Innovation Pulse Check

As the [Innovation for Impact](#) paper showed, social innovation is a complex beast. It's often difficult to know where your organisation is at in its innovation journey and how to improve your performance – i.e. which of the nine drivers will give your organisation the biggest return or boost for your effort.

In 2015, a number of ACFID members participated in the ANGO Innovation Healthcheck conducted by Inventium, an Australian training and consultancy firm specialising in innovation. This survey quantified where the ANGO sector stood against each of the nine innovation drivers, and has proven to be highly valuable to demystify what next steps for the sector should look like in terms of innovation progression.

As such, this section of the guide includes an abbreviated innovation survey (an Innovation Pulse Check) that individual ANGOs can use to benchmark their innovation success and develop tailored strategies to further embed and promote innovation (as per recommendation 4 in the 2016 research paper). ANGOs can repeat this Pulse Check regularly, for example annually, to measure the progress of their innovation activity and to decipher which driver they should next target.

Work through the question tables from pages 15 to 23, writing your scores in the column on the right. At the end of each driver, calculate the average score for that driver. Then once completed, use the results table on pages 24 to 29 to work out where your organisation is at in its innovation journey, and where represents the biggest opportunity for progress in the coming months.

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Process	Do your employees engage with stakeholders such as beneficiaries, partners and donors to gather their problems or get feedback about ideas?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are organisation challenges communicated to employees to gather possible solutions/ideas?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do employees use idea generation tools to push their creative boundaries?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are ideas quickly and cheaply tested to validate their value in the stakeholder's eyes?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
		Average score per question for Process	/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Climate	Are employees supported and intellectually stimulated by their peers?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do managers and supervisors support employees with their ideas?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are employees challenged and interested in their role?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do employees have a clear understanding of the goals and expectations around creative performance?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are employees free to perform their tasks in a way that suits them?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Average score per question for Climate		/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Capability	Do employees have the opportunity to undertake social innovation training?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do employees have the skills required run social innovation projects (i.e. uncover stakeholder problems, push creative boundaries and leanly test ideas)?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do leaders have the skills to implement and track top-down social innovation initiatives that embed the nine drivers of innovation?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
		Average score per question for Capability	/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Resources	Do employees have the time to participate in social innovation projects and activities?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Is there funding available to progress social innovation ideas?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are there some employees who are formally dedicated to social innovation (e.g. as advisors, in secondments, as a percentage of their role)?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
		Average score per question for Resources	/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Strategy	Does your organisation have a social innovation strategy or similar that dictates where employees should focus their efforts?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Is this strategy communicated and understood by all employees?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
		<u>Average</u> score per question for Strategy	/5

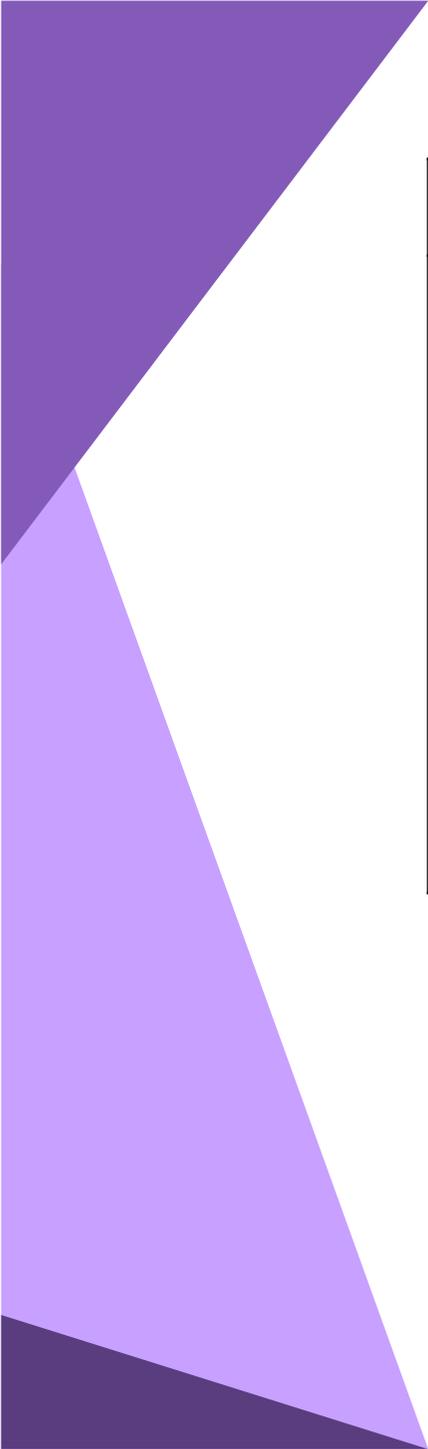| Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Roles	Are their any extrinsic motivators tied to employees roles such as social innovation in their job descriptions or KPIs?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Does your organisation have a reward and recognition program for social innovation?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are their any initiatives that help intrinsically motivate employees such as structuring tasks to give staff regular feelings of progress, or presenting staff with opportunities to become experts in their field?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
		Average score per question for Roles	/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Measurement	Does your organisation measure the inputs to social innovation projects such as time, FTE or funding?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Does your organisation measure the outputs to social innovation projects such as impact to beneficiaries, or funds raised or saved?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Does your organisation measure your innovation process such as monitoring the speed ideas travel through it, or identifying bottlenecks or improvement opportunities?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Does your organisation measure the environmental factors that influence social innovation performance such as employee participation or number of ideas submitted to managers?	o Strongly disagree (1) o Disagree (2) o Neither disagree nor agree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Average score per question for Measurement		/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Communication	Do leaders regularly and consistently talk about social innovation?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do employees have a shared understanding of what social innovation means to your organisation?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do employees have a shared understanding of why social innovation is important to your organisation?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Do employees have a shared understanding of how they can participate in your organisation's social innovation activities?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Average score per question for Communication		/5

