Co-funded by
the European Union

re:gen-u

WP4: Innovation Challenge Concept

Content

- Introduction to the Innovation Challenge
- WP Action Plan
- Innovation Challenge Playbook
- Regenerative Challenge Themes
- Framework Toolkit (Recruitment, Co-ordination)
- Workshop Structure
- Problem Solution Fit
- Design Thinking
- Design Thinking Toolset
- Lean Regenerative Canvas
- Pitching – Art of Persuasion
- Outcomes / KPIs

Preface

The Innovation Challenge Framework

Harnessing the twin objectives of WP3 which aim to develop entrepreneurial ambition and capabilities targeting the need to disrupt our approach to the regenerative economy, the Innovation Challenge will facilitate efforts to more practically define the regenerative economy, including those promoting a transformative transition to the economy among different stakeholders. The Challenge aims to;

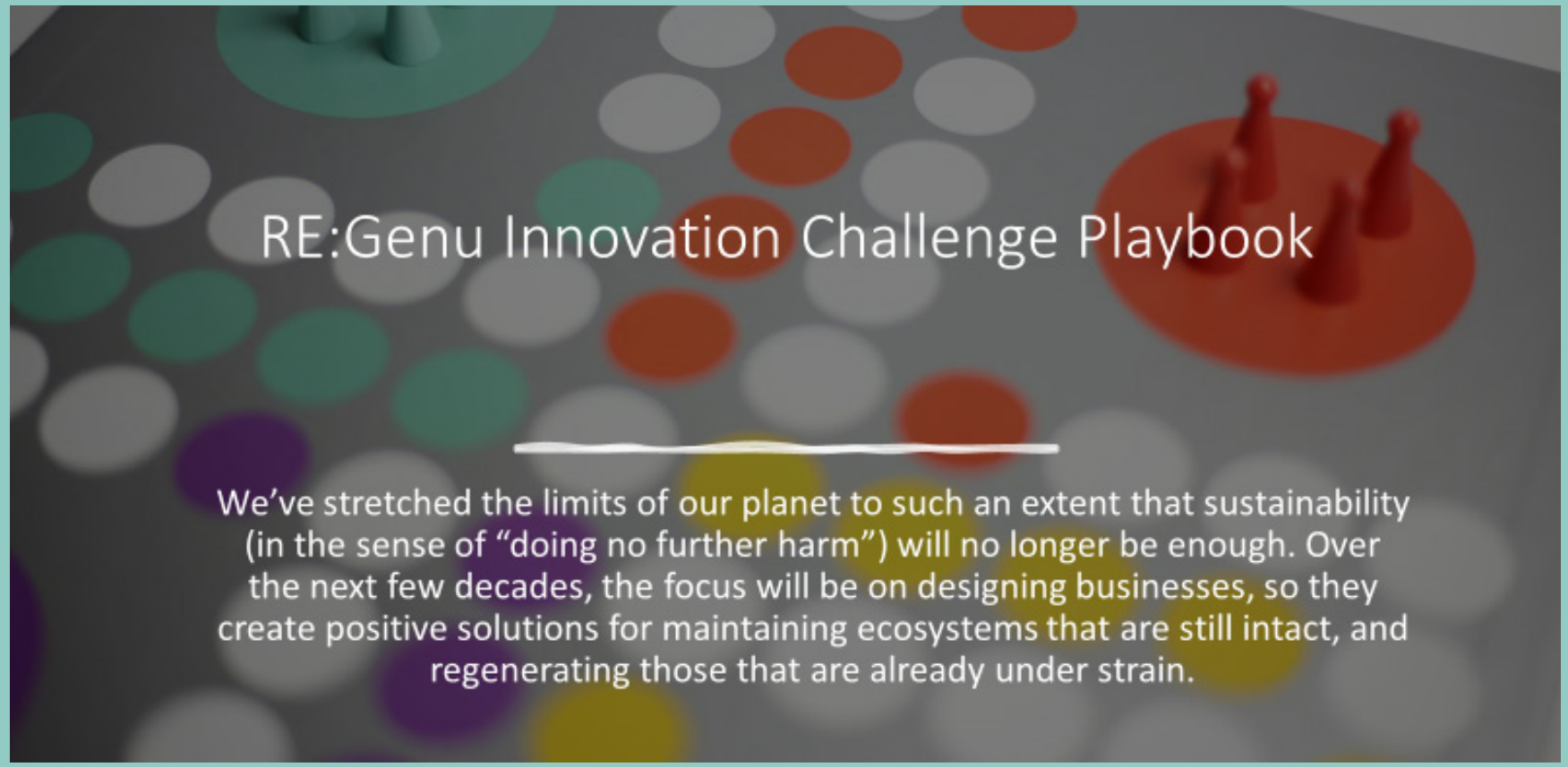
- **Facilitate engagement** among diverse stakeholders based on university-industry-government-civil society collaboration in sustainable regenerative policies and actions;
- Create a **common Challenge Framework** that can be adapted and deployed by partners in their respective local settings at a time of their choosing;
- Develop and **produce innovative solutions** as outputs of the Innovation Challenge;
- Generate **policy recommendations** based upon ideas developed during the Challenges that will support future advancement of the sustainable renewable green policies and actions in transnational context.

Action Plan

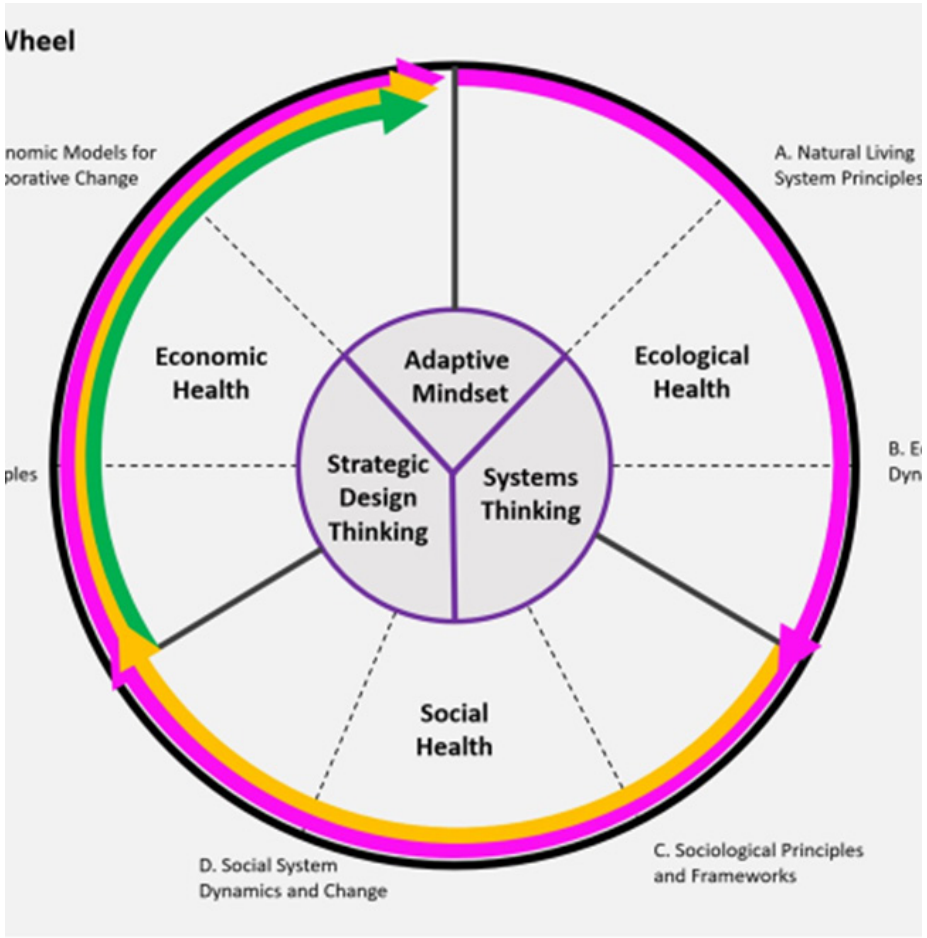
	TCD Tasks for WP 4	Start Date	End Date
T4.1	Lead the WP and coordinate the input from all other partners	01/01/2024	31/12/2024
T4.2	Preparation of the Innovation Challenge Concept & Toolkit	01/01/2024	31/01/2023
T4.3	Re:Genu Innovation Challenge promotion and recruitment of participants	25/02/2024	15/03/2024
T4.4	Innovation Challenge Delivery	18/03/2024	15/04/2024
T4.5	Evaluation of the Challenge and development of Policy Recommendations on how to organise successful Re:Genu Innovation Challenge.	30/04/2024	31/12/2024
T4.6	Innovation Challenge implementation and Policy Recommendations Report	01/10/2024	31/12/2024

