

HACKATHON GUIDE



► Why a VET Toolbox Hackathon?

During this Hackathon we will look for solutions to persistent and new challenges related to inclusion and public-private collaboration in VET (vocational education and training) that we are all struggling with. During these two days we want to co-create innovative solutions for these challenges together with you - fellow experts, policy makers, private sector stakeholders, unusual suspects and – of course – users.

The outcome:

- to create strong bonds
- to get inspired by others' knowledge, expertise and experiences
- to generate synergies, find out what already exists and avoid duplication
- to launch the development of some innovative solutions for complex challenges in VET...
- ... by picking each other's brains to produce evidence and co-create (re)new(ed) tools or approaches

► Steps we will go through

Step 1: Expert introduction to the challenges followed by a Q&A

Objective: familiarize yourself with the challenges, get a systems-level view of the issue, understand the related constraints and get deeper into ‘why is what we need not happening now to our expert understanding’.

How: Introduction of the challenges by the experts, followed by the possibility of asking questions.

Needed: Projector and microphones (for speakers and audience)

Step 2: ‘Download your learnings’

Objective: determine what you find most striking/important about the challenge and complement the expert introduction with you own insights.

How: write down in maximum 3 bullets what you find most striking/surprising/consistent/significant/relevant/to be missing on each of the two post-its (one for each challenge) that you received at registration. Make sure your name is on both post-its. Be open to include new insights you gained from the expert introduction or your previous conversations and experience.

Please circle your preferred challenge to work on – if you have a preference.

Needed: Post-its received at registration and markers

Step 3: ‘Finding themes and making teams’

Objective: The teams are composed based on common topics, hidden patterns and key themes from the post-its of the previous step. These can be translated by the team into a more specific challenge and provide an opportunity for innovation design.

How: During your coffee break, the facilitators will read all the post-its and cluster these around common topics and themes to propose team compositions. They will try to get a good mix of participants with a different profile in each team. The participants give feedback (modifications are made -if necessary) and then validate the compositions.

Needed: Post-its previous step, a wall and masking tape (just in case) to cluster the post-its under each challenge into teams

Step 4: Identify your persona and 'empathize'

Objective: Based on the cluster of statements from the post-its of your team you should be able to identify some common insights which you and your team can use to fine-tune the challenge you will be working on. First step in this is identifying your user.

How: Discuss the common challenge as it was pitched by the facilitators and see if you agree or if you would like to formulate it differently or explore reorientation. Identify the "user(s)" who would be mostly affected by/at the centre of this challenge. 'Empathize' with the user(s) by drafting a persona*, using the 'User Profile Canvas' (Tool 1a) or the 'Empathy Map' (Tool 1b), focus on understanding the jobs to be done or the goals/wishes and needs (2) of your persona.

Tip: You might have different user types, which is fine. Try to understand a few of them if required.

Tip: Drawing your persona can be very helpful as it will allow you to visualize the person whom you are trying to design a solution for.

Needed: Persona templates: Tool 1a - User Profile Canvas or Tool 1b - Empathy map

Step 5: Re-define your challenge

Objective: Based on the cluster of statements on the post-its of your team and the persona you created in the previous step, you should be able to identify some common insights which you and your team can use to fine-tune the challenge you will be working on.

How: Based on the understanding you have of what the needs / jobs-to-be-done are of your persona, re-define the initial challenge identified by the organiser. Use tool 2 'Frame your design challenge template'. Properly framed design challenges drive toward ultimate impact, allow for a variety of solutions, and take into account constraints and context. (Source: <http://www.designkit.org/>)

Tip: A common pitfall when scoping a design challenge is going either too narrow or too broad. A narrowly scoped challenge won't offer enough room to explore creative solutions. And a broadly scoped challenge won't give you any idea where to start. We will not solve

* A persona is a fictional character that represents a type of customer or user of your service or product. This fictional character is created based on a synthesis of what you've learned about your real customers and user and the themes or common characteristics you have observed that many of them share in common. (Source: <https://www.innovationtraining.org/create-personas-design-thinking>)

full employment for all, but we also do not want to simply improve one functionality of an vocational tool. The impact you identify in the template should be significant enough with regards to the challenge you chose initially (Source: <http://www.designkit.org/>)

Needed: Tool 2: Frame your design challenge - template

Step 6: Time for 'ideation'!

