Skills, attitudes and behaviours that fuel public innovation
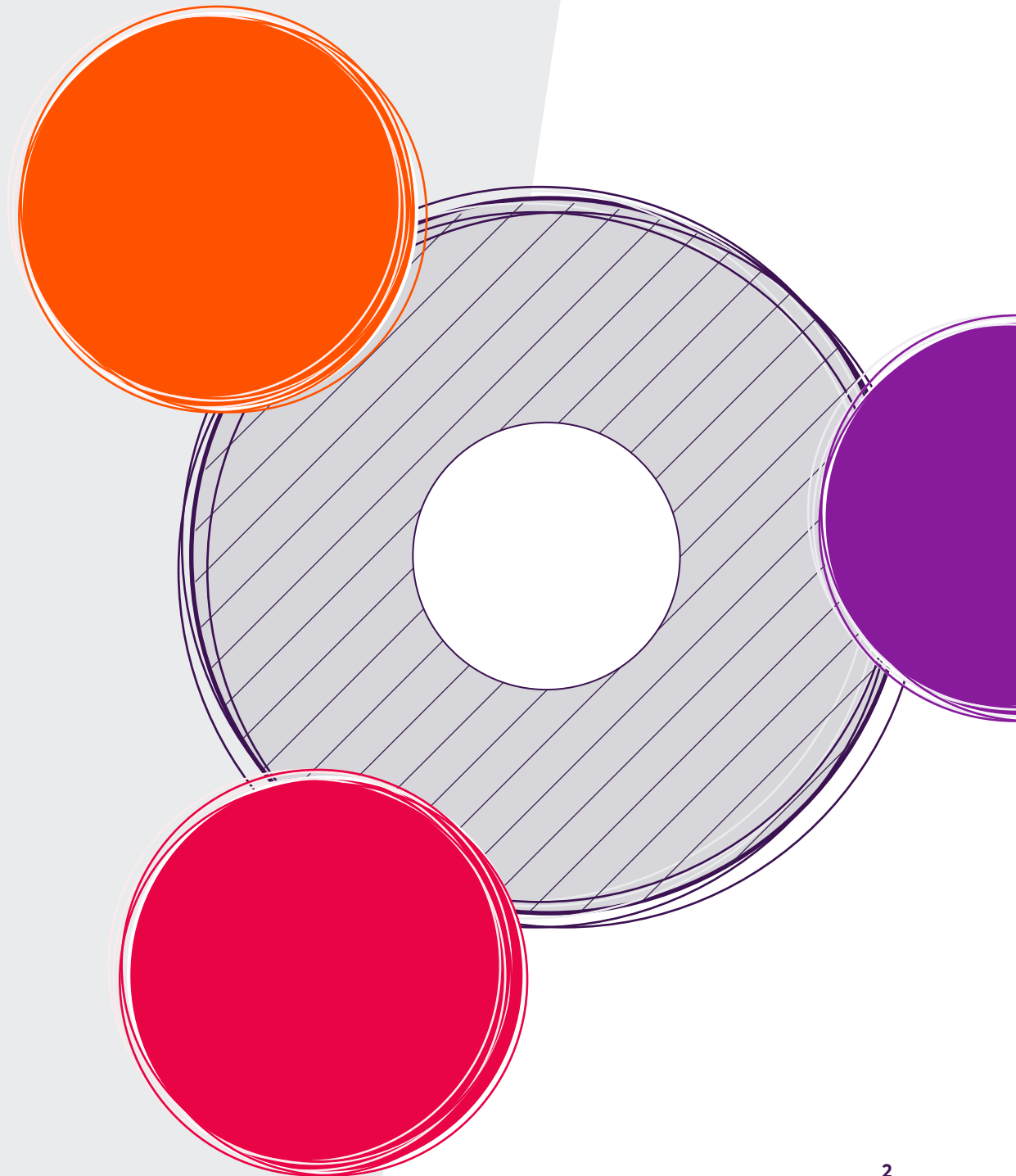
Team activities

nesta

Activities

Different ways to use the Competency Framework

Both the competency framework and app are tools for reflection. There isn't a single way to use them, but they work best when a team comes together to reflect on them. This is because empowered and well-balanced teams are where change happens. You can be working in the same office, or spread across a region, it doesn't matter.