Tasks for WP 4 ALL Other Partners	Start Date	End Date
Re:Genu Innovation Challenge promotion and recruitment of participants	01/05/2024	31/12/2024
Innovation Challenge Delivery	01/05/2024	31/12/2024
Evaluation of the Challenge and development of Policy Recommendations on how to organise successful Re:Genu Innovation Challenge.	01/05/2024	31/12/2024
Create the final Report	01/05/2024	31/12/2024
Feedback, evaluation, and finalisation	01/05/2024	31/12/2024

re:gen-u


RE:Genu Innovation Challenge Playbook
We've stretched the limits of our planet to such an extent that sustainability (in the sense of "doing no further harm") will no longer be enough. Over the next few decades, the focus will be on designing businesses, so they create positive solutions for maintaining ecosystems that are still intact, and regenerating those that are already under strain.

The Challenge



'Regenerative Mindset Wheel'. Source: ThinkPlace Institute for Regenerative Design, 2023

- Our 'State of the Art of the Regenerative Economy' report proposes the following summary definition of a regenerative economy based upon a synthesis of recently undertaken interviews:
- "Regenerative economics is an economic system that prioritises the regeneration of natural and social capital to create sustainable and equitable outcomes, whilst also benefiting people and the economy. It seeks to create positive feedback loops that promote regeneration and renewal, rather than negative feedback loops that lead to depletion and degradation"
- Regenerative—in the business sense—embodies a holistic, systemic approach based on the natural principles of life. In contrast to sustainable business models, regenerative ones go a step further: they focus on the successive restoration of resources and serve the entire ecosystem and the living systems embedded within it.
- For the purpose of defining and creating a common thematic framework for the Innovation Challenge, we suggest that partners recommend themes or ideas that resonate locally but that align with the philosophy of doing something that gives back more than it takes....

Regenerative Themes

In alignment with WP3 outputs, the challenge could **focus on one or more of the following** impacts:

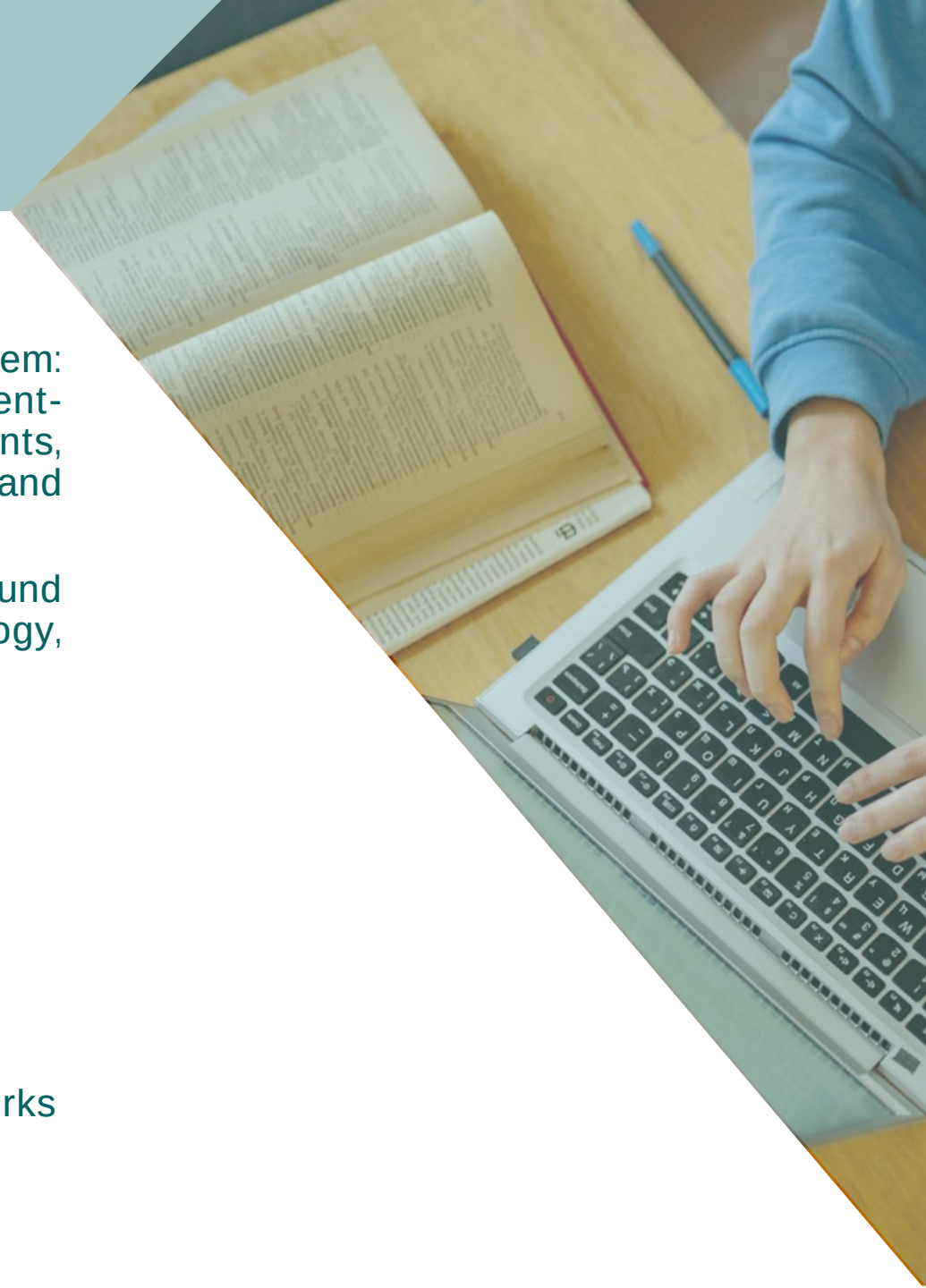
1- **Regeneration of ecological resources** - The regeneration of ecological resources refers to the process of restoring or renewing ecological systems to a healthy state.

