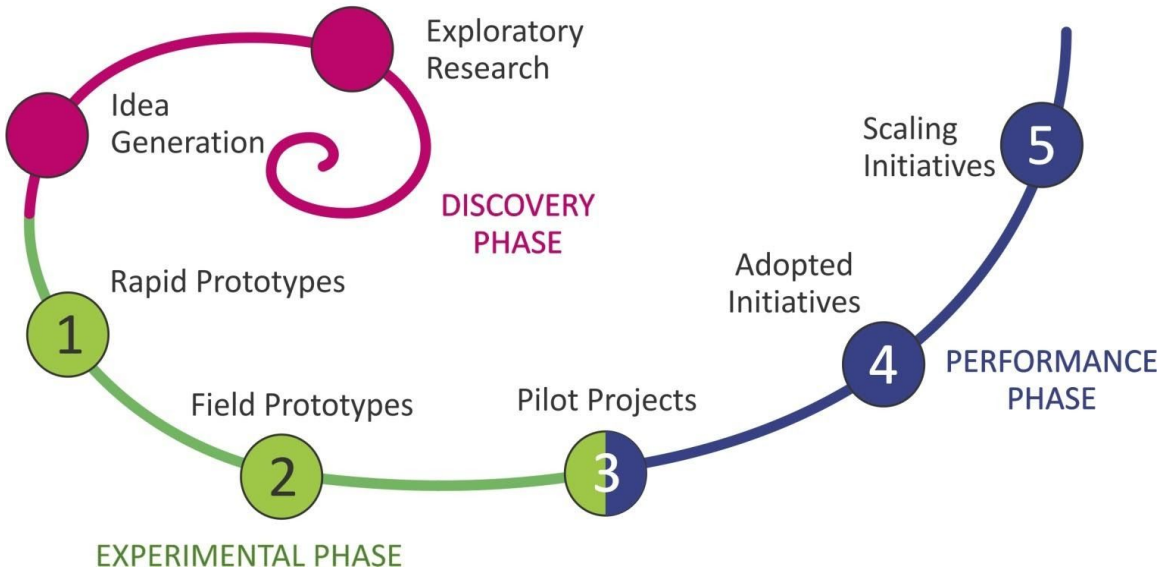## Key Evaluation Insights

RECOVER has been using a developmental evaluation framework to assess and guide the work being undertaken. Developmental evaluation aims to provide social innovators with real time feedback on their progress and learnings that they can use to improve or strengthen their efforts. The design may not turn out as expected or may produce surprises, but it is part of an intentional act to create value through new thinking and action.

Four key insights have emerged related to evaluation in RECOVER:

1. **The RECOVER activities/prototypes have generated recognized value.** This recognized value has resulted in continued and expanded testing and iterations. For example, *Project Welcome Mat* has been replicated, *The Gallery at City Centre Mall* is expanding its testing, and the REACH Connector Role is in the Field Prototype Phase.

2. **The RECOVER approach requires time to make an impact**. In the realm of social innovation, impact is only possible AFTER the most promising small scale experiments or prototypes evolve into full fledged pilots, and are formally adopted and implemented. This concept can be visualized through the *Innovation Continuum.* To be successful and make impact, prototypes must make their way through the innovation continuum towards the performance phase. (Image 2 below)

Image 2: Nesta's Innovation Continuum
(image courtesy of From Here to There Consulting)

The prototypes that are continuing in 2020 fall within stages 1, 2 and 3 on the continuum.

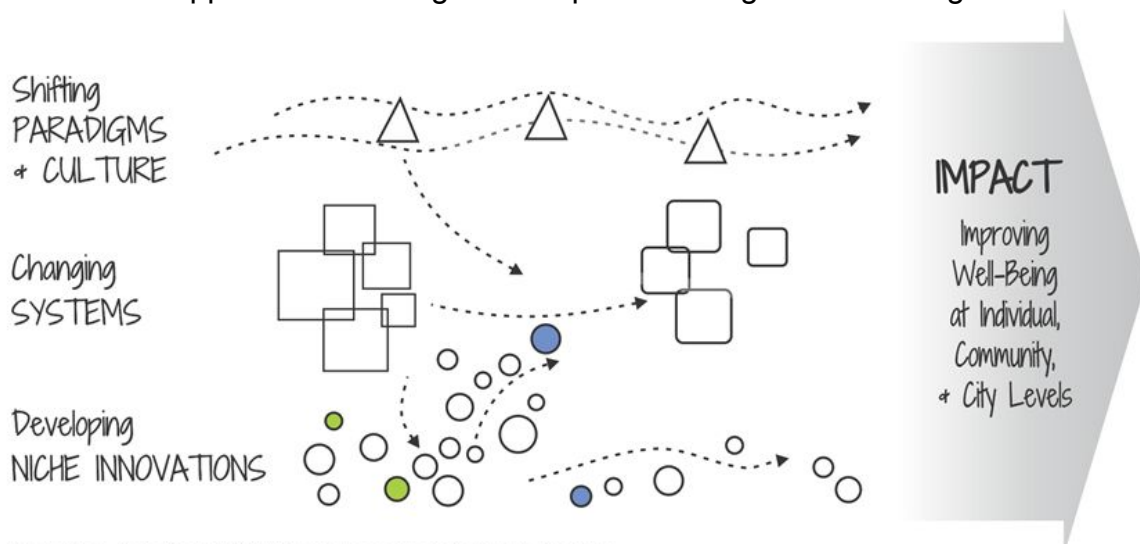**The Innovation Continuum Features in Each Phase:**

