



EXPLORE

IDEATE

## The Design Process

# Explore and Ideate

The Explore and Ideate phase transforms research findings into clearly defined problems and possible solutions. This is when the process moves from understanding reality to imagining responses, while maintaining a critical eye on risks, inclusion, and feasibility.

Although it opens space for creativity, this phase is not a stage of boundless technological enthusiasm. It is a structured exercise in responsible exploration.

### 1. Objective

Translate research findings into:

- \* Clear and actionable problem statements.
- \* Relevant and contextualized solution options.
- \* Early risk identification.
- \* Clear strategy for ongoing engagement.

This phase seeks to reduce the gap between understanding and action without compromising ethical principles.

### 2. Introduction for the facilitator

In this phase, the facilitator will find tools to transform research into strategic direction. It is a space for creativity, but also for responsibility. Here, we define what problem we really want to address, for whom, and under what conditions.

Explore and Ideate is not about generating as many ideas as possible, but about generating ideas that are relevant, inclusive, and safe in the context of crisis. The usefulness of this phase lies in the fact that it allows us to move toward solutions with criteria, reducing the risk of developing tools that are disconnected from reality or that cause unforeseen damage.

### 3. How to use this phase

Use this phase when:	Do not use this phase to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* There is sufficient clarity about needs and context.</li> <li>* It has been validated that technology could add value.</li> <li>* Preliminary risks have been identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Solve poorly defined problems.</li> <li>* Introduce predefined solutions.</li> <li>* Avoid difficult conversations about risks.</li> </ul>

### 4. Pre-Activity Checklist

**Before starting activities:**

- The problem is clearly defined from the previous phase.
- It has been validated that there is potential value in exploring digital options.
- Preliminary risks have been identified.
- Applicable data protection frameworks are known.
- Diverse and inclusive participation has been planned.
- The ideation space is secure and private.
- The team understands that not all ideas will move forward.

### 5. Activities

**Define the Problem**

**Purpose**

Clearly articulate:

- \* What problem will be addressed.
- \* Who is facing it.
- \* Why a digital solution could help.

**Facilitator Guidance**

- \* Formulate the problem based on people’s experiences.
- \* Avoid implicit solutions within the statement.
- \* Be specific (not abstract).
- \* Validate the definition with key stakeholders.



## How to facilitate in a crisis

- \* Keep the problem focused and realistic.
- \* Consider structural inequalities.
- \* Avoid oversimplification.

## Suggested methods

- \* Problem statement canvas.
- \* “How might we...” statements.
- \* Quick validation with community or staff.

## Specific checklist

- The problem is clear and specific.
- The affected group is identified.
- The reason for considering technology is justified.
- The scope limits are identified.

## Ideation sessions:

### Purpose

Generate multiple ideas before evaluating or selecting.

### Facilitator Guidance

- \* Create a safe creative space.
- \* Do not evaluate ideas prematurely.
- \* Include diverse perspectives.
- \* Consider non-digital solutions.

## How to facilitate in a crisis

- \* Assess whether separate sessions are required (gender, digital trust).
- \* Ensure privacy.
- \* Include operational staff.
- \* Adjust duration for fatigue.

## Suggested methods

- \* Structured brainstorming.
- \* User personas.
- \* Journey mapping.
- \* Simple sketching.



## Specific checklist

- Diverse groups participated.
- Multiple ideas were generated.
- Non-digital options were considered.
- No predetermined solution was imposed.

## Risk Assessment

### Purpose

Identify risks before moving forward with prototypes.

### Facilitator Guidance

Explore:

- \* Privacy and data protection risks.
- \* Social and exclusion risks.
- \* Possible unintended harm.
- \* Technical and operational feasibility.

### How to facilitate in a crisis

- \* Include community and operational perspectives.
- \* Document risks explicitly.
- \* Consider differential impacts by group.

### Suggested methods

- \* Risk mapping canvas.
- \* Probability-impact matrix.
- \* Structured discussion.

### Specific checklist

- Data risks were identified.
- Social risks identified.
- Feasibility assessed.
- Potential harms discussed.



## Participation Strategy

### Purpose

Define how participation will continue in later phases

### Facilitator Guidance

- \* Ask how they want to participate.
- \* Define feedback mechanisms.
- \* Assess need for awareness raising.
- \* Plan ongoing communication.

### How to facilitate in a crisis

- \* Be realistic about timeframes and capacities.
- \* Ensure clarity in expectations.
- \* Do not overload the community.

### Suggested methods

- \* Participation planning template.
- \* Feedback loop mapping.
- \* Simple communication plan.

### Specific checklist

- Feedback mechanisms were defined.
- Training needs were identified.
- Update channels were agreed upon.
- Commitments were documented.

## 6. Specific considerations in emergencies

### Inclusion and safety

- \* Real diversity in sessions.
- \* Private spaces.
- \* Separate sessions if necessary.

### Review of the participatory process

- \* Adapt initial design according to new findings.
- \* Adjust group composition.



## Regulatory framework

- \* Identify applicable data protection policies.
- \* Understand regulatory implications.

## Adoption and legitimacy

- \* Identify formal and informal influencers.
- \* Explore integration with existing platforms.

## Accessibility

- \* Consider voice-based technology.
- \* Design for low literacy.
- \* Include marginalized groups in discussion.

## 7. Expected outcome

At the end of this phase, the team should have:

- \* A clear and validated definition of the problem.
- \* A small set of relevant and viable ideas.
- \* Explicit identification of risks.
- \* Agreed participation strategy.
- \* Clarity on which ideas should not move forward.

*“Creativity in crisis must be guided by responsibility, inclusion, and risk awareness—not urgency alone.”*