How to support EXPERIMENTS

-A GUIDE FOR THE MENTORS

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Introduction

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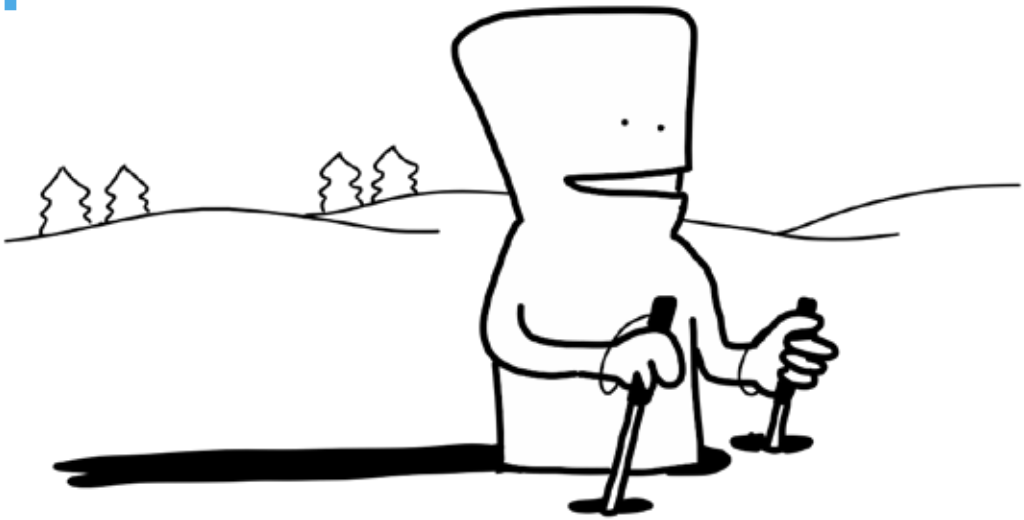


We Finns are a nation of planners. We are good at thinking about how things should be done, but we often lack the courage to see our plans through. In a world full of complex challenges, solutions born on the designer's table alone will not work. That is why we increasingly need to take swift action – developing by experimenting. The more complex the problem, the more crucial it is to experiment.

One of the policies in the Government Programme of Prime Minister Sipilä is to introduce an experimenting culture. The aim has been to create innovative solutions for developing our society and various services, encourage proactivity and entrepreneurship, strengthen regional and local cooperation and promote citizen-driven ways of working. An experimental culture as an aim included in the Government Programme has been a unique feature on a global scale. The wider aim is to make Finland the world's best environment for innovating and experimenting by 2025.

This guide is primarily intended for the supporters of experiments in the public sector. These mentors play a key role in initiating and funding experiments, acting as coaches during the experiments, and utilising and sharing their final outcomes. The guide delves into the different forms of supporting experimentation, which are divided into four themes.

Providing support for experiments has previously been discussed in the Smart Kalasatama CookBook for quick experiments, but it applies primarily to local government and situations where experiments are conducted within the

framework of a restricted platform. This guide does not limit the size of the experiments or platform, as it discusses supporting experiments in general. Guides intended particularly for experimenters include The experimenter's start package *(in Finnish)*, which was created by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in collaboration with D9 Digital Team.

When to experiment?

Experiments enable agile and democratic trials based on tried-and-tested data. They are particularly suited to creating new, future-oriented solutions and operating models. Experiments can be used to divide large entities into smaller components. They should represent something new and have a limited duration. An experiment allows an idea to be tested in practice. A good experiment helps us understand what works and why.

Experiments are often differentiated from pilots. In this line of thinking, a pilot is considered to be a test of an almost finished product or process before it is finally commissioned. At this stage, the risk of failure is minor and the aim is primarily to give the product or process a final fine-tuning, rather than seeking completely new operating models. The search for something new is where experiments come in. When we really do not know the outcome, we must experiment.

An experimental culture is a way of working where experiments and experimental development are utilised as a tool for development and renewal. Key elements in this culture include a tolerance for uncertainty and developing stage-by-stage, as often several different options must be tested before finding the right solution.

The strength of experiments lies in the fact that solutions are tested in collaboration with a diverse group of participants and in a genuine operating environment. The tested solutions are known to be workable, and collaborative development helps secure wider acceptance for them. The use of experiments is efficient, as agile development generates quicker solutions and detects any faults in time.

Various experiments can be used for many different purposes. They can generate data, change ways of thinking and working and disseminate useful solutions. At its broadest, an experiment can serve as an instrument for systemic change *(Source: Näkökulmia kokeilurahoitukseen (Perspectives into Funding Experiments -report.) Abstract in English).*

Different levels and types of experimental activities

Experiments can be carried out at different levels:

- **Strategic experiments** address the needs stated in the government's agenda, seeking a broad social impact.

- **Thematic experiment** clusters are broader groups of experiments, interwoven around a given topic or sector. These experiments aim to develop innovative new solutions for the topic or sector.

- **Grass-roots experiments** seek quick solutions, particularly strengthening participation and democracy through their impact. They can be used to encourage citizens to experiment and share their competence towards solving common problems.

