

# Flow Forward Starter kit



**Interreg**  
North Sea



Co-funded by  
the European Union

---

Connected River

# Flow Forward Starter kit

## *kickstart your pilot area*

This Flow Forward Starter kit helps you to get started quickly with your pilot area. It provides a practical approach to set up your pilot area team, build an ecosystem, start experiments and explains the short-cycle way of working. Each step has one or more instruments that can be accessed via links.

The starter kit is a result of the Connected River project. This project was made possible by [Interreg](#). The content of the starter kit has been developed based on need, applicability and experience from other pilot areas.



# Table of content

# 1. Learn to innovate

*The need to do things differently*



# Connected River & Flow Forward

## Connected River Project

Waterways and waterfronts are vital for the economy, ecology, and quality of life in the North Sea region. However, their changing and increasing shared use causes a decrease in safety, accessibility, and liveability. Connected River addresses those issues by, mobilizing multi-stakeholder ecosystems, conducting user centric, agile innovation, and accelerating the uptake of digital/smart solutions.

Want to read more about the project? [Go to the Connected River website](#)

## Flow Forward approach

The Flow Forward approach will be developed within the European project Connected River. Flow Forward is a short cycle innovation approach where added value for (end) users is realized in collaboration with partners through experimentation and learning. This approach combines Design Thinking with elements of Lean Startup and Agile Design.

Flow Forward is focused on enabling efficient experimentation with emerging digital technologies, new innovation methods and forms of collaboration, with a strong connection to society in waterway or waterfront regions.

Want to read more about Flow Forward? [Go to the Flow Forward platform](#)



# Innovation process

The Flow Forward method helps you to go through all phases of the innovation process:

## 1. Ecosystems

Putting together and mobilizing stakeholders and partners in your ecosystem and developing the ideal ecosystem for innovation.

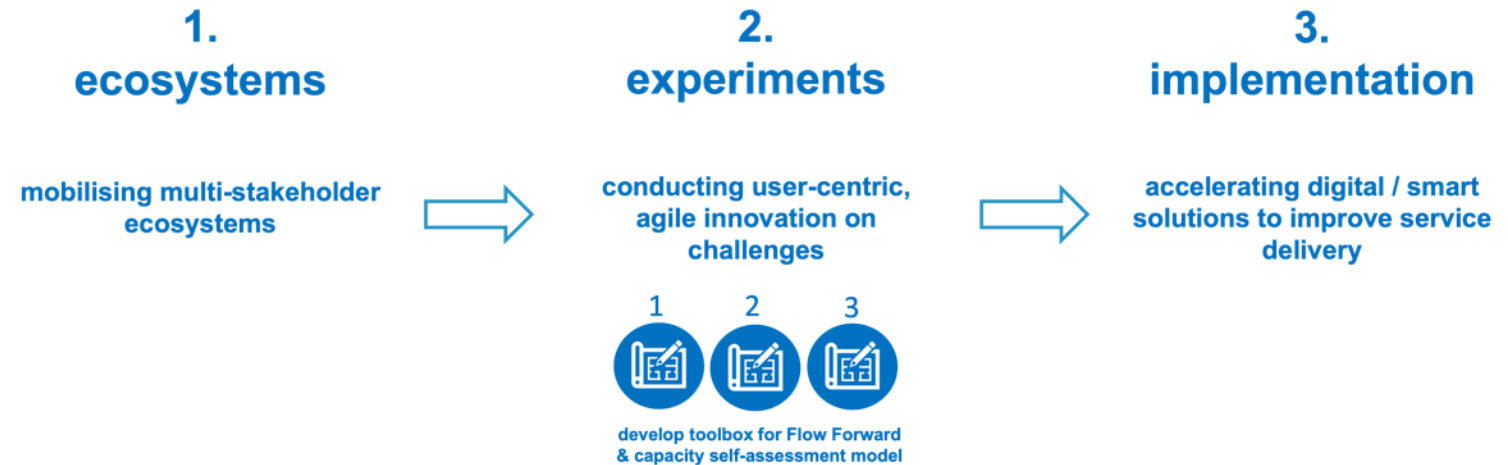
## 2. Experiments

Doing short cyclical innovation in a standardized way, even when challenges faced are specific per host partner. Knowledge partners support by providing tools and guidance to experiment and develop in a user-oriented way.

- With project documents;
- Scientifically based tools;
- And by learning from each other in consultations between pilot areas.

## 3. Implementation

Scaling up ideas from an experimental phase to a successful implementation.



