Proposed foundational investments & transitional arrangements

Please send feedback to info@evidencesic.org. We regret that we cannot respond individually to every email we receive.
A thematic summary of this feedback will inform revisions to the proposed approach.

Investment 1: Sectoral (ES infrastructure) hubs

ESIC

- 'Covered' and **proposed new** domains (at COFOG* level 1), by SDG pillar

SDG pillars (4)	'Covered' domains (5-8)	Proposed new domains (5-6)
Planet	Climate solutions (Wellcome-DESTINY/SOLACE-AI)	Environmental protection (UKRI)
Peace	Crime and justice (UKRI)	Peace & effective institutions
Prosperity		Economic affairs
People	Education (Jacobs & partners, including UKRI) Health – Infectious disease (Wellcome-GLOPID-R, CIHR, HRB**) Health – Mental health (Wellcome-Galenos) Health – Screening (NIHR)	Social protection (Health – Determinants; all)
Cross-cutting	International development (UKRI)	Humanitarian assistance

- COFOG 'orphans' remaining with the proposed slate of 10-14 sectoral hubs: 1) Food safety & security (within General public services); 2) Housing & transportation; 3) Recreation & culture; 4) Other health subdomains – system arrangements; other sectors, conditions and treatments; priority populations; and 5) Two of six enablers of SDG transformation – Energy access and affordability (could be covered under economic affairs) and digital connectivity
- *COFOG is short for 'classification of the functions of government'
  **HRB is the Health Research Board (Ireland)

ESIC

- Capabilities and alignments to the ESIC roadmap

Capabilities	Alignments to ESIC roadmap 'solutions'
Produce living evidence maps (including a sectoral taxonomy) and pilot standing up & iteratively improving sectorally focused, policy-scale AI-enabled LESs	0. Delivering a vanguard suite of evidence syntheses
Maintain a sectoral question bank and keep attuned to sectoral 'windows of opportunity'	1.3 Co-production labs (with regional hubs & GSDGSC)
Plan for establishing a partnership with a local technology company (so IT investment can also go to the Global South)	2.1 Federated repository (with regional hubs)
Contribute to developing cross-sectoral standards for policy-scale AI-LESs; develop any required sector-specific variants	4.2 Shared quality standards for different types of synthesis (with regional hubs)
Manage protocol registration; actively support movement to full coverage; advise re next-generation research	4.4 Coordination of ongoing synthesis projects to avoid duplication
Be prepared to pivot to address local, regional or global crises	

- Sectoral questions could always include: 1) within planetary boundaries; and 2) how the findings vary by groups and contexts

Investment 2: Regional (collective-impact network) hubs

ESIC

- **Proposed priorities** (keeping in mind the subsidiarity principle that countries are what matter most; regions are 'infrastructural' means to an end)
  - Begin work immediately: 1) Africa; 2) Latin America & Caribbean (where strong country nodes are already organized regionally)
  - Begin additional landscaping work: 1) Asia Pacific; 2) Middle East & North Africa | Hold for now: 1) Europe & Central Asia

Capabilities	Alignments to ESIC roadmap 'solutions'
Maintain a regional question bank (with country questions), keep attuned to regional & national 'windows,' and support regional synergies (e.g., rapid response, science-advice contextualization)	1.1 Regional demand-side secretariats (with GSDGSC & SAB)
Support (i.e., connect & share capacity among) country-level evidence-support mechanisms and networks, including UN country teams & humanitarian teams	1.2 Implementation support to intermediaries (with GSDGSC)
Partner with sectoral hubs (& issue-based coalitions) on agile delivery & local packaging of global public goods & advance timely, demand-driven evidence support at country level	1.3 Co-production labs (with sectoral hubs & GSDGSC)
Contribute to sectoral question banks, piloting of data sharing and reusing, engaging local technology company (so money stays in Global South), and translation	2.1 Federated repository (with open data system)
Build partnerships with embedded units (& those working with other forms of evidence) and support new partnerships (UN country teams & government departments)	4.1 Embedded-support units embedded in user organizations
Contribute to developing standards for methods and data enhancements related to context & groups	4.2 Shared quality standards for different types of synthesis (with sectoral hubs)
Convene & build capacity among a panel of citizens to participate in evidence synthesis & support	4.5 Panel of citizen partners at (global,) regional, sub-regional levels
Support capacity sharing (informed by rapid evidence-support system assessmetns), often in partnership with UN regional collaborative platforms, INGSA regional chapters, Embedded Evidence Labs, GSDGSC & others, as well as support connections to the full array of local interest holders	5.3 Regional and country-based learning and development centers (with GSDGSC)
Be prepared to pivot to address local, regional or global crises	