2- **Regeneration of financial resources** - The regeneration of financial resources refers to the process of increasing or replenishing financial assets.

3- **Regeneration of human resources** - The regeneration of human resources refers to the process of developing and improving the skills, knowledge, and overall well-being of a workforce.

4- **Ecosystemic functioning** with the local environment - Ecosystemic functioning refers to the ability of an ecosystem to perform its essential services and is essential for maintaining the health and resilience of ecosystems including business, innovation, ecological and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Toolkit Phase 1: Multi-stakeholder Recruitment



Promotion Campaign

Recruit stakeholders across the regenerative economy eco-system: The challenge will take the form of a university-industry-government-civil society collaboration and as such will be open to students, academics, university staff as well as external stakeholders and industry actors whose voices are influential in policy direction.

NB: No technical skills are required. We will create teams around ideas supporting participants matching business, technology, strategic, academic and other miscellaneous skillsets.

Recruitment Strategy

- Media Messaging and Conforming Graphics
- Promote on relevant social media channels
- Engage with Student Societies and College Networks
- Engage Civil Society and Government Agencies (e.g. leverage WP2 interview connections)
- Email marketing targetting users on partners' community networks e.g., Students, Researchers, Academics, Professionals, Industry partners etc.

Toolkit Phase 2: Applications

Applicants will be asked to complete an online form (e.g. Microsoft Forms etc.) in order to assess their suitability and appetite for the challenge and in order to provide them with a menu of potential themes we would like to develop.

Teams may be formed on the basis of this information in advance of the challenge or alternatively, suitable formation may be done by a process of self-selection on the day of the Challenge itself.

Partners should feel free to deploy their own engagement platforms (*e.g. TCD Tangent uses its own proprietorial 'Open Incubator' (OI) platform to deliver Innovation led programming and engagement.*

Toolkit Phase 3: Delivery

In a similar vein to WP3's objectives, to reach the largest potential number of participants, there is considerable flexibility permitted in the delivery of the programme and in customising to your local context.

Thus, the programme can be delivered:

Online, as well as in hybrid form;

As a single full-day programmatic event with a short preparatory event held a few days in advance (e.g. a 90-minute online introduction to the Challenge in advance of the Challenge Day / Event)

OR

*Hosted over a specified period e.g., 2-3 days, (ideally within a one-month period);

In your local language;

Example of Innovation Challenge previously delivered by TCD; https://player.vimeo.com/video/375964804

*Content would remain the same but locally you might choose to manage the Challenge over a few days rather than condensing into a single day. It depends upon time and resource constraints at a local level, not to mention participant availability.

Toolkit Phase 4: Structure

1. Express Interest to participate - To participate in this challenge the teams fill out "problem" and "solution" components. It is okay if teams don't have any specific idea during the application. The Challenge instructors will curate the problem/solution statements in advance of the Challenge Day in order to expedite the team building process more efficiently.

2. Onboarding to challenge playbook– Selected teams will be onboarded to the Challenge ‘playbook’, a comprehensive guide specially curated for the selected teams participating in the RE:Genu Innovation Challenge. This playbook serves as a valuable resource to empower and assist teams throughout their innovation journey.

3. The Kick-off event and workshops will be open for all signed-up participants. Potential participants will have the opportunity to join in at any time and contribute to their teams during the workshops.
    - Kick-off Event: The challenge begins with an exciting in person kick-off event where participants can meet face-to-face, build the team, network, and gain insights into the challenge objectives and rules.
    - Workshops: Throughout the challenge, a series of workshops will be conducted. These workshops will cover various aspects of idea building, based upon our ‘6-step Approach’ (Design Thinking, Lean Canvas and Pitching) and presentation skills, equipping participants with the knowledge they need to excel.

Separately, one of the themed workshops / masterclasses proposed under WP3 could also be hosted within this Challenge cohort.

Toolkit 4: Structure (cont'd)

4. Mentorship – Onboarded teams to the Challenge will be able to engage with mentors within the representing a range of regenerative economy influencers, including a blend of academic, public body and corporate perspectives.

5. Idea Submission - To submit a finalized idea, participants / teams should either present live or record a video pitch that covers the elements of the Lean Regenerative Model Canvas as it applies to the regenerative economy themes teams have chosen. The ideas will be assessed based on various criteria, including desirability, feasibility, viability, innovativeness, and the quality of the presentation.

6. Blended Pitch Deck Preparation Sprint - Selected teams will receive an exclusive invitation to participate in an intensive, day-long pitch deck preparation sprint. During this sprint, teams will have the opportunity to refine and polish their pitch decks. Expert mentors will provide valuable feedback on various aspects, including content, design, and public speaking skills.

Toolkit Phase 5: Content

The difference between Human-Centred Design, as it is currently widely practiced, and a regenerative view of user-orientation (sometimes labelled "Beyond Human Centred Design" or "Planet Centred Design") lies in systemic thinking and placing more emphasis on the long-term.

Solutions that only meet users' current needs today, but that in 10 or 20 years become part of the problem rather than the solution, will undermine the business model of the original solution provider.

In the medium term, the only conceivable reason for companies to exist, will be to direct commercial activities towards generating positive solutions, and contributing to the preservation, or indeed regeneration, of threatened eco-systems. (Berkler, S., 2021)

Empathize & Observe:
Empathize: Engage deeply with people to understand their perspectives and identify the barriers they face.

Observe: Delve into the system's intricacies to comprehend its functioning and dynamics.

Define & Explain:
Define: Pinpoint the specific challenges and problems faced by individuals.

Explain: Grasp and articulate how the system operates, shedding light on the root causes of the problems.

Ideate: Brainstorm innovative solutions that cater to both human needs and the planet's well-being.

Design: Craft comprehensive strategies and solutions that serve both humanity and our environment.

Prototype: Develop tangible prototypes to test and refine ideas. Remember, action often brings clarity and deeper understanding.

Evaluate: Rigorously assess the impact of the solutions on both the system and its people, ensuring alignment with our regenerative goals.

