Rethinking Parks

Funding and support for organisations and partnerships to develop innovative ways of managing and financing the UK's public parks

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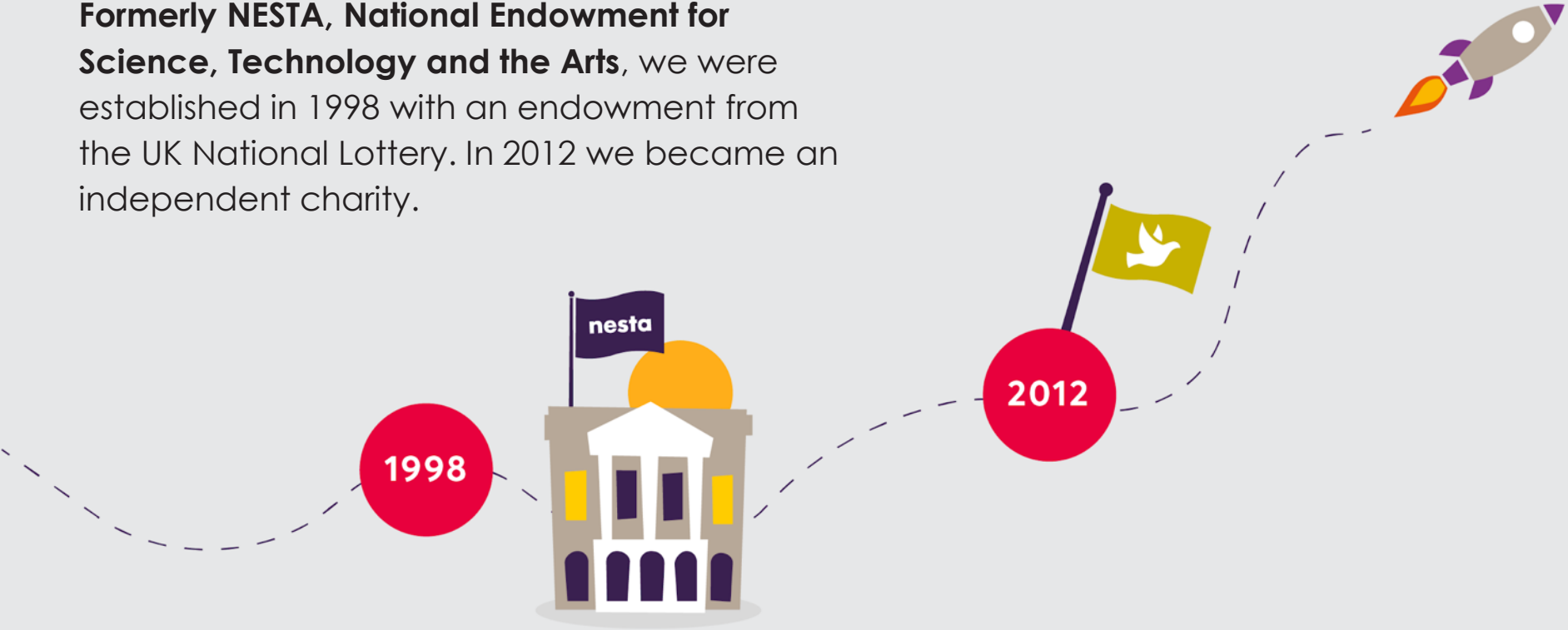
Rethinking parks