Investment 3: Open (evidence synthesis) data system

- Interest holders who need to be engaged in bringing together key data system elements

Interest	Interest holders	Contributions
Stock & flow of studies from OpenAlex	• **Sectoral hubs** (with funding to do this): 1) climate solutions; 2) education; 3) three other UKRI-supported domains; 4) screening	Enhancements to bibliographic metadata & abstracts and tagging for sector relevance & taxonomy (to make studies 'synthesis ready')
Stocks & flows of other forms of evidence	• **Evaluations**: 1) DEP from 3ie; 2) DEReC from OECD; 3) UNEG; 4) ECG (MDBs); 5) IDEAL & Impact AI (WB) • **ES protocols**: PROSPERO • **ESs**: 3ie, EWE (planned), Health Evidence, HSE, SSE • **Guidance** underpinned by ESs: BIGG	Some of the above Directly meeting the needs of some interest holders
Sharing of processed ES data	• **Set up** for data sharing: SRDR+ • **Capable** of data sharing: Campbell, Cochrane, EEF, JBI, metapsy • **Vehicle** for data sharing: Covidence, EPPI Reviewer, Revman • **Condition of funding**: Sectoral hubs (and regional hubs if applicable)	Study-level data and risk-of-bias assessments
Data-sharing protocols	• HEvKA	Data protocols to build upon
Questions & insights from demand side	• Regional hubs and sectoral hubs • GSDGSC, SAB and other UN entities	Input to funders (and funded entities) about needs (questions, context and group considerations)
Active management	• Sectoral hubs	Fillings gaps and avoiding duplication
Integration into existing platforms already in use	• MDB operations (diagnostics, project analysis) • HIROs members' peer-review platforms • New 'AI use cases' project with UNPO	Directly meeting the needs of some interest holders

I3: Open data system

- Proposed next step is a series of virtual calls with key interest holders to work through a series of questions:
  1) How can we **move from research project(s) led by a few to a co-owned, distributed 'open data system' that people trust**? [i.e., feel invested in, contribute insights to & engage in testing of (e.g., for/in different contexts & sectors), & add data to and draw data from]
  2) How can we **fund Global South contributors** in a way that gives them a path to (co)leadership?
  3) How can we **set the stage for sharing and reusing** the future flow of humans-in-the-loop 'processed synthesis data' (not just for sharing and reusing synthesis-ready data that can be drawn from OpenAlex and processed by machines)?
     a) Current focus is helpfully on pulling in data (DOIs) and providing key enhancements (bibliographic metadata, abstract enhancement, and annotation enhancement for sector relevance and for sector taxonomy
     b) Need to expand enhancements to other sectors (working with sectoral hubs on sector relevance and taxonomies)
     c) Need to expand enhancements to include contexts and equity groups (working with regional hubs)
     d) Need to add enhancements like LES version tracking
     e) Need to leverage existing platforms and enable future integrations with existing platforms
     f) Need to develop a new business model to underpin data sharing

Investment 4: Living inventory of AI-enabled digital ES tools
(and a governance framework for such tools)

ESI

- Draw from out-of-date static inventories, develop and maintain a living version, establish and document performance metrics (both type 1 and type 2), and develop a governance framework
  - Need type 1 performance metrics (how does it perform the task for the sector and context where it was first development) and type 2 metrics (how does it performance in other sectors and contexts)
  - Proposed goal is to be a support for making and reporting on choices of AI tools (and to be a market shaper), not to fund AI tool development directly
  - Note that this could be a step towards another ESIC roadmap 'solution': AI-enabled evidence-synthesis studio (ESS)

Investment 5: Agile monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) infrastructure

ESIC

1) Support a light-touch monitoring mechanism to underpin accountability (public reporting on the ESIC website) and learning (learning & improvement cycles – see point 2 below)

    a) Measure the shift in power to the Global South, particularly in the governance of ESIC, leadership of initiatives, and resources to execute initiatives

    b) Measure progress in locating equity

        i. in its many dimensions, namely sector, region (and language), and interest-holder category, as well as career stage and gender [as prioritized in the ESIC planning process]

        ii. at the heart of the infrastructure (step 1), processes and outputs enabled by it (synthesis, intermediary work, embedding in tools people already use, and use in decision-making - i.e., steps 2-5), and its impacts on people (improving lives and saving money) [as laid out in the ESIC roadmap]

    c) Measure progress in capability for each sector, region and interest-holder category (always using a strengths-based approach and where applicable focusing on coverage against a denominator)