For Each Partner…

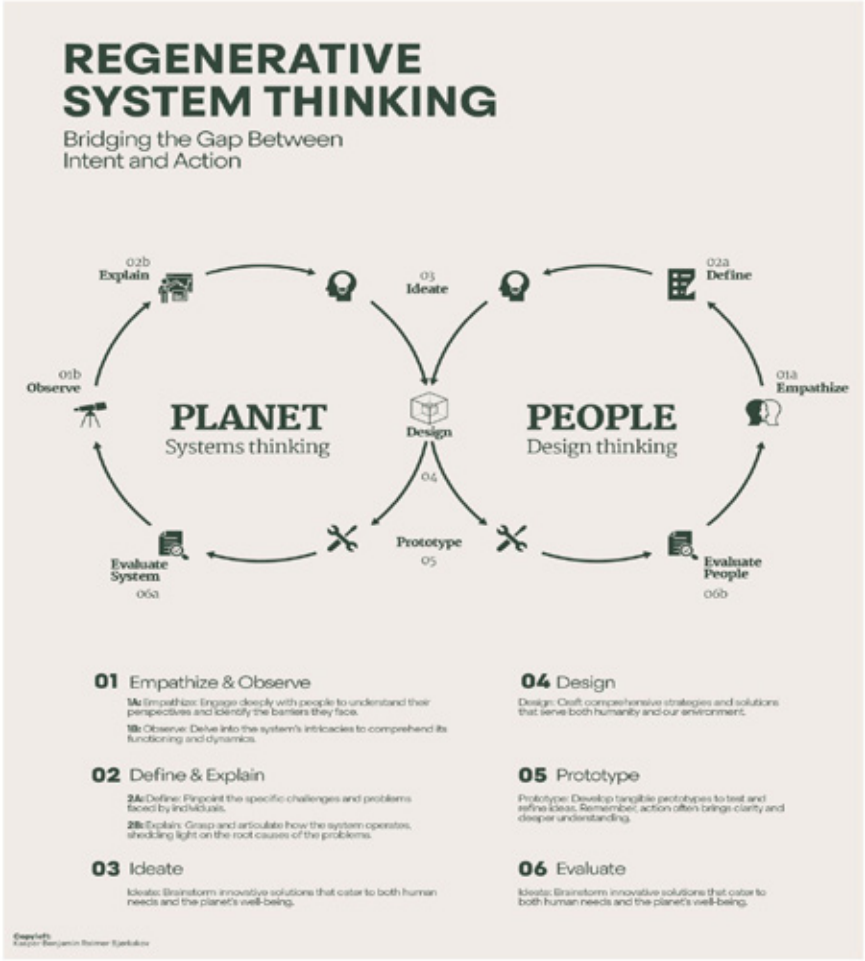
The step from sustainability to regeneration is more than a change in simple terminology. It is a change in mindset and worldview that will drive profound transformation (Wahl, 2019)

Review your regenerative economy goals & plans

Identify the goals/objectives that align best with our 4 overarching themes (re. Slide #7)

Use the Problem Solution canvas to map your solution to that/those problem(s)

- Identify any similar projects/solutions you have running or have run in the past
- Outline the problem(s) you will solve in a simple statement
- Explain how your solution can solve this problem – ensure that a business model underpins it.
- Explain how you will validate your solution (Quicky & Effectively to begin with….)
- Highlight any potential barriers to validating or applying this business model

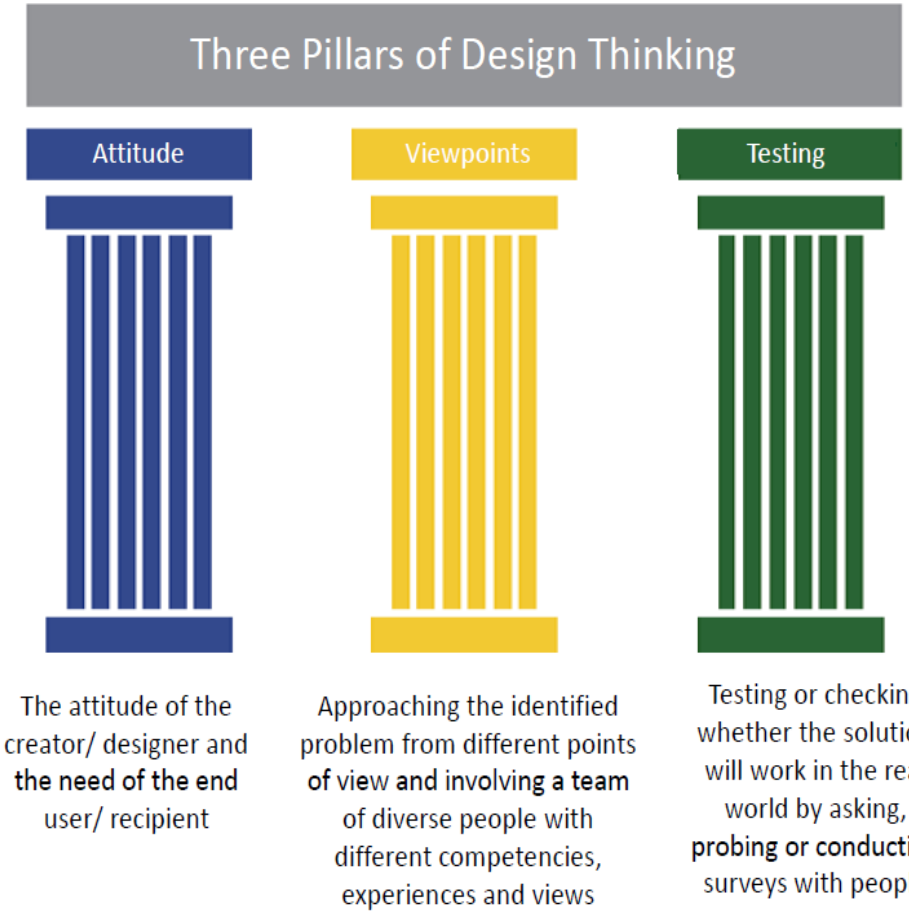


Source: Kasper Benjamin Reimer Bjørkskov (2023)