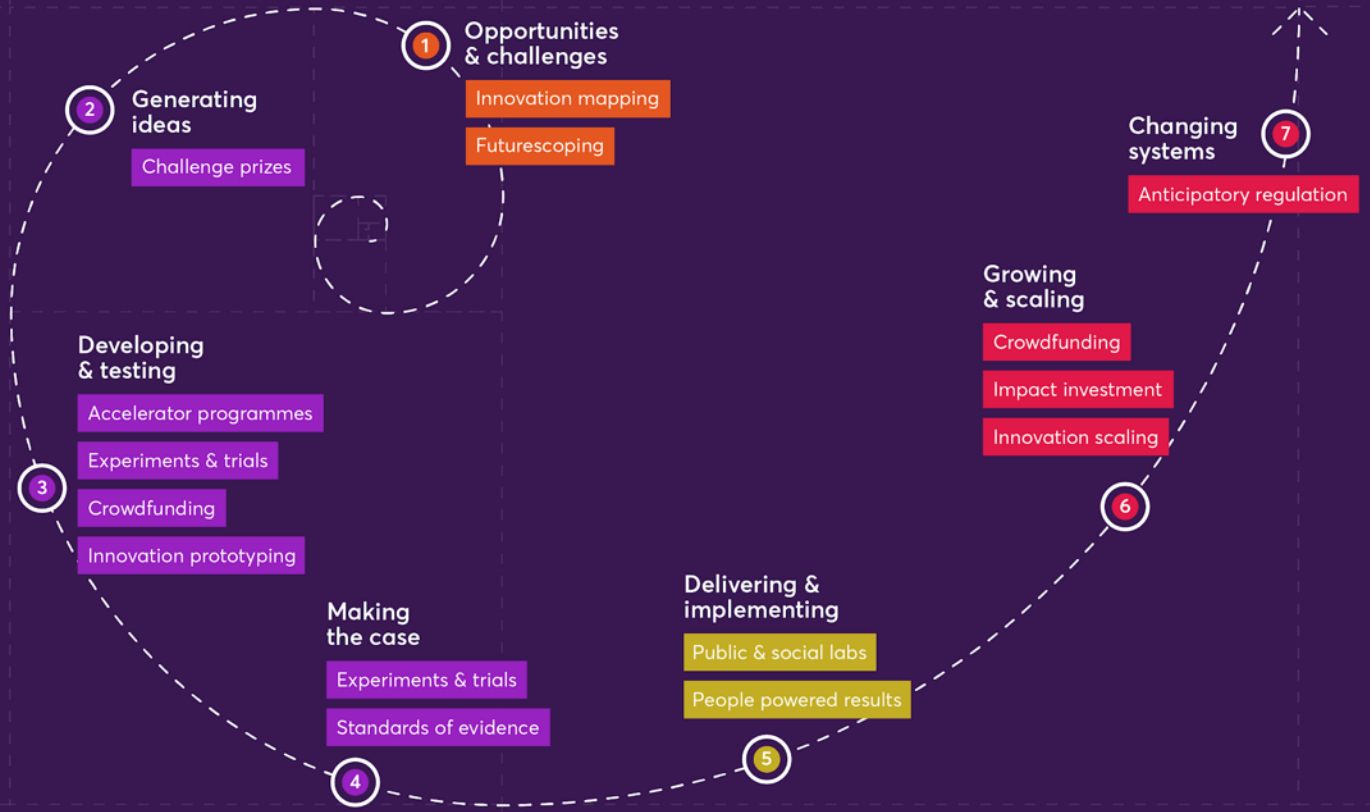
nesta HERITAGE FUND COMMUNITY FUND

Formerly NESTA, National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, we were established in 1998 with an endowment from the UK National Lottery. In 2012 we became an independent charity.



We work in areas where there are big challenges facing society, from the frontiers of personalised healthcare to stretched public services and a fast-changing jobs market.

Nesta investee *Oomph! Wellness* delivering an exercise class


1
Opportunities & challenges
Innovation mapping
Futurescoping
2
Generating ideas
Challenge prizes
3
Developing & testing
Accelerator programmes
Experiments & trials
Crowdfunding
Innovation prototyping
4
Making the case
Experiments & trials
Standards of evidence
5
Delivering & implementing
Public & social labs
People powered results
6
Growing & scaling
Crowdfunding
Impact investment
Innovation scaling
7
Changing systems
Anticipatory regulation

What is Rethinking Parks?

Funding and support for organisations and partnerships to develop innovative ways of managing and financing the UK's public parks.

