TOOLS TO FACILITATE CO-CREATION

"Tools to facilitate co-creation" is a set of cards for regional authorities and SMEs that combines the most effective methods to solve various problems in a creative way, focusing on the real needs of users.

With the help of this set of tools, regional authorities can develop new or improve existing policies and services, as well as implement process improvements.

This set of cards consists of five sections, each associated with a separate stage of design thinking.

Let's address the elephant in the room !

ATTITUDE IS KEY

DESIGN THINKING ATTITUDE

Dozens of design courses and extensive experience will not be enough to master the tools, the key is in the attitude.

The two most important aspects are the following:

BE CURIOUS
Question the obvious, ask yourself why, why, why? Dive in-depth in the context and challenge.

BE YOURSELF
Listen to others, do not judge, be yourself with people you meet. Trust your guts, but validate the intuition.

EMPATHIZE

BE OPEN AND OBJECTIVE

You need to be able to get close to people, to understand their needs and chain of thoughts. You can not rely on your assumptions and knowledge only, as we all see the world through your own lenses.

Do not comment on others' opinions, listen to their complaints, thus crystallize the needs of people, including those they do not even imagine or see themselves.

Design thinking will save you time and money, because you will have a better understanding of the needs and people. This will allow you to develop a better and more efficient solution, avoiding expensive adjustments often seen in public projects.

I WONDER WHY …

I WONDER WHY

AIM
Nurture curiosity and critical thinking by asking open-ended "I wonder why…:" questions. This stimulates deeper understanding, helps you find new insights and opportunities to address your challenge.

TASK
Individually generate as many "I wonder why …" questions as possible related to the challenge & its context. Question the obvious. Have an individual reflection on your process, followed by an open discussion with the team about your own reflections and questions.

RECOMMENDATION
Prepare a safe and open environment for the exercise, where participants will feel comfortable sharing their questions and engage in discussions.

Document the insights and recommendations that emerge from the exercise.

HOW MIGHT WE

CURRENT SITUATION & TRENDS

WHY IT IS IMPOIRTANT

RESEARCH NEEDS

STAKEHOLDERS

DESIRED IMPACT

PAIN POINTS

HOW TO EVALUATE SUCCESS

CONTEXT MAD

CONTEXT MAP

AIM
Get together as a team and align your understanding about the challenge and its related elements. It is a very first rough picture of the case with information on key aspects that will help you kickstart research and talk to your clients to better understand their needs and challenges.

TASK
Start by defining the challenge you would like to tackle in one sentence. Afterwards fill in the sections of the context map one by one after having a discussion within your team.

RECOMMENDATION
Be brief and specific at the same time. As this is the very first rough picture of the challenge, it does not need to contain tons of information. Have a thorough discussion about the research needs - all the unknowns that will help you identify the concrete directions for further research, for example, client interviews, to be carried out.

CLIENT PROFILE

NAME

AGE

OCCUPATION

SHORT LIFE STORY

GOALS & MOTIVATION

PAIN PONITS

CLIENT PROFILE

AIM
To understand the habits, problems, needs and challenges of the clients, by immersing in their life and current situation, with the aim of creating a real, but at the same time imaginary and personalized profile of the client.

TASK
In order to try out client profile creation, we recommend that you create at least three, preferably different types of client profiles. Take a flipchart paper and answer the questions about the client on the card. Try to "step in the shoes" of the clients and be as specific as possible.

RECOMMENDATION
Using this method, you will create realistic images of your clients or gather your own assumptions about real clients. The next task is to meet these people in real life - interviews, observations and prototype tests. Are your previous assumptions about the clients different from your experience with them in reality? This method helps to individualize your clients (specific name, age, profession, etc.), rather than perceive them in particular mass categories, such as women, people in cities, aged 20 to 60 years, etc.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

NAME, SURNAME

SCENARIO OVERVIEW

	BEFORE ANYTHING	FIRST CONTACT	OTHER STEPS	AFTER IT IS DONE
ACTIVITIES GOALS				
TOUCHPOINTS MESSAGE				
FEELINGS				
OPPORTUNITIES PROBLEMS				

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

AIM
The customer journey tool aims to provide you with insights into the customers' experiences, allowing you to better understand and optimize each touchpoint along the journey, leverage opportunities & address problems.

TASK
Start by defining who is the user, and what is the scenario they go through, from applying for grant to being in hospital. Define the steps of the scenario, take a flipchart paper or more, and re-create the template. Fill the template, in cronological order, some boxes may remain blank upon completion.

