



ATTRACTISS

Empowering Innovation
Support Services



SPIRAL FUNCTIONS CARD SET



UK Research
and Innovation



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ABOUT THE PROJECT *And the Card Set*

This set was developed within the framework of **ATTRACTISS** – AcTivate and TRigger ACTors to deepen the function of Innovation Support Services.

The project aims to strengthen the competences, approaches, tools and governance models of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), with a particular focus on Innovation Support Services (ISS).

The seven cards presented here illustrate the **7 key functions of ISS**, as they appear throughout the stages of the Spiral Facilitation Process.

Designed as both a practical and reflective tool, this set supports facilitators and innovation actors in navigating their roles and enhancing their contribution to sustainable transitions in agriculture and forestry.



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WHAT ARE ISS?

Innovation Support Services



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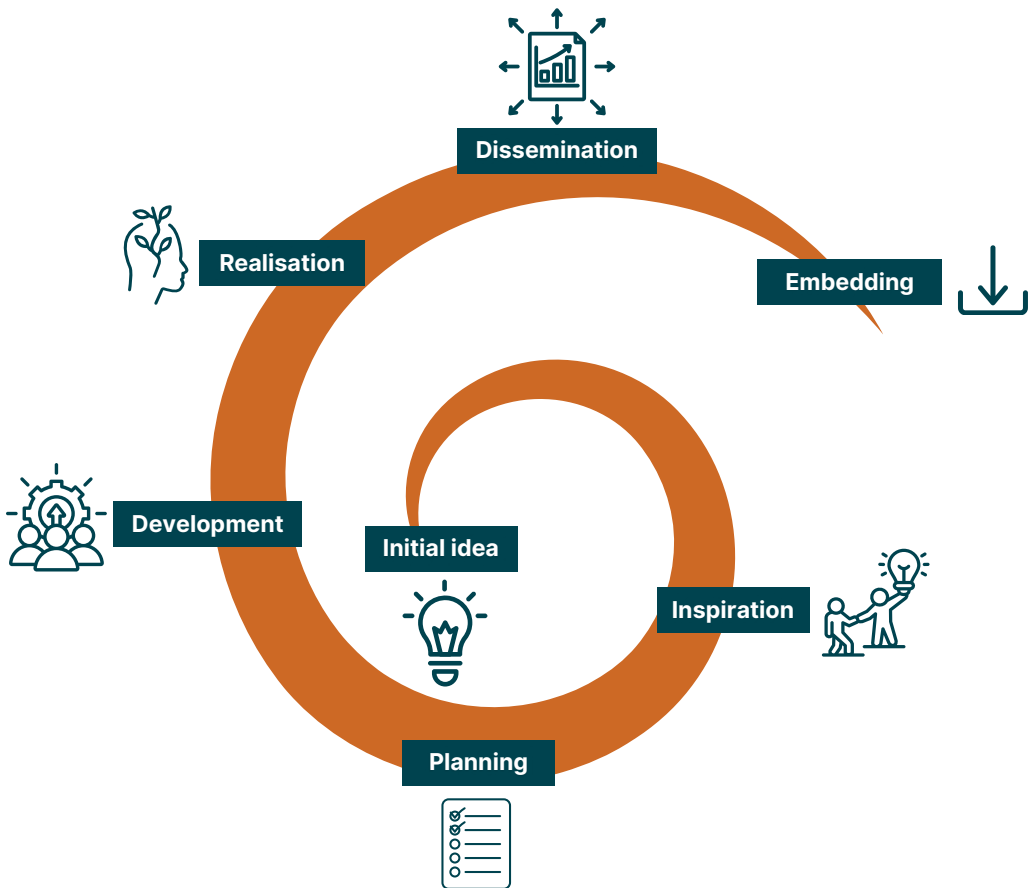
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WHAT ARE ISS?

Innovation Support Services

Innovation Support Services (ISS) can be defined as services that make innovation happen by fostering interactions and constructing knowledge





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UNDERSTANDING THE *Interactive Innovation Process*

UNDERSTANDING THE *Interactive Innovation Process*

How does an innovation happen?