Driver	Question	Answer (points)	Your Score
Positioning	Do people external to your organisation see you as an innovation leader in your industry?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
	Are there employees within your organisation that are thought leaders and who are often quoted in the media or are invited to present at events?	○ Strongly disagree (1) ○ Disagree (2) ○ Neither disagree nor agree (3) ○ Agree (4) ○ Strongly agree (5)	/5
		<u>Average</u> score per question for Positioning	/5

Once you've averaged all of your scores for each driver in the question table above, enter the averages in the tables following.

In the last row on page 29, tally your overall innovation score by summing each driver average, and use this score to identify your innovation maturity through the column on the right. To work out how to boost your innovation progress, identify which *three* drivers have the lowest average scores, then use the column on the right of these to obtain your recommendation on how to boost performance.
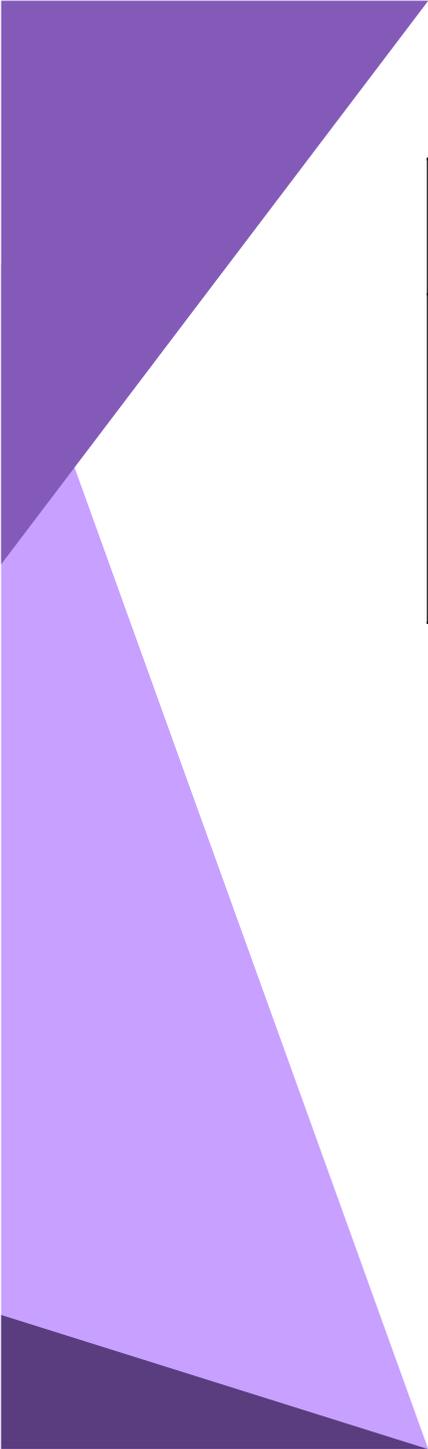
Driver	Average Driver Score	Recommendations
Process		To improve your innovation process: o make sure that you're talking to your partners, beneficiaries, staff, supporters and donors when you're looking for opportunities or problems to innovate around. o invite your stakeholders to co-create solutions and ideas. o use creativity boosting tools such as Hot Off The Press in brainstorming sessions to push people's thinking in different directions. o ensure that everyone involved knows the scope and scalable impact that you're aiming for with social innovation projects. o Identify any assumptions that you may hold around your ideas and test each of these individually with stakeholders to validate whether they are true or not. o ensure that your are constantly learning from your stakeholders and iterating your ideas to deliver the best possible value and impact for them.

