



Folkhälsomyndigheten  
PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF SWEDEN

# Checklist for high-quality implementation

From news to everyday use – the difficult art of implementation



# Checklist for high-quality implementation

This checklist aims to provide practical support for implementation. It is based on a compilation of 25 theoretical frameworks for implementation created by three American researchers. By compiling key components from the 25 frameworks, the researchers have identified four overarching phases and fourteen critical steps for planning, assessing, and successfully undertaking implementation processes. For further reading on the basics of implementation, please see the report *From news to everyday use – the difficult art of implementation*.

The checklist starts with four key questions on need, intervention, knowledge support, and place of implementation. The purpose of the four questions is to create awareness of the key components and thus lay the foundation for a continued implementation process. These are followed by specific questions over four phases and fourteen steps. The checklist is a tool that can be used throughout an implementation process, i.e. not something to be read, answered, and abandoned, but something to regularly revisit throughout the process. As additional support, the Public Health Agency of Sweden's E-guide *Implementation* is also available.

We use the term "intervention" throughout this checklist. By "intervention", we mean, for example, new work practices, new methods or products, or a new attitude to work - in short, things you want to change. New elements of an existing work can also be included here. It is easier to complete a checklist on the implementation of a limited and clear intervention than a more complex one, e.g. a comprehensive change management process involving several levels, roles, and professions. In such cases, it can sometimes be easier to divide the intervention into several parts specified in different checklists.

Meaning, Phase 1 and 2 and the first ten steps in the checklist are only about preparing for implementation. Note that it is only the third phase that deals with actual implementation.

We hope that the checklist will help decision-makers responsible for public health issues, as well as development managers, strategists, and practitioners with coordinating tasks in different areas. Thus, the checklist is meant for people who are occasionally faced with the challenge of implementing new interventions and work practices to promote the health of the population.

## [Implementation public health](#)

# Checklist for high-quality implementation

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- Step 1 Describe the need
- Step 2 Assess the intervention
- Step 3 Assess readiness for change
- Step 4 Assess the need to adapt the intervention
- Step 5 Assess the need to adapt the organisation
- Step 6 Assess organisational support
- Step 7 Identify implementers
- Step 8 Train implementers

## PHASE 2. Structure for implementation

- Step 9 Identify those responsible for the implementation
- Step 10 Produce an implementation plan

## PHASE 3. Implementation

- Step 11 Provide support to implementers
- Step 12 Follow up the implementation
- Step 13 Provide feedback to all involved

## PHASE 4. Lessons learned and improvements

- Step 14 Lessons learned for the next implementation process

# Four initial questions

Several factors play a role in the long-term success of the implementation of a new intervention. But sometimes a planned implementation does not meet even the most basic requirements - that there is a stated need and that the proposed intervention is right for the context. Answering the four questions below is therefore a good start – and a prerequisite for assessing whether to start an implementation process at all.

## **What need has been identified?**

Describe the need to be met, e.g. reducing the proportion of young people who smoke or increasing the proportion of the population who are physically active.

## **What intervention (if any) should be implemented?**

Indicate which intervention will meet the need. The term "intervention" covers, e.g., new work practices, approaches, methods, or products – in short, what you want to change. New elements of an existing work can also be included here.

## **To what extent is it supported that the intervention can meet the need?**

Describe the knowledge support that backs the choice of intervention, for example by referencing a relevant report, guideline, evaluation, or scientific article.

## **Where will the implementation take place?**

Establish the location where the implementation will take place, geographically or organisationally. An implementation process can be carried out entirely or partially within the organisation or in collaboration with other organisations.

## PHASE 1

# Initial assessment

The first phase of the Quality Implementation Framework is about carefully assessing whether the proposed intervention fulfils an actual need and whether it is suitable for, or can be adapted to, the organisation (e.g. a municipality, region, county administrative board, authority, or other organisation). This is a more thorough assessment than the four initial questions. Phase 1 consists of eight steps, each containing questions that should be answered to the best of your ability before moving on to Phase 2.

Answer the questions as best you can. The questions you cannot answer, or which cannot be answered in a sufficiently specific manner, show where there are issues or weaknesses that you need to address before proceeding to Phase 2 of the checklist. Such issues can be described in the Comment/analysis field below each question. The answer "partially" can sometimes be sufficient, but if you answered "partially" to many questions in Phase 1, this can be a warning sign. Once any issues or weaknesses have been addressed, return to the checklist, complete and revise. Then proceed with the checklist and your implementation planning.

Sometimes you don't "cross the finish line". The answers to the questions in Phase 1 may show that the organisation does not actually need the proposed intervention, or that the organisation is not ready, at least not at the moment. You may then decide, for good reason, to stop or pause the work as important aspects of the implementation process have not been met.

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# Step 1. Describe the need

- why are we doing this?

Step 1 involves a thorough needs assessment. Who would gain from implementing the new intervention? An overview of the organisation and other stakeholders involved may be helpful. If the implementers do not consider the intervention necessary, there are probably only two options: to increase the motivation for the proposed change and the understanding of its value, or to stop the implementation process. Early involvement of those who will carry out the implementation, i.e. the implementers, can help to increase motivation.