LINEAR PROCESS

Researcher

Advisor

User

Experts define desired result



INTERACTIVE PROCESS

Initiators define shared ambition

Through interaction, knowledge is combined in new ways or new knowledge is created



Addresses a
real challenge



Multi-actor based

Collaborative



Shares power and
responsibility

THE RISE OF AN *Innovation*

1. Need



2. Opportunity



3. Hidden Needs



THE RISE OF AN *Innovation*

The farmer is developing initial ideas for a new initiative. He or she is motivated by **practical challenges, new opportunities, or a desire to make a change.**

New initiatives can also emerge from **interactions or unexpected events.** Engaging with people who have **different experiences or areas of expertise** often sparks new ideas.

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Getting trigger knowledge exchange
- Needs/opportunities assessment
- Active listening



GET INSPIRED, *Explore...*



GET INSPIRED, *Explore...*

The farmer, with a fledgling idea, is now seeking a group of enthusiastic allies who can inspire one another — **people with similar interests or challenges, and individuals willing to take risks.**

He or she needs to engage in **discussions and explore the idea's potential with a group** before taking action. The idea should become a concept that is **collectively embraced**, which may require some adjustments before moving on to concrete plans with clear objectives.

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Organise contacts with other people
- Share information, arrange informal discussion
- Consider different solutions
- Help defining the project scope: vision building, negotiations...
- Manage conflicts

PLANNING



PLANNING

The farmer wants to translate his or her **idea into concrete plans** — actions need to be taken. In developing the plan, tasks are assigned and agreements are made. Are additional people needed, such as experts or policymakers? Are there any missing links? The plan may require the consent of others, including financiers, policymakers, and others, while still allowing room for experimentation. **The endpoint at this stage is a clear, actionable plan.**

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Help identifying the right key actors, the roles and functions needed to achieve the innovation.
- Finalise the idea and define the objectives (all the expectations should be considered)
- Facilitate access to seed funds
- Facilitate the setting up of informal and flexible networks

DEVELOP

Something new...



DEVELOP

Something new...

The farmer is about to implement his/her idea — whether it's a **solution to a practical problem**, the **development of a new practice**, or a **demonstration that meaningful change is possible**.

This can be achieved through experimentation. At this stage, **others can be involved** and may need to be **persuaded to collaborate** — **communication with the outside world becomes essential**. In some cases, the development path may turn out to be a dead end, forcing the network to reconsider its plans.

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Help identifying/assigning clear task
- Creating trust between the partners
- Facilitate collaborative work, joint learning and decision processes
- Managing disagreements or conflicts
- Facilitate the identification, and solution, of potential problems or difficulties.

CONCRETE *Implementation*



CONCRETE *Implementation*

The experimentation has produced good results! It is now time to **implement the solution in practice** — encouraging cooperation from other parties in the chain, if necessary, and negotiating with stakeholders affected by the change. This may involve amending legislation or regulations and addressing concerns raised by other interested parties.

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Manage disagreement or conflict (internal and external)
- Help identifying potential problems or difficulties
- Help identifying other parties / stakeholders that are relevant for the innovation
- Negotiate and manage contracts / agreements.
- Monitor the progress towards reaching the objectives



SHARE *Results*



SHARE *Results*

Are others also positive about the change? If so, the new situation truly represents an **improvement over the old one**. Genuine improvements have the potential to be **widely adopted and replicated**. This is an initiative that works. It's important to share successful initiatives so they can be implemented in various contexts and locations, benefiting more people.

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Ensure that relevant information are shared with actors outside the partnership
- Help identifying target groups, communication instruments/channels
- Mobilize multiplier actors
- Ensuring that all the key actors invest enough efforts in dissemination activities.



SCALING *Innovation*



SCALING *Innovation*

As more farmers achieve positive results with the innovation and share their experiences, it begins to **become embedded within the agricultural community.**

This phase involves the **innovation becoming a standard practice** or an **integral part of farming culture.** It may include the development of support networks among farmers, the establishment of local expertise, and the integration of the innovation into agricultural policies, regulations, and extension services.

WHAT SUPPORT?

- Training and dissemination services
- Intermediation (between consumers and producers, or between multiple network partners within an overall system/value chain)
- Institutional dialogue (for instance, to connect with other programmes and strategies)