Working together

- Funding from National Lottery Community Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Management, support, learning from Nesta
- Ideas, delivery, reflection from parks innovators
- Supporting ideas to be tested and adapted elsewhere

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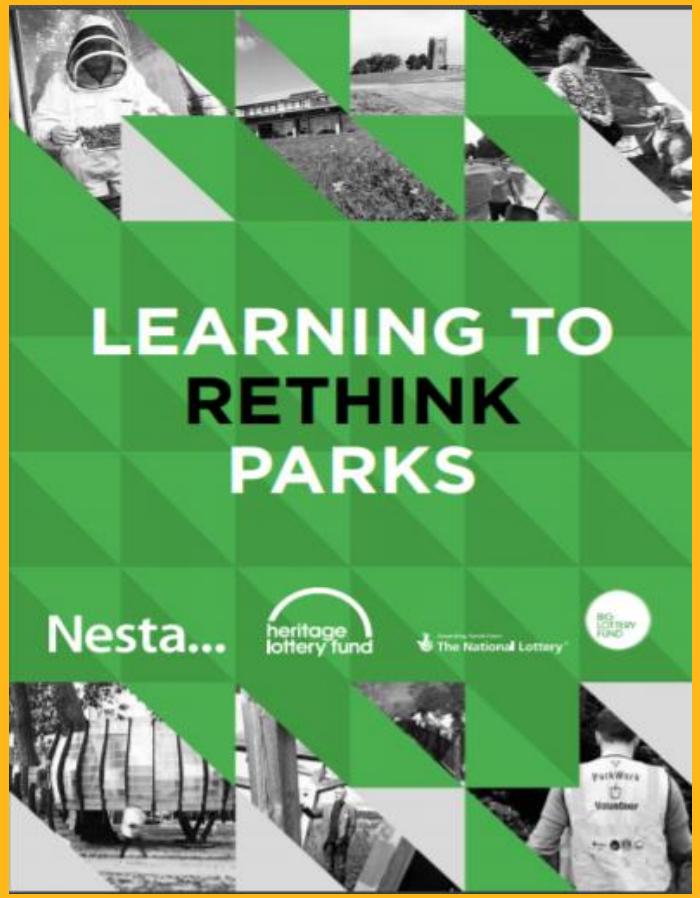


2014-2016

Building on past work

- 11 projects, c£100k funding per project and support
- A platform to spread ideas
- 7 learning guides