Below are some group exercises you can do together with your team to help start a conversation. This might be around areas for development, or how best to set up a new project team. Remember, this tool isn't designed to evaluate you but to empower you.

Mapping a team's innovation competencies

Aim:

To map out the skills and attitudes of everyone in a team and create a "heat map" of the whole team's strengths. This activity is helpful when starting with a new team, at the beginning of a new project or with an existing team. Use it to discuss whether the skills and attitudes you need are present and to prompt reflection on the strengths of your team..

4-6 people

45-60 minutes

1 x A1 print of the Competency Framework (or largest size possible)

1 x A1 print of the Roles worksheet (or largest size possible)

2 sets of the "skills cards" per team

Coloured sticky dots, pens (markers/felt tips)

REMEMBER!

The map focuses on developing strong teams rather than heroic individuals.

To date, we've not met (or heard of) anyone who has all the skills and attitudes we've outlined here, so please don't see this as a checklist. The framework presents a spread of skills and attitudes that need to be present within the wider team. The challenge is to combine these skills and attitudes in ways that make the team greater than its individual members.

This isn't an assessment! You are not being scored against this, nor are you being judged against others. It's about highlighting our strengths and better organising to make the most of them. Remember; this is about teams and getting the best from them.

STEP 1
COMPLETE THE APP

15 minutes

The first step is for each person in the team to complete the app and identify what they feel their strengths are. You can all do this ahead of the session, or spend 10 minutes or so at the beginning of the session completing individually.

The information at the beginning of the app should tell people everything they need to know about what the app is about.

STEP 2
INTRODUCTION

5 minutes

Have the framework printed out and attached to a wall, visible to all team members. Explain that in the session you'll be using the competency framework and app results to reflect on and have a discussion about your team skills.

IDENTIFYING SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

20 minutes

Have each team member choose a colour and take eight sticky dots. Ideally, everyone should have different coloured dots.

- **Map the skills -** Using five of the same coloured sticky dots, ask each team member to mark on the framework their top five skills from their results, placing the dot just above their chosen skill. Ask participants to add a legend to the sheet, so it's clear which dots belong to whom.

- **Discuss core skills as a team -** If they are familiar with each other, get people to discuss with their colleagues their top five skill choices. Do they recognise these skills in their colleagues? Are there skills they have but don't use at work?

- **Map the attitudes -** Repeat the process with the three coloured sticky dots but this time exploring the team's three core attitudes. Prompt the conversation by asking:

IDENTIFYING 'SUPERPOWERS'

10 minutes

Everyone will need a marker or felt-tip pen for this stage.

Identify what people see as their greatest strength.

- **Everyone should now have eight dots on the framework**. Five skills and three attitudes. Ask people to pick what they consider to be their strongest skill and their strongest attitude; their 'superpowers'. Give them a few moments to consider this in silence, and then ask them to highlight or circle their top attitude and skill on the framework using a marker.

- **Discussing superpowers** - If they are familiar with each other, get people to discuss with their colleagues their 'superpowers'. Do they recognise these skills in their colleagues? Are there any common 'superpowers'? What might this mean for your team?

DISCUSSING THE HEAT MAP

🕑 **5-10 minutes**

Stand in a circle and ensure everyone gets a chance to share their thoughts.

Reflect on what the team has mapped.

- What do they see?
- What do they consider the strengths of the team? (i.e. where are most of the dots)
- Are there any gaps? Are these a bad thing? (Often the skills and attitudes might be present but not highlighted as a strength).
- How might a team plug any gaps? By recruiting, training, or perhaps collaborating with external experts?
- Are there skills people feel they possess but don't have the opportunity to apply in their role? Why is this, and what might be done to change it?

REFLECTING ON THE ROLES

🕑 **15 minutes**

Now move onto the roles. Stick the roles worksheet up and give each person another three sticky dots of the same colour they've been using. Ask them to then stick a dot on the roles that came up in their results.