Experiments can also be divided into different types:

- **Quick experiments** are templates for a product, service or operating model that is conceptualised and whose prototype is tested in cooperation with the users at the earliest stage possible.

- **Systematic experiments** are prepared by collecting data in order to define the problem to be solved. Here the collection of data and service design form a part of the development work.

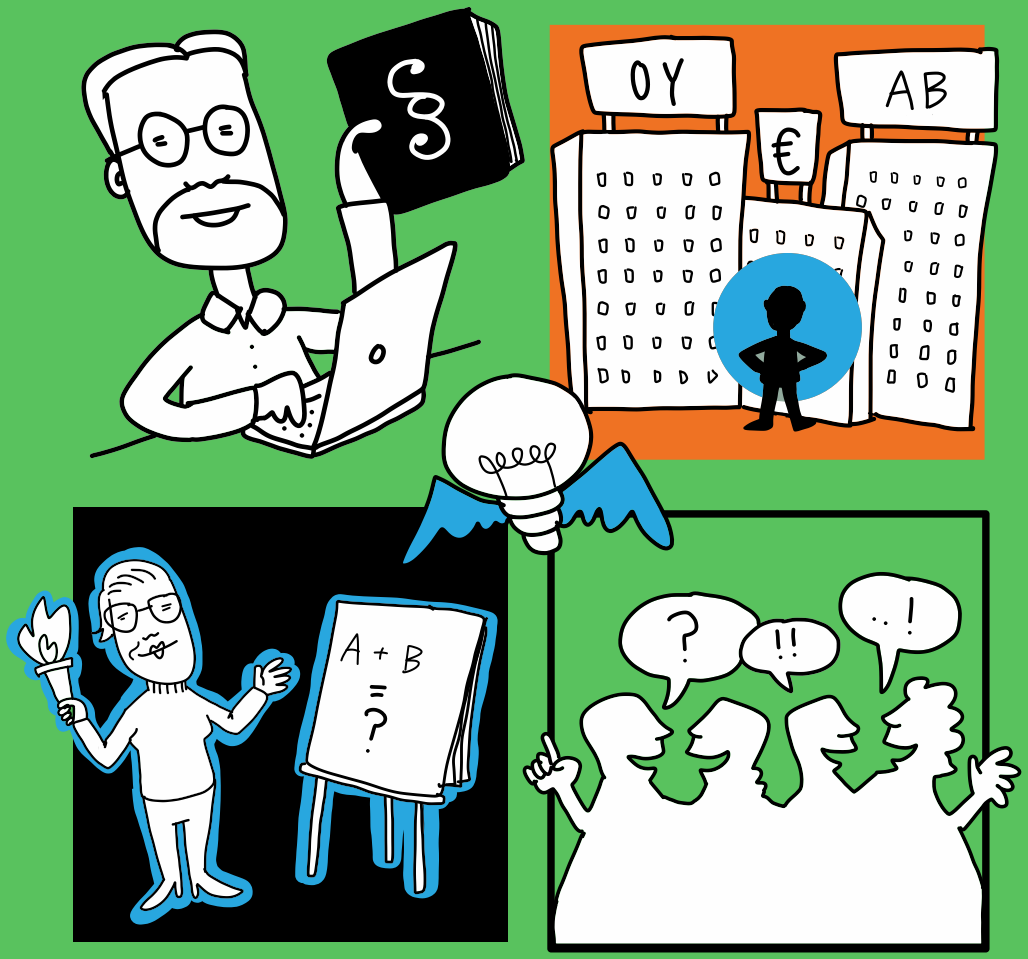
- **Research-based experiments** apply a scientific approach in the way they are conducted and in the assessment of their reliability across a larger sample. Research-based experiments have the potential to strengthen the knowledge base for decision making, for example.

Experiments can be conducted by municipalities, companies, associations, foundations, research organisations, educational institutions and central government, as well as by private persons. An experimental culture is an operating model that permeates society as a whole, challenging old structures, striving for new innovative solutions and demanding changes to attitudes. For trials to fully blossom, those conducting the experiments need the backing of mentors.

This guide will help you avoid the pitfalls of experiments and allow you to steer your trials to a better conclusion.

We hope you will find the contents inspiring!

Initiating and conducting an experiment



Initiating and conducting an experiment

Before initiating an experiment, it is a good idea to stop for a moment to answer at least the following questions:

- What do we want to find out with the experiment we are supporting?
- What are the key challenges and problems we aim to solve?
- Who is required to be involved in the development work? (Users, stakeholders)
- Who will benefit from the experiment?
- What can we learn from past experiments?

An experiment is not needed if we already know that a planned solution works. If the outcome of the solution cannot be determined in advance, it is time to boldly start the experiments!

Before taking the first steps, it is important to consider how the trial will fit in with a larger process of change or a wider set of strategic aims. One of the leading ideas behind the experimental culture is to divide large challenges into smaller components, so as a mentor, it is a good idea to make sure the experiments are narrowed down properly.

