Overview
The VHA Innovators Network (iNET) is one of the signature programs of the VHA Innovation Ecosystem. iNET seeks to empower employees to implement, disseminate, and sustain innovative programs to serve Veterans. The Network teaches and trains VA employees on innovation-related competencies, creates an innovation development pathway through the Spark-Seed-Spread (S-S-S) funding program, and supports the Diffusion of Excellence Initiative (the other signature program of the VHA Innovation Ecosystem which helps identify and disseminate best practices).

iNET also provides:
• Training to develop core competencies and toolkits;
• Training for Innovation Specialists; and
• Engagement and outreach to support innovation development, beginning with prototype development, through pilot initiative and finally deployment and implementation.

This expanding Network now includes 32 sites nationwide along with over 20 ‘finalist’ sites that engage in a subset of iNET activities. The INPOWR Partnered Evaluation is designed to provide rapid and frequent feedback to iNET partners by helping our partners understand:
• Who participates in the Innovators Network,
• Why they participate (e.g., expectations for impact at the site and project level), and
• What level of impact is attained through participation at a site- and project-level.

Specific aims include:
• Examine Innovators Network site characteristics and expectations for impact (site and project levels);
• Measure the impact of Innovators Network site participation, using mixed-methods; and
• Measure the impact of Innovators Network projects, including factors associated with success, sustainability and return on investment.

Methodology
INPOWR investigators employ both quantitative and qualitative methods—and contribute to defining the impact of the Innovators Network and resulting projects. Using a mixed-method model, investigators will assess the influence of Innovators Network projects through measurable success and implementation metrics. Concurrent qualitative efforts will deepen their understanding of impact at the site level. In addition, they will assess factors associated with iNET impact, including employee engagement, Innovation Specialist training, and return on investment (ROI) analysis.

Anticipated Impact
Knowledge gained from this evaluation will continue to inform and improve the ongoing implementation of iNET.

Operations Partner
VHA Innovators Network.