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ISS *Functions*

ISS *Functions*

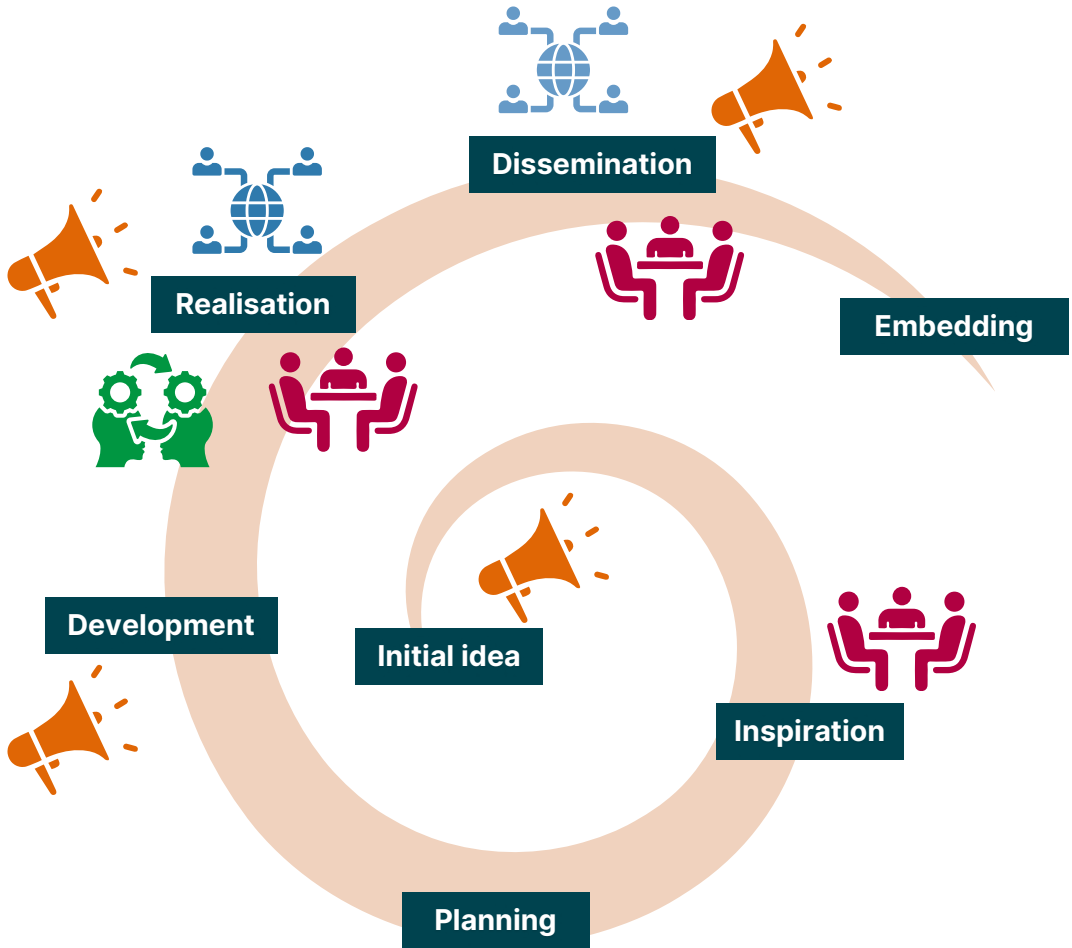
The diversity of services provided to support innovation processes can be summed up into 7 functions:

- ISS**
1 **Awareness-raising and knowledge dissemination**
- ISS**
2 **Advisory, consultancy and backstopping**
- ISS**
3 **Demand articulation**
- ISS**
4 **Networking facilitation and brokerage**
- ISS**
5 **Capacity building**
- ISS**
6 **Enhancing/supporting access to resources**
- ISS**
7 **Institutional support for niche innovation and scaling mechanisms stimulation**

ISS

1

Awareness-raising and knowledge dissemination



ISS

Awareness-raising and knowledge dissemination

ISS1. Includes all activities **contributing to knowledge awareness, dissemination of scientific knowledge, or technical information for farmers.** For instance, providing knowledge based on information dissemination forums (website, leaflets), meetings or demonstrations and exchange visits.

Activities played under ISS1:



Dissemination of information (website, brochures, magazines, newsletters, bulletins, webinars, etc.), **organisation of exchange visits, organisation of demonstrations, etc.** *It includes: selection and evaluation of information; Transformation of information into documents (targets: advisors, farmers, etc.); Language translation.*