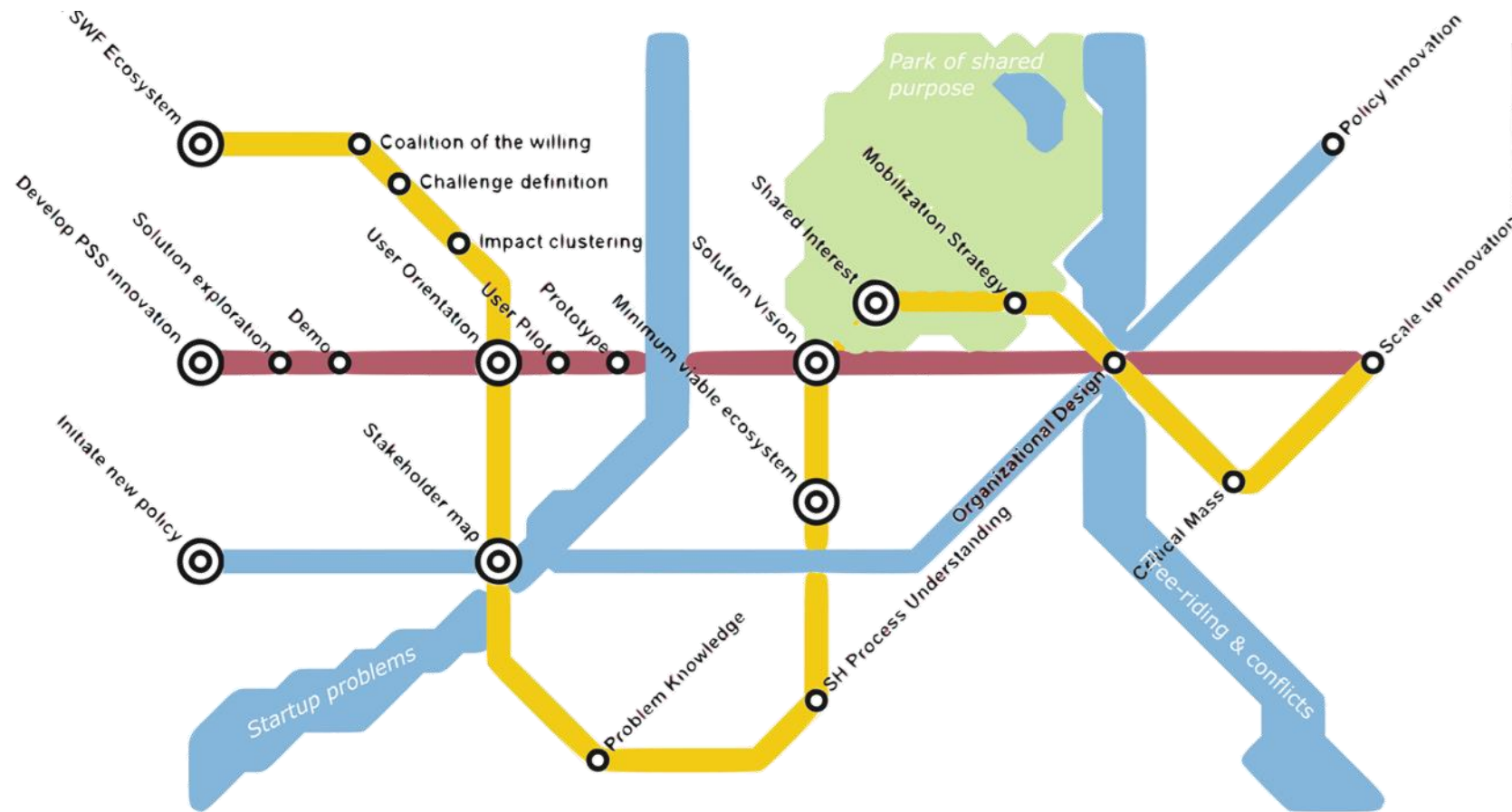
# Metro map

Innovation is a journey. On your journey, you will pass several stations. A metro map has been developed to provide insight into all steps in the innovation process. You decide where to go and where to stop.

## Lines

- You take the **yellow** line to take steps in building ecosystems.
- The **red** line helps to conduct experiments.
- For the development of innovation policy, you take the **blue** line.

*Innovation is a continuous journey*



# Get started

To determine your itinerary, you need to know your starting point and your goals.

With the innovation maturity scan, we measure each step in the innovation process on which level you are. This helps to navigate and determines on the metro map which stops you should take during your journey, and which stops you can pass.