2014-2016

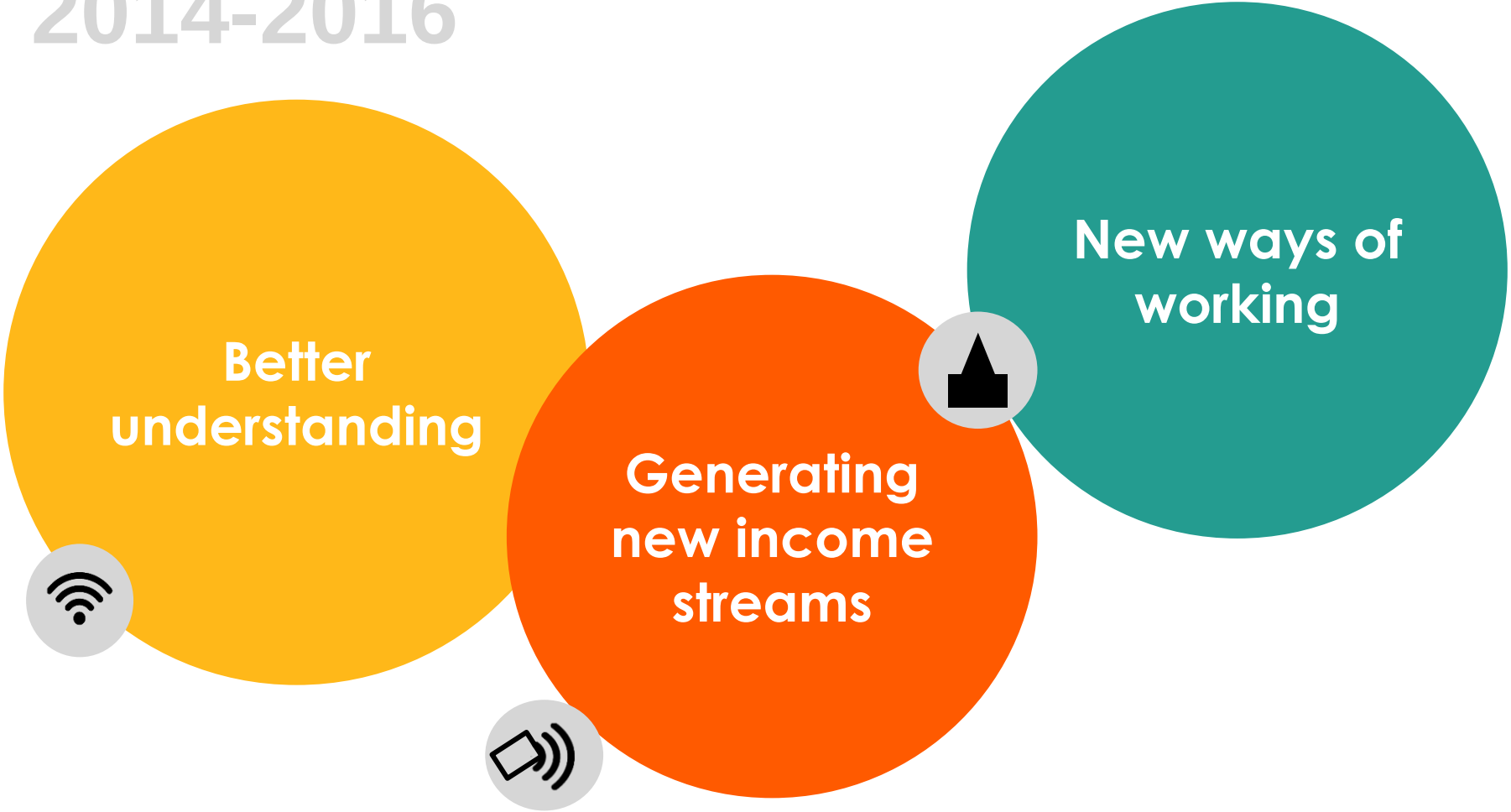
> We have been able to fully test our model and take advantage of the ongoing learning from our own project, and from other projects too. Being able to compare findings from around the country has been very beneficial.
>
> Rethinking Parks Participant

Space and resource to learn and develop

> Moving from a traditional 'closed' understanding of parks and greenspaces towards a more business orientated approach has been most useful. Understanding finances, forecasting, audiences/markets and products/services represent new skills that can be applied across a range of contexts.
>
> Rethinking Parks Participant

Opportunity to capture impact – savings; engagement; income

2014-2016


Better understanding
Generating new income streams
New ways of working

Core principles and assumptions

1. There is a pipeline of ideas and approaches that the parks sector would and could adopt if tested and funded. **A lack of evidence of 'what works' is currently a barrier to adoption of innovations**.