Meetings



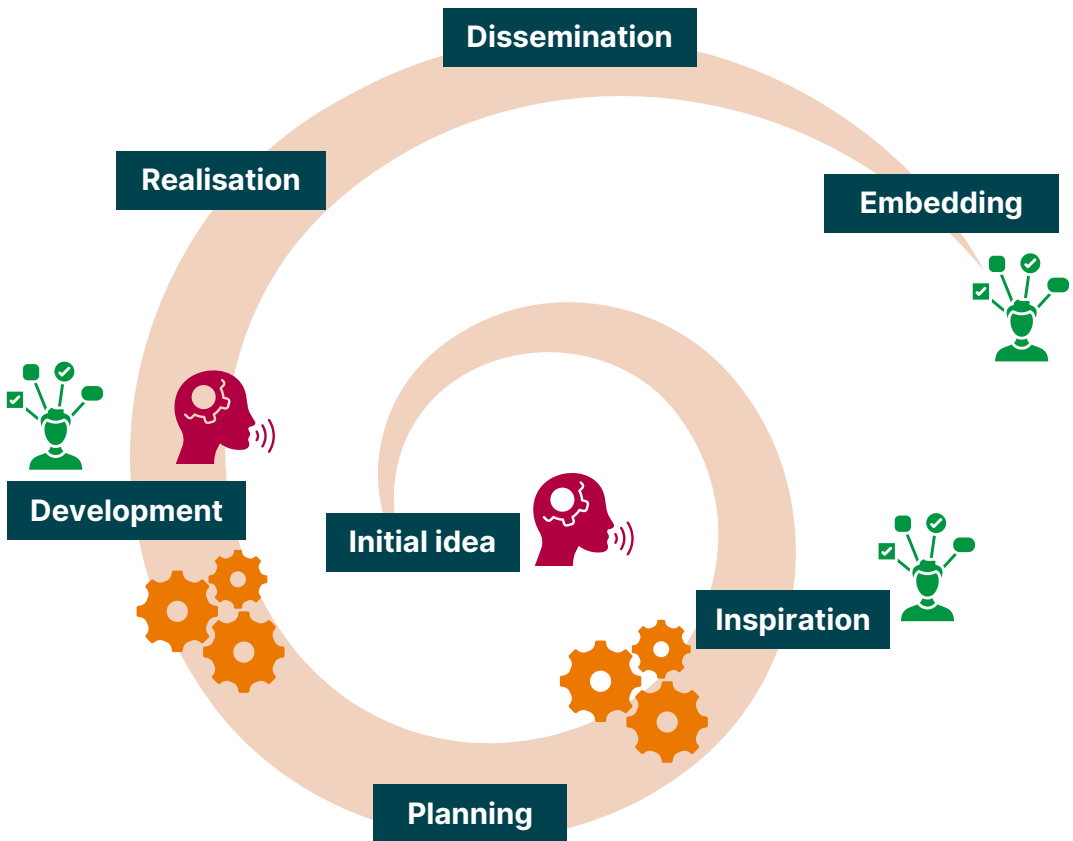
Communication of project results



Supply of knowledge and technical information for innovation (knowledge transfer), which includes selection and identification of know-how and transfer of knowledge/technologies

ISS 2

Advisory, consultancy and backstopping



ISS 2

Advisory, consultancy and backstopping

ISS2. Includes **targeted, supportive activities** aimed at **solving complex problems** (e.g., a new farming system), based on demands of actors and the co-construction of solutions.

Activities played under ISS2:



Articulation of advisory needs/specific need to provide a more targeted support (e.g., data and information gathering, design of tailored advisory packages)



