

Stage three: Implementation

Using the innovation in practice and monitoring progress.

First published 11 August 2026

At this stage, staff begin using the innovation in practice. Training is delivered and systems are set up to collect data and monitor progress. The focus remains on being responsive and adaptable, with an emphasis on continuous improvement.

Start using the innovation

Implementation begins when staff start using the innovation in practice. This is often best approached through a phased rollout, starting with a pilot group or small team. This allows for early learning, reduces risk and helps build confidence before wider adoption. Training should be delivered at this stage. Systems for data collection and monitoring must be in place from the outset.

Governance and oversight

Strong governance is essential throughout implementation. Ensure that there is:

- timely access to decision makers
- a clear escalation process
- regular governance meetings

The frequency of these meetings should reflect the level of risk and the need for responsiveness. Daily meetings may be appropriate in high-risk or fast-moving contexts. Governance must include routine performance challenge, not just reporting. Benefits tracking should be embedded in project governance, with regular reporting to the project board and, where appropriate, to a chief officer-led forum. This ensures transparency and accountability, and ensures that benefits are not only tracked, but also realised.

Monitor progress and adapt

As implementation progresses, data should be collected and reviewed regularly, in line with your evaluation and/or benefits measurement plans. This includes both quantitative data and qualitative

feedback from practitioners.

Monitoring enables you to:

- identify barriers and enablers
- assess whether the innovation is being delivered as intended
- make timely adjustments

Where gaps are identified, implementation strategies may need to be adapted, such as:

- providing additional support
- improving communication
- refining delivery methods
- revisiting the logic model of your evaluation

Any adaptations to a blueprint should be made with care to stay true to the core components of the innovation.

It is important to distinguish between:

- core components – the essential principles that underpin the innovation
- adaptable elements – practices that can be tailored to suit local needs and contexts

Adaptations can affect whether the innovation is delivered exactly as intended. This can influence the benefits achieved. In some cases, significant changes have led to poor outcomes, requiring a full reset of the implementation. In other cases, thoughtful adaptations have improved outcomes and led to updates to the original blueprint.

It is important to strike a balance between:

- preserving the innovation's effectiveness
- allowing adaptations that improve local fit, ownership and engagement

If adaptations are being considered, it can be helpful to revisit the original problem statement to ensure that the changes still align with the intended purpose.

Use data to inform support and decision making

The insights gathered should be used to:

- target implementation support
- address unintended consequences
- guide decisions about whether to sustain, scale or stop the innovation

You should understand the innovation's error rate, so that appropriate accuracy thresholds and performance benchmarks can be set.

Even where benefits are not fully realised, learning should be captured and shared to inform future work. Once benefits are achieved, they should be reported to a chief officer-chaired board (such as a change or efficiency board) to support organisational learning and strategic planning.

Tags

Innovation