*Ready for your trip?*

*[Complete the innovation maturity scan](#) and we will help you shape your journey.*

WP	Category	Your starting point
WP1	Leadership	Yellow
	User & stakeholder focus	Orange
	Innovation Goals	Orange
	Innovation Strategy	Yellow
	Problem & process knowledge	Orange
	Innovation Ecosystem	Yellow
WP2	Innovation Processes	Green
	Knowledge, Competence and Capabilities	Green
WP3	Scaling Up	Green
General	Innovation Culture	Green





A wide-angle, eye-level shot of a two-lane asphalt road stretching straight into the distance. The road has a yellow dashed center line and white solid edge lines. The landscape is arid and flat, with sparse, dry vegetation. In the far distance, a range of brown, rocky mountains is visible under a clear, bright blue sky. The text "What does your journey look like?" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**What does  
your journey  
look like?**

## **2. Set up your pilot area team**

*Setting the right conditions*



# Setting the right conditions: hiring innovation capabilities

## Need some help in the innovation process?

Hire an innovation coach!

In the Nijmegen and Amsterdam pilot areas, an innovation coach provides support to:

- pilot area team: to map challenges
- innovation team: to apply the Flow Forward approach in the specific environment of their pilot area
- implementation advisory team: to link experiment results to the business
- pilot area board: to advise about portfolio and which experiments to carry out

[Download the template for hiring an innovation coach with a general description of the project, requirements and competencies and intended results](#)



# Setting the right conditions: governance

Different roles can be identified in each pilot area. Each role has its responsibility. Make sure all roles are represented. It is also possible for people to fulfil multiple roles.

## Roles

**Pilot area board** – Area owners / board members of responsible Host Partner(s), keeping track of the portfolio and deciding which challenges to carry out. Responsible for the budget, availability of resources (people & assets)

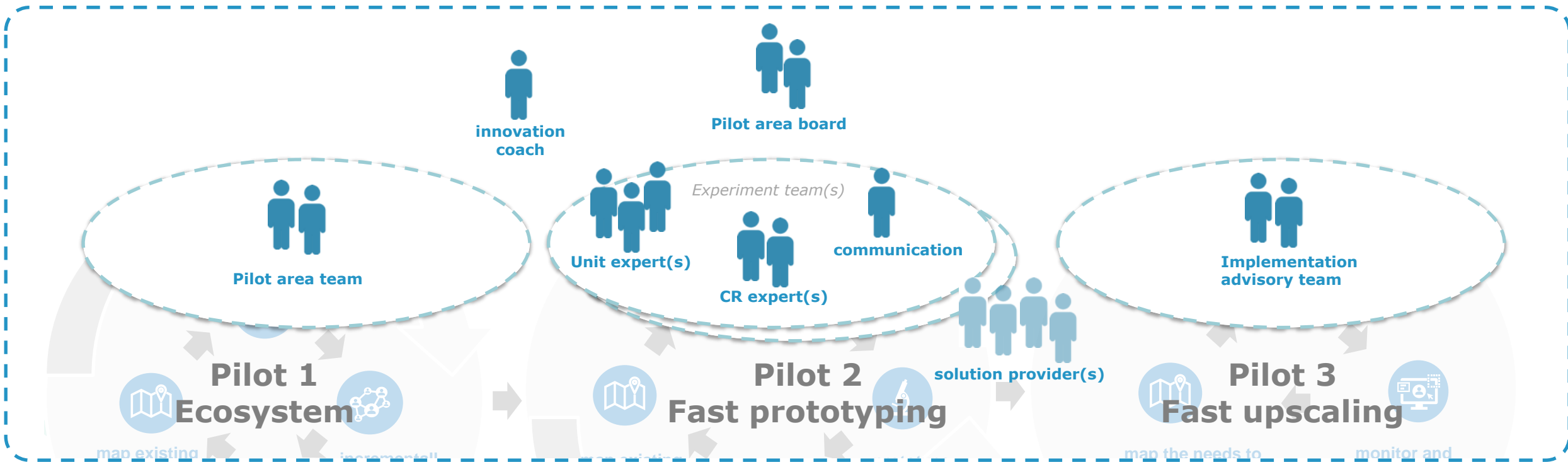
**Pilot area team** – Mapping challenges and advising the pilot area board on which challenges to select.

**Experiment team(s)** – Team of >3 experts conducting experiments. Each pilot area has 1-2 innovation teams that perform 1 experiment per team at the same time.

**Implementation advisory team** – Helps to accelerate results and start preparation activities for implementation.

**Innovation coach** – Provides support to all roles mentioned above

**Solution provider** – Brings in advanced knowledge of digital/smart solutions to be tested by the innovation team.



# Pilot area board

## The Pilot Area Board (PAB)

- Consist of area owners / board members of responsible Host Partner(s)
- Keeping track on the portfolio
- Decides on directions for experiments and evaluates results
- Responsible for the budget, available resources (people & assets)
- Meets every quarter according to a fixed agenda

Actively involving the PAB creates management buy-in that is necessary to get the right resources and people available and to get support and connection in the organization

[Download the template for the Pilot Area Board meeting](#)

01

Welcome and  
announcements

02

Activities and  
results in the  
previous Quarter

03

Outlook to the  
next Quarter

04

Discussions and  
decisions for today



## **3. Build an ecosystem**



# Preperation

Identify your stakeholders

Tool: **Partner radar**: Who is Who and why are they interesting in the context of your project?