        • e.g., for funders, measure proportion of grants supporting and leveraging ESIC infrastructure

2) Support quarterly learning and improvement cycles for each of the above

3) Collect examples of impacts that can be the focus of future evaluation funding

Remaining high-priority 'orphan' solutions

1) AI-enabled evidence-synthesis studio (ESS) → stage set by FI4

2) Living quality standards → some will be developed by FIs (e.g., policy-scale AI-LES by sectoral hubs & GSDGSC, context & equity groups by regional hubs, evaluation/mixed-methods synthesis by GSDGSC, science advice by SAB), leaving a few orphans (e.g., RAISE guidance)

3) Capacity-sharing (CS) add-ins to existing CS programs → national evaluation capacity will be supported by GSDGSC and some other forms of capacity will be supported by others, leaving a few orphans like science advice & evidence synthesis

4) Peak body development (policymakers, evidence intermediaries, ES producers with BGESC/ESI, & citizen-serving/led NGOs)

Proposed transitional arrangements

Governing and coordinating for collective impact

ESI

	Steering group (transitional)	Communities council (transitional)	Secretariat (future)
Role	Governance for collective impact	Strategic coordination for collective impact	Operational coordination for collective impact
Participants	Individuals with a public-benefit obligation (and no plans to apply for funding and no COI)	Leaders of peak bodies for (or in their absence, representatives from) each category of interest holder, including citizens	Staff with needed forms of expertise and experience
Location	Virtual	Virtual	Global South
Collective-impact element			
• Common agenda	Approves it, governs to achieve it, and updates it as needed	Collectively commits to it and supports members and peers to achieve it	Translates it into an annual operational plan that it executes to achieve it
• Shared measurement systems	Draws upon them in accountability and learning	Learns from them and supports members and peers to improve	Develops and maintains them (as part of MEL strategy)
• Mutually reinforcing activities	Requires or incentivizes them using funding and other levers	Prioritizes and champions them	Enables, supports and reports on them (including with change management resources)
• Continuous communication	Oversight of public reporting against goals	Communications and exchange vehicle for members and peers	Maintains website, issues monthly newsletters, produces quarterly & annual reports, and organizes meetings, workshops and annual conferences
• Backbone-support organization	Governs it (and seeks input from the planning-process secretariat in the near-term)	Benefits from it and amplifies its reach within its members' and peers' own domain	Plays this role (and possibly selected from among successful candidates to be a regional hub)

Funding for collective impact

ESIC

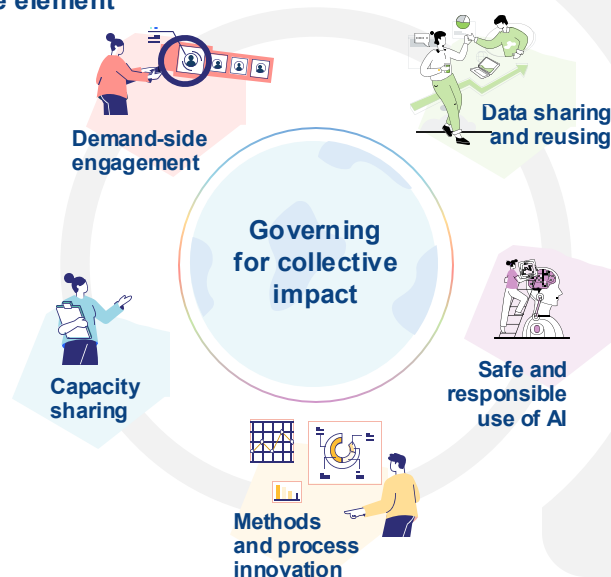|	FIG executive (transitional)	Funders interest group (FIG)
Role	Strategic funding for collective impact	Keeping abreast of opportunities for collective impact and considering ways to contribute to it
Participants	Representatives from Wellcome and UKRI (co-chairs), as well as HRB, Jacobs and NIHR	See confidential long list, with sub-groups for HIROs, EvalNet
Location	Representatives of funders that have made large (new or recent) funding commitments that are aligned with ESIC	Representatives of any funders interested in the above role description
Collective-impact element		
• Common agenda	• Provides input to it, aligns own funding to help achieve it, and provides input to updates to it as needed	Considers ways – as individual organizations and in groups – to help achieve it
• Shared measurement systems	• Draws upon them in accountability and learning	Learns from them and considers ways – as individual organizations and in groups – to improve accordingly
• Mutually reinforcing activities	• Uses funding to require or incentivize them	Considers ways – as individual organizations and in groups – to prioritize and champion them
• Continuous communication	• Contributes to public reporting against goals (via the ESIC website, monthly newsletters, and annual reports, as well as events)	Contributes to and learns from communications and exchange, including public reporting
• Backbone-support organization	• Provides input to it and acts as a complement to it via the co-chairs and their advisors	Benefits from it and amplifies its reach within individual organizations and their domain

