



D3.1

Handbook “How to build a RuralBioUp Regional Hub”

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1 Executive Summary

This handbook has been developed to support regional partners involved in the RuralBioUp project, specifically in establishing regional bioeconomy hubs. The primary focus of this handbook is to facilitate targeted interaction with stakeholders, aiming to collaboratively design actions that contribute to a shared bioeconomy vision in the respective region, promoting positive economic, ecological, and social outcomes within the region.

The handbook equips facilitators with necessary knowledge and tools to prepare for and implement a co-creative workshop involving different bioeconomy stakeholders. Its purpose is to serve as a comprehensive guide for building a sustainable RuralBioUp hub. By embracing co-creation principles and utilizing the tools and approaches outlined within, project partners can tap into the collective understanding, creativity, and expertise of stakeholders to effectively address complex challenges and achieve impactful and sustainable solutions for their regions.

The handbook offers a selection of specific tools, methods, and recommendations. These recommendations are derived from the authors' practical experiences in implementing stakeholder engagement activities, as well as relevant literature. While it does not provide an exhaustive repertoire of co-creation methods, it focuses on a tailored selection that aligns with the context of the RuralBioUp project. By doing so, it fosters a deeper understanding of how participation and co-creation should be designed and implemented in the context of RuralBioUp.



2 Introduction

Stakeholder engagement and co-creation are essential processes in achieving effective collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making in various domains. They encompass actively involving individuals, groups, or organizations who have a vested interest or are affected by a particular project, initiative, or policy. Stakeholder engagement refers to the process of interacting and collaborating with stakeholders to understand their perspectives, gather input, and incorporate their feedback into decision-making processes. It recognizes that stakeholders have valuable knowledge, experiences, and concerns that should be considered to develop inclusive and sustainable outcomes. Effective stakeholder engagement fosters transparency, builds trust, and promotes shared ownership of initiatives.

Co-creation on the other hand takes stakeholder engagement a step further by emphasizing active participation and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. It entails creating a collaborative space where stakeholders can contribute their unique expertise, insights, and creativity to collectively design and implement solutions. Co-creation harnesses the collective intelligence and resources of stakeholders, enabling innovative approaches to complex challenges. It recognizes that solutions are often more effective when developed collaboratively rather than in isolation.

The benefits of stakeholder engagement and co-creation are numerous. They enhance the quality of decision-making processes by incorporating diverse perspectives, leading to more informed and robust outcomes. Stakeholders feel valued and included, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the initiatives. Additionally, stakeholder engagement and co-creation build stronger relationships, trust, and social capital among stakeholders, facilitating future collaborations and cooperation.

To effectively engage stakeholders and foster co-creation, it is essential to establish clear communication channels, provide accessible information, and create an inclusive and respectful environment that values diverse perspectives. Facilitation techniques, such as workshops, focus groups, or online platforms, can be employed to enable meaningful dialogue and collaboration. It is crucial to ensure that power dynamics are acknowledged and mitigated, allowing for equitable participation and decision-making.

In order to use these powerful approaches to address complex challenges and to achieve sustainable outcomes, this handbook introduces the RuralBioUp hubs into the process of stakeholder engagement as well as co-creation methods and gives insights into possible methods and tools. Additionally, it provides concrete proposals on how a kick-off event of a RuralBioUp co-creation process could be designed, always having in mind that the adaptation to regional needs and stakeholder specificities is essential.

2.1 Structure of deliverable

The handbook is structured as follows: PART 1 deals with the preparation, identification of goals and the planning. PART 2 elaborates on the engagement of stakeholders and the co-creation. These two



parts form the theoretical background of the deliverable.

Thereof PART 3 refers to the practical part. It elaborates on how the RuralBioUp kick-off meeting, aimed at working on the specification of value chains, the hub vision and the creation of the activities, could be designed in a co-creative way. In addition it gives guidelines for the monitoring of the actions, the adjustments and the sustainable integration of activities.