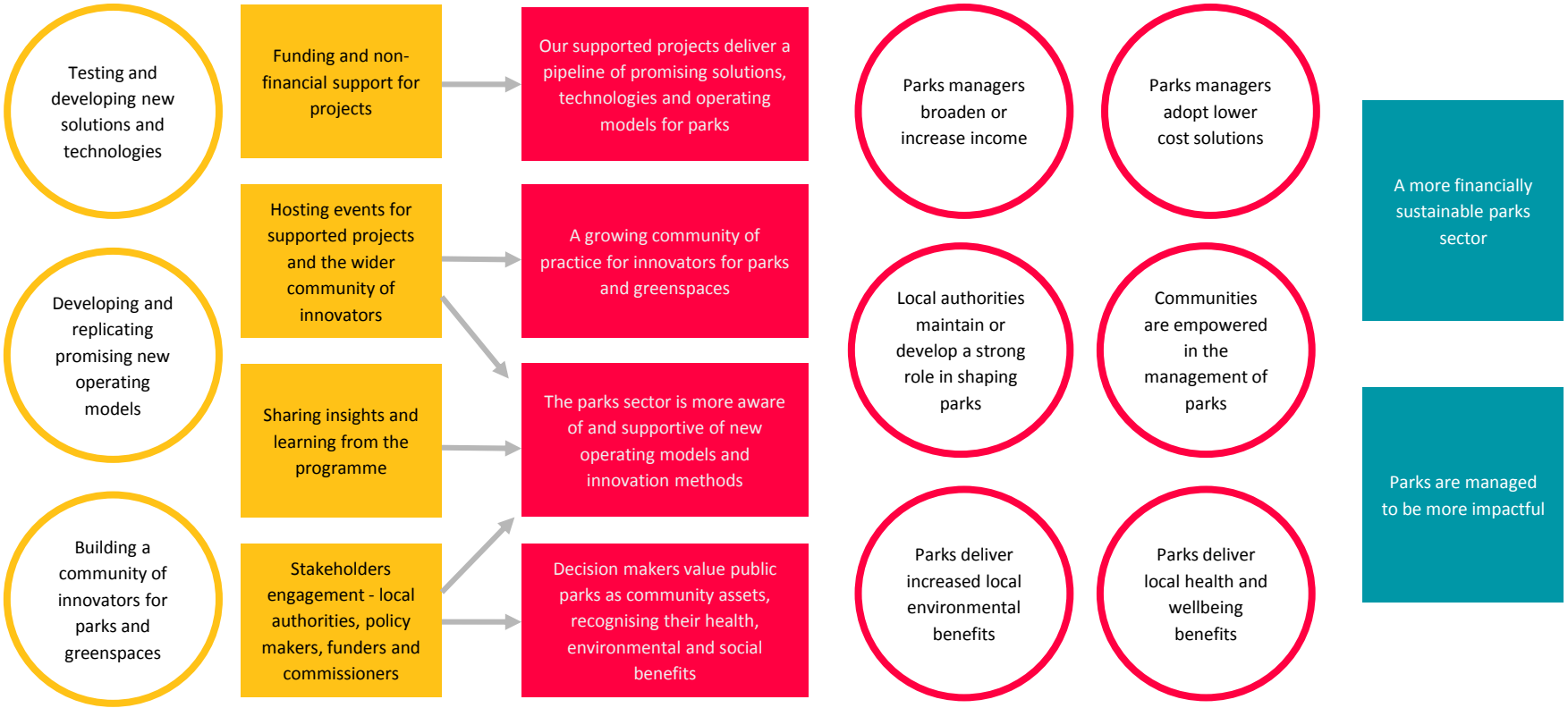
1. Innovation in the parks sector doesn't just need funding, but also capacity building support including to build a community of innovators and advocates for new approaches. **How can we connect these innovators?**

1. Local authorities cannot work alone in managing public parks, but Rethinking Parks isn't about scaling back their role. In fact, councils need to play a stronger strategic role in shaping green spaces. **How is the role of a parks manager evolving?**

1. There might be many partners involved in each local operating model for parks, but this should always include park users and the wider community being empowered and involved. **What is the right balance of control, power and responsibility between community and parks service?**

1. Parks are key community assets that can't be managed in isolation. There are particularly strong opportunities for greater collaboration with the culture, leisure and health sectors. **There is a continuing challenge in breaking down barriers and making a case for the value of parks.**