## 1. Have we assessed the needs of the organisation?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

"We" refers to the person(s) planning the implementation process and working on the checklist, but not necessarily those who will use the new intervention.

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## Step 2. Assess the intervention

– does the new intervention fit our organisation, culture, needs, and values?

Step 2 assesses how well the new intervention or work practices fit into the organisation. For example, the new should be consistent with the culture, values, and vision of the organisation, i.e. the context. As political values and priorities vary, a specific intervention may fit one time and context but not another. The new must also reflect the needs and values of users and final recipients.

### 2a. Does the new intervention contribute to meeting the identified need?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 2b. Does the new intervention fit the objectives and mission of the organisation?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**2c. Is the new intervention in line with the organisation's values?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:



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# Step 3. Assess readiness for change

- is our organisation ready for the new intervention and are we ready for change?

Step 3 assesses whether the organisation is ready for the new intervention. Is there willingness and means, such as sufficient resources, knowledge, and motivation? An organisation often has multiple levels, different roles and activities. Sometimes the activities that will carry out the implementation is not even part of the organisation itself. Please note under "Comment/analysis" if different parts of the organisation or external stakeholders have different conditions and readiness for change.

### 3. Have we assessed the organisation's readiness for change?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

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## Step 4. Assess the need to adapt the *intervention*

- should and can we adapt the new intervention to our organisation?

Step 4 assesses whether the new intervention can and should be adapted before starting any implementation process. Adaptation may involve, for example, simplifying or delimiting a large or complex intervention to make it more manageable for those implementing it in practice. It is important not to "adapt out" those parts of an intervention that are assumed to be effective. Any adaptations should be monitored and documented.

### 4a. Are there parts of the intervention that we would need to adapt?

If no, proceed to step 5.

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 4b. Do we know which parts of the intervention could be adapted to our organisation?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**4c. Do we know which parts of the intervention should not be adapted?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**4d. Do implementers have the possibility to propose adaptations of the intervention?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

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## Step 5. Assess the need to adapt the *organisation*

- do we need to strengthen infrastructure, motivation, or knowledge levels?

In Step 5, the organisational capacity is reviewed. Can the organisation be adapted in terms of infrastructure, motivation, and level of knowledge? And if so, are there resources for this? If there is no support and motivation for implementation, you may need to consider whether it is worth going ahead.

### 5a. Can we adapt the organisation's infrastructure to achieve successful implementation?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 5b. Can we strengthen motivation in the organisation to achieve successful implementation?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**5c. Can we increase the level of knowledge in the organisation in order to achieve successful implementation?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

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## Step 6. Assess organisational support

- does the new intervention have the support of key persons in the organisation?

Step 6 is about assessing whether there is a supportive climate in the organisation for implementing the new. This step includes ensuring that there is support from decision-makers and that relevant stakeholders are positive about the implementation process and feel that the new intervention is "worth it". If there are particularly driving stakeholders, it is good to think about how they could be used as resources, but also about what happens if they leave the organisation. It is also important to assess the need for resources in terms of time, money, and staff. Thus, it is important to identify both hindering and enabling factors for implementation.

### 6a. Are relevant decision-makers and managers positive about the new intervention?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 6b. Have resource needs been assessed (time, money, and staff for implementation)?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**6c. Are other relevant stakeholders positive about the new intervention?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**6d. Have any particularly driving and positive stakeholders been identified?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**6e. Has any resistance to the new intervention been identified and addressed?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**6f. Have any obstacles to the implementation of the new intervention been identified and addressed?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:




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## Step 7. Identify implementers

– have we identified who is carrying out the implementation in practice?

Step 7 involves identifying and recruiting those who will undertake the practical implementation work – the implementers – and the people who will support them. Implementers need to understand the benefits of the new intervention itself, know how to use it, and have the skills to use it. The people, internal or external, supporting the implementers should also have knowledge and understanding of the value of the new intervention, as well as knowledge of implementation processes and follow-up.

### 7a. Have we identified and recruited those who will carry out the implementation in practice?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 7b. Can we offer support to those who will carry out the implementation in practice?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

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## Step 8. Train implementers

- can we provide sufficient education and training?

Step 8, the final step in Phase 1, is about practical training. Implementers may need education and training, followed by continued support and supervision for as long as needed. The organisation must therefore be able to offer training and upskilling so that the implementers feel knowledgeable and confident in the new system. This applies whether the intervention to be implemented is a new work practice or a new method or product.

### 8. Can we provide sufficient education and training in the new intervention?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

Phase 1 and the first eight steps are thus only about preparing for implementation. In the next phase, preparation continues, but now with a focus on structure.

## PHASE 2

# Structure for implementation

The second phase of the Quality Implementation Framework is about developing a structure for implementation. The long-term "survival" of the new intervention should also be part of the implementation plan. An intervention is perceived as institutionalised, i.e. fully integrated into ordinary activities, only when employee turnover, internal and external reorganisations, political changes, new methods of financing, etc. do not affect the intervention. Only then can the implementation finally be considered successful. Before concluding Phase 2, there should be a clear plan of what will happen and when. It should also be clear who is responsible for different parts of the implementation process.