3 Part 1 – Bring your hub to life: Prepare, identify, plan

Before you start to engage your stakeholders in your RuralBioUp hub it is essential that you know where you start from and clarify what you want to reach. As you start to engage with your stakeholder, you will need to re-negotiate goals and tactics, but you should start the process on a solid basis of evidence and self-reflection. Be realistic in your expectations and definition of goals!

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do I want to achieve
2. What do I NOT want
3. What are my GOALS
4. What are my TACTICS to reach my goals?

Further in the process you will challenge your tactics in the light of the shared vision, which you co-create with your stakeholders in your hub. Tactics are the concrete activities you undertake to make your goals, your vision, come to life. You will find your allies and assets, but also your opposers and barriers. Finding the common in the controversies is the duty of the hub manager.

3.1 Evaluate the strategic landscape and define the problem

Base your standards (goals and milestones that you want to reach) on an analysis of the strategic landscape and state-of-the-art of your region. In the end you can measure your results against the initial situation. Look at macro and micro trends and know what happened in the past and why. This may help you to understand dynamics, challenges and opportunities. Building on what has worked in the past might be very useful. Your strategy does not necessarily need to be innovative, but it needs to be effective. Methods that you can apply in this phase are literature review, scenario building, SWOT, good practice analysis, future trends analysis, etc.

3.2 Definition of goals and non-goals

As a first step we suggest developing a logic model for your hub, which is one instrument for the development of a more complete theory of change. There are different types of logic models (result chain, logical framework, etc.), but in principle it is a visual tool that helps thinking through the whole process of a project. The idea is beginning with the “end in mind”, respectively what the future state will look like when the project ends. It is a starting point that “reflects the team’s best thinking at that moment in time”¹, but which should be revisited and updated, You might also consider using the logic

¹https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/project_logic_model_how_to_note_final_sep1.pdf, p.2



model as a communication tool with your stakeholders. The logic model can also be used in the monitoring of goal achievement.

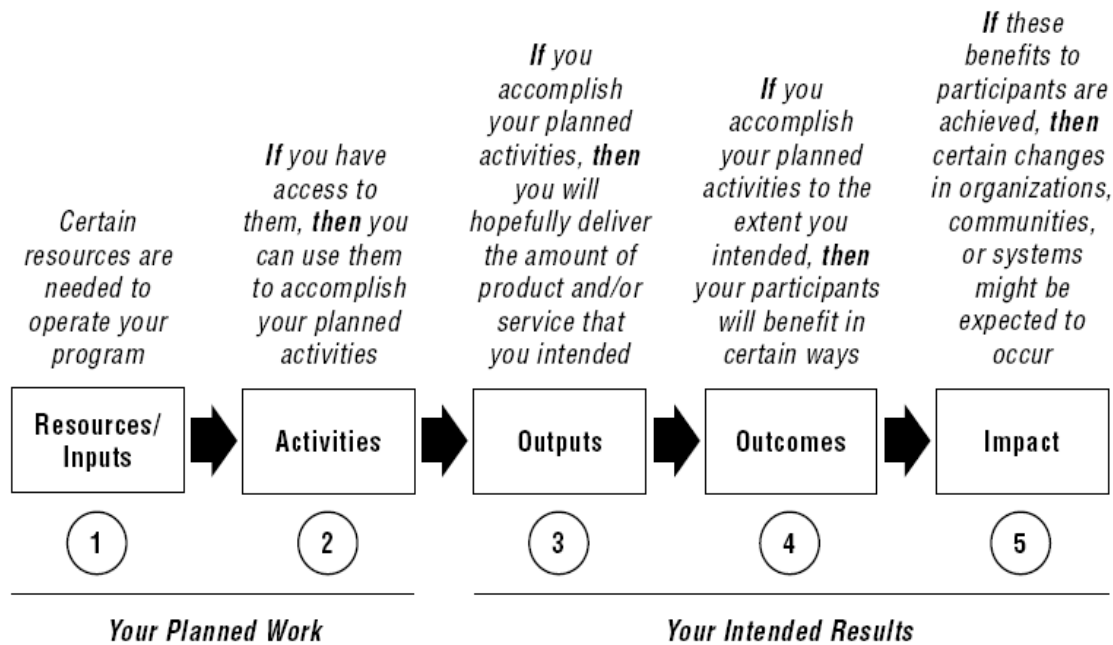


Figure 1: Source: WK Kellogg Foundation, 2004

The logic model will help you to define **3-5 strategic objectives**.