RETHINKING PARKS **THEORY OF CHANGE**



ACTIVITIES

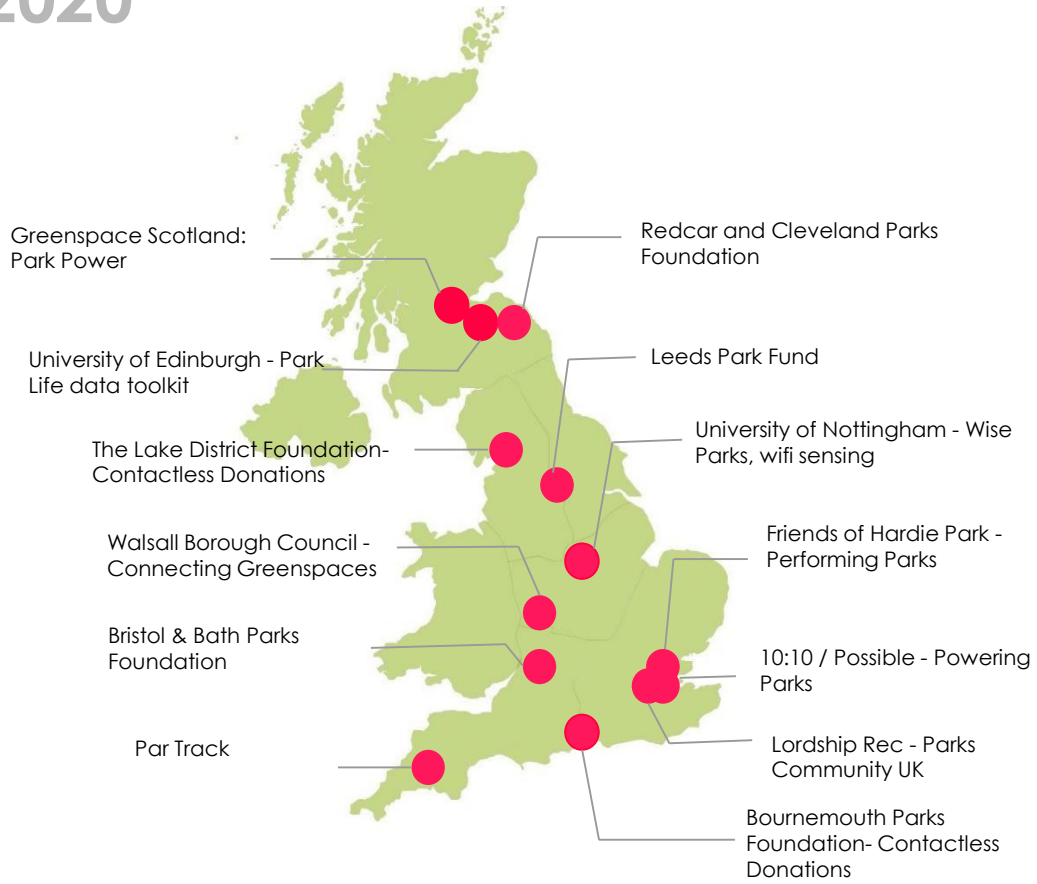
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Rethinking Parks 2018-2020