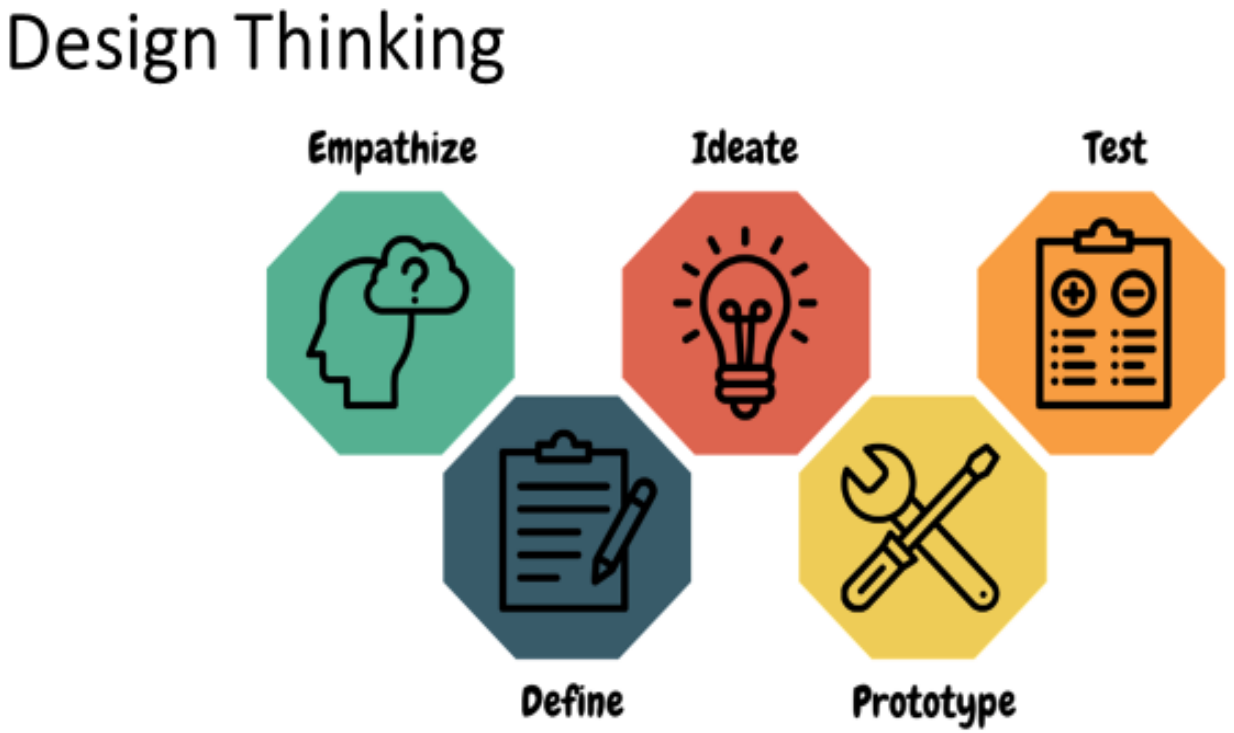
Design Thinking Workshop

"Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success."

TIM BROWN, EXECUTIVE CHAIR OF IDEO



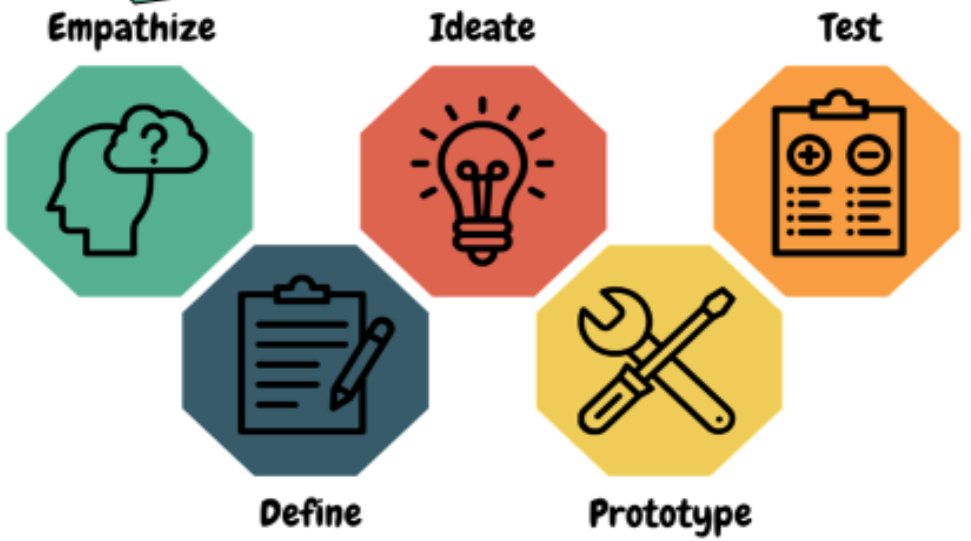
Design Thinking



DESIGN THINKING is a non-linear, iterative process which seeks to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions to prototype and test.

Empathise

Empathize
Learn as much as possible about the problem, the people it effects and what causes it
Find out who the user really is!



Ideate

Ideate
Think up lots of possible solutions, how you could solve the problem.
Take inspiration from other fields, areas or industries.

Test

Test
Test your prototype to see if it solves your problem. If it doesn't, learn why not, improve your design and test again.

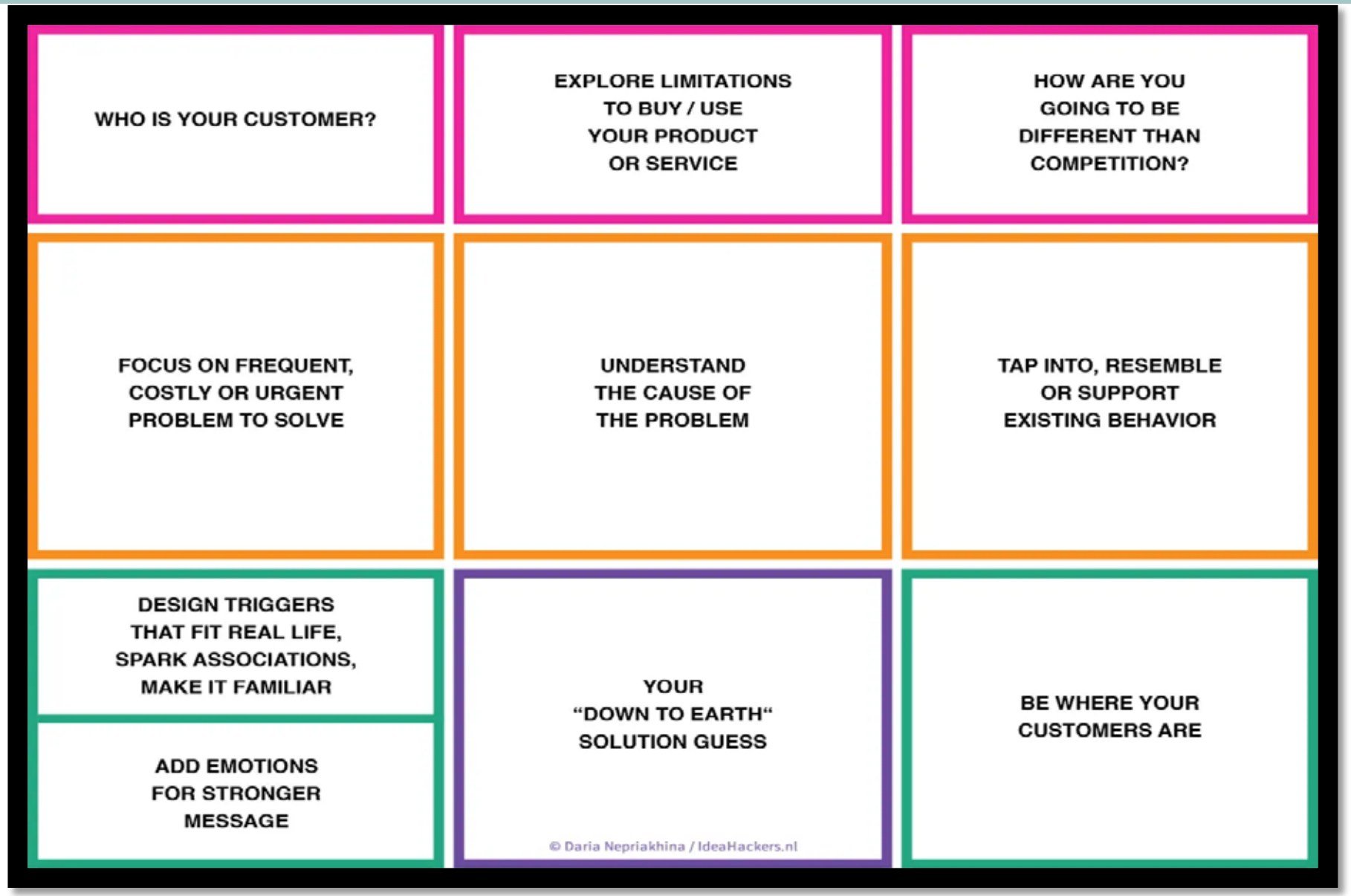
Define

Define
Gather all your information and set out the actual problem. Define the problem as simply as possible.