Diversity achieves better results

For an experiment to succeed, it is often useful to include as many points of view as possible in it. The team conducting the experiment should feature people with different competences. It is also recommended that various skills and

viewpoints are harnessed when preparing the trial and giving feedback on its implementation. This will provide the party running the experiment with sufficiently diverse support from different administrative bodies.

In the spirit of open innovation, it is worth involving actors from different organisations in the experiments. One innovation cooperation model is the quadruple helix, where the public and the private sector, research and educational institutions and the users of the service *(residents, consumers, citizens)* work in cooperation to generate innovations. The third sector, i.e. foundations, organisations and non-profits, may also be involved.

Experiments should also utilise joint development to bring together different experts and perspectives. For instance, hackathons and jams can be used to bring together different actors to develop experimental templates for solving existing problems.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR EXPERIMENTAL ACTIVITIEST

Experiments can also be supported using various digital platforms. **Innovillage**, for example, offers its community virtual spaces for working and collaborating when creating ideas, as well as providing feedback. It also offers a diverse range of training modules. **Place to Experiment** offers the opportunity to apply for experiment funding, arrange agile funding applications for small trials, network with others in the experimental field and share the outcomes and insight gained from experiments. Digital platforms for experiments can also be used for finding and further developing potential innovations.

Coaching to support experiments

Experiments can be conducted using innovation design and service design processes, for example. A process for quick experiments that applies the principles of service design consists of four stages: **research**, **specify**, **develop** and **implement**. Moreover, quick experiments are typically user-oriented and developed in cooperation with the users.

Coaching consists of guidance and consultation under the leadership of an expert and it is intended as a support for development work. A coach can help with such subjects as experimenting competence, support for the experimenting process, or examining the effectiveness and applicability of the trial. The coach

can be the supporter itself, working as a guide, trial mentor, agent or ambassador. Coaching services can also be obtained from external parties.

Examples of coaching topics:

Supporting the experimenting process

- Strengthening the experimental culture and competence
- Fine-tuning the changes sought
- Promoting service design and customer-orientation
- Supporting networking among experimenters and a trial community
- Supporting incremental and iterative development
- Identifying the stakeholders

Ensuring that the experiment is productive

- Providing coaching on the experiment's effectiveness during the preparation and implementation stages
- Providing content-related support
- Supporting the development of technical, business or other similar solutions
- Guidance provided by the funder or other parties
- Pitching to the steering/management team (guidance concerning content, networking with key contacts and users)

ACHIEVING RESULTS BY REFINING AND ACCELERATING

Many actors offer long-term support for experiments. Workshops offer coaching by experts and peer support from other experimenters. **The Trial Refinery** project organised by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, for instance, supports experiments in local government using service design methods. **The Experimentation Accelerator** organised by different actors in central government aims to solve challenges related to the work of public servants.

EXPERT POOLS PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR EXPERIMENTS

The digital municipalities experiment project (Digikuntakokeilu) selected nine consultants through a competitive tendering process to serve as coaches for experiments with four different themes. The best-suited coach was chosen for each experiment from this pool. The Experimental Finland project, meanwhile, set up an expert pool to support, in particular, research-based and behavioural science experiments within organisations from central government.

Field trials for reliable assessment of effectiveness

For many developers, randomised field trials might be a fairly unfamiliar way to study the effectiveness of new procedures and practices, but it is worth considering, because they produce very reliable results. Field trials provide benchmarking between existing and new practices by dividing the study units randomly or in some other randomised way into a trial group and a control group. The groups studied can consist of people or even enterprises or school classes, for example. This is also known as a randomised controlled trial *(RCT)*.

The reliability of this method is based on the fact that it is tested in an authentic environment and that the trial and control groups are comparable, since they are similar as they have been randomised. Any differences that arise in the course of the testing illustrate the effectiveness of the trial.

In some cases, a separate legislative act may have to be drafted for carrying out field trials in society. When planning a randomised controlled trial, it is important to also take ethical considerations into account.

The Experimental Finland project gives a helping hand in carrying out randomised field trials in the public sector by offering the assistance of experts specialised in formulating such trials. Similar assistance from experts is also available for experiments where the objective is to influence human behaviour using nudging as a method.

Nudging involves influencing without restricting people's freedom of choice or altering the expenses related to choices. It aims to steer in-

INFORMATION ON PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR USING FIELD TRIALS

A randomised controlled trial can easily be carried out with very limited resources and swiftly. A good example is a trial carried out among public officials that used behavioural science for the trial. The trial showed that the formulation of questions had a significant bearing on how people felt about a higher voting age.

dividuals towards better outcomes in a predictable way. The means used are gentle ones that guide people in a way that is in their own best interest. They are based on research in behavioural science that sheds light on the psychological and external factors affecting people's actions. Being able to understand these factors also helps when planning field trials in society.

GUIDE TO SUPPORT THE DRAFTING OF EXPERIMENTATION ACTS

This guide provides support for situations where an experiment cannot be conducted without drafting a separate experiment act. It might be the case that separate experiment acts are needed for randomised controlled trials and for other broad experiments in society. The guide helps to identify the questions that must be considered when drafting the act and contains examples of experiment acts.