Discovery Phase	1. Research: spending time with people in the neighbourhoods to understand their daily experiences and needs. 2. Ideation: surfacing different ideas on how to improve conditions.
Experimental Phase	3. Prototypes: testing the ideas through rapid prototypes (e.g. getting feedback on the full explanation of the idea from people) or field prototypes (e.g. testing a rough version of the idea quickly in field conditions) to see if it's worth exploring. 4. Pilots: creating a longer term, more systematic test of an idea in the community to see if it's useful.
Performance Phase	5. Sustaining: formal adoption of the innovation by at least one organization. 6. Scaling: expanding the innovation for broader impact with other organizations and contexts.

Since 2017, RECOVER has tested a portfolio of about 25 prototypes and is continuing with five of the most promising for ongoing development. These prototypes are being developed using the new Well-being Framework (see Attachment 1), including points of connection to the non-material aspects of well-being (e.g. aspects like connection to land and connection to the sacred). The Framework and prototypes provide a deeper exploration of this non-material side of well-being, historically not addressed by municipalities.

3. **The RECOVER approach can contribute to - but not drive - changes in well-being at the community or population level.** Changes in community-wide well-being requires the cumulative effect of multiple, mutually reinforcing, initiatives, particularly in the systems and cultures that keep vulnerability in place. RECOVER contributes to creating population level changes, but cannot drive them on their own. In an environment that includes initiatives such as EndPoverty Edmonton, Affordable Housing Solutions Lab, EPS Community Solutions Accelerator, REACH, and many more, it is impossible to attribute a change in

population level measures, such as with a citizen perception of safety, to a single initiative. The overlapping efforts of these initiatives together are what create impact. Additionally, the lack of positive movement in population level measures does not indicate a failure of the initiatives, but rather reflects the complexity of the issues that are being addressed.

As demonstrated by Geels' framework for systems change (Image 1 below), it is important to have many different groups, people and organizations working to solve related problems. A variety of complementary and mutually reinforcing efforts, many of which are at the niche level, are required to create shifts at the systems level. In essence, Edmonton needs a "silver buckshot" approach as opposed to a "silver bullet" approach to solving the complex challenge of well-being.

Image 1: Shifting the Landscape
(image courtesy of Here to There Consulting, adapted from Frank W. Geels' *The Multilevel Framework on Sustainability Transitions*)
Together, a variety of efforts can create change at the systems and landscape levels. It is not an implementation failure if you cannot attribute a change in population level measures to a single initiative; rather, it is expectation failure.

4. **The participants of the RECOVER process have concluded that their framing and indicators of well-being needed to evolve**. When people come together to tackle complex problems, their understanding of what the problem is and how it should be solved evolves over time. This was certainly the case for RECOVER.

   RECOVER has come to understand that well-being means more than having access to the material aspects of life (e.g. money, houses, etc.). Perhaps more importantly, RECOVER has learned that focusing exclusively on the material aspects of well-being can have a detrimental

impact on the things that people have expressed really matter to them, such as purpose, respect and connection to friends and family.

There is a lot of great work being focussed on material outcomes (e.g. housing, antipoverty), but there is less focus being placed on the non-material aspects of well-being. RECOVER is pivoting to address the nonmaterial gap that has been identified. The work ahead is for RECOVER to look for ways to begin to weave the material and non-material aspects of well-being back together in a holistic approach.

It is key to note that as the non-material aspects of well-being have not historically been addressed by municipalities, the City's standard ways of measuring impact fall short. Continuing with RECOVER's developmental approach to evaluation, new ways of measuring and evaluating well-being continue to evolve alongside this new framework.

Creating Knowledge and Meaning Using Two-Eyed Seeing
Far from just a boring technocratic exercise, measurement is a deeply ethical exercise reflecting what we value. The question is: from whose worldview and perspective are we measuring? What logics and ideas are baked into our evaluation processes and metrics? Worldview and perspective especially shape concepts like individual and community well-being. Given that RECOVER aims to create spaces that promote both Indigenous (along with non-Indigenous) ways of knowing, it stands to reason that Indigenous ways of knowing will have to be incorporated into RECOVER's measures.

Implications
RECOVER has come to understand that the indicators typically used to measure well-being, based largely on the social determinants of health and the basis of the original indicator categories proposed by RECOVER, do not reflect the project's evolved understanding of well-being. Additionally, these indicators are measured at the community population level, where results cannot be attributed to any one initiative. As such, the Well-being Framework will be used to guide a new way of measuring well-being.