing
- Understand actors, in terms of their ability to influence a problem and the incentives that drive them
- Prioritize actors with whom we can partner and build networks

#### Maximize Relationships:

- Understand which partners are best suited to address which needs and roles
- Identify approaches to reach shared objectives



# Network

## Innovation Decision Making

Decisions that fall within the Network category can play a critical role in informing the actors with whom we work along the innovation journey. These decisions generally come into focus while we are attempting to identify the partners and resources needed to address a complex challenge.



### Program Manager

#### Sample decisions:

- With whom and on what basis might we build strategic alliances?
- How might we prioritize among a list of potential partners?
- Are our incentives for action aligned with a potential partner?



### Field Officer

#### Sample decisions:

- What actors should we include within our activities?
- How do we identify and prioritize opportunities to network and build relationships within the communities and spaces in which we work?

## Tools

Here are some tools that innovation decision makers can use to build networks equipped to tackle complex challenges.

### Network Segmentation:

Tool to map out the landscape of actors with whom we might potentially partner.

**Uses:** Helps us

- Understand existing and potential partners and the value they offer
- Clarify how relationships can be mutually leveraged to achieve shared objectives

### Influence and Incentives Matrix:

Tool to understand the influence actors hold and incentives that drive or inhibit them to act on the challenge we seek to address.

**Uses:** Helps us

- Clarify which actors are able to influence or have the incentive to address a challenge
- Prioritize actors with whom you should partner based on your programmatic objectives





# Getting to Results

Moving from knowledge to practice

# How might we move from individual effort to organizational change?

You've used the toolset to make an innovation decision and feel great about it. You know that your idea has the power to transform your work and help you achieve your goals. Now what? First and foremost, you need to bring the rest of your organization on board to support your idea. But organizational culture change is difficult. It takes strategy and effort to build buy-in. Doing so is critical: becoming an innovative organization *depends* on cultural alignment. To lead change, individuals across the organization need to build trust, generate enthusiasm, and inspire others to join the cause. Below are tips for how to work within your organization's current culture to achieve buy-in for improved innovation decision-making processes across your organization.

- **Create a sense of urgency.** Communicate your vision again and again – more times than you think is necessary – to let your message slowly become familiar and, ultimately, gain acceptance across the organization.
- **Build a guiding coalition.** Establish a community of practice with innovation champions who can make timely and clear decisions. Create a supportive, safe environment for them to share their new ideas.
- **Form a strategy.** Targeted interventions, designed to change a few critical behaviors at a time, can energize and engage people. Be sure to use both formal approaches—new rules, metrics, training programs, and incentives—with informal approaches, such as behavior modelling, question-and-answer sessions, and distribution of promotional materials.
- **Enlist volunteer support.** Change will not succeed without the involvement of many people throughout the organization. Find people who already support the organization's innovation ethos and enlist their support. Be sure to look broadly across the organization.
- **Enable action by eliminating barriers.** Don't worry if some conflict arises; disagreement is inevitable and fundamental to innovation. But pay attention to others' emotional reactions, and be mindful to portray change in a positive light.
- **Generate short term wins.** Change is hard. You cannot expect to change everything all at once. Honor the strengths of your existing organizational culture by showing how it already supports innovation. This will make the change feel less top-down or forced.
- **Sustain momentum.** Effective culture change takes time. Remain positive and celebrate successes, no matter how small.
- **Institute change.** Once you achieve buy-in and begin implementing specific measures to support innovation, be sure to monitor progress to ensure goals stay aligned and momentum is maintained through the process.

*Adapted from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School Center for Leadership and Change "Five Steps for Managing Culture Change."; Harvard Business Review "Culture Change that Sticks"; John Kotter "8-Step Process for Leading Change"*



*“Change is a threat when done **to** me,  
but an opportunity when done **by** me.”*

*- Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business School*



# How might we move from individual effort to organizational change?

Individuals at various levels of an organization can exert influence over the broader innovation culture and practice via their personal innovation decision-making efforts. Indeed, as more and more people begin applying an innovation mindset and using innovation tools, “it has an effect on the larger pattern of behavior at the systems level and the organizational system starts operating in ways that constitutes innovation at a higher level” (Banerjee, 2016). While organizational change can be called for and supported from the top, it is brought to life by the individual efforts of many throughout the organization. The images below highlight how three key innovation decision makers – senior managers, program managers, and field officers – might begin this dual process of individual improvement and organizational change.



## Senior Manager

People in charge of high-level vision, strategy, organizational development, etc.

**Key Opportunities:** Set innovation strategy; support innovation culture; align incentives to spur innovation; support innovation skill building and procedural structures

### Places to Start:

- Seek out opportunities to model and support innovation activities within your organization
- Incentivize innovative behavior and reward informed risk-taking
- Demonstrate how failures can be used as learning opportunities



## Program Manager

People in charge of day-to-day operations, staffing, budgets, etc.

**Key Opportunities:** Lead innovation processes and teams; support knowledge sharing and collaboration across teams; Model appetite for experimentation and risk-taking

### Places to Start:

- Listen to field officers and encourage them to put forward new ideas
- Remember many of the tools presented can be used multiple times to account for changing conditions
- Keep updated on what other partners are doing, seeking out ways to learn from and collaborate with them



## Field Officer

People who oversee and support program implementation on the ground

**Key Opportunities:** Actively apply an innovation mindset and tools; refine innovation skills through practice; effectively participate in innovation teams and support colleagues' efforts to become more innovative

### Places to Start:

- Look for different ways to undertake your activities more effectively and efficiently
- Explore challenges as opportunities and engage different perspectives
- Keep updated on what other partners are doing, seeking out ways to learn from and collaborate with them





**For more information about the Improved Innovation Decision Making Toolset, the Global Knowledge Initiative, and our work as the YieldWise Innovation Partner, please contact:**

The Global Knowledge Initiative  
[www.globalknowledgeinitiative.org](http://www.globalknowledgeinitiative.org)  
Phone: +1 650-814-6592  
Email: [info@gkinitiative.org](mailto:info@gkinitiative.org)