You'll now have a map of the roles across the team. Prompt a discussion, asking:

- What do you see?
- How are the roles spread across the team? What does this say about the team's strengths?
- Are there any roles that are overpopulated? What does this mean for the breakdown of tasks and activities in your team?
- Are there any gaps? What might this mean for the team?
- Are there roles that people feel they could/would like to play but aren't able to currently? Why is this (i.e. skills, permission, confidence, time)? What could be done to address this?
- Looking at any role gaps, do these contain skills that team members have? Or are they skills that need to be brought in or developed?

Wrap up the activity - Any final reflections or thoughts? Would they consider using this at the start of a project with their colleagues? Or do they see other opportunities? What needs to be done to get the most from the team's strengths?

Additional group activities

A. IN-DEPTH TEAM DISCUSSION

For teams that know each other well, you could add a more specific discussion around each other's strengths and blind spots. Use the questions below to guide the conversation.

• Are there any obvious gaps that your team has (remember: not all gaps are bad, discuss what the impact of this gap may be).

• How do you want to address the gaps?

• Is this type of work covered by an existing team you work with?

• Or would it make sense to hire somebody who has those missing skills or attitudes?

• Or is there potential to develop those skills in the team, how and who might want to develop them?

B. ICEBREAKER

The framework can be a helpful way for people from different institutions, departments or teams to get to know each other in an interactive and thoughtful way. It allows people to look past hierarchy, structure and technical skills to create a more level playing field, and demonstrates that everyone contributes.

• Follow the 'Mapping your team's skills and attitudes' exercise until step 6.

• At step 6, have a discussion around the focus of your particular session/event and how the core skills may relate to this.

C. PROJECT EVALUATION

When projects end we don't always take the time to stop and reflect on their successes and failures. The framework can be used to identify why things did or didn't go well in order to learn from them.

• Take a current or recently completed project. Map out all the highs and lows to this date.

• Follow the 'Mapping your team's skills and attitudes' exercise until step 5.

• At step 5, open a discussion around where people have observed these skills in action on that specific project. What was happening during the 'high points'? What was potentially missing during the 'low points'?

• Could a certain skill have played a positive role during one of the low points? What could be done (in terms of skills or attitudes) to avoid this 'low point' happening again?

Developing learning goals

Aim:

To identify the change we want to see in our behaviour that could positively impact our projects and organisation. This activity focuses on you as an individual, exploring how you can start to activate those less obvious, enabling ways of working in your day to day work.

1 person

60+ minutes

1 x A3 print of the Competency Framework

Skills descriptions and behaviours (this guide)

'Developing learning goals' worksheet

20-30 minutes

In order to make the most of this activity, it's vital you set some time aside to reflect on your current behaviours and established ways of working.

Behaviours and established ways of working
These are the observable actions you take when tackling a challenge or carrying out a project. They're your default setting, your initial response to a situation, your first notion of a suitable option. **It may be difficult to identify these behaviours initially.**

One starting point could be to map out your innovation competencies (page 59), where you can pinpoint your strengths and gaps (regarding attitudes and skills), and reflect on how this skill or attitude (or lack of) is affecting your behaviour. To support this reflection, read through the behaviour descriptions in this guide - is there anything you recognise in yourself? Think about which you feel are a priority to address.

COMPLETE WORKSHEET

30-40 minutes

To capture your reflections from step 1, we have created a 'Developing learning goals' worksheet (see next page). The sheet is made up of three columns:

- **Column 1 -** Asks you to list the five behaviours you want to do less. To complete this, a good starting point is to use one of the 'common or comfort zone' behaviours listed in the description of whatever skill gap you identified.
- **Column 2 -** Asks you to list the five behaviours you want to do more. To complete this section, it can be useful to consider what the 'enabling behaviours' might be in relation to your answer for column 1.
- **Column 3 -** Asks you to describe the ways in which you will make this transformation from an existing, established behaviour to a new one. This could be centred around learning (e.g. "I need to read more content specific material, take a course, engage with a subject matter expert"), or around rehearsing (e.g. "I need to try out a new behaviour, attitude or skill in practice and learn what works and what doesn't") or changing how you approach a situation.