RECOMMENDATION
Focus on one specific user for activities, touchpoints & feelings. When it comes to opportunities and problems do not limit yoursef and write them taking into consideration all different potential customers. Upon completing the map, you may use and adapt the "idea sorting" template to classify the opportunities and problems.

DEFINE

FOCUS

At this stage of the design process you are going to Identify some points of interest, focus and get as much information as possible. You will make sense of all the information gathered at the Empathy phase, notice patterns and analyze the challenge to get more specific. Out of many problems the aim is to find the real underlying problem to solve or address one concrete problem.

Your observations could create ideas for several possible options. Identify some points of interest and focus and get as much information as possible. In the course of the process, focus your time and energy towards what you believe are the most promising option.

If necessary, you can change the definition of your problem as the more information you gain the more precise it becomes. It is totally normal - after having gone deeper in the design process. You may as well want to take a step back and seek more information.

CONSEQUENCE

CONSEQUENCE

CONSEQUENCE

CURRENT PROBLEM

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

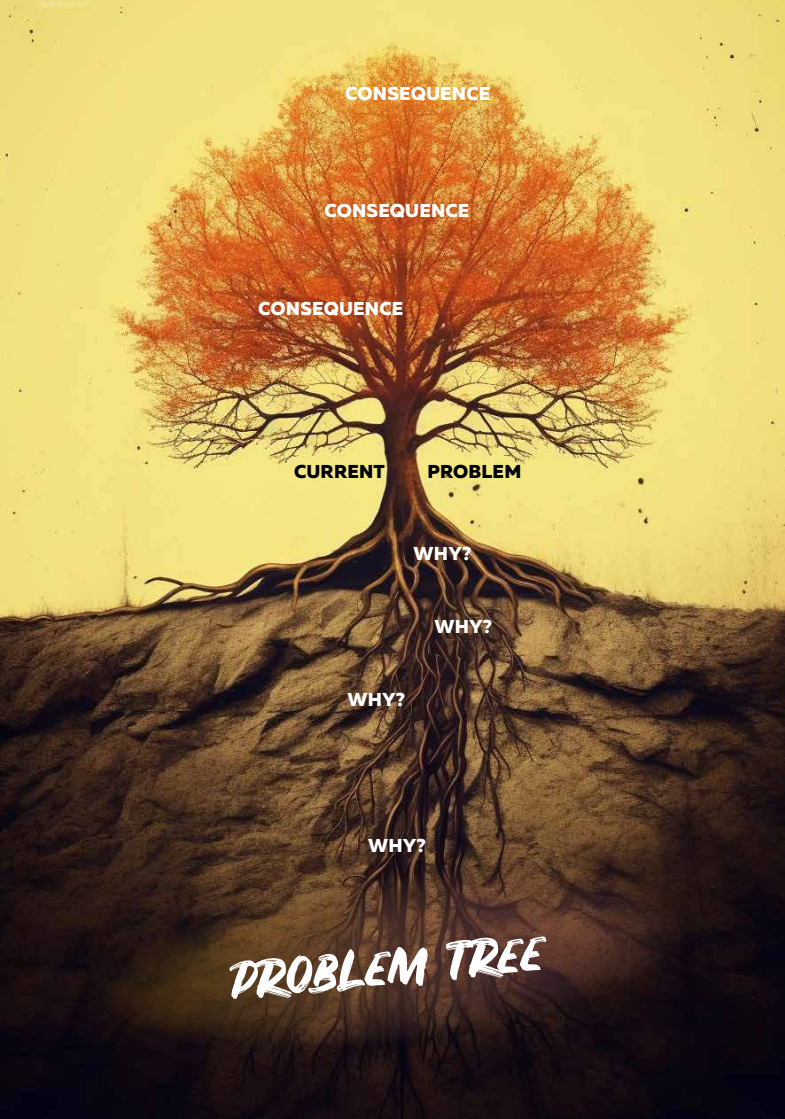PROBLEM TREE

PROBLEM TREE

AIM
To get an understanding of the causes and effects of the current challenge or problem and to discover, as a result of the analysis, whether the initially raised problem is the real problem that needs to be solved, or whether the real cause lies somewhere else.

TASK
Draw a tree on a large sheet of paper, in the trunk of the tree, write the current problem or challenge that you would like to address. In the roots of the tree, analyze the causes of the problem. Ask the question "Why?" and dig deeper. In the branches of the tree, write the consequences of this problem. Have you got a deeper insight into the current problem situation? Is the problem that you initially raised still the same? Maybe you have discovered something more specific in the roots, which must be solved first?