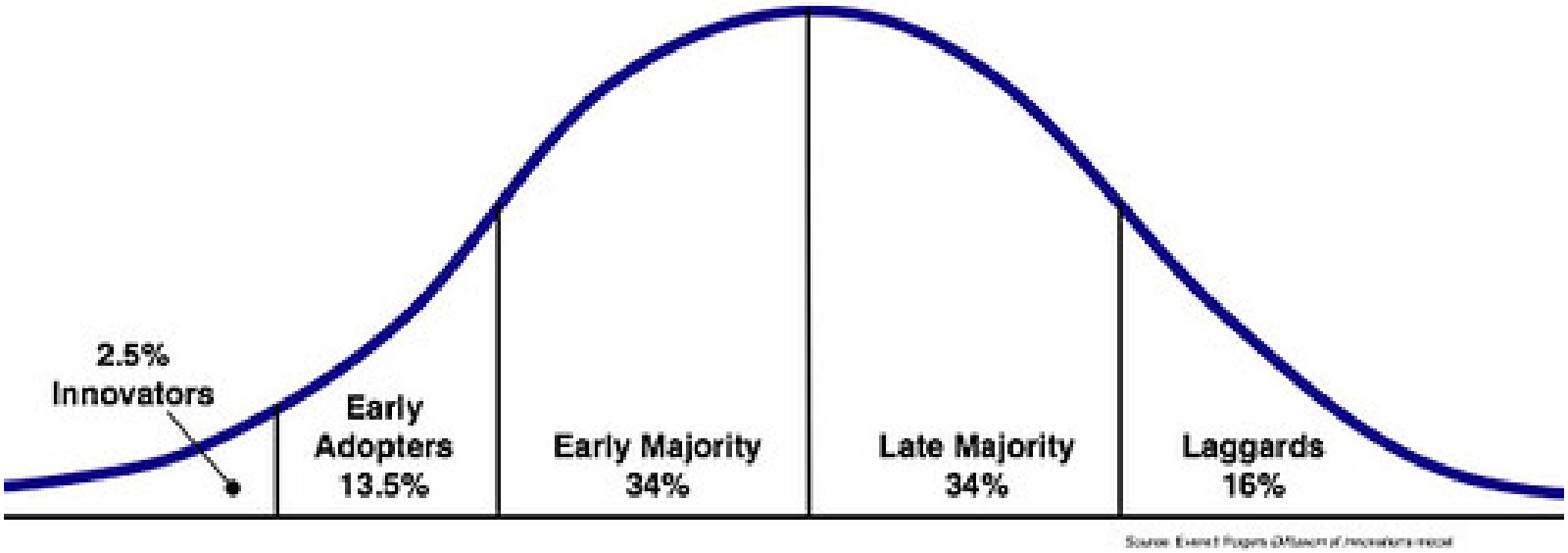
A £2 million fund to support park innovators create a more sustainable future for our parks.

Six clusters of projects

- Digital and data
- Contactless donations
- Parks foundations
- Community Empowerment
- Renewable energy
- Business partnerships



How innovations spread



Rogers Innovation Adoption Curve - Source - Wesley Fryer - Diffusion of Innovations

Clusters

Understanding parks usage through data sensing and analysis tools

Leveraging **renewable energy** technologies to generate new income streams and cost savings for public parks

Effective approaches to **business engagement** and employee volunteering in parks, shared with the parks sector as replicable models

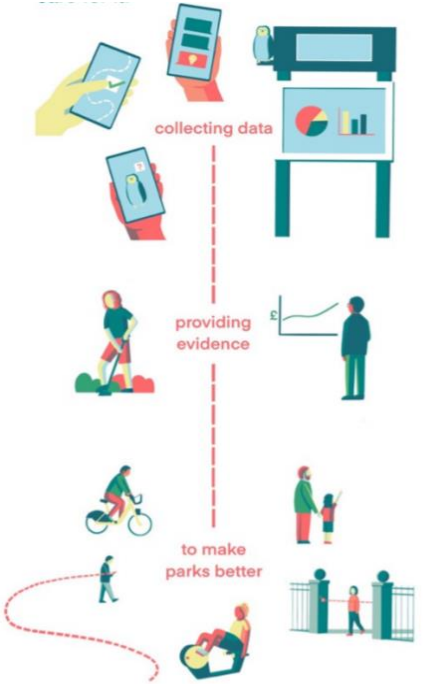
Trialling digital and contactless donations in parks

Creating **parks foundations**, working towards wider understanding and adoption across the UK

Supporting grassroots replication of community business, stewardship and **co-management models**

Prototyping - digital and data

University of Edinburgh - ParkLife Data Toolkit



Testing - contactless donations

Bournemouth Parks Foundation

The Lake District Foundation

Developing - effective community empowerment

Friends of Hardie Park

IT'S NOT THEIRS

IT'S OURS

A RADICAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP FROM THE FRIENDS OF HARDIE PARK