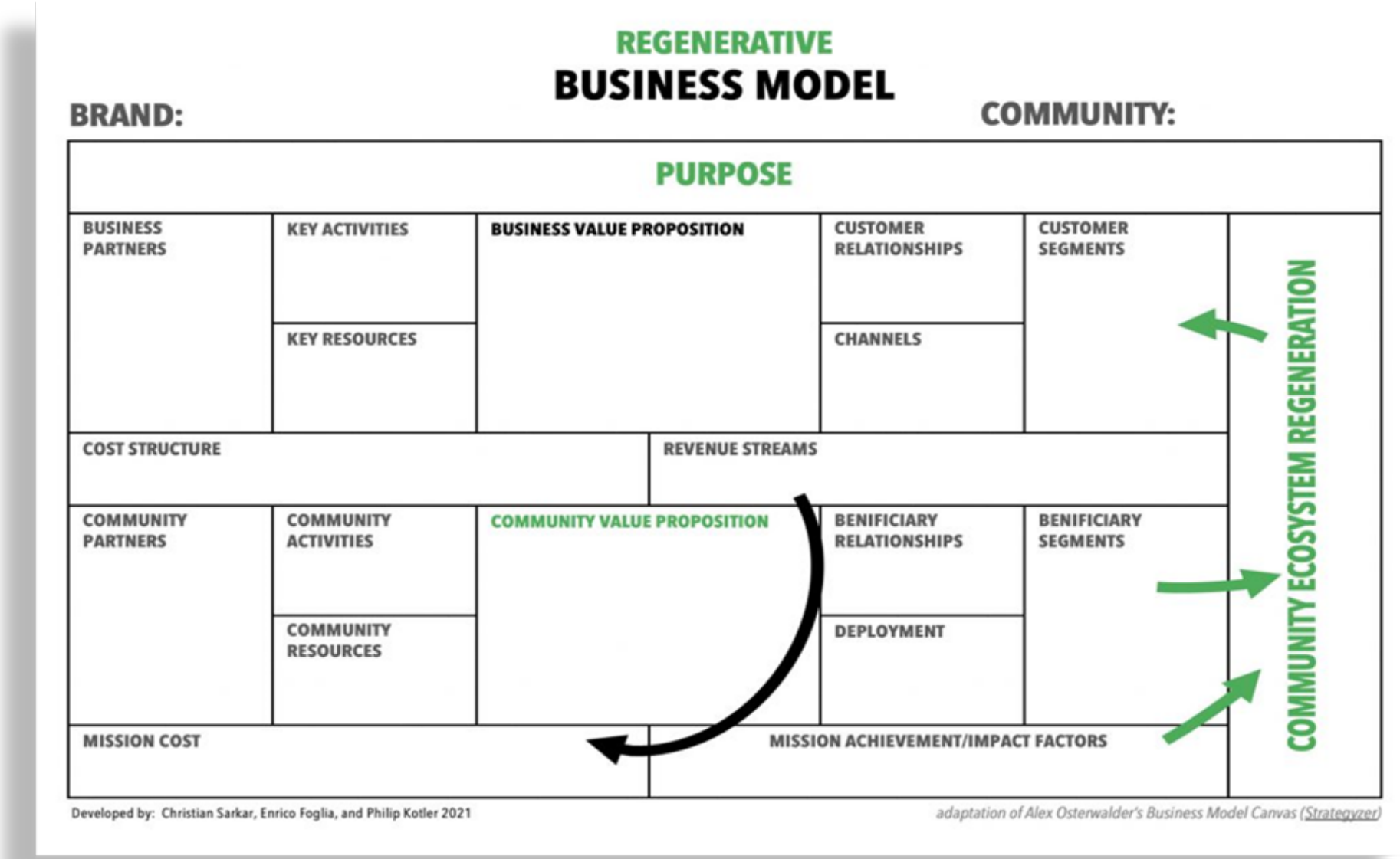
Prototype

Prototype
Build your solutions to show that the basic idea works. Build it to learn as much about it as possible.

Problem – Solution - Fit



Regenerative Business Canvas



Source: Sarkar, Foglia, Kotler (2021)

