



Embedding Evaluation Method



Introduction

At [ImaginationLancaster](https://www.imaginationlancaster.com), we are researching ways for embedding evaluation processes into research projects.

We have developed a practical method called '[Embedding Evaluation Method](#)', that helps researchers explore and plan a project's evaluation from the early stages of development and embed evaluation processes into the project's design.

How does it work?

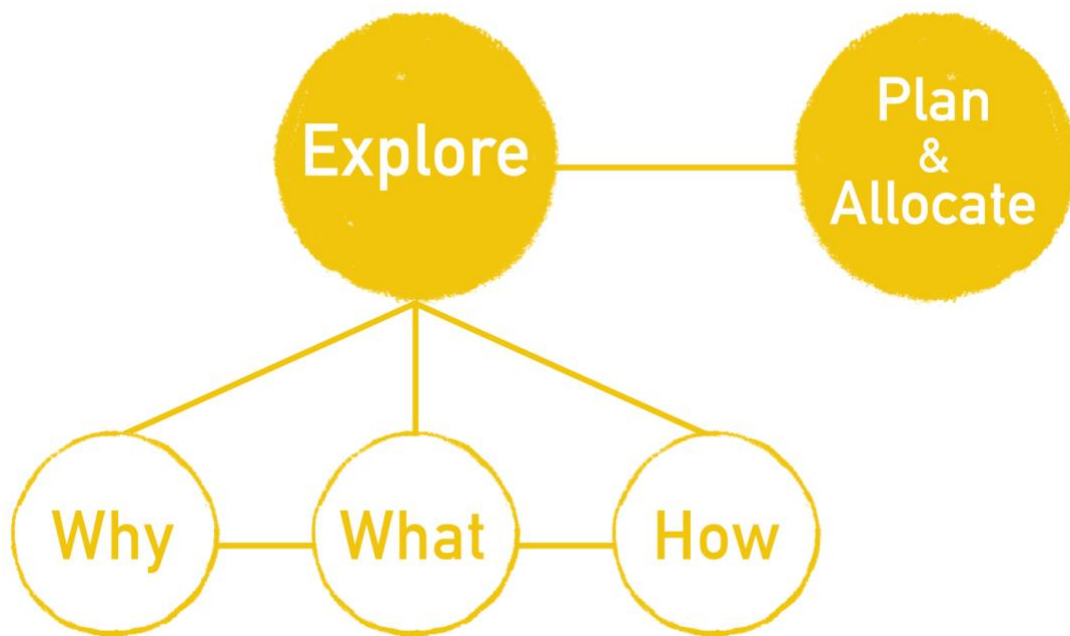
The method has two steps:

- 1. Explore.** This step helps you understand more about the WHY, the WHAT and the HOW of your project's evaluation by answering and reflecting on a set of exploratory questions as a team.
- 2. Plan and allocate.** This step helps you develop an evaluation plan by asking you to identify and plan evaluation activities and allocate relevant resources.

This document walks you through the process of the Embedding Evaluation Method. The method is designed to be delivered through two 90-minute workshops, one workshop for the first step and one workshop for the second step. If your project has a team, we suggest getting as many of your team members involved in this process as possible.

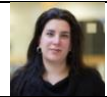


If you wish to use the Embedding Evaluation Method for your project you can:

- Get in touch with one of our team members to discuss facilitation of the workshops.
- Apply the method yourselves in which case we suggest:
 - Use the resources on this document accordingly (step 1 for the first workshop and step 2 for the second workshop).
 - One of your team members to volunteer to chair the workshops and go through the steps of each one.
 - Have the workshops as a team - invite as many members of your project's team as you can - and focus on encouraging an environment for exploration, reflection and discussion.