When you develop your specific goals, you might want to check if they are **S.M.A.R.T.** - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, Time-bound (Doran, G. (1981). We also recommend you to specifically define **NON-goals**, goals that you won't be focusing on immediately.

In a more pragmatic way in the context of RuralBioHub we advise you to screen the project contract and extract all information regarding requirements for your hub. Structure this information in half-year plans. Also consider inter-dependencies between tasks and partners. Does a specific task rely on someone else's work? Does someone else rely on your in-time work? You might also include KPIs for each task.



Figure 2: Example Planning tool for RuralBioUp hub creation

3.3 Identify your stakeholders

When you have analyzed the strategic landscape and developed your theory of change and related project goals, you can start to identify stakeholders that you need to co-create specific steps along the process.

3.3.1 Five good reasons why it is important to get stakeholders involved

Stakeholder involvement is crucial for the success of any project or initiative. Here are some reasons why it is important to get stakeholders involved (Jeffery 2009, Adema et al 2020, Bahadorestani et al 2020, Philipson et al 2012)

1. **Improved decision-making:** Stakeholders bring diverse perspectives and expertise to the table, which can lead to better decision-making. By involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, you can ensure that all relevant factors are considered and that the final decision is well-informed.
2. **Increased buy-in:** When stakeholders are involved in the project from the beginning, they are more likely to feel invested in its success. This can lead to increased buy-in and commitment, which can help to overcome any resistance or obstacles that may arise during the project.



3. **Reduced risk:** Stakeholders can help to identify potential risks and issues early on in the project, which can help to mitigate or avoid them altogether. By involving stakeholders in the risk assessment and management process, you can ensure that all potential risks are identified and addressed.
4. **Improved communication:** By involving stakeholders in the project, you can improve communication and ensure that everyone is on the same page. This can help to avoid misunderstandings, reduce conflicts, and ensure that the project is moving forward in a coordinated and efficient manner.
5. **Increased accountability:** When stakeholders are involved in the project, they are more likely to feel accountable for its success. This can help to ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and that everyone is doing their part to contribute to the project's success.

3.3.2 The 3 Rs: Right stakeholder - Right message – Right tools

3.3.2.1 *The right stakeholders*

Finding the right stakeholders is an essential part of any project or initiative. Here are some steps to help you identify and engage with the right stakeholders:

Step 1. Identify the purpose of the project: Start by identifying the purpose of the project or initiative. This will help you to determine which stakeholders are most likely to be impacted by or have an interest in the project.

Step 2. Develop a stakeholder map: Develop a stakeholder map that identifies the different stakeholder groups and their relationships to the project. This can help you to identify the key stakeholders who are most critical to the success of the project. There are several tools that might help for developing this overview. One example can be found in Annex 1.

Step 3. Conduct stakeholder analysis: Conduct a stakeholder analysis to understand the interests, needs, and concerns of each stakeholder group. This will help you to tailor your approach and messaging to meet their specific needs (example of tools pl. see Annex).

Step 4. Engage with stakeholders: Engage with stakeholders to understand their perspectives and gather feedback on the project or initiative. This can be done through focus groups, surveys, or one-on-one meetings.

Step 5. Identify stakeholders with influence: Identify stakeholders who have influence over the success of the project. This could include individuals or groups with decision-making power, access to resources, or the ability to influence public opinion.



Step 6. Prioritize stakeholders: Prioritize stakeholders based on their level of impact and influence on the project or initiative. This will help you to focus your stakeholder engagement efforts on the most critical stakeholders.

By following these steps, you can identify the right stakeholders and tailor your stakeholder engagement efforts to meet their specific needs, ensuring the success of your project or initiative.