*The tool helps you **to identify your stakeholders**. With this tool, you determine what their influence is on the project. It helps to determine the kind of relationships that you should try to establish with stakeholders.*

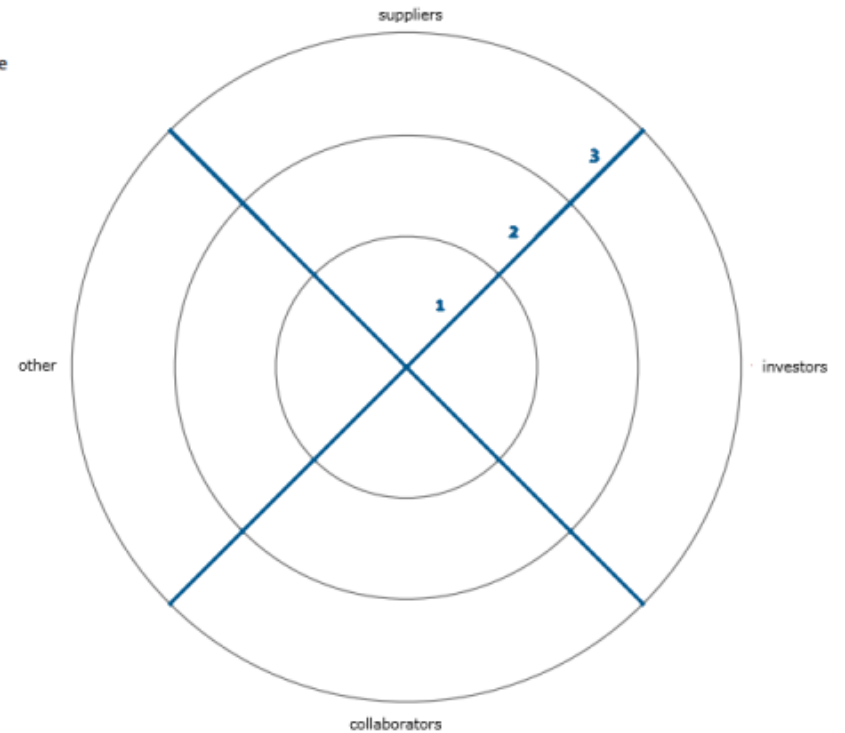
You'll find the tool here:

<https://flow-forward.eu/tools/partner-radar>

## partner radar

name \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 great influence
- 2 limited influence
- 3 little influence



date \_\_\_\_\_







**Categorize impact – Step 4:**

Ask the group to rate the economic, environmental and social impact as a result of the challenges with low, medium and high.

**Who is enthused to tackle it – Step 5:**

Ask each and every one who wants to tackle the challenge and ask them to write down their name and organization.

**Key Performance Indicators – Step 6:**

Ask the group to concretize results to describe Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) per challenge.

**Define stakeholders – Step 7:**

Ask the group to describe the stakeholders that are expected when it comes to the challenges per challenge.

**Next steps**

Make sure to document the table and make specific agreements with the stakeholders how they will be involved and how to proceed (e.g. see chapter 4)