PRIORITISE

15 minutes

Changing established behaviours takes time, so trying to do five at once may be overly ambitious. Using your completed sheet, select the one behaviour to focus on initially. You can prioritise this choice by asking yourself the following questions:

- **Which established behaviour do I feel currently has the greatest negative impact on my work?**
- **Which new behaviour do I feel could have the greatest positive impact on my work?**
- **What activity from column 3 do I feel I could do in the next week or so?**
- **What is my gut telling me to do?**

Once selected, write out a brief action plan of when, where and how you'll do this new behaviour. Before and during the 'activation' of your new behaviour, try to be mindful of:

- **How you felt**
- **What the outcome was**
- **And how others responded**

BEYOND THE ACTIVITY

Keep your worksheet to remind you of the behaviour you want to change, and to reflect on how far you've come. Try keeping it somewhere you'll see it often. Update it when necessary.

DEVELOPING LEARNING GOALS

Write down the five behaviours that you believe you should do less of, and those you feel are most important to do more of, in order to tackle complex challenges in a more experimental way. Then, start to identify what actions will enable you to achieve this change.

What current behaviours do I want to stop, or do less of?

It may be useful to reflect on where your skill gaps are, or what 'commonly observed' behaviours you recognise in yourself.

What behaviours do I want to develop, or do more of?

It may be useful to refer to the 'innovative and experimental behaviours' listed in this guide as inspiration.
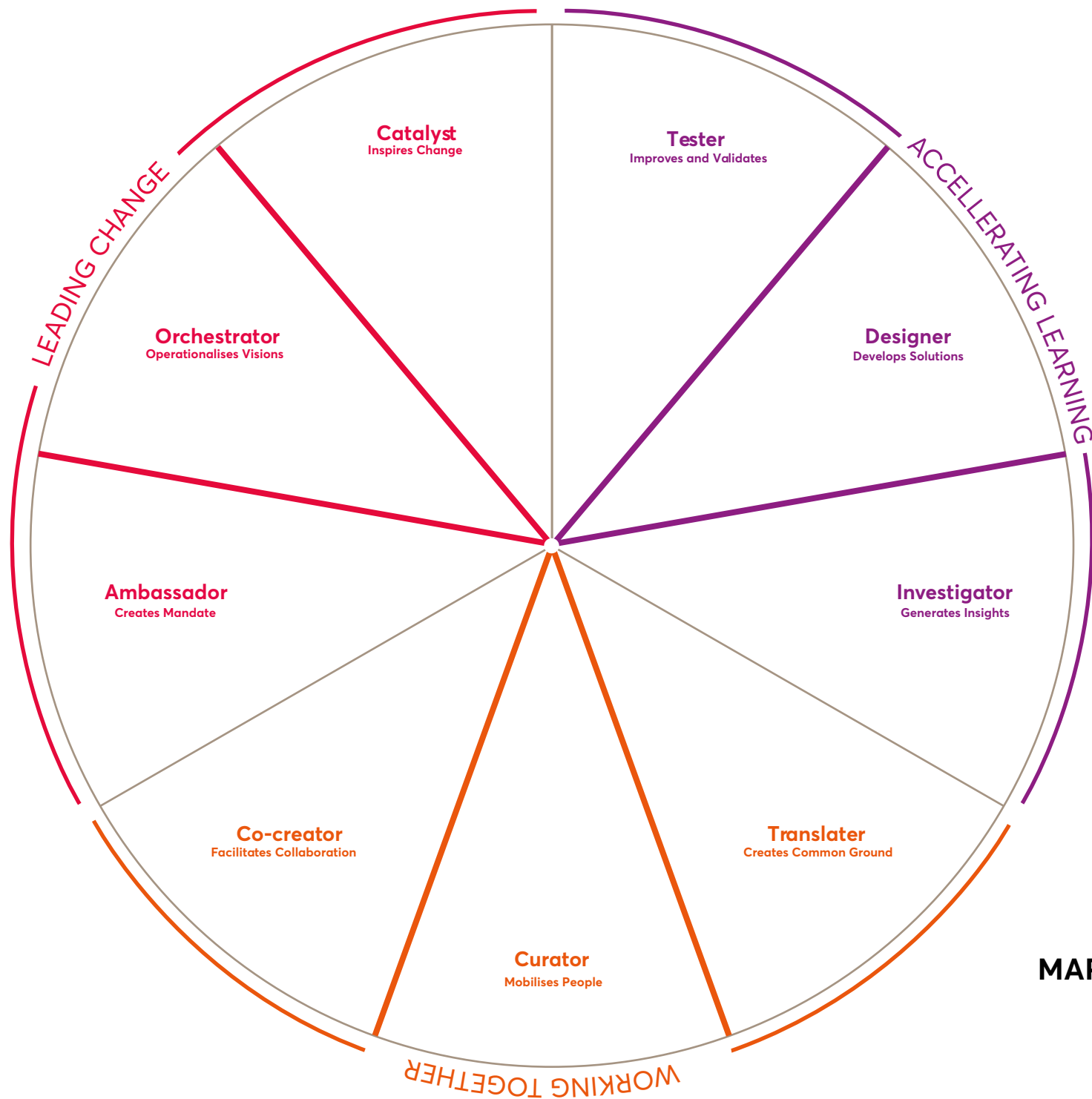
What do I need to do, or to learn, to make this transformation happen?

