A Quick Guide to the VHA Innovation Ecosystem's
Evaluation Framework

What is the evaluation framework?

The evaluation framework is VHA Innovation Ecosystem (IE)'s standardized criteria to assess the value of innovations that are in action for discovery, testing, piloting, or deployment at VA. It ensures that projects at VA are evaluated fairly, transparently, and efficiently. The framework is used throughout a project's lifecycle, from initial evaluation and selection through execution and completion. The evaluation framework is comprised of two assessments:

> Subjective Assessment leverages subject matter experts to gauge the value of an innovation based on the criteria below

1 Subjective Assessment

Is the project valuable?

The innovation solves an important problem for those who can benefit, such as Veterans, Caregivers, families, survivors and VA staff	The innovation addresses VA and VHA strategic priorities (e.g., enables timely, accessible and quality care; builds trust; improves experiences, etc.)	VA has the people, processes, infrastructure, and finances to implement and realize value at the projects' appropriate scale with reasonable resources

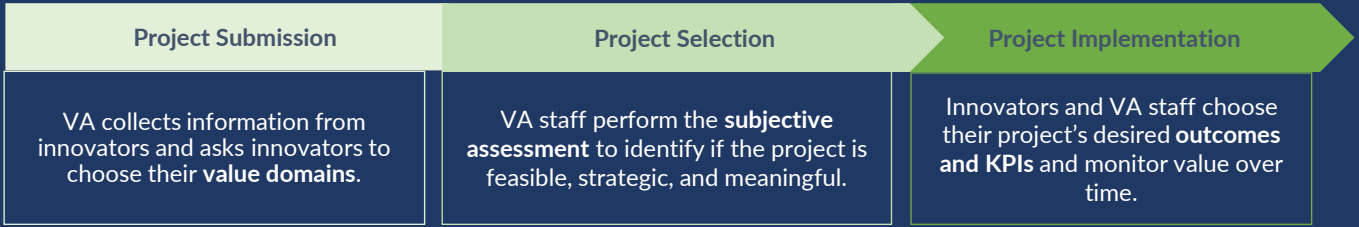> Objective Assessment uses evidence-based criteria to define and measure a project's value

2 Objective Assessment

Where is the project driving value? How is the value measured?

Value is defined by the combination of Value Drivers and Value Domains	
Value Drivers	**Value Domains**
How an innovation drives value.	The value domain is where an innovation aims to create impact.

VHA IE has defined four drivers of value:

1. **Efficiency:** Improves the extent to which inputs (e.g., expenditures) are best used to secure outputs (e.g., saving doctors' time)

2. **Equity:** Improves the opportunity for every person to attain his or her full health potential with no disadvantage tied to social position

3. **Access:** Contributes to timely use of health services to achieve the best outcomes

4. **Effectiveness:** Improves provisioning of services based on scientific knowledge to all who could benefit while refraining from providing services to those not likely to benefit (avoiding underuse and misuse)

VHA IE has defined 7 domains:

Clinical   Financial   Operational

Veteran   Caregiver   Workforce

Societal

VHA Evaluation Framework in Practice

Evaluation across the project journey

In order to optimize the likelihood a project will have value upon implementation, the evaluation framework is implemented across a project's journey.

Project Submission	Project Selection	Project Implementation
VA collects information from innovators and asks innovators to choose their **value domains**.	VA staff perform the **subjective assessment** to identify if the project is feasible, strategic, and meaningful.	Innovators and VA staff choose their project's desired **outcomes and KPIs** and monitor value over time.

VHA IE requires that innovation projects define their desired outcomes and track the implementation of the idea to evaluate the outcome of the project. VA staff working with innovators have the option to choose from a list of standard outcomes and KPIs _or_ create their own unique outcomes / KPIs to report on.

Outcomes are the intended result of the innovation

Outcomes are the desired or hypothesized objective(s) of an innovation. **Standard Outcomes** align specifically with VA priorities as a preset menu that can be applied to a large variety of innovation efforts. **Unique Outcomes** are those specific to individual innovations and thus would be developed in conjunction with the innovator.

A KPI is the metric through which the desired outcome is measured

KPIs are the metric through which the hypothesized or desired outcome is measured ensuring accountability. **Standard KPIs** align with standard outcomes and can be applied to a large variety of innovation efforts. They ensure benchmarks are informed by VA priorities, provide a starting point for innovators, and enable cross-project reporting. **Unique KPIs** are specific to individual innovations and recognize the specific nature of the value created by certain innovations.

Example: Putting it all together using Podimetrics

Standard Outcomes & KPI	Creates **effectiveness** in the **clinical domain** through **improved patient safety** as measured by **the rate of healthcare acquired infections**

Unique Outcomes & KPI	Creates **effectiveness** in the **clinical domain** through _Value Drivers_ _Value Domain_ a **decrease in diabetic foot ulcer emergencies** as measured _Unique Outcome_ by 13% **reduction in major diabetic amputations** _Unique KPI_

Appendix – Value Domain Definitions & Standard Outcomes

Value Domains		Definitions
	Veteran	Innovation benefits the overall well-being and quality of life of a person who served in the US armed services
	Clinical	Innovation benefits Healthcare staff that provides direct patient care of any type (i.e., doctors, nurses, technicians, etc.)
	Caregiver	Innovation benefits non-clinical individual who assists with a Veteran's personal care (inc. health and well-being, personal needs, safety, protection, and instruction) in their daily living environment
	Financial	Innovation provides positive financial benefits to VHA and/or Veterans
	Operational	Innovation improves supply chain management, workflows, and technology to enable VA to better meet customer needs
	Workforce	Innovation improves all classifications of staff within the VA network at local, regional, & national levels
	Societal	Innovation makes improvements in Impact areas beyond VA's usual scope, including academia, healthcare, and public health

Value Domain	Standard Outcomes
Veteran	Improved access, equity, or timeliness to care or services | Improved customer experience (e.g., trust, transparency, satisfaction, etc.) | Improved Veteran quality of life | Cost avoidance or savings to Veteran | # of Veterans positively impacted
Clinical	Improved access to innovative treatments | Improved care coordination | Improved patient engagement | Improved patient safety | Improved quality of care delivery | Improved health outcomes | Improved continuity of care | # of Veterans and/or Providers positively impacted
Caregiver	Improved ability to care for Veterans | Improved customer experience (e.g., trust, transparency, satisfaction, etc.) | Improved Caregiver quality of life | Cost avoidance or savings to Caregiver | # of Caregivers positively impacted
Financial	Increased cost avoidance | Increased cost savings | Return on Investment (ROI) | $ and area (VAMC, VISN, VACO) of cost avoidance or savings
Operational	Improved system modernization (e.g., automation, integration, new technology, etc.) | Improved efficiency (e.g., productivity, process improvement, resource sharing/utilization, timeliness, etc.) | Improved effectiveness (e.g., continuity, quality, reliability, etc.) | Improved accountability (e.g., collaboration, compliance, and transparency, etc.) | #s to quantify positive impact wherever possible
Workforce	Improved employee experience (e.g., trust, transparency, satisfaction, etc.) | Improved employee performance | Improved professional empowerment to drive change | Improved professional growth opportunities (e.g., development, promotion, etc.) | Improved workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion | Improved employee quality of life (e.g., work/life balance, mobility, schedule flexibility, benefits, etc.) | Improved workforce management (e.g., hiring process, recruitment, retention. etc.) | # of Employees positively impacted
Societal	Advancement of U.S. healthcare industry at large | Improved VA recognition as a leader in healthcare innovation | Improved population health or quality of life beyond VA | # of Patients, Providers, or Healthcare Systems positively impacted