

Background & Objective

Aim: To design and test organisational innovations to improve access to primary health care for vulnerable populations.

Approach: Four research projects are *informed by and inform* six Local Innovation Partnerships (LIPs)(Fig 1).

Objective: To describe how participatory deliberative dialogues are used in the six LIPs to design and deliver their innovations.

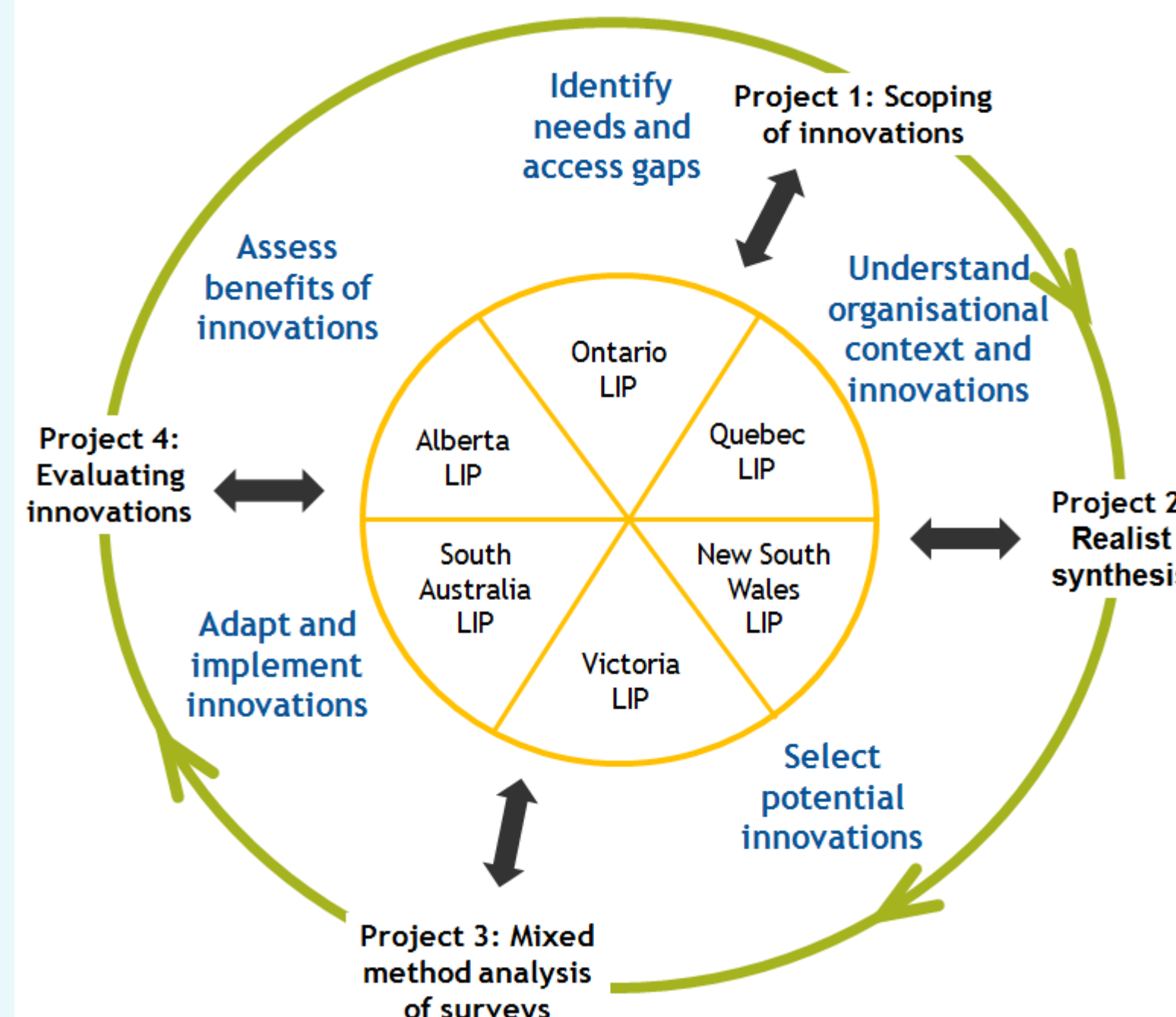


Figure 1. IMPACT Program Plan

Deliberative Dialogue...

...is a *participatory approach to collective decision-making* that can allow people from different backgrounds with different values to work together to achieve reasoned, informed collective decisions. Information related to deliberative dialogue was shared with the research team, through video conference, online meetings, and an implementation guide.

Our approach to participatory deliberative processes was informed by research and experience in the field (1,2) and required:

- identifying a collective decision and framing questions;
- identifying stakeholders to participate as peers in decision making;
- identifying and providing appropriate background materials;
- facilitating listening and learning during the deliberative process;
- facilitating learning about the completed deliberative process.

In this first year, our intention was to involve primary health care professionals, decision makers, community members, researchers and members of vulnerable populations.