Answer the questions as best you can. The questions you cannot answer, or which cannot be answered in a sufficiently specific manner, show where there are issues or weaknesses that you need to address before proceeding to Phase 3 of the checklist. Such issues can be described in the Comments/analysis field below each question. The answer "partially" can sometimes be sufficient, but if you answered "partially" to many questions in Phase 2, this can be a warning sign. Once any issues or weaknesses have been addressed, return to the checklist, complete and revise. Then proceed with the checklist and your implementation planning.

Sometimes you don't "cross the finish line". You may then decide, for good reason, to stop the work as important aspects of the implementation process have not been met.

## Step 9. Identify those responsible for the implementation

- appoint people with organisational responsibility and specify roles and responsibilities

In Step 9, a team is created with a clear responsibility and mandate to plan, implement, and evaluate the implementation process. Individual members of the team are allocated responsibilities for different elements of the work. Note that the implementation team is responsible for the implementation process, but rarely for using the new intervention (see Step 11). The members of the implementation team should be well aware of the need and understand why the new intervention is needed. It is also an advantage if the implementation team is trusted within the organisation.

### 9a. Have we appointed an implementation team or equivalent?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 9b. Have we appointed a person to be in charge of the team?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**9c. Have we defined roles and assigned responsibilities for different parts of the work?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

## Step 10. Produce an implementation plan

- the plan should describe concrete tasks and time for implementation, including in the long term

Step 10 involves producing an implementation plan. This plan sets out the elements of the implementation process, when they must be completed, and who is responsible for getting it done. The plan also clarifies what may need to be in place before the implementation of the new intervention begins in earnest, such as the need for education and training of staff, and the development of tools and local procedures. The implementation plan should also address follow-up.

### 10a. Do we have an implementation plan that includes objectives, tasks, and follow-up, as well as clearly defined responsibilities for all stakeholders and relevant implementers?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Commentary/analysis:

### 10b. Has the implementation plan been anchored in the organisation, i.e. have the relevant stakeholders received the plan?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Commentary/analysis:

**10c. Have we produced a clear timeline that includes long-term sustainability?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

## PHASE 3

# Implementation

It is only in the third phase of the Quality Implementation Framework where actual implementation is covered. Structure and support for the work are important parts of this phase. Phase 3 includes practical and technical support for the implementers, follow-up of the implementation process, and feedback to all involved.

Answer the questions as best you can. The questions you cannot answer, or which cannot be answered in a sufficiently specific manner, show where there are issues or weaknesses that you need to address before proceeding to Phase 4 of the checklist. Such issues can be described in the Comments/analysis field below each question. The answer "partially" can sometimes be sufficient, but if you answered "partially" to many questions in Phase 3, this can be a warning sign. Once any issues or weaknesses have been addressed, return to the checklist, complete and revise. Then proceed with the checklist and your implementation planning.



## Step 11. Offer support to implementers

Step 11 includes concrete support during the implementation. This can range from providing supervision and technical support to producing materials and rearranging schedules. It may also involve newly identified needs for education and training or further adaptation of the new intervention.

### 11a. Have we appointed someone to provide practical support during the implementation process?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 11b. Does the person(s) providing the practical support have good knowledge of local conditions?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

## Step 12. Follow up the implementation

In step 12, the implementation process is evaluated. What has worked well? Have any weaknesses emerged that should and can be addressed? Information on how different parts of the implementation process have been carried out is collected and compiled.

### 12a. Have we followed up on the objectives of the implementation plan (Step 10)?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 12b. Is there a plan for monitoring long-term sustainability?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

## Step 13. Provide feedback to all involved

Step 13 is about continuously feeding back the results of follow-up reviews of the implementation process to all those involved. Often, a large number of people are involved in an implementation process, such as decision-makers, administrators, practitioners, and support staff, which means that feedback may need to be provided in different ways and at different times.

### 13a. Are there channels to disseminate the results of follow-up reviews to the stakeholders involved?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### 13b. Is it possible to discuss the results of follow-up reviews with the stakeholders involved?

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

**13c. Is it possible to act on the results of follow-up reviews, i.e. use the results for quality improvement of the implementation process?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

## PHASE 4

# Lessons learned and improvements

The fourth and final phase of the Quality Implementation Framework involves only one step. It is about learning from experiences.

## Step 14. Lessons learned for the next implementation

Step 14 is about the need to learn for the future. What have you learned from this implementation process that you can take with you for future implementations?

### **14a. Have lessons learned been collected from those involved in the implementation?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

### **14b. Have lessons learned been shared with those involved in the implementation?**

Yes      No      Partially      Unclear

Comment/analysis:

You have now gone through the checklist for high-quality implementation and we hope you have learned a bit more about implementation!

**Want to learn more?**

Read the report From news to everyday use – the difficult art of implementation and check out E-guide Implementation.

[Implementation public health](#)