3.3.2.2 *The right message*

Formulating the right messages is critical to effective stakeholder engagement. Here are some steps to help you formulate the right messages:

Step 1. Define your objectives: Start by defining your objectives for stakeholder engagement. Consider what you want to achieve, what actions you want stakeholders to take, and what information you need to communicate. (see 3.2)

Step 2. Identify your audience: Identify your audience, including their demographics, interests, and level of knowledge about the project or initiative. This will help you to tailor your messages to their specific needs and interests.

Step 3. Your messages: Craft your messages based on your objectives and your audience. Use clear and concise language, and focus on the benefits of the project or initiative. Use examples and stories to help stakeholders understand the impact of the project.

Step 4. Use multiple communication channels: Use multiple communication channels to reach your stakeholders. Consider using email, social media, websites, videos, and in-person meetings, depending on the preferences of your audience.

Step 5. Test your messages: Test your messages with a small group of stakeholders to ensure they are effective and resonate with your audience. Make any necessary adjustments before scaling up your use of the messages.

Step 6. Evaluate your results: Evaluate your results to see how effective your messages have been in engaging your stakeholders. This will help you to refine your messages and improve your stakeholder engagement efforts over time.

By following these steps, you can formulate the right messages for your stakeholders, ensuring that you are communicating effectively and building strong relationships that support the success of your project or initiative.

3.3.2.3 *The right tools*

Selecting the right tools for stakeholder engagement is an important aspect of any project or initiative. Here are some steps to help you select the right tools for engaging with your stakeholders:



1. **Identify your stakeholder communication needs:** Start by identifying your stakeholder communication needs. Consider the types of information you need to share with stakeholders, the frequency of communication, and the level of detail required.
2. **Research stakeholder engagement tools:** Conduct research to identify the range of stakeholder engagement tools available. Consider the features of each tool, the cost, and how easy it is to use.
3. **Evaluate the tools:** Evaluate the tools you have identified against your stakeholder communication needs. Consider factors such as the tool's functionality, ease of use, cost, and the level of technical expertise required to use it.
4. **Consider stakeholder preferences:** Consider the preferences of your stakeholders when selecting the tools to use. For example, some stakeholders may prefer to receive updates via email, while others may prefer to attend meetings in person.
5. **Test the tools:** Once you have identified the tools you want to use, test them with a small group of stakeholders to ensure they are effective and meet your stakeholder communication needs. Make any necessary adjustments before scaling up your use of the tools.
6. **Provide training and support (if needed):** Provide training and support to stakeholders on how to use the tools effectively. This will help to ensure that they are able to engage with the tools and stay informed about the project.

By following these steps, you can select the right tools for engaging with your stakeholders, ensuring that you are able to communicate effectively with them and build strong relationships that support the success of your project or initiative.

3.3.2.4 Practical tips - Do's and Don'ts for stakeholder engagement in the framework of the Bioeconomy hub creation

The following list of Do's and Don'ts was developed by all project partners during the kick-off meeting.

DO's	DON'Ts
Define and clarify impact and benefits of hubs activities	Not define and clear impacts and benefits of the hub's activities
revenue stakeholder commitment	No revenues for their (stakeholder) commitment
be realistic with requested time	Promise to do many volunteer activities



Clearly outline the collaborative character, but emphasize that borders are accepted	Ask to share more than they want
Interactive discussion	Not listening to the stakeholders and not asking their point of view
Make clear what can be the benefits (short term)	Asking for a lot of work without benefit
Clearly outline the tasks and their involvement	Asking for a lot of work without benefit
Place them comfortable/good position (trustful environment)	Put stakeholders in a situation of competition
Say what they can get and how benefit from participation and only then ask for time and contribution	Asking their time and participation without giving something back
Communicate the benefit of participation	Not communicating the benefit for the stakeholders
Display the results and value their engagement	Not showing the results for their engagement
be selective in what activities you are proposing	Involve stakeholders in activities that are not relevant for them
Get to know your stakeholders (interest, way of working, relevant fields) Use different communication channels (e.g. social media for younger people, shared groups - less invasive)	Not knowing your stakeholders
Plan a time table for emails that is sustainable and accepted (Select carefully your messages) e.g. 1/month	Too many emails / spamming them
Only ask for engagement that is doable and feasible	Involving stakeholders in time and resource consuming activities
plan only logic and necessary activities and make a good distribution of work between the measures	asking stakeholders for many duties (ex. To fill out questionnaires or writing reports)
keep stakeholders up-to-date with new and useful information	providing old information (about fund raising, legislation, opportunities)
organize focus groups with people having the same vision (ie. Same issues and problems)	forcing people to collaborate with other people who are conflictual (for policies, strategies, ...)