Objective: One of the main goals of this Hackathon is to come up with new innovative, co-created ideas on how to solve key challenges for VET as identified by the VET Toolbox partners. To do this, we'll diverge again: 'ideation' is the creative process of generating, developing and communicating new ideas, without any restrictions. The ultimate brainstorm!

How: Write down ALL ideas you can come up with to solve your re-defined challenge on post-its, in a brief version. Use one post-it per idea. To be able to be creative and ensure your team has enough confidence and freedom for innovative thoughts to come about, please, remember the '[Hackathon Rules](#)'.

Tip: The best solutions often come from ideas that seemed absurd, unrealistic or even crazy in the beginning. Do not reject an idea but think about it and reflect about how you could work with that idea: not "yes, BUT", always "yes, AND"

Needed: Lots of post-its and markers

Step 7: The 'Groan Zone'

Objective: The 'groan zone' (because, yes, grrrrroaaannnnn, of course it can be hard to 'kill your darlings', but we can't work on everything...) is a crucial phase in between the diverging and converging phase of ideation. Your team now needs to converge again and identify what the main features/functionality/roles of your specific solution will be, whether that is a product/ tool/ project/ organisational set-up.

How: Take a long good look at the ideas on the wall, cluster related ideas and try to identify similar concepts. Park the ideas that are not working within any of the clusters on the side. Take another hard look and decide which ones you want to keep, and which ones are not likely to fit within the bigger picture.

Needed: Small and large post-its (of the previous step), a wall and masking tape (just in case)

Step 8: Start prototyping - Story Board

Objective: As you have understood what roles/functionalities/features are key for a good solution to your challenge, reflect and identify how you want to integrate this in an overall solution/system. The exercise should allow you to come up with a concept that looks like a solution or answer to the challenge which your team defined. By visually plotting out elements of your product or service, you will further define and detail how your solution will work and how the user you identified with your persona will interact with your solution.

How: Use the Story Board template (Tool 3) to draw and describe how your user becomes aware of your solution. How he/she could benefit from your solution and make a decision to try it. How they would interact with your solutions, and how the solution might ultimately have a positive impact on him or her.

Needed: Tool 3 - Story Board - template

Step 9: Lean Canvas: How will your solution function in the real world?

Objective: Use the Lean Canvas to think through some key aspects of your solution, whether it is a project/product/tool/ project/business plan or a different organisational set-up (e.g. social enterprise, consortium, etc.).

How: Use the Lean Canvas to think about how your solution would function in the real world (how you will reach out to your users/ how you will measure your success/etc.) and reflect on all key questions.

Needed: Tool 4: Lean Canvas

Overview of the tools (you will receive these during the Hackathon with extra instructions)

Tool 1. Persona development: 1a. User Profile Canvas or 1b. Empathy Map

Tool 2. 'Frame your design challenge'

3. Story board

4. Lean Canvas

THIS IS WHAT YOUR TEAM WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE AT THE END:

Team deliverables (in **bold** those that will go the jury)

1. Persona (either template)
- 2. Your team's design challenge**
- 3. Story board on your solution and impact**
- 4. Lean Canvas to describe how your solution will function in the real world**
- 5. 3-minute pitch + a visual if you like (strict timing!)**

These are the criteria the judges will look at when judging your team's pitch:

- 1. Challenge:** is the design concept responding to the given challenge as formulated by the organisers?
- 2. Creativity/Innovation:** are there new or innovative aspects in the design concept? Is it transcending the traditional and classical methods used in the field of application?
- 3. Feasibility:** are the goals and the approach of the solution realistic and achievable?
- 4. Quality of the pitch:** to the point and convincing presentation skills?

Scores the jury will give for each of these criteria

- 1- Poor
- 2- Below average
- 3- Average
- 4- Good
- 5- Extremely good/Extra-ordinary