RECOMMENDATION
Practice this method at any time, analyzing current challenges. Often, we seemingly want to solve big and complex challenges without knowing where to start, we are entangled in our thoughts and assumptions. However, when we dig deeper, we can discover the true causes of this challenge, thus addressing topical issues more productively, often starting with smaller things to solve.

HANAKO

needs **COMPANY**

because **ELEPHANTS ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS AND CAN NOT BE KEPT ALONE!**

Hanako, was a female Asian elephant who lived in captivity at in Tokyo.
She gained attention due to her solitary captivity, sparking discussions about animal welfare.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

PROBLEM DEFINITION

AIM
Focus your attention and agree with colleagues on the current issue that needs to be addressed.

TASK
As a result of the analysis of the problem tree or the research carried out, agree on the seemingly real identified problem which you should start addressing, and define it in one short and simple sentence: "User.... needs..... because/to...". Pin this sentence to the wall, as it will be the basis for further work in finding a solution to the problem that has been discovered. Note that the definition of the problem in the work process may change. It is just normal that by taking further steps, as well as getting feedback and opinions from people, we will understand that we have not hit the right direction, and the definition of the problem needs to be changed.

RECOMMENDATION
The definition of the problem must be short, concise and simple, including keywords about the identified problem. The problem formulated in this way will help to focus the team's attention on the most important and be united in the understanding of the direction to take looking for a solution.

IDEATION

BE OPTIMISTIC

Do not try to limit yourself and team members, create and consider all sorts of crazy ideas. You will sort them out later. At this point, you are putting your insights and learnings in a tangible form, the solution will come later. It is about quantity before quality. Do not judge yourself, be bold and encourage others to be bold. Crazy ideas often lead to the best solutions.

DRAWSTORMING

DRAWSTORMING

AIM
By letting your creativity flow, create as many ideas as possible for the current problem or challenge.

TASK
Quantity, not quality, is important in this task. No words, names and numbers are allowed. Ideas have to be created in drawing. How to do this? If you have 5 people in your team, each person takes 5 A4 sheets and does this task individually. One of the team members can take time and set rules, for example, draw 1 idea to solve the problem in 1 minute. In 5 minutes as a team you will have created 25 ideas. When you have finished drawing ideas, present and explain them to your team members. Do not defend your ideas, but listen to the opinion of the team members. Make a vote on the best ideas.

RECOMMENDATION
You can vary with the ways to perform this task, as well as with the number of ideas, but remember: the more, the better. No matter how good or not you are at drawing, the most important thing is how you express your ideas.

WHAT IF ...

WHAT IF ...

AIM
By harnessing the creative power of your mind, the aim is to generate a variety of ideas within a short period of time to solve the problem.

TASK
This is another method to unleash your creativity and generate ideas to solve the problem. Take sticky notes and create ideas by answering the following questions:
If you were the user, what would be your solution?
What if you had an unlimited budget?
What if the solution was made by robots?
What if you had only 24 hours to create a solution?
What if you had 6 months to develop a solution?
What if we were 10 years in the future?
What if you had no budget at all?
What if you were living in the United States?
What if only 10 people were the users? What if you could do anything?

RECOMMENDATION
Do not limit yourself, write down even the most unrealistic and crazy ideas down. Feel free to come up with your own questions. Remember: this task is also about the quantity of ideas, not the quality. You can sort and select ideas at the next stage.

IDEA SORTING

HIGH IMPACT

HARD TO IMPLEMENT

EASY TO IMPLEMENT

LOW IMPACT

IDEA SORTING

AIM
To make a choice about which idea will be further developed in a form of a prototype.

TASK
Collect all the ideas created in the previous stage by writing them down in the form of keywords on the sticky notes.
1 idea = 1 sticky note.
Group the sticky notes on the axes, placing them in the most appropriate place, taking into account the following criteria: "easy to implement", "hard to implement", "low impact", "high impact". Choose one idea that you will continue to develop further. As a team, you can make a vote to choose the seemingly best idea.

RECOMMENDATION
The ideas created are our assumptions about how to solve the identified problem in the best possible way. Do not be afraid to share your ideas and do not worry that someone could steal your idea. Without further steps in the development of the idea, the ideas remain in our thoughts and on paper. Try not to get too far in developing your idea, as in the further stage you need to test the prototype of the idea and get feedback from clients and other stakeholders, as your idea and its elements are likely to change until it is implemented in reality.