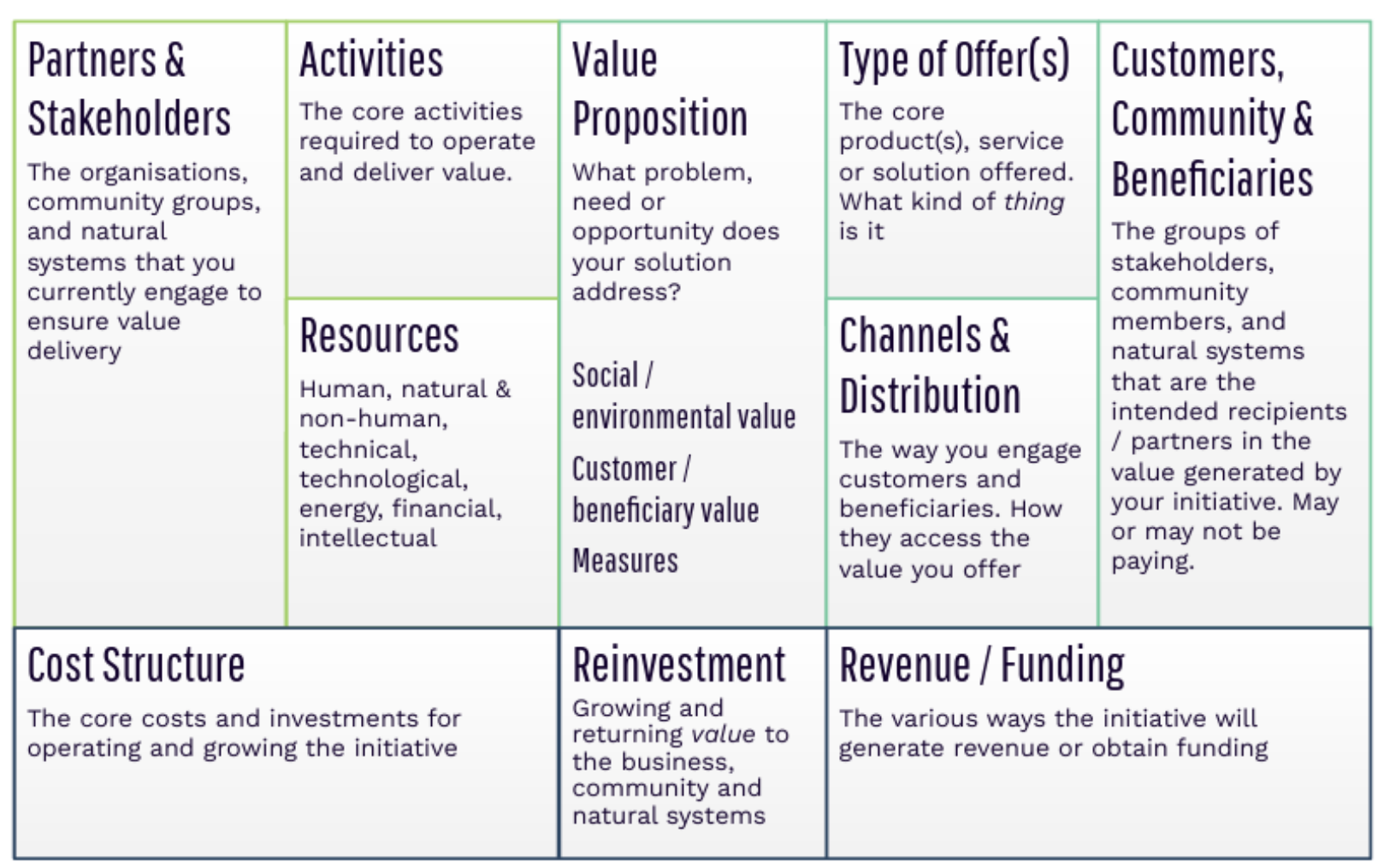
Techniques for Applied Design Thinking

Empathize	Define	Ideate	Prototype	Test
• Surveys • Participants Observation • Interviews • Focus Groups • Conversations	• Benchmarking • Customer Profile Mapping • Morphological Analysis	<u>Divergence</u> Want to develop high volumes & wild ideas • Brainstorming • Mind Mapping • Random Word Generation • Working Backwards from Perfect <u>Convergence</u> Narrow down to the best ideas • Prioritisation • Ranking • Impact Maps	• Storyboard • Role Play • Static Modelling • Small Scale Implementation • Dynamic Simulation • Real Prototypes	• Surveys • Experimentation • Refining a viewpoint • Triangulation Techniques • Early Adaptors

Design Thinking Toolset

Design Tools	
Visualisation	Use imagery to imaging possibilities and bring them to reality
Journey Mapping	Assessing the current experience through mapping the customer's journey
Value Chain Analysis	Assessing the current value chain that supports a customer's journey
Mind Mapping	Generating insight from exploration activities and using these to set design criteria
Brainstorming	Creating new ideas and possibilities along with new business models
Concept Development	Combining innovative elements into a valid new solution
Assumption Testing	Isolating and testing the key assumptions that will lead to successes or failure of a new idea
Rapid Prototyping	Creating a tangible version of an idea for exploration, testing and refinement
Customer Co-Creation	Creating an affordable experiment to enable customers experience your new solution which will help test assumption with market data

Lean & Regenerative Model Canvas Workshop

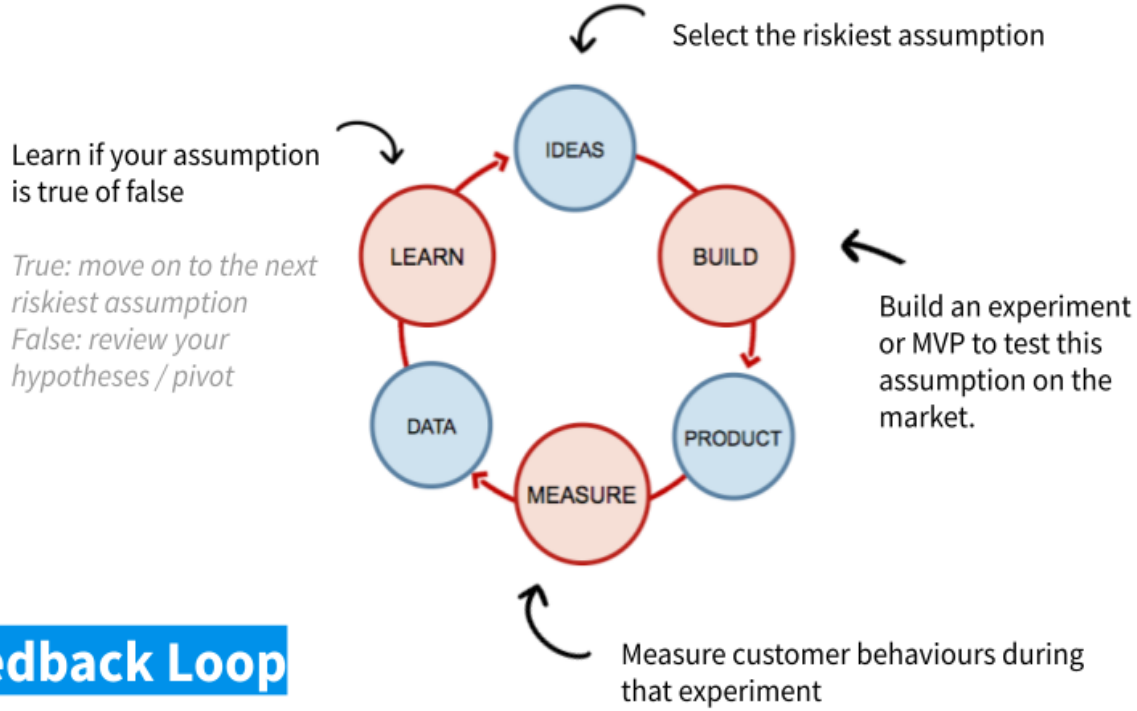


The Lean Startup Canvas methodology, reconfigured in a regenerative context, is perfect for framing new and innovative ideas/ product/services. It creates a simple, yet comprehensive framework for building a clear vision, establishing a problem-solution hypothesis, and identifying the key metrics that will ultimately be used to measure long-term success.

NB. this technique is 100% iterative.

Your Canvas should be updated regularly throughout the product/service development process to ensure that the product hypothesis takes into account everything you've learned in between iterations. Ideas rarely survive first contact with end-users, so pivoting is important.

Build – Measure - Learn



Feedback Loop

THE LEAN STARTUP METHOD IS BUILT ON A FEEDBACK LOOP DESIGNED TO SYSTEMATICALLY TEST YOUR PLAN, STARTING WITH THE RISKIEST HYPOTHESIS. THIS IS HOW THIS FEEDBACK LOOP WORKS :

BUILD: BUILDING A BASIC PRODUCT/SERVICE THAT ALLOWS YOU TO TEST VARIOUS APPLICATION HYPOTHESES (SOMETIMES CALLED THE MVP, (MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT).