## **4. Start your (first) experiment**

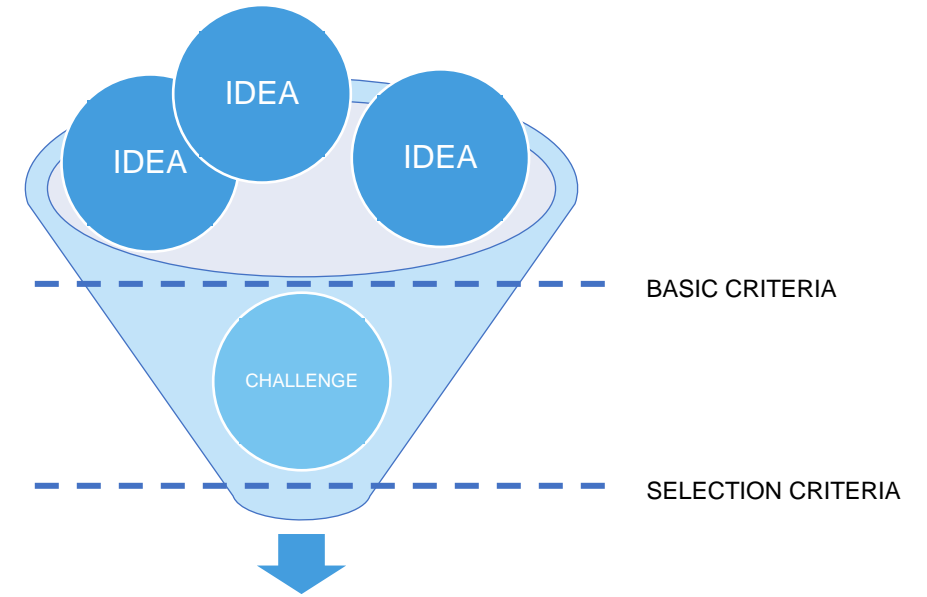


# Start your (first) experiment

Centralized in the Flow Forward is solving problems in collaboration with partners and with a focus on added value for (end) users. This approach enables short experiments that permit fast learning. We move like water: not afraid to leave the beaten track, and adapt to the rapidly changing environment.

Team of >3 experts conducting the experiment.  
Each pilot area has 1-2 innovation teams that perform 1 experiment per team at the same time.

- Understand the problem
- Understand the users
- Get to know the stakeholders
- Define the experiment
- Team
- Budget
- Process



## EXPERIMENT



# Start your (first) experiment

## Are you ready?

### Readiness checklist

#### Energy:

- You have the right team. There are people with time, passion, drive and energy who can tackle the challenge

#### Starting point:

- The challenge is user oriented
- It is in line with the social and area-specific task of the parties involved
- It is innovative in terms of collaboration with partners outside the organization

#### Approach:

- The issue can be tackled in a short cycle
- Results can be achieved within 3 to 4 months
- There is a team in mind that has time to carry out the assignment
- Financing is available
- Has potential communication value – it can be explained to others
- The potential solution is scalable if successful



# Start your (first) experiment

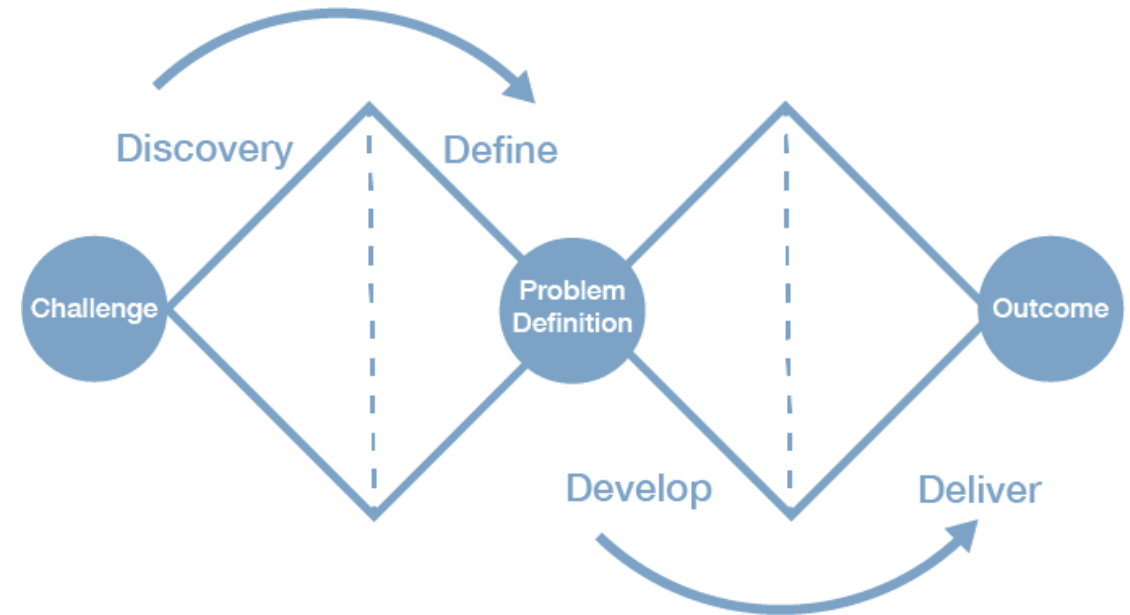
We use the Double Diamond model for experimentation. It represents the phases Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver. The Double Diamond consists of two “diamonds” that each symbolize a process of diverging (exploring and investigating something) and then converging (making choices and taking action).

We will explain per phase what the phase entails and indicate which tools you can use as a designer within the relevant phase.

## Design principles

1. User centered design
2. Communicate (visual & inclusive)
3. Collaborate and co-create
4. Iterate frequently

*Note: It is important to understand that the Double Diamond method is not a linear process. The blue gauges indicate that you can go back to the start of the design issue at any time. For example, you can already make and test a very fast prototype in the discovery phase.*



# Start your (first) experiment

## Discover

The Discover phase aims to develop a real understanding of / experience with the challenge. By delving into the problem as much as possible, allowing different perspectives, and listening and experiencing carefully, you prevent prejudices. In many cases, this simply means spending time with people who experience the problem to be solved.