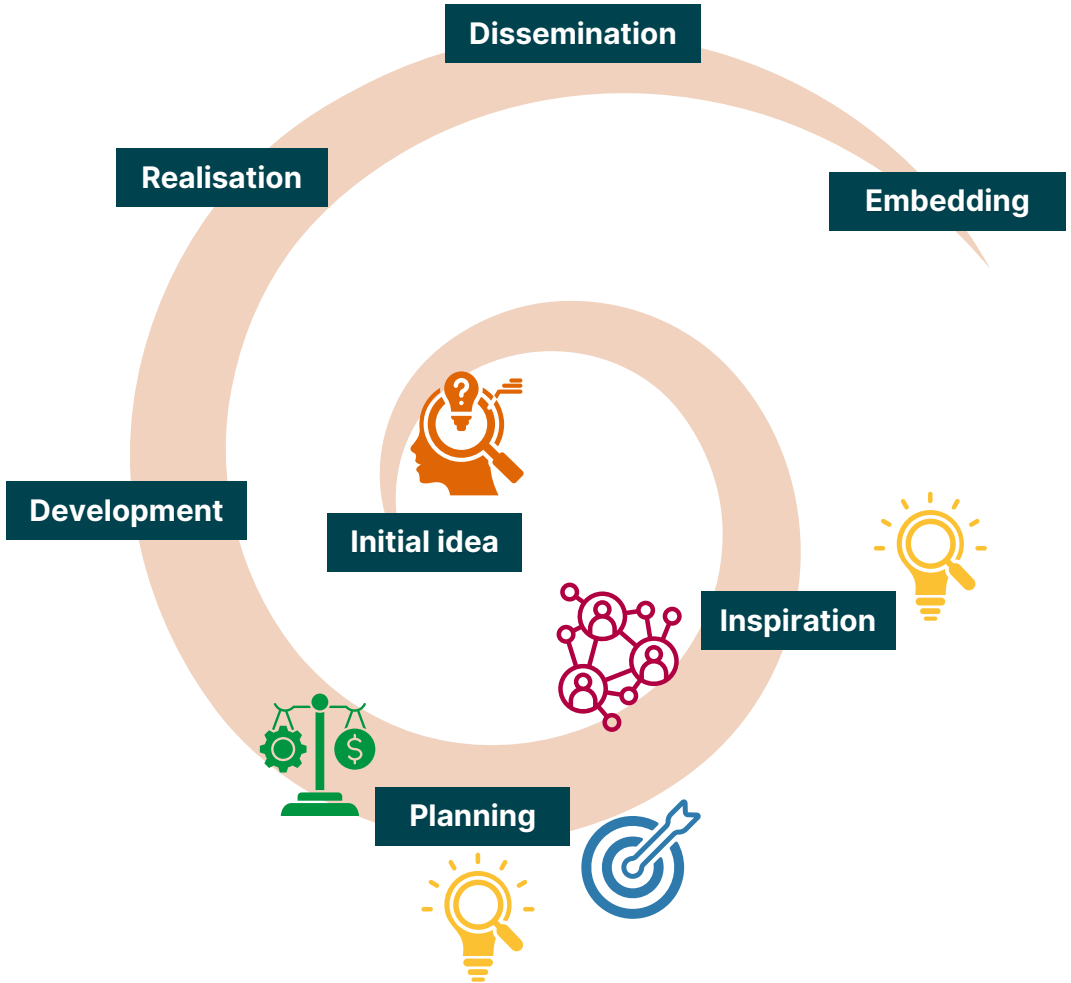
“Management” of the innovation process (soft skills), including support to find specialized advice



Organisation of backstopping pools (research/advisory SME/etc.) **to find a solution to a complex problem**

ISS 3

Demand articulation



ISS 3

Demand articulation

ISS3. Includes all **services targeted to help actors to express clear demands to other actors** (research, service providers, etc.). This is targeted support to enhance the innovator's ability to express his/her needs to other relevant actors.

Activities played under ISS3:



Needs analysis



Feasibility analysis



Building bridges with users and intermediary organisations to make the need concrete, defining its contents, specificities and costs