Appendix:
ESIC planning process
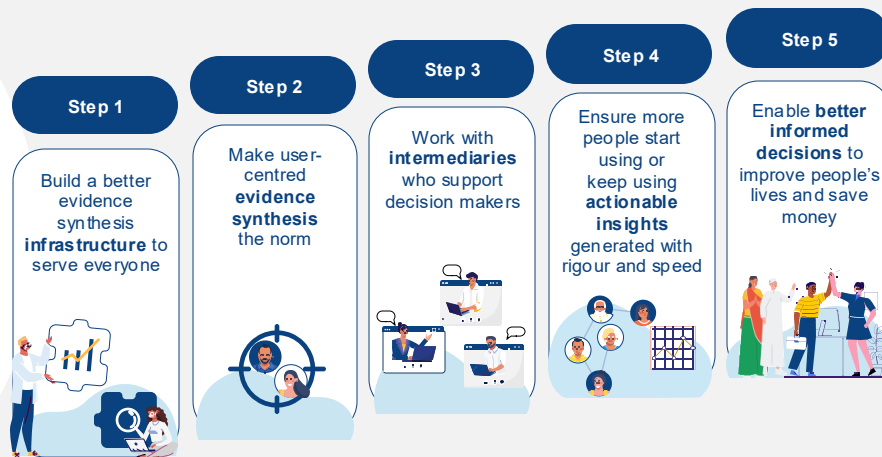& ESIC roadmap

ESIC planning-process overview
Faster learning from the best available evidence for better results

ESIC

Working groups aligned to infrastructure element

Governing for collective impact

- Demand-side engagement
- Data sharing and reusing
- Safe and responsible use of AI
- Methods and process innovation
- Capacity sharing

Collective impact, collaboration, equity

Step 1
Build a better evidence synthesis **infrastructure** to serve everyone

Step 2
Make user-centred **evidence synthesis** the norm

Step 3
Work with **intermediaries** who support decision makers

Step 4
Ensure more people start using or keep using **actionable insights** generated with rigour and speed

Step 5
Enable **better informed decisions** to improve people's lives and save money

It's up to all of us to:

| Act now | Start small | Think big |

Step 5 | Enable **better INFORMED DECISIONS** to improve people's lives and save money

Better informed decisions

Step 4 | Ensure more people start using or keep using **ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS** generated with rigour and speed

Actionable insights
(often embedded in tools people are familiar with)
served up in different ways for different decision-makers, sectors, regions & languages

Step 3 | Work with **INTERMEDIARIES** who support decision makers

Evidence support units for advisory & decision-making processes	Evidence support units for learning & improvement processes	Science advisors	Citizen-led & citizen-serving NGOs
Evaluation units in UN entities & multilateral development banks (MDBs)	Operations teams in MDBs and international financial institutions (IFIs)	Researchers	Groups working with applied forms of evidence

Step 2 | Make user centred **EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS** the norm

Living evidence syntheses (LESs) about accelerating progress towards the Sustainable development goals (SDGs)	Suites of LESs on additional SDG priorities (current and future)	Suites of LESs on other shared priorities

Step 1 | Build a user centred evidence synthesis **INFRASTRUCTURE** to serve everyone

1	2	3	4	5
Demand-side engagement Engaging with users to understand needs and respond to 'windows of opportunity'	**Data sharing & reusing** Enabling everyone to discover, use and add to diverse evidence synthesis data from around the world	**Safe & responsible use of AI** Using AI tools for discrete tasks as performance metrics allow	**Methods and process innovation** Making synthesis radically more timely, relevant and affordable	**Capacity Sharing** Building global capacity with leadership from the Global South