MEASURE: COLLECTING AND MEASURING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK TO UNDERSTAND HOW REAL END-USERS ARE ACTUALLY USING YOUR PRODUCT/SERVICE (YOU BUILT IN THE PREVIOUS STEP).

LEARN: ANALYSE THE DATA COLLECTED AND APPLY THOSE LEARNINGS TO FUTURE ITERATIONS OF YOUR PRODUCT/SERVICE. IF THE DATA IS INCONCLUSIVE, YOU NEED TO PIVOT / ALTER DIRECTION.

Blank, Steve (May 2013). "Why the Lean Start-Up Changes Everything". Harvard Business Review.

Pitching

The Art of Persuasion Workshop

A successful pitch grabs the attention of your listener, gives them a crystal-clear picture of your idea or concept, and leaves them with a call to action that they cannot resist.

This is about persuasion—why should this person choose your solution to a problem compared to others?

re:gen-u

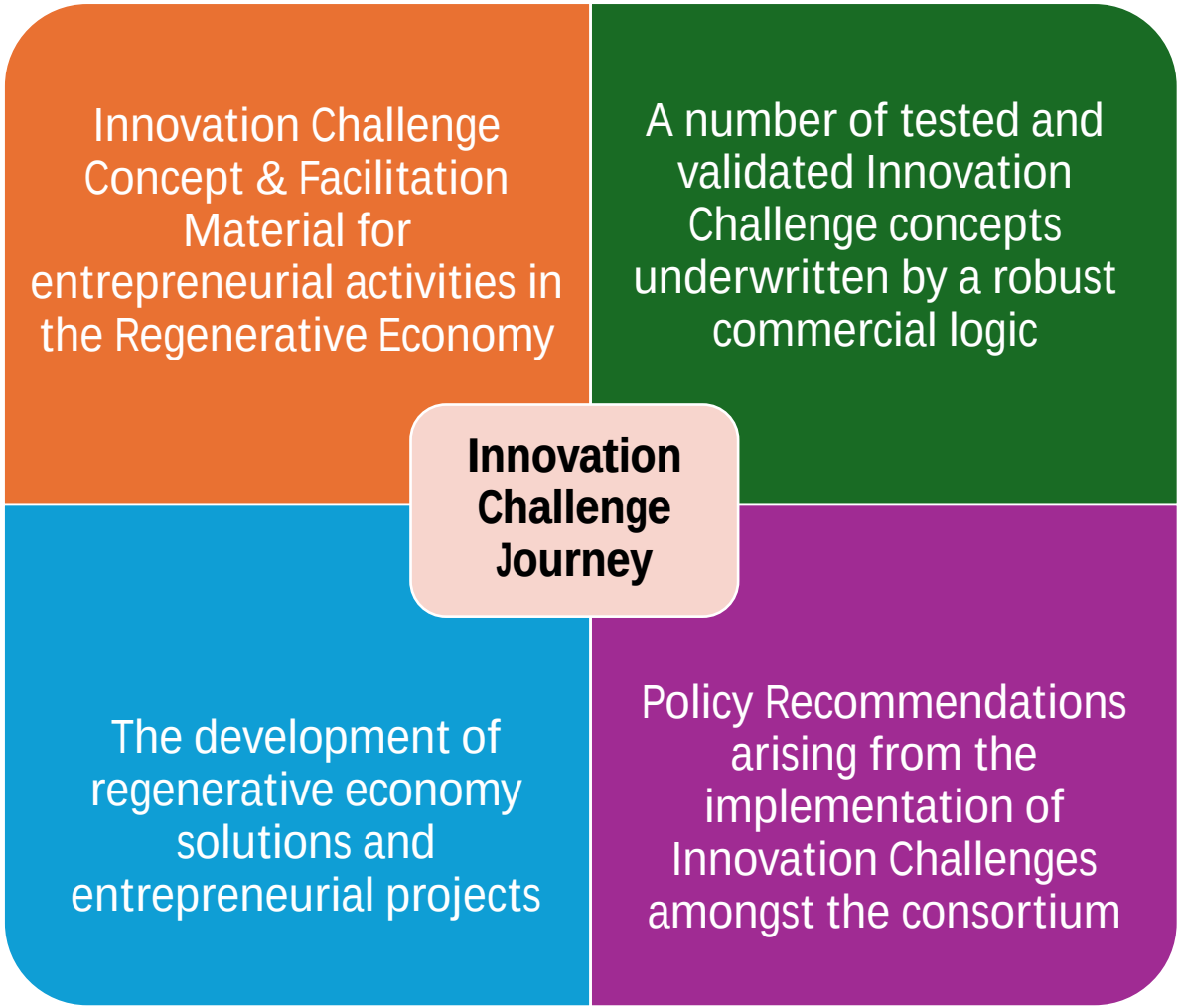
OUTCOMES

Horizontal Topics

The Innovation Challenge addresses and enhances the three important horizontal topics that pertain to Re:Genu:

- The need to further develop entrepreneurial mindsets and processes (particularly as radical, transformative designs for a regenerative economy),
- The importance of technology, and therefore, technology skills and competencies, and
- The ability to undertake university-business-government cooperation to ensure project outcome impact.

Challenge Conclusion



Upon conclusion of the Innovation Challenge at the partner organisations, a survey will be conducted to review the process and evaluate any shortcomings.

Participants from the partnering universities, the network representatives engaged in the implementation as well as academics, policy makers, business representatives will be invited to reflect on their respective experiences. The feedback and evaluation reports will then be included in Summary on Policy Recommendations for Innovation Challenge organisation with a focus on regenerative green economy.

The final report, reflecting on the mechanisms, challenges and solutions developed during the implementation phase of the WP will synthesise the experiences and lessons learned from each partner for the future exploitation of the course material and methodology on a larger scale.

Innovation Challenge KPIs

One of re:genu's primary objectives is to engage stakeholders in the university-industry-government-civil society (quadruple helix) collaboration model with a focus on sustainable, civic minded, renewable green policies and actions to increase support for innovative solutions by:

- Supporting transnational cooperation and mutual learning on forward-looking issues in the green economy
- Empowering them to bring innovative HEI-led education policy solution and promote their transfer through capacity building measures.

WP4 KPIS

The Innovation Challenge framework developed to support the practical application of ideas. The framework will have flexibility to allow application in multiple settings

1 x Facilitators Guidelines

10+ academics from 5 HEIs participated in the Innovation Challenge

80+ students participated in the Innovation Challenge

40+ professional staff, government representatives, and civil society participated in Challenge

80+ Feedback of the programme manual and challenge framework P4 KPIs

Intellectual Outputs

- Drafting of an Innovation Challenge Manual (M22)
- Innovation Challenge Manual Feedback (M24)
- Re:Genu Innovation Challenge Manual Dissemination (M24 +)

re:gen-u

www.regenu.eu @regenu @regenu.eu

Co-funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.