Think about how you might learn or rehearse this behaviour. Is it skill or attitude based? Where and when might you be able to try this?

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERIMENTAL PROBLEM SOLVING

WORKING TOGETHER
Engaging with citizens and stakeholders to create shared ownership of new solutions

Citizen & Stakeholder Engagement
Actively involving citizens, stakeholders and unusual suspects

Creative Facilitation
Creatively processing different perspectives and deliberating multiple options

Building Bridges
Orchestrating interaction to find common ground and create shared ownership

Brokering
Mediating contrasting interests and reducing friction between multiple stakeholders

ACCELERATING LEARNING
Exploring and iterating new ideas to inform and validate solutions

Future Acumen
Connecting long-term vision with short-term achievable tasks

Prototyping & Iterating
Testing ideas and systematically improving them

Data Literacy & Evidence
Using different kinds of data effectively to accelerate sense-making

Systems Thinking
Combining micro and macro perspectives to grasp complexity

Tech Literacy
Understanding technological developments and use their potential

LEADING CHANGE
Mobilising resources and legitimacy to make change happen

Political & Bureaucratic Awareness
Operating political dynamics and bureaucratic procedures to ensure strategic support

Financing change
Understanding the many ways to liberate and use financial resources for innovation

Intrapreneurship
Being insurgent and use business acumen to create opportunities

Demonstrating Value
Articulating the value of new approaches and solutions for decision-making purposes

Storytelling & Advocacy
Using narratives and media to articulate vision and information in compelling ways

Competencies for EXPERIMENTING & PUBLIC PROBLEM SOLVING

CORE SKILLS
KEY ATTITUDES

Empathetic
Understanding others' experiences and frames of reference

Agile
Responding to changing environments with flexibility

Action-oriented
Biased towards action and learning by doing

Resilient
The perseverance to deal with resistance

Curious
The desire to explore multiple possibilities

Imaginative
Exploring and envisioning new possible futures

Reflective
Habit of critically reflecting on process and results

Outcomes-focused
Strong commitment to real world effects

Courageous
Willingness to take risks

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Catalyst
Inspires Change

Tester
Improves and Validates

LEADING CHANGE

ACCELLERATING LEARNING

Orchestrator
Operationalises Visions

Designer
Develops Solutions

Ambassador
Creates Mandate

Investigator
Generates Insights

Co-creator
Facilitates Collaboration

Translater
Creates Common Ground

Curator
Mobilises People

WORKING TOGETHER

MAPPING ROLES
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