### Tools

In this phase you can use the following tools:

- Observations
- Interviews
- Area exploration
- [Focus group](#)
- [5x Why](#)
- [Value builder](#)
- [Lego Serious Play](#)
- [Empathy map](#)



# Start your (first) experiment

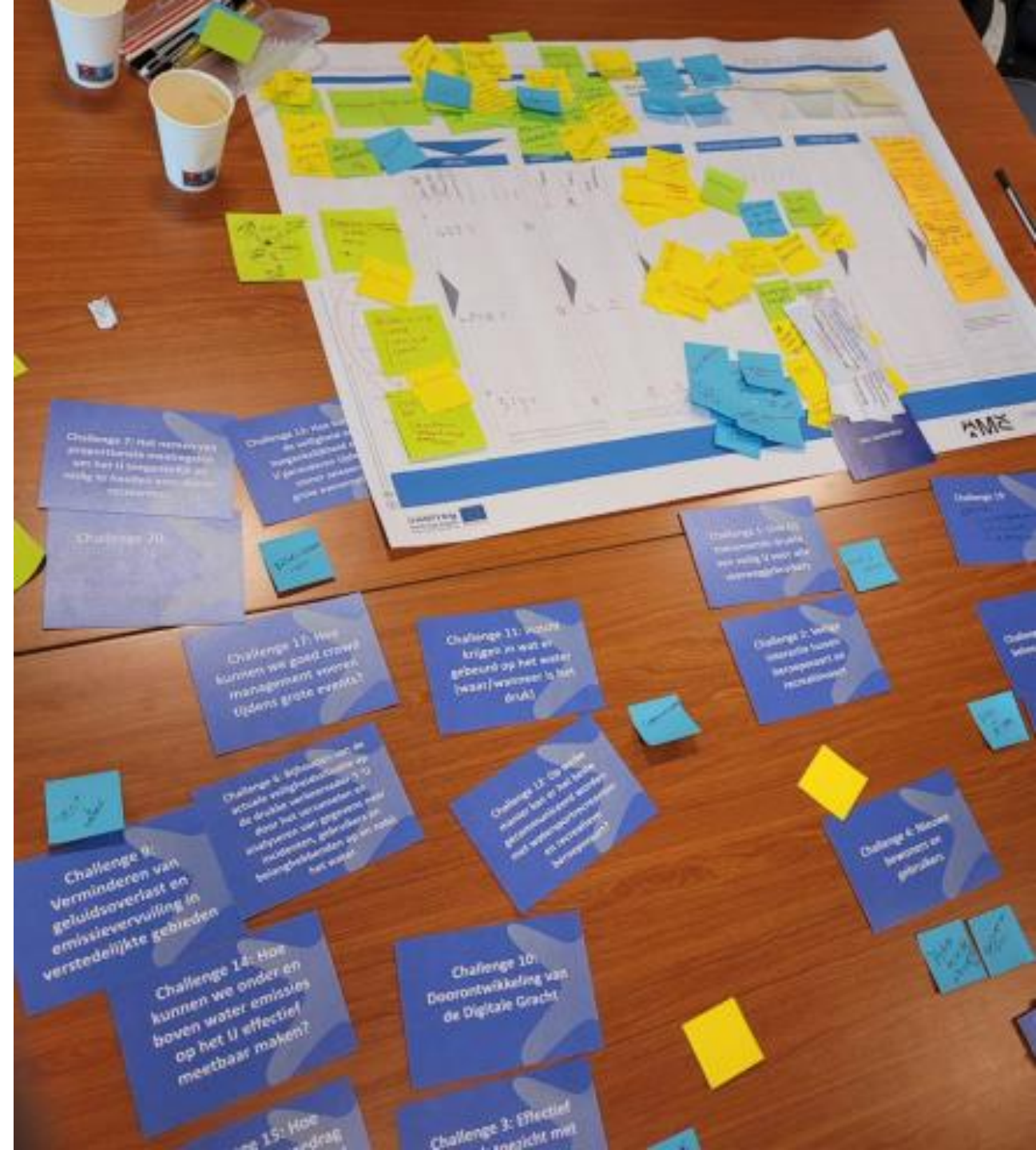
## Define

The Define phase is intended for defining the design brief. You use the information and experience gained during the discovery phase. So here you see the process of diverging and converging in the first diamond.

### Tools

In this phase you can use the following tools:

- [Focus groups](#)
- [Personas](#)
- [Affinity diagramming](#)
- [Customer journey mapping](#)
- Impact clustering
- [One pager](#)



# Start your (first) experiment

## Develop

The Develop phase is the start of the second diamond. That means that we will first diverge again. In this phase, we look for as many possible solutions for the design assignment as possible. This is a creative phase where idea generation, combining perspectives, and co-creation are central.