Read more

Communications

Communications

Communications help make experiments visible. If we want to avoid having to reinvent the wheel, we have to be aware of what has already been done elsewhere. It is difficult to make a broader impact if the knowledge gained from experiments is not disseminated. Moreover, communications can be used to commit partners and inspire new people to become involved. Communications always consist of interaction that can generate new insights and ideas for development work. Information should be communicated at every stage of an experiment – not just about its outcomes.

In today's information overload, succinct and well-summarised messages are the most effective. Audiovisual forms of communication, i.e. images, video and audio, are powerful, as they are often the best and only way to communicate and summarise certain messages. Videos and podcasts, for example, are becoming increasingly more popular.

You should have a clear understanding of at least the following for the purposes of communications:

- Core message: Why should other people know about this experiment?
- What differentiates this experiment from other similar ones?
- Who is the message being communicated to?
- How and how often will messages be communicated?
- Which channels will be used?

Division of duties and communications channels

The division of duties between the implementer and the mentor of the experiment should be clear from the start. Often both the experimenter and the mentor engage in communications, with the former focusing on conveying information about its experiment, while the latter communicates data on groups of experiments, for example.

The mentor can offer the implementer of the experiment the following, for example:

- **Communications channels: the mentor's website, press releases, blogs and social media channels**
- **A communications guide**
- **Coaching for planning communications and delivering presentations**
- **Help with making videos**
- **Highlighting experiments and their successes; for example, the experiment of the month on the Experimental Finland website**

A clear distinction should be made between internal and external communications. Communications should not focus solely on external parties, as it is just as important to communicate the successes, challenges and various stages of a project internally within the mentor's own organisation.

Communications should be conducted through multiple channels to reach the widest possible audience. They should also be extended to social media, which many people use on a daily basis.

Communications should always be weighed on a case-by-case basis, taking the purpose into consideration. For instance, in certain research-based experiments, external communications while the trial is ongoing could jeopardise the success of the research design. On the

STORYTELLING AS A METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

Experimental Finland organised a story workshop at the 2018 Week to Experiment, where participants were able to turn their experiments into a story. The workshop focused particularly on the core story that the participants wanted to share with the public. In the best cases, storytelling helps to create a personal form of communications that captures people's imagination, gets them interested and commits them to the experiment.

other hand, the meagre resources afforded to small experiments do not always leave much time or money for communications. Here, the mentor's role in communications is all the more important.

Experiments with funding may have requirements set out in their terms and conditions on the volume and type of communications the experimenter must provide. Additionally, there may be requirements on how the funders should be mentioned in communications.

LOSING THE FEAR OF FAILURE

When you are trying out something new, the results are not always what you expect. It is important to share failures, too, so others can avoid running into the same problem. The Smart Energy Transition project, for instance, held an after-work event for the experimenters who had participated in the autumn 2018 experimenting week, where they could share their failures. In truth, the only failed experiments are those where no lessons are learned. Therefore, "failures" should be seen as important learning experiences. This shift in thinking was promoted, for instance, at the international **day for failure** events organised by Experimental Finland.

Reporting on an experiment can also take the form of a blog instead of a traditional final report. This was done, for example, in the resource-wise trials run by Sitra and the City of Jyväskylä. Reporting can also be published on various communication platforms, such as Place to Experiment or Innovillage. These platforms also compile experimental data.

Events as a tool for communications

Information on experiments can also be provided in various events. These can vary significantly, including:

- Seminars, kick-off events and final events
- Workshops, network meetings
- Webinars and experimental clinics
- Presentations, stands or showrooms at other events
- Meetings with the implementers, users or decision-makers of the experiments

Remember that there is no magic formula for good communications. Often the best communications include experimental aspects, in which boundaries are boldly broken and which convey the joy and positive energy of the experimenters to the recipients. You should not be afraid to fail in communications, either!

Utilisation and effectiveness of experiments

Utilisation and effectiveness of experiments

Even a small experiment can have an impact if it is used the right way and effectiveness is supported. In large groups of experiments, in particular, the mentor bears a great responsibility for their utilisation and effectiveness, as it is the mentors who view the experiments as an integrated whole.

To be able to utilise the outcomes, it is important to document progress, results and lessons learned both during and after an experiment. To be able to make a thorough assessment of an experiment, the organisers must continue to track its outcomes for a certain period because these outcomes may not be verifiable right after the experiment is concluded.

Experiments as part of long-term development

To ensure that the results of an experiment are utilised, it is crucial to link experimental activities with long-term development work and decision making. Experiments can be used to flexibly test the impact and functionality of reforms before they are implemented, which results in better-quality solutions.

The connection between experiments and standard development work within organisations can be supported by, for instance, including experimentsin the organisation's strategy, as the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities has done. This has ensured that experimenting forms a part of normal day-to-day work and processes, meaning that the management also supports experiments and increasing their effectiveness.