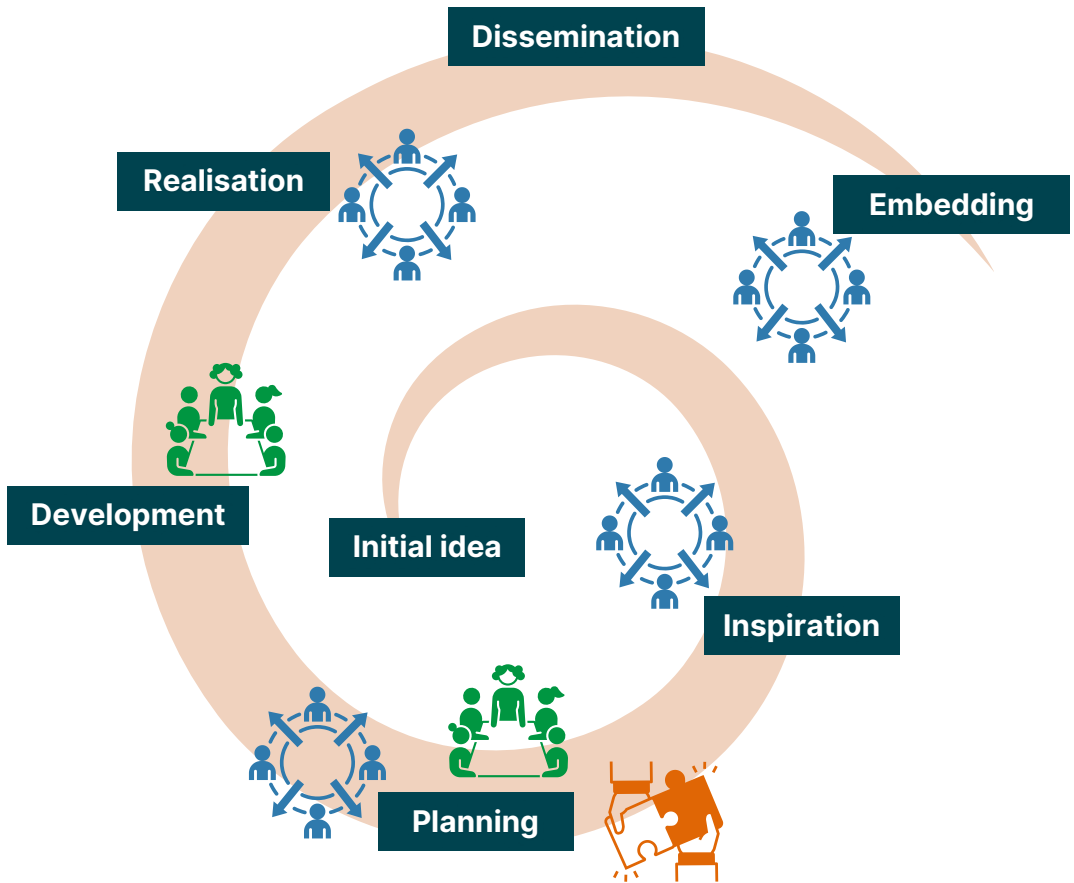
Strategy and vision development



Looking for ideas and solutions

ISS 4

Networking, facilitation and brokerage



ISS 4

Networking, facilitation and brokerage

ISS4. Provision of services to help **organise or strengthen networks, improve the relationships between actors and to align services** in order to be able to complement each other (the right service at the right time and place). It also includes all activities aimed at strengthening collaborative and collective action.

Activities played under ISS4:



Partner identification and aggregation



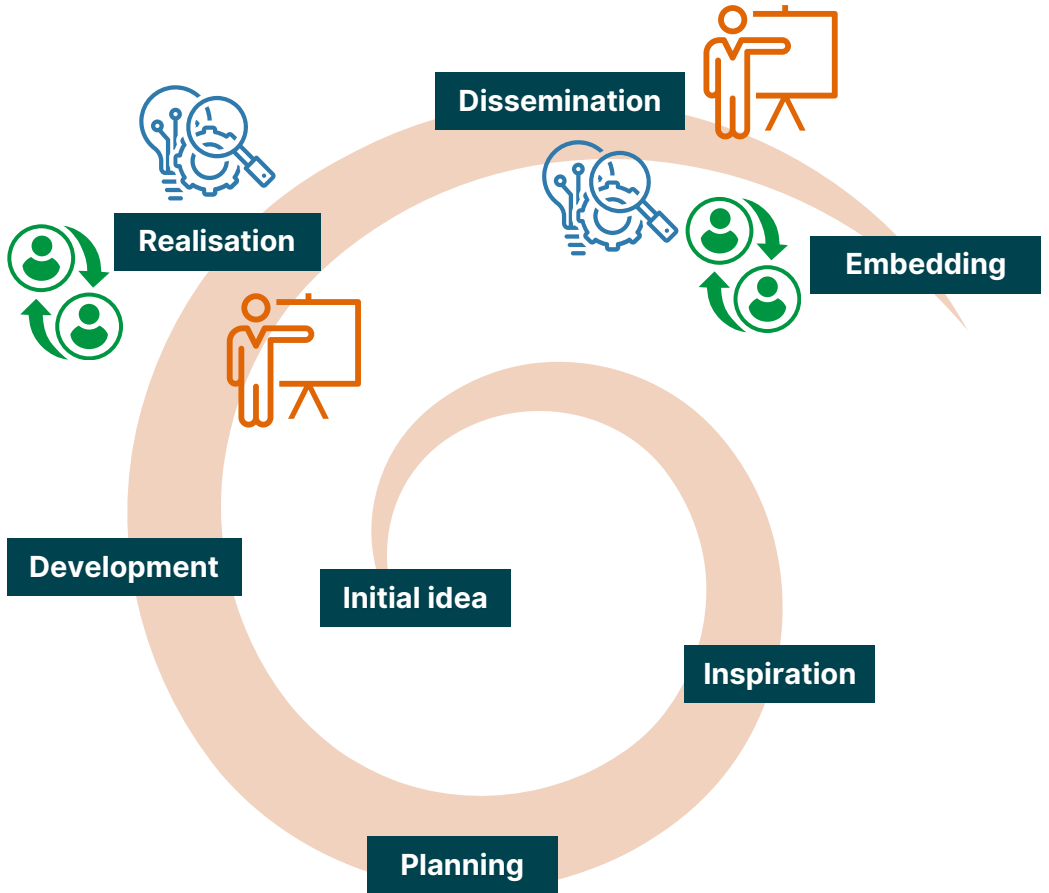
Internal: Facilitation, mediation and conflict management (construction of the project proposal, definition of objectives, roles, knowledge exchange, collective learning, etc.)