Plan vs. Reality: Deliberation in Practice

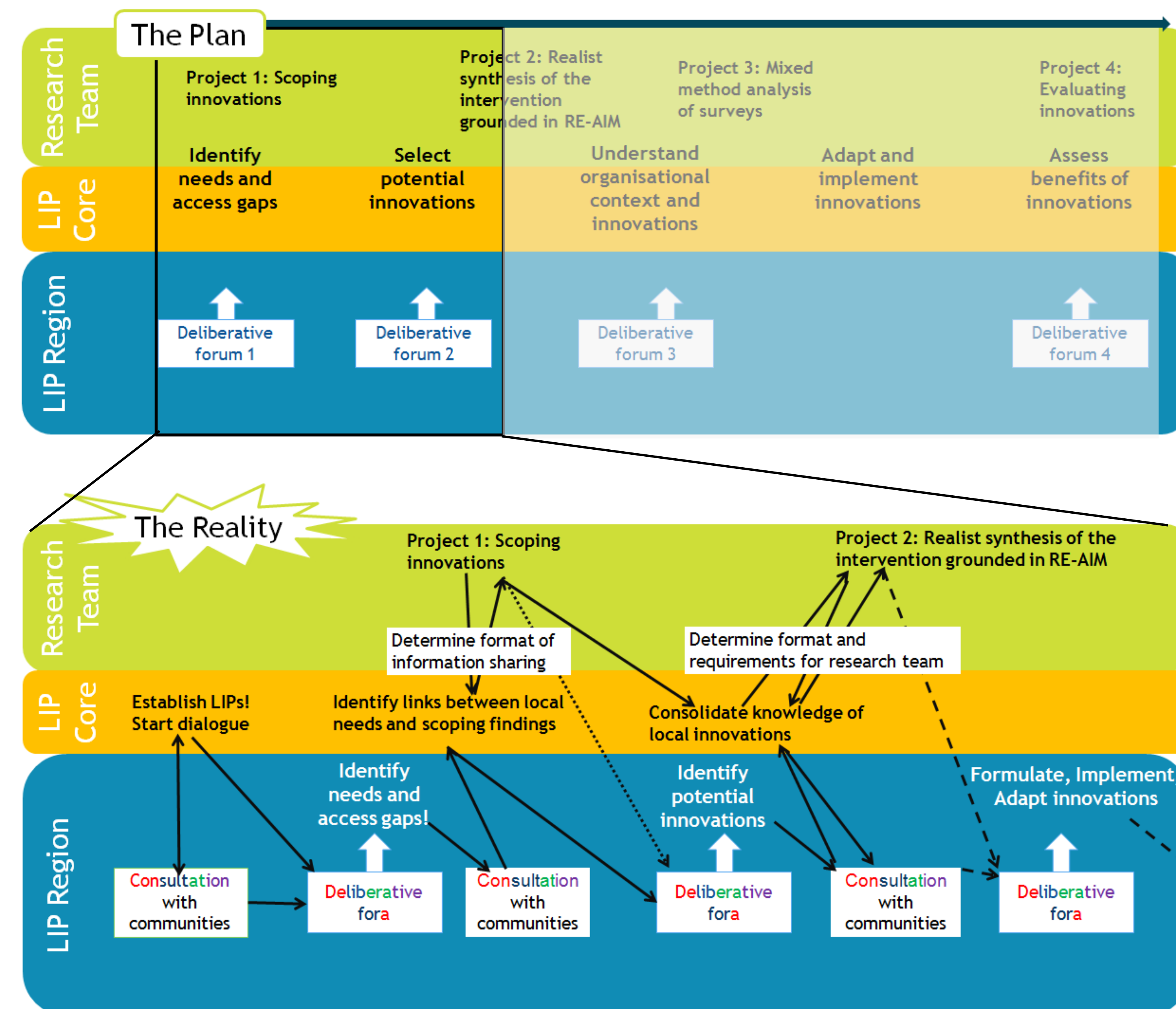


Figure 2. Plan vs. Reality During Phase 1

Deviations from the plan included:

- community consultations before and after deliberative forums;
- the variety of deliberative methods used;
- variations in the way project outputs informed the LIPs, due to tailoring of information according to stakeholder needs; and
- numerous feedback loops between researchers, LIPs and the project team.

Current status:

- All 6 LIPs will have had at least one Forum by the end of November 2014

Lessons from the First Year...

- *Adapting to context* – Adaptation has been far more extensive and nuanced than originally conceptualized.
- *Complexity = reality* – Much more time and effort was required for community consultations in order to develop LIPs and support deliberation.
- *Approach fit for purpose* - It has been important to distinguish between when different forms of deliberative dialogue are needed (for decisions) and when consultation is needed (for gathering and sharing information).
- *Training & experienced facilitation* – Experiential learning is critical to deliberative dialogue and requires high level facilitation. We needed increased and significant focus on building and/or contracting appropriate facilitation capacity.
- *Learning and improving* – "Deviations" from the plan were learning opportunities across the international team. To capitalise on adaptations to context and complexities, we have built in multiple communication modalities, coordinated reflection, and experiential learning strategies.

Significance & Next Steps

Is engagement in deliberation throughout the research program a potentially powerful mechanism for sustaining PHC transformation? We will continue to address this question through the IMPACT program of research.

Next steps:

- Strengthen early communication and information sharing between the research teams and knowledge users.
- Use deliberative processes at key decision-points throughout the program to ensure stakeholder engagement in the implementation and evaluation of innovations.
- Continue to record and reflect on use of deliberative processes to improve the way it is used throughout the project.