The Ministry of Justice has encouraged its senior officials to commit to experiments by including clauses on experiments in their management contracts. The Tax Administration, on the other hand, has included in its project model a process for experiments that has lighter criteria for progress and approval than other projects.

CITY SERVICE AS A TRIAL PLATFORM

The healthcare and wellbeing centre that opened in the Kalasatama district in Helsinki in early 2018 serves as a development and trial platform for cooperation with businesses. The Smart Kalasatama project by Forum Virium operates as a partner in Kalasatama, involving networks of residents and other actors and adding their joint development competence to daily work. With these trial and development platform activities, the City of Helsinki aims to offer the developers of healthcare and wellbeing solutions the opportunity to study the needs of this sector in collaboration with the city's professionals and customers.

Read more

COOPERATION BETWEEN EXPERIMENTS AND NETWORKS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES

The Smart Energy Transition project of the University of Helsinki has planned joint meetings between political programmes and themed experiments so as to better transmit the knowledge generated by the latter to decision making. The concept was tested for the first time in October 2018 with the Smart Network Working Group of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, where the discussion focused on pilots related to demand flexibility. The event resulted in development ideas that continue to be refined. New meetings are also considered for different themes, but their forms and content must be planned according to existing needs.

Utilising results and lessons

The utilisation of an experiment often starts with bringing its lessons and results out into the open, even when its outcome was not as expected. Utilisation, in other words, is intrinsically tied to communications, as discussed in the previous chapter. Communications alone, however, will not suffice, as other means are needed, too.

Even the results and lessons of small experiments can be utilised on a larger scale and duplicated for other types of functions. The utilisation and further development of the outcomes of experiments can be supported with, among other means, accelerators and development labs intended for concluded experiments.

Cooperation with other funders can enable further development for good outcomes of experiments through other funding. For example, the business operations of companies that conducted experiments in the KIRA-digi project as well as the Peloton project run by Demos Helsinki and the Ministry of the Environment were supported through presentations held for investors.

CONCRETE DEN GENERATES FUNDING FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF EXPERIMENTS

A Ministry of Environment project for accelerating digitalisation in the real estate and construction sector, KIRA-digi, organised an event called Concrete Den (Betoniluola) in August 2018, inspired by the reality television format Dragons' Den. In Concrete Den, the experimenters pitched their ideas to business angels and capital investors, aiming to attract additional financing for their business.

Assessing experiments

The impact of an experiment can usually be demonstrated with an assessment. Assessments can vary considerably, depending on the size and nature of the experiment. For a small grass-roots trial, a light self-assessment will often suffice, whereas the assessment for an extensive experiment with social impact must be planned very carefully.

The mentor of an experiment should consider in advance who is responsible for the assessment. Will it be done by the experimenter, the mentor or an external party? When dealing with larger groups of experiments, a good option could be to make the mentor responsible for assessing the experiments as a whole (either directly or through an external party), while the individual trials are assessed by those who conduct them.

When assessing the impact of large groups of experiments and how well they can be utilised, it is also possible to separately assess thematic sets of experiments. For example, the assess-