External facilitation: facilitation, mediation, network strengthening and conflict management (with the MAs/Granters (ISS6), with stakeholders and potential users, along production chain (ISS7)).

ISS 5

Capacity Building



ISS 5

Capacity Building

ISS5. Includes services aimed at increasing innovation actors' capacities at the individual, collective and/or organisational level.

Activities played under ISS5:



Traditional training/face-to-face individual training



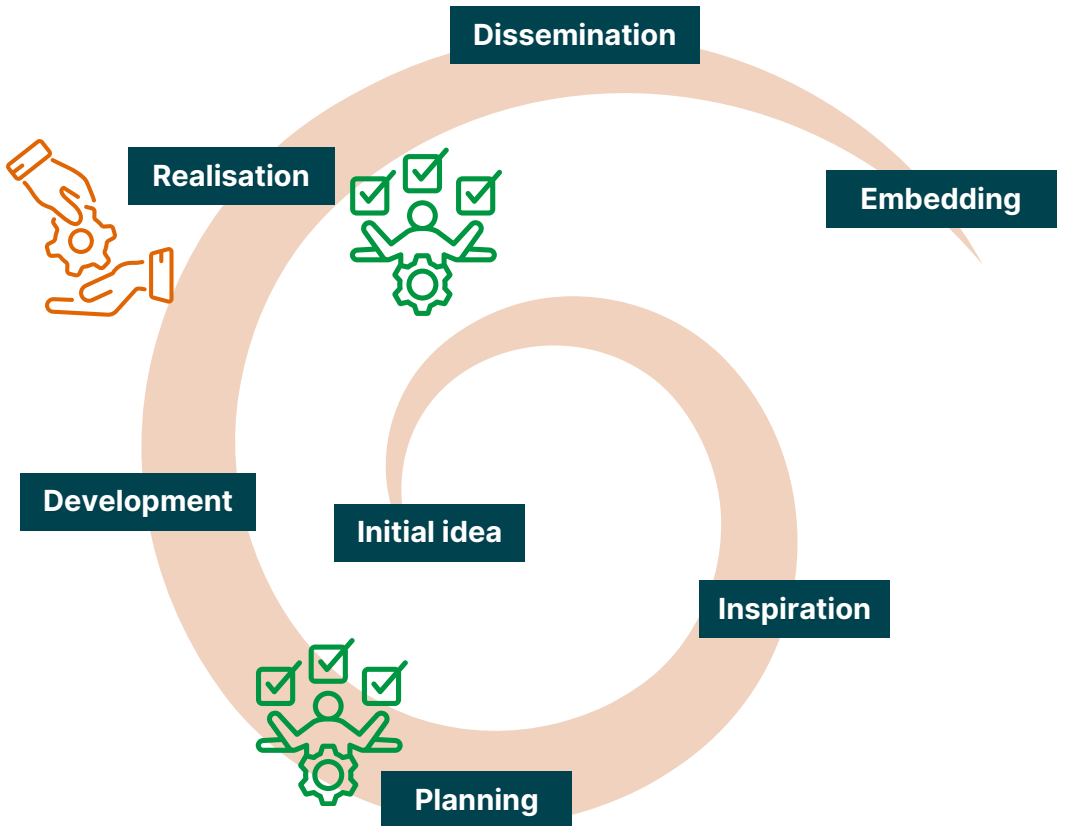
Peer-to-peer facilitation/coaching



Experimental learning

ISS 6

Enhancing/supporting access to resources



ISS 6

Enhancing/supporting access to resources

ISS6. Includes all services for innovators aimed at **enhancing the acquisition of resources to support the process**. This could be facilitating access to inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.), facilities and equipment (technological platforms, labs, etc.), and funding (credit, subsidies, grants, loans, etc.).