### Tools

In this phase you can use the following tools:

- [HMW questions](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [COCD Box](#)
- [Thinking hats](#)
- [Service blueprints](#)
- [Prototype](#)





# Start your (first) experiment

## Deliver

In the Deliver phase, you will try different solutions on a small scale. You say goodbye to what doesn't work and you continue to develop what does work.

### Tools

In this phase you can use the following tools:

- [Wizard of Ozz](#)
- [User testing](#)
- [Customer lifecycle map](#)
- [Role play](#)

It is not a sales pitch!



# **5. Way of working**



# Short cyclic

Flow Forward is a short cycle innovation approach. Each cycle lasts 3 months. During the cycle the Connected River innovation team will work on predetermined goals within the ecosystem, experiments and upscaling phase. After which there is an evaluation with the team. At the end of each quarter, there is a reflection with the PAB and goals are set for the next quarter.



Pilot  
Area  
Board



**Reflection**

- Are we doing the right things?
- Are we doing the things right?



**Direction**

- Next steps



Connected  
River  
Team



**Innovation**

- ecosystems
- experiments
- upscaling



**Evaluation**

- Lessons learned
- Results overview
- Playbook contribution



**Direction**

- Next steps



# Flow Forward, a mix of methods

In the Flow Forward approach, a combination of Design Thinking, Lean Startup and Agile Design is used. In all these innovation methods, the end user is at the centre of development from an early stage of development.

## Design Thinking

This method helps you understand the perspective of the end user. It focusses on working together with the end user and getting focus on their needs and wants. It describes an iterative process that can be used when you need to solve complex problems.

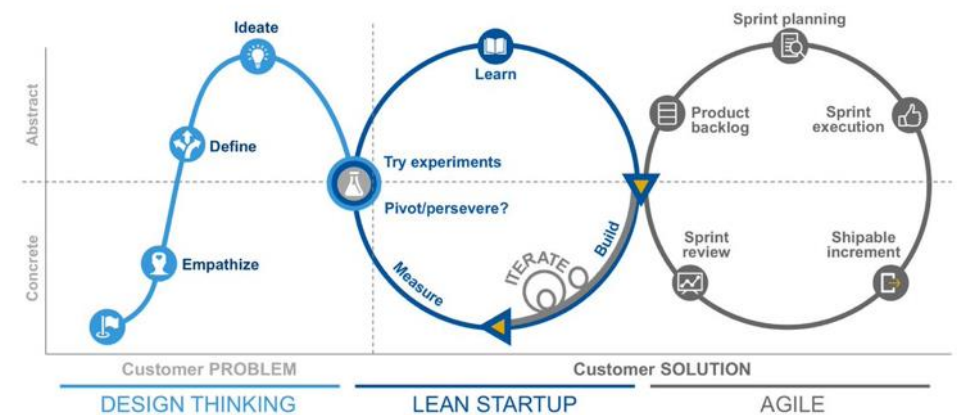
## Lean Startup

The Lean Startup method helps you to research and test your ideas in practice. It focusses on arriving faster at a suitable result by iterating and helps you to constructively adjust when necessary.

## Agile Design

Agile focusses on sharing the minimal viable solution with your end users. The method helps you to quickly get your solution idea out to end users to get their feedback. You adjust and keep on producing minimal viable products and collecting feedback.

## Combine Design Thinking, Lean Startup and Agile



#GartnerSYM

21. CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY | © 2016 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner and ITAP are registered trademarks of Gartner, Inc. or its affiliates.

Gartner

# Experiment backlog - Trelloboard

This tool helps you to work together with your experiment team effectively by keeping tasks organized. In Trello, you can divide and keep track of the tasks that need to be completed within the experiment

## This tool is best used by ...?

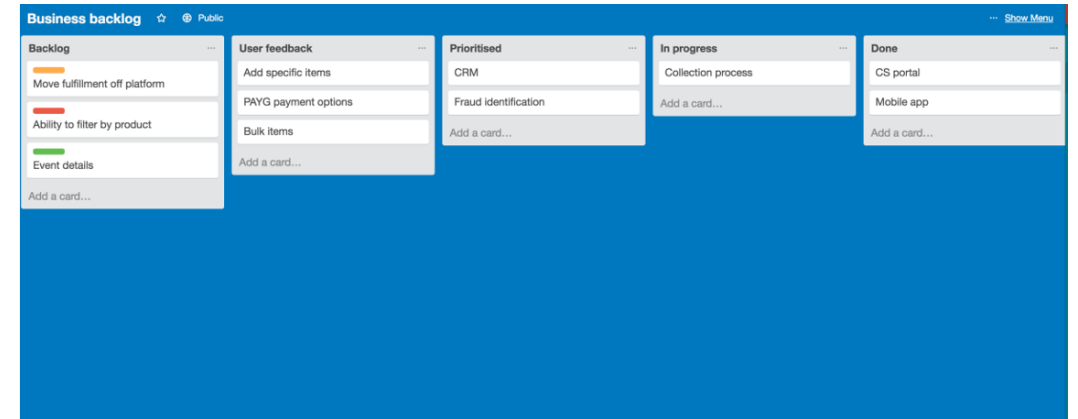
This tool needs to be used by the experiment team. The experiment lead is responsible to share the board and keep it up to date.