PROTOTYPING

PROTOTYPING

STAY FOCUSED

You will be making many prototypes, starting from low resolution to high resolution, improving on your solution at each step. The main goal of prototyping is to get different insights, opinions and feedback on your idea. You can prototype part of the solution or all of it depending on what feedback you are seeking. Do not look for applause and appreciation, but critical comments and suggestions on how to improve your ideas.

RAPID PROTOTYPING

RAPID PROTOTYPING

AIM
Quickly and cost-effectively test and iterate on design ideas in the early stages. It helps gather feedback, identify flaws, and refine solutions before extensive investment. It is also a good tool to engage with potential users receiving honest feedback.

TASK
Using simple materials, focusing on core functionality, create a prototype or representation of your idea or part of it.

Gather feedback, and iterate on your prototype based on feedback received.

RECOMMENDATION
When collecting feedback from users, bring simple material to prototype and encourage them to modify it to be better. The less impressive the prototype, the better !

FAKE BROCHURE

FAKE BROCHURE

AIM
To make a representation of your idea in the form of a brochure for users to get a better understanding about it.

TASK
Fold the paper in 3 parts (or any other form that better suits your idea). Think of information design – how will you structure necessary details about your idea? Which are the most important aspects to test? Write down a title and a description of the idea with benefits for users. What is your call for action? Hand it out to users. What is their first reaction?

RECOMMENDATION
You can also create a simple digital brochure using such free tools as Canva which provides you with pre-made templates that can be adjusted for your own needs.

DIGITAL IMITATION

DIGITAL IMITATION

AIM
Create a real digital prototype quickly and without financial investment, check it out and get feedback from users.

TASK
Decide what you want to prototype – whether it's the idea as a whole or a specific aspect of the project. Sketch on the paper the experience you want the user to test/check. Do not invest money in it, use existing free tools to create it, such as Google slides, Canva or Figma, where you can set a specific screen size and create buttons that will lead to a specific slide(screen). Choose wisely what images and other elements you will add and make it feel real. You can test this prototype with your users and gain valuable insights to further improve and develop.

RECOMMENDATION
This method can be used many times throughout a project. In the early stage you can create paper drawings as prototypes to engage your users and have a conversation, and then gradually increase the resolution of the prototype until the final project.

TESTING

BE READY FOR AN ADVENTURE

Launch your project in the wild and find new ways to improve it. If you are not used to testing prototypes of your ideas, this process may worry you, especially when the design solution does not work as intended and you need to step back to work on the improved version. Testing ensures that you will rock it !

TRY IT YOURSELF

AIM
Before giving it to others, try your prototype yourself at first. Be the user of your own solution. By immersing in the user's experience you will be able to spot flaws and rework the prototype for real user testing.

TASK
Make a decision about what you want to test – what assumptions to check. Put away everything that may distract you (PC, phone, etc.). Use the prototype in a way it is intended to be used. Record your impressions and findings - what works well, what needs to be improved? At the end of the test, make a decision about what are the most important changes needed. What else could be improved?

RECOMMENDATION
Self-testing is a quick way to evaluate prototypes and make adjustments before running tests with real users.

TRY IT YOURSELF

TEST WITH USERS

TEST WITH USERS

AIM
Check whether your assumptions about the problem or idea are appropriate to how it is perceived or utilized by users.

TASK
Decide what you want to test – what assumptions you would like to check. Draw up a test plan (when, where, how, responsibilities). Engage colleagues, talk to people, do not live with ideas only in your office. Get back to client profiles you created and contact real people that correspond to these profiles. How would they interact with your prototype or respond to different steps? Record feelings and discoveries throughout the process. If you are testing your prototype in a focus group you can structure the feedback by using 3 color balls: "positive", "constructive" and "user" feedback. Simply throw the balls around in the room and invite people to speak out. Document the findings.

RECOMMENDATION
Testing can be carried out at any stage of the design process – to get an understanding of whether the problem you have identified is the real one for users, as well as to test the prototype and get feedback on whether your solution in this form is in line with the needs and desires of users to get ideas for improvements, as well as at any other stage. It is also recommended to involve users in co-creating the solution together with them, not for them.

WHATEVER
YOU DO
...
ENGAGE WITH OTHERS!

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This set of tools is is developed for the EU Interreg Europe InnoCOM project, ID: 01C0183, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

It is designed to improve the implementation of regional policies, thus strengthening SME competitiveness. It was developed by the University of Latvia.

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PUBLIC DOMAIN