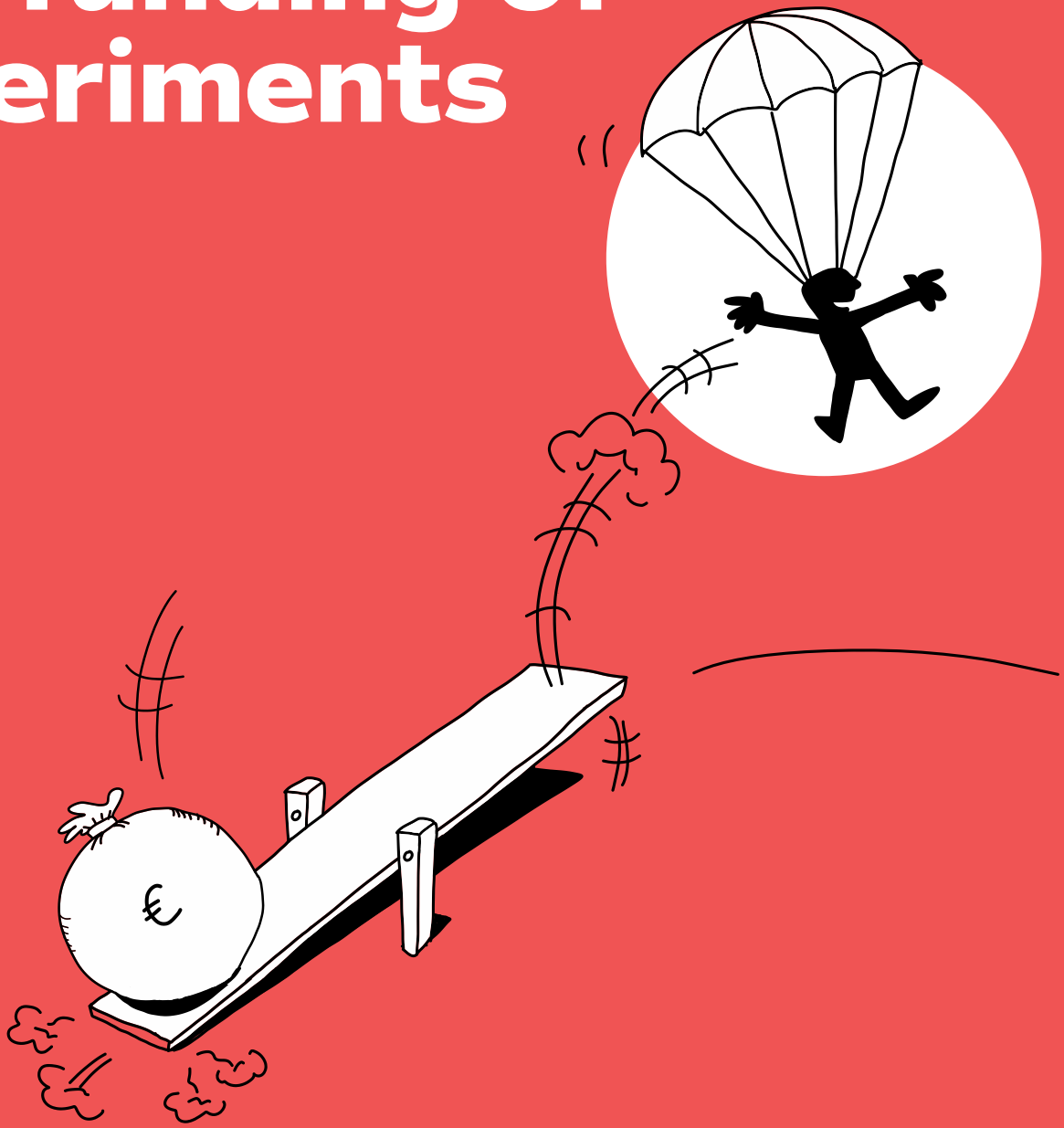
ment of around 140 funded experiments in the KIRA-digi project is divided into ten different themes. External service providers are selected through a competitive tendering process to perform the assessments, in which they analyse the utilisation potential of the experimental projects. After that, they communicate the results gained to the real estate and construction sector. The aim is also to assess the effectiveness of the experimental projects and to prepare development proposals for increasing the applicability of the results in the real estate and construction sector.

A potential challenge faced when assessing small trials is the fact that their aims may be too broad. Agile development also includes the possibility that the aim may change during the experiment. This should be taken into consideration in the assessment. Therefore, it is worth laying down guidelines in advance for what constitutes sufficient proof of an experiment's success and how to ensure adequate documentation of an experiment.

ASSESSMENT INTEGRATED INTO THE EXPERIMENTAL PROCESS

The Kumous project, run by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Lappeenranta University of Technology, the University of Helsinki and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, developed the Kokeilut käytäntöön (Putting experiments into practice) handbook, in which assessments are primarily treated as an interactive process aiming at committing the different actors to disseminating the results of the experiments.

Procurement and funding of experiments



Procurement and funding of experiments

The public sector can accelerate experiments both financially and without direct financial aid. The possibilities and procedures for funding should be examined before the experiments are launched, because they will have an effect on the next stages of funding for the experiments.

Experiments of various types demand different approaches, as the funding practices in grassroots experiments differ to a certain degree from those in large groups of experiments or in research-based experiments. The procedures for funding experiments should be kept as light and flexible as possible, leaving room for agile experimentation.

Procurement or subsidy

Experiments in public sector organisations can be funded either in the form of a procurement or discretionary government grants, depending on the nature of the activities. When the funding is provided through a procurement, the public sector acts as the buyer, expecting to receive services, goods, an operating model or some other outcome in return for its financial contribution. Discretionary government grants are gratuitous, where public authorities support an experiment conducted by another actor.

The difference between a procurement and a government grant is also illustrated by the fact that, in a procurement, the commissioning party has a need, and it defines the product or service to be procured, whereas in the case of a government grant, the funder does not have an immediate need for a service, but instead the experimenter describes the purpose for which the government grant is needed. A procurement covers all costs

and the implementer of the experiment may be left with a financial gain. A government grant, on the other hand, usually requires the applicant to have existing funding, and if any sales are made under the subsidised experiment, a part of the government grant may have to be paid back or no grants may be awarded at all.

Experiments may be procured as a normal purchase of services or as a procurement that meets the criteria for research and development *(R&D)* procurements, depending on the nature of the service. Normal service purchases are carried out in accordance with the Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts, with the exception of minor procurements of less than EUR 60,000. If a procurement meets the commissioning party's needs, generating new knowledge and openly published and broadly utilisable results, it can be considered an R&D service that falls outside the scope of the abovementioned Act. For example, the quick trials in Kalasatama procured by Forum Virium Helsinki were commissioned as minor procurements from companies. The small trials jointly commissioned by Experimental Finland and Motiva, on the other hand, were procured as R&D services.