## How do you use the tool?

On the Trello board, you write a backlog of all the activities that need to be done within the experiment. During the experiment, you move activities through the different status columns putting each activity with its current status. Think of useful categories for your experiment like: user feedback, priority, in development and of course ready.

## What is the result of this tool?

The result of a well-maintained Trello board is that everyone in the project knows what is being worked on and by whom. It is also clear what is still on the backlog, and you don't take on too many tasks at the same time.



# Working out loud

Working out loud provides valuable perspectives, alternative approaches, and new ideas that can improve our work and lead to continuous improvement.

By sharing your progress and challenges, you invite others to contribute their insights, which can lead to creativity and innovation for your challenges.

*Share your best practice, lessons learned, innovative solutions, mistakes and experience with us.*

**Contact:** Verena Jahn

**Email:** [VJ@hamburg-logistik.net](mailto:VJ@hamburg-logistik.net)



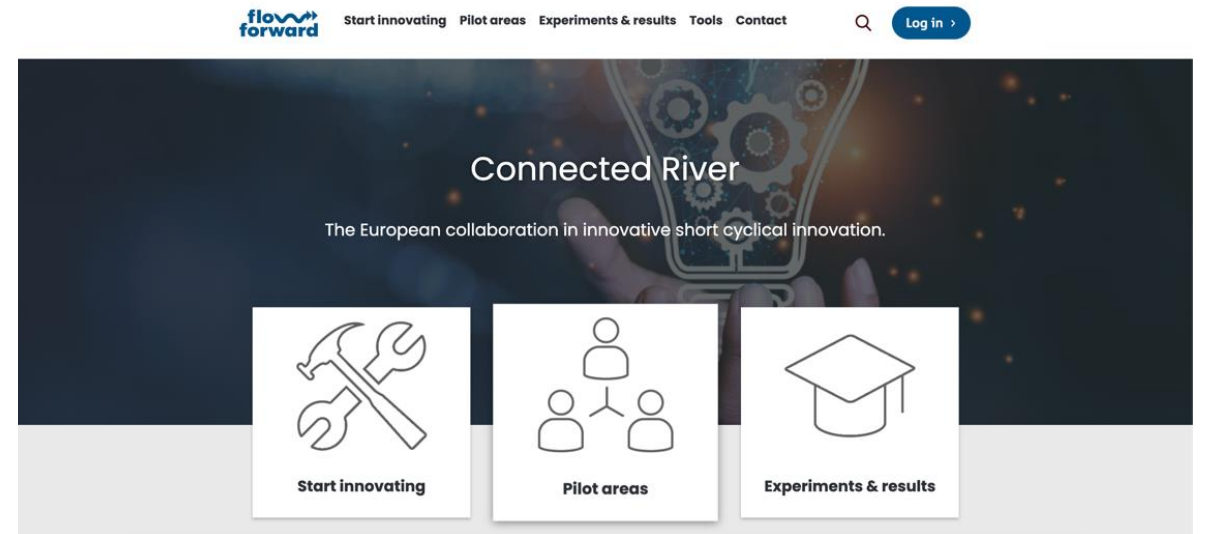
# Looking for more?

During the next 4 years, the Flow Forward platform will be developed. A first version is already available and will be continuously improved based on our and your insights and experiences.

The goal of the Flow Forward platform is to provide easy-to-use tools, that guide one step at a time to practical and direct applicable results. The platform will be free to use for anyone interested in the approach.

On the platform you can share interesting cases and results, but also provide tools and approach guidelines so that both current as well as potential partners can use the necessary content to create successful collaborations and innovation.

Explore the platform. [Go to the flow-forward.eu](https://flow-forward.eu)



# Improving the Flow Forward

The starter kit is part of the Flow Forward approach. Flow Forward stands for learning to experiment, but also for experimental learning. We use this philosophy for this innovation method as well.

This starter kit is not a final product, but the first version that we will continue to develop in the coming years with you.

*If you have feedback, let us know!*

**Contact:** Ruud Kosman

**Email:** [ruud.Kosman@innovalor.nl](mailto:ruud.Kosman@innovalor.nl)

