



How to learn fast?

A case study of challenges in evaluating a programme designed to bring about systems innovation

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The Programme

The Smart Systems and Heat (SSH) programme was designed to learn about how to decarbonise residential heat:

1. Identifying how to address the technical, regulatory, economic and social barriers that block new low carbon heat products, services and business models getting to market;
2. Establishing a range of platforms, insights and modelling tools to help innovators discover new low carbon heating solutions that consumers value and;
3. Bringing innovators, businesses, local authorities, networks, policy-makers, regulators and consumers together to understand how to create new markets that deliver low carbon heating solutions at scale.

Considerations for evaluation

Scale

Pace

Adaptive nature of delivery

What did we learn?

The aims and purpose of the evaluation need to be clearly scoped and framed

Not to underestimate the challenges in drafting a theory of change

The value of building in informal feedback loops

Unresolved issues and challenges

Timing of the final evaluation

How to engage with programme stakeholders in an appropriate and timely way

Value of conducting the evaluation externally vs internally

Conclusions: Needs of the evaluator

Highly responsive to the dynamic delivery environment

Comfortable with uncertainty and potentially incomplete information

Work to keep implementers engaged and bought into the evaluation