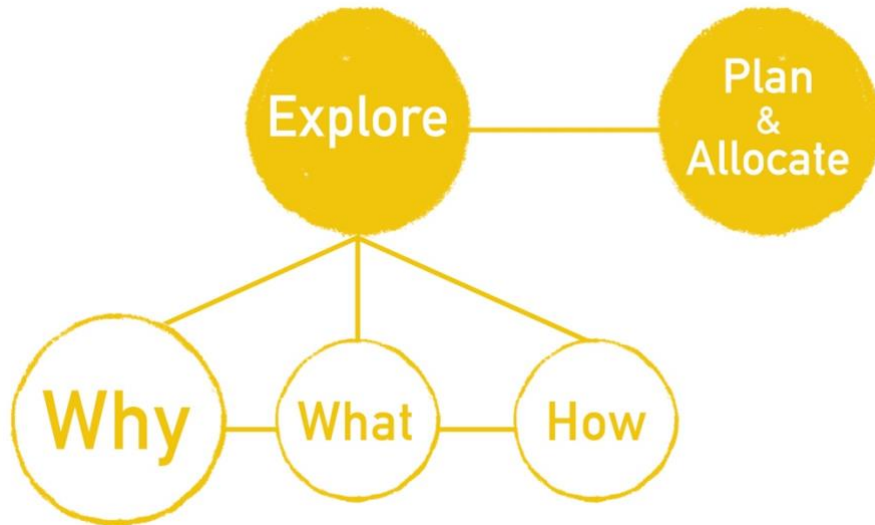
If you test the method yourselves, we would love to hear your thoughts on the method!

Our team:

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1st Workshop

Step 1: Explore the why, what and how of your evaluation.



- **'WHY' Questions**

1. Describe your project's overall objective. What is your research project about, what are you trying to achieve, what are your main goals and objectives?

2. Why embedding evaluation processes into your research project is going to be important?

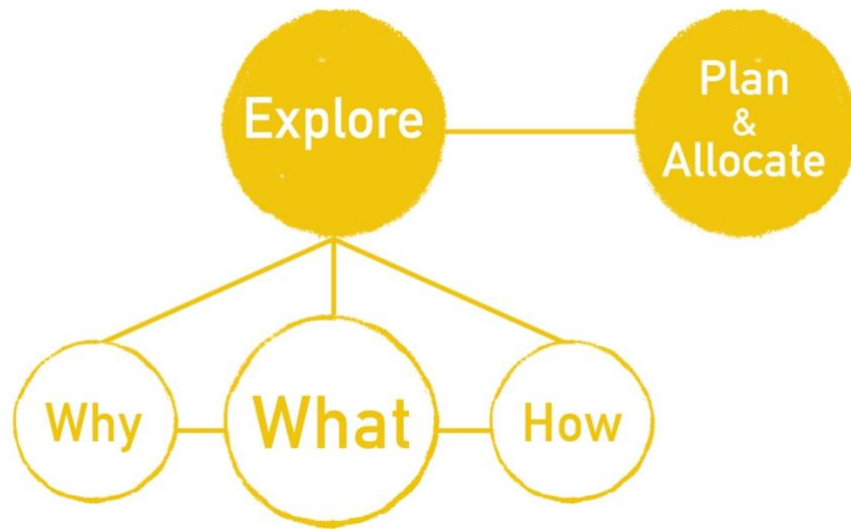
For example, is evaluation going to help you achieve your project's goals and objectives or help you capture important evidence on impact that will support submissions/reports, or perhaps it will help you engage with communities and the public?

3. What value you are expecting to see from your research project.

Think of your project's value in terms of impact (economic, social, cultural, environmental and otherwise), change, learning and knowledge. Are there other kinds of value can you think of, relevant to your project?

4. Who will benefit from your project's value?

Think of your research team, participants, partners, funders, the public.



- **'WHAT' Questions**

- 1. What could be used as evidence of value?**

Number of people engaging with your research, visual evidence on engagement; data on change in behaviors; new collaborations that can evolve into partnerships; quality, quantity and reach of research outputs; feedback by participants; skills gained by the researchers involved.