Activities played under ISS6:



Facilitating access to facilities and equipment
(technological platforms, laboratories, etc.)



Facilitating access to inputs



Facilitating access to financial/insurance



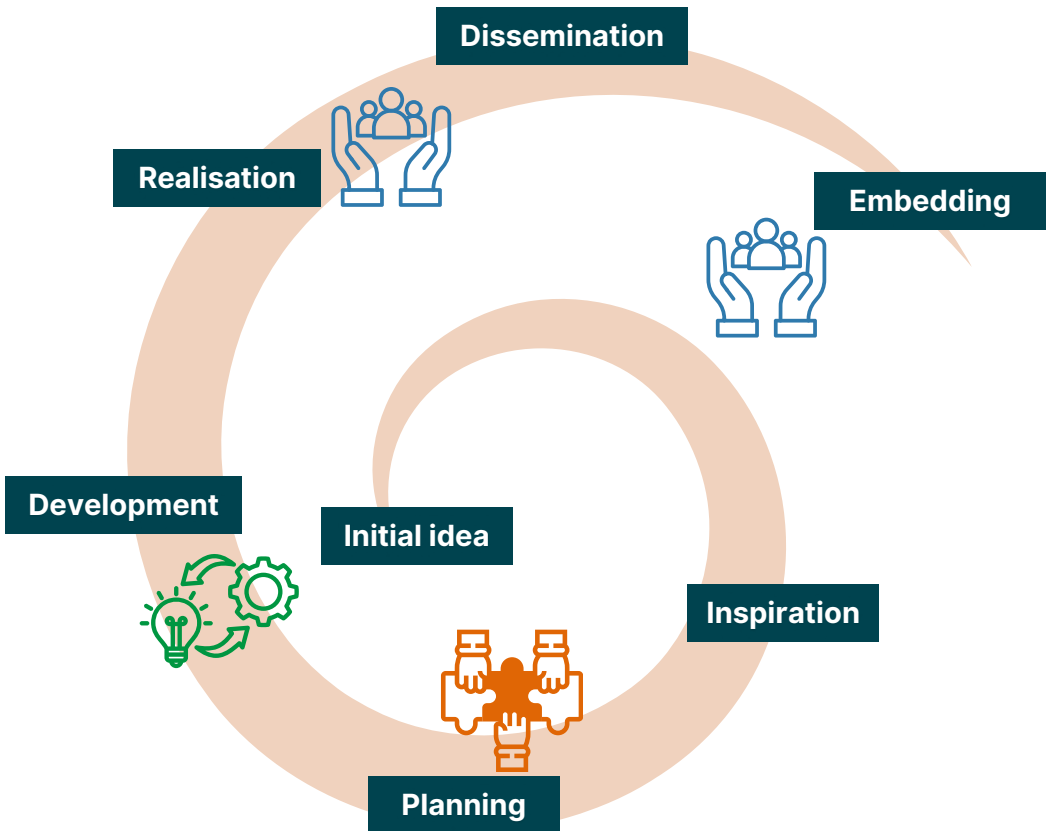
Facilitating access to funding (incl. application preparation and submission to grants)



Project management

ISS 7

Institutional support for niche innovation and scaling mechanisms stimulation



ISS 7

Institutional support for niche innovation and scaling mechanisms stimulation

ISS7. Includes **institutional support for niche innovation** (incubators, experimental infrastructures, etc.) and for **scaling up the innovation process**. This refers to support for design and enforcement of norms, rules, funding mechanisms, taxes, subsidies, etc. That facilitate the innovation process of the diffusion of innovation.

Activities played under ISS7:



Negotiation with authorities to create 'project' space for experiments



Brokerage along for the production chain (ISS4)



Negotiation with people affected by the innovation



Provision of incubators and experimental infrastructures



Exploitation strategy and action plan design and implementation



Support for the design and enforcement of norms, rules, funding mechanisms, etc. that facilitate the diffusion of innovation



Supporting intellectual property (patents) and patent authorization processes



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ISS *Providers*



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ISS Providers

ISS providers support users to progress along the innovation process, delivering, at least, one of the 7 ISS functions.

The services which are needed evolve throughout the innovation process and might require different providers with diverse skills, knowledge, capacities to support in a particular phase.

Different actors can be engaged in the same innovation process contributing, by performing different functions, to achieve successful outcomes.