Driver	Average Driver Score	Recommendations
Climate		To enhance your innovation climate: o implement activities that will stimulate employees intellectually and allow them to work supportively together (for example, an innovation sprint where they solve a complex organisational problem). o talk to managers and supervisors about ways that they can better encourage and support employees ideas (for example, crowdsourcing ideas from their teams in response to team/departmental challenges). o ask employees to rate how challenged they feel in their role, and if they are over or under challenged, adjust their tasks accordingly. o investigate whether employees are clear on their innovation goals and objective, and if not communicate these organisation-wide. o ask employees to rate the degree of autonomy they have in their role, and if it is low, work with the employee and their manager to give them more freedom in their tasks. o incrementally fund multiple ideas and celebrating when there are 'good' failures (i.e. when ideas have failed quickly and cheaply with lots of learnings).

Driver	Average Driver Score	Recommendations
Capability		To increase your employees innovation capability: ○ provide employees with online or face-to-face training in how to run social projects through your innovation process. This may include training on exploratory research, idea generating tools and lean testing/prototyping. ○ encourage leaders to learn about the nine drivers of innovation and put their skills into practice by developing and implementing initiatives within their units. ○ collaborate with others who might have complimentary capabilities such as start-up accelerators, impact investors, and academic institutions.
Resources		To improve how you resource innovation: ○ think about ways that you can create protected social innovation time for employees (for example, secondments, sprints, dedicated hours per week, offsite days etc.). ○ create and protect a social innovation specific budget within the organisation or your team, that employees can tap into to progress their ideas. ○ Seek out others such as local partners, smaller organisations and the private sector, whom you might be able to share resources (and value) with. ○ explore alternative flexible funding opportunities such as crowdsourcing (e.g. StartSomeGood, Kickstarter, Pozible).

Driver	Average Driver Score	Recommendations
Strategy		To improve your performance on social innovation strategy: ○ look at your organisational strategy and extract the key areas or opportunities you think are complex and hence require innovation to achieve. ○ craft each of these opportunities into a one-pager and communicate them organisation-wide. ○ map out your priority social innovation opportunities for the next 12 months and proactively progress these by allocating executive sponsors and working groups to each.
Roles		To better integrate innovation into employees roles: ○ embed innovation into every employee's job description (for example, including 'contributing business improvement ideas' in key responsibilities). ○ establish a reward and recognition system for social innovation (for example, crowdsourcing nominations for intrepreneurs and rewarding the winners with vouchers, secondments or extra annual leave). ○ talk to managers about ways they can structure their team's time to give regular feelings of progress (for example, creating more short term goals).
Measurement		To make your social innovation measurement more robust: ○ think about how you are measuring social innovation project inputs and outputs and identify if there are any gaps (for example, only measuring outputs in terms of financials). ○ mentally work through your innovation process and develop metrics that would identify whether there are bottlenecks and if so, where they exist. ○ Include questions that assess your innovation climate in your employee engagement survey.

Driver	Average Driver Score	Recommendations
Communication		To improve your organisation's innovation communication: o ask leaders about what they think social innovation means to the organisation, why it's important and how they think employees can get involved. Note any discrepancies. o together, have the leadership team develop a definition for social innovation for the organisation and why they as a leadership team believe it is important. Ask leaders to circulate this to their teams along with how their teams can participate in upcoming activities. o showcase via internal communications supportive leaders and managers who are promoting creativity, collaboration and resilience in their teams. Share the message of how they are achieving this within their teams.
Positioning		To increase your innovation positioning: o identify breakthrough social research or innovations that your organisation has participated in or driven, and communicate these externally to donors, supporters, government and partners. o seek out employees who are experts in their field and promote them externally as thought leaders (for example, quoting them in media releases, or giving them keynote opportunities at conferences).

Driver	Average Driver Score	Recommendations
Overall Driver Total (sum of all driver averages)		A score of 27 or below represents that you're early in your social innovation journey. A score of between 27 and 35 represents that you're about halfway in your social innovation journey. A score of 36 or above represents that you're well on the way to completing your social innovation journey.