- 2. How will you make use of this evidence?**

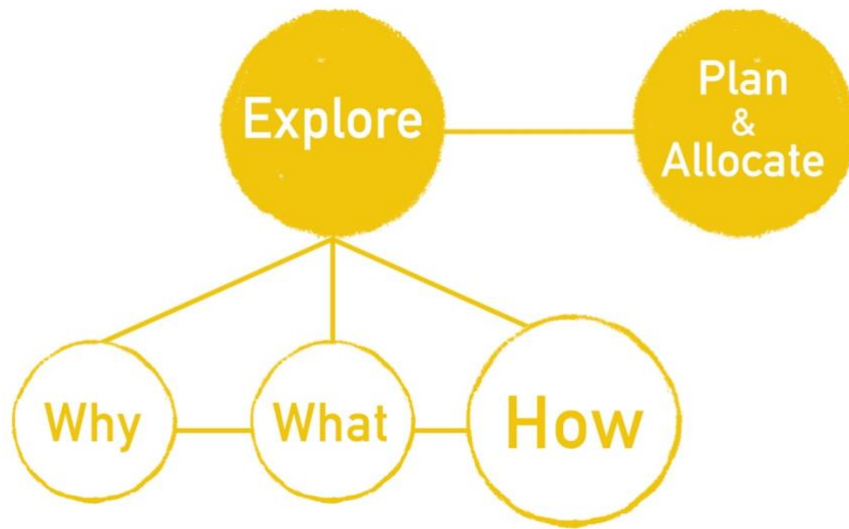
Is evidence going to be part of the research, support the project's impact and value reports, be used in academic publications, be used to communicate work to the public or support a future research project?

3. When should you start and where should you end?

Are you going to embed evaluation throughout the project's timeframe? Are you going to keep collecting evidence of impact after the end of the project?

4. What evaluation activities will you need to plan for?

Would you need to plan for evaluation workshops, engagement and feedback activities, systematic collection of data (number of users, number of visits on a website), producing of reports?



- **'HOW' Questions**

1. **What kind of partnerships and collaborations will allow for your evaluation activities to succeed?**

Collaborations with communities, partnerships with organisations and industry.

2. **When is the right time in your research project to develop/act on relevant partnerships and collaborations?**

3. Who will be working on your evaluation activities from your team?

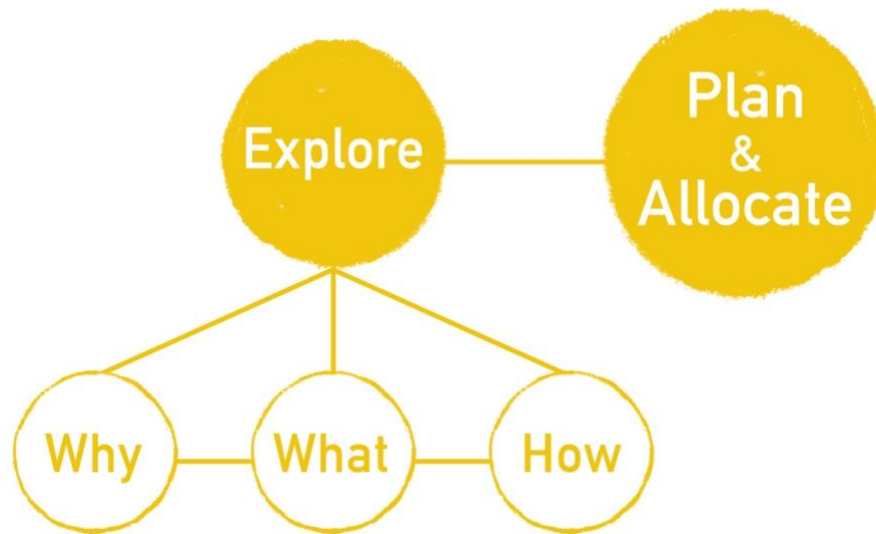
Think of your ideas for evaluation activities so far and your team's skills and expertise. Would you need extra support or evaluation training from an evaluator?

4. Do you have enough resources to deliver your evaluation plans so far?

Think about your project's budget and your team's time availability. If needed, are there any other resources that you could use for evaluation, like free evaluation tools, administrative support from your organisation or extra budget to cover costs?

2nd Workshop

Step 2: Plan your evaluation activities and allocate resources.



1. Gather all the details about your project's resources (team members, partners and stakeholders, volunteers, time allocations, budget).
2. Use the notes from the first workshop to discuss further the evaluation activities that need to be planned.
3. Design a timeline for your project, from beginning to end, and organise your activities accordingly.
4. Start planning each activity (what needs to happen, where is the activity taking place, who is going to be involved). Start with the ones you consider to be priorities.
5. Once each activity has taken form, allocate relevant resources to it and move to the next activity.

For this workshop we suggest using an online whiteboard tool like Miro, or (if possible), physical material like whiteboard, paper and sticky-notes.