Depending on the nature of the activity, an experiment can be funded with a normal government grant or with aid to companies under the EU rules for state aid. Under the General Block Exemption Regulation, aid may be granted to companies for supporting experimental development or for supporting research, development and innovation activities. Aid may also be granted in the form of aid under the de minimis regulation. As a general rule, state aid for companies is forbidden in the EU, although there are certain exceptions. Under the EU rules for state aid, all entities with economic activities are considered enterprises, regardless of their legal form. The experimental aid provided by the Finnish National Agency for Education, for example, was granted in the form of a government grant. The financial aid for the KIRA-digi experiments, on the other hand, comprised support for experimental development under the EU General Block Exemption Regulation.

It is a good idea to find out about the right type of procurement or aid with the help of a lawyer specialising in these matters. In any case, the relevant criteria and procedures should be checked carefully, because illegally granted financial aid may be subject to recovery, possibly with interest.

Organising applications for experiments

Experiments are usually applied for through an open application that covers a broad group of experiments. Launching several experiments

at the same time can, in fact, be useful, since it is worth setting the effectiveness targets more broadly than for an individual experiment. Moreover, experimenters can network and learn from one another within a wider group of experiments. Such groups also hold more value in communications than an individual experiment, as well as having a higher probability of achieving changes that have an impact on a given theme or sector.

The application notice or invitation to tender should provide a summary of the aims, requirements and assessment criteria for the experiments. To ensure that the outcomes can be utilised, the aims of experimental activities should be linked to the strategic goals of the sponsoring organisation.

The assessment criteria used include:

- Novelty and innovativeness
- Effectiveness and scalability
- Feasibility
- Implementers and resources
- Agility
- User-orientation
- Availability and openness

Digital platforms can be used for communicating application rounds for experiments and, in some cases, as a channel for submitting applications or tenders. Applications and tenders has to be evaluated and decisions on them has to be justified in accordance with the evaluation criteria set in the application notice or invitation to tender. External experts may also be used for the assessments. To ensure consistency, the assessment process and criteria should be examined jointly before the assessments are conducted, either at an information session or by providing an information package on how the assessment will be performed and how its criteria will be interpreted.

It is worth keeping in mind that, when procuring several experiments at the same time, they are usually not considered separate procurements at the tendering stage, even if a separate procurement agreement is signed for each one of them. So, for example, if you are procuring 20 small trials for EUR 5,000 each, they will probably be considered a procurement of EUR 100,000 that must be submitted to tendering instead of it qualifying as a small procurement.

New funding methods

Since the public sector's resources for supporting experiments are often limited and the forms of funding are fairly inflexible from a legal standpoint, it is worth utilising other funding channels whenever possible. Experiments can

also be funded by foundations and the private sector, which may have more flexible procedures for offering funding. Sometimes experiments can even be crowdfunded. Various organisations have also examined the possibility of adopting a two-stage funding model based on progress in experiments and on their outcomes.

Experiments can also be funded in cooperation between several organisations. For example, the Ministry of the Environment granted a maximum of 40% of the funding for the KIRA-digi project's experiments, with the remainder coming from the implementers or other partners. This encouraged the sector to commit to conducting the experiments and utilising their outcomes broadly.

If you are planning to outsource the preparation of the procurement or financial aid process, you should ensure that this will not lead to the principles of openness and equal treatment being compromised. When entering into an outsourcing agreement, it is important to make sure that the party handling the procurement possesses the competence needed for this task and that it commits to the same openness and good governance principles as public sector organisations. In the case of government grants, it is not possible to fully outsource the process to a state-owned company, as government grants may only be awarded by a central government accounting unit.

OUTSOURCING THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The Experimental Finland project has developed an operating model in which the procurement of small trials is outsourced to Motiva Oy. The aim is to enable Motiva to offer the same service to other organisations, especially the ministries. The cooperation aims at reducing the public sector's administrative tasks in the procurement and funding of experiments, as well as at developing new operating models for supporting experiments financially or otherwise.

Role of the funder

When funding an experiment, it is crucial to find a balance between control and flexibility in the funding. The control stipulated by funding – whether through an agreement, a government grant decision or the funder's steering activities – ensures that experiments strive to achieve the desired ends and that results are communicated adequately. Flexibility in the

terms and conditions of funding, on the other hand, enable agility when conducting experiments, so that aims can be modified if necessary, and “failure” can also be an option if the tested solution does not work as expected.

Elements that maintain control or flexibility can be included in the invitation to tender as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement or funding decision. Aims, for example, can be defined in such a way that, instead of delivering a functioning solution, the implementer is required to test a solution and provide the results and lessons gained from the test.

It is also recommended for the terms and conditions of the application round to specify how public the results will be, will they be published as open source data, and which party will gain ownership of the rights to the results. Before an experiment is started, a clause about how and how often results will be reported should be included in the funding decision or agreement. Experimenters should be required to report results and successes, as well as the lessons, surprises and failures encountered during the process. Experimenters should also report on how the results have been utilised and will be utilised in the future.