Friends of Lordship Rec

parkscommunityuk

helping embed community empowerment in green spaces

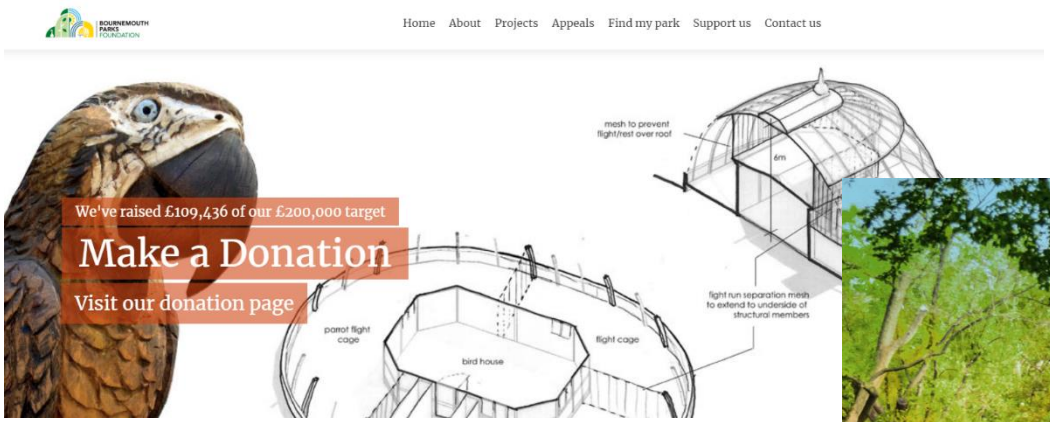
Scaling - Parks Foundations

Bournemouth

Leeds

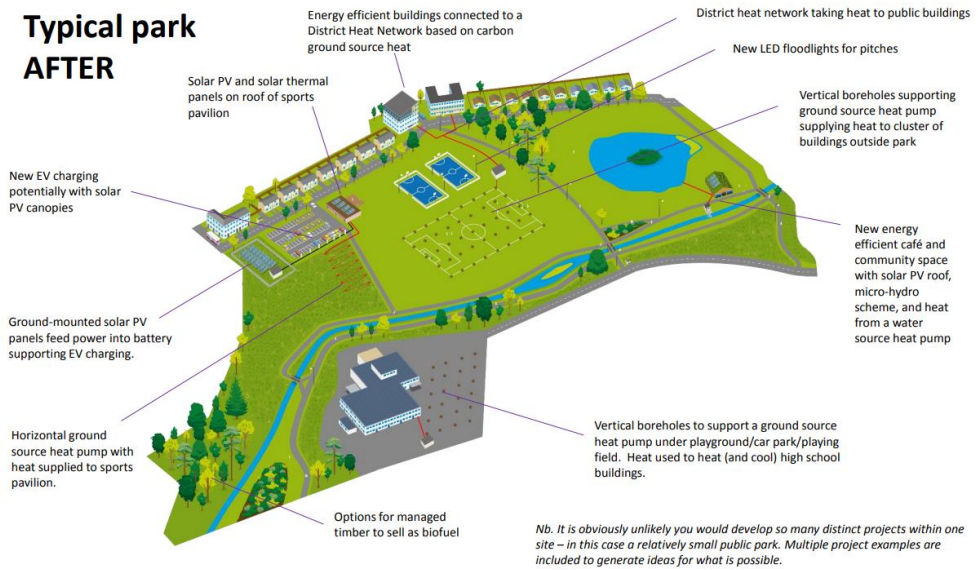
Bristol and Bath

Redcar and Cleveland



Making the case - Renewable energy in parks

Greenspace Scotland



Nb. It is obviously unlikely you would develop so many distinct projects within one site – in this case a relatively small public park. Multiple project examples are included to generate ideas for what is possible.

Possible (10:10)

Challenges

1. **A lack of evidence of 'what works' is currently a barrier to adoption of innovations.**

1. **How can we connect innovators in the sector?**

1. **How is the role of a parks manager evolving?**

1. **What is the right balance of control, power and responsibility between community and parks service?**

1. **There is a continuing challenge in breaking down barriers and making a case for the value of parks.**

Thank you

Questions? Email rethinking.parks@nesta.org.uk