Supporting experiments without funding

Supporting the experiments of external organisations does not always require funding. Experiments can be supported by non-financial means, for example by offering data or testing platforms or the opportunity to join an experimenting community or theme development network. Support can consist of assistance for

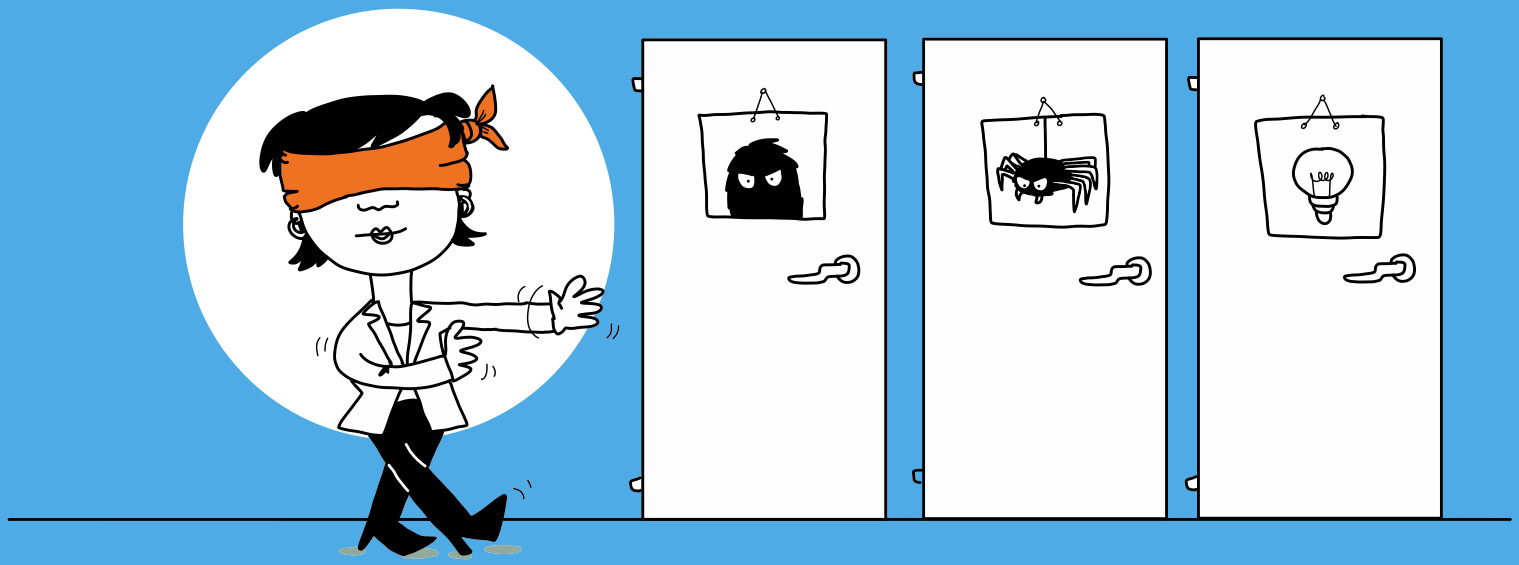
RESULTS WITHOUT FUNDING

Trafficlab, which is coordinated by the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency (Traficom), does not grant cash support to experiments; it offers its network a cooperation forum and visibility instead. The network solves common challenges and develops traffic to make it smoother, for instance. Currently the network includes thousands of actors, the majority of which are companies, although the public sector is also well represented. Trafficlab also refers actors conducting experiments to other sources of funding, such as Business Finland.

developing a new solution, business model or network, collecting user feedback or creating market references.

Experiments within your own organisation may not always require separate funding, either. Instead of consisting of separate project activities, trials can be included in the organisation's normal operations, budget and work resources, which makes them fit seamlessly into broader and more standardised development work.

Closing words



Closing words

An experimental culture enables agile transformation that utilises resources efficiently and where failures are learnt from, outcomes are shared and evidence-based development is possible. This entails a broader change in people's mindset and a willingness to learn together.

Experiments are often born from the desire to do things differently. Often there is no certainty that the new idea will work before it is tried out. That is why we need the courage to experiment. The mentor of an experiment likewise needs to be bold because the results are often uncertain. Mentors are needed to provide clarity, act as coaches and offer encouragement for experiments so that they reach their full potential.

Experiments can be supported in various ways, ranging from preparation to the utilisation of the results and ensuring their effectiveness. Acting as a coach for the implementers of experiments is a key element if the bar is to be set high enough. Care must be taken to record the results and lessons learnt during and after the experiments so that they can be used in the best way possible. It is worth remembering that the results of experiments will not necessarily emerge overnight, and that they may take time. That is why the impact of an experiment should be tracked even after it has been concluded.

Mentors are needed to initiate and utilise experiments and, eventually, succeed in them.
The larger the group of actors that are involved in the different stages of an experiment, the better we can utilise the outcomes. Experiments need every one of us.

Further reading

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How to support EXPERIMENTS

-A GUIDE FOR THE MENTORS

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