If you ask stakeholder, be serious in integrating their experience	Not listening to the stakeholders and not asking their point of view
Think of benefits and credit for participating stakeholders	No benefit for work done
showing/present the impact	lack of acknowledgement
goal orientated, demanded messages	spamming
evaluate role of stakeholders	non interesting content
Giving awards to the stakeholders	Showing progress on regional hub on social media without informing and updates with the stakeholders that contribute to it - no acknowledgements

Table 1: Summary of Hubs focus group session, Rome 10th October 2022

3.3.3 Further reading and helpful literature

Further reading and helpful literature

Adema, L. C., Malietso, M. C., & Anyanje, S. T. (2020). Influence of stakeholder empowerment on sustainability of social based corporate projects in TVETs in Western Kenya. *International Journal of Project Management*, 2(3), 98– 108.

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Phillipson J., Lowe, P., Proctor A., Ruto, E. (2012) Stakeholder engagement and knowledge exchange in environmental research. *Journal of Environmental Management*. Volume 95, Issue 1.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide. (2004) <https://hmstrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/LogicModel-Kellog-Fdn.pdf>



4 Part 2 – Co-creation fostering engaged RuralBioUp Hubs

4.1 A short overview on what is co-creation?²

Co-creation is a collaborative approach to innovation that involves stakeholders in the design and development of products, services, or initiatives. It is an approach that encourages the active participation of stakeholders, such as customers, employees, or community members, in the creative process.

Co-creation is often used in the design of user-centered products and services, where the goal is to ensure that the product or service meets the needs and preferences of the end-user. By involving stakeholders in the design process, co-creation ensures that the product or service is designed with their input, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.

Co-creation involves a shift away from the traditional approach of designing products and services in-house and then launching them to the market. Instead, stakeholders are invited to contribute their ideas, insights, and expertise to the design process, resulting in products and services that are tailored to their needs. Co-creation can be facilitated through a variety of participatory methods.

Participative methods are techniques and tools used to engage stakeholders in a project or initiative. These methods encourage stakeholder involvement, collaboration, and contribution to decision-making processes. Examples of participative methods are i.e. Focus groups (small, moderated discussions that bring together stakeholders to share their thoughts and ideas about a specific topic. Focus groups can be used to gain insights into stakeholder needs, preferences, and concerns.), or workshops (Workshops are collaborative meetings that bring together stakeholders to solve a specific problem or develop a plan. Workshops can be used to facilitate stakeholder participation in decision-making processes and encourage collaboration and co-creation.) and Co-design/co-creation (Co-design involves involving stakeholders in the design and development of a product, service, or initiative. This approach ensures that stakeholder needs and preferences are taken into account, and can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions). By using participative methods, you can involve stakeholders in your project or initiative, build trust, and ensure that their needs and preferences are taken into account, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.

Usually, a co-creation process involves multiple iterations of prototyping, testing, and refining until the final product or service is developed.

² Vlg. . Ind & Coates, N. 2013, Sanders & Stappers 2008, Ramaswamy&Ozcan 2018, Seppä, M., & Tanev, S. 2011,



Overall, co-creation is a collaborative and inclusive approach to innovation that involves stakeholders in the design and development of products, services, or initiatives, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.

4.2 Develop a RuralBioUp co-creation strategy for your hub establishment

Starting from your theory of change or logic model, we advise you to develop a co-creation strategy. Think about which working steps or products in the project lifetime you intend to co-create and with whom? Again, have clarity about the benefit and goal of the co-creation activity, otherwise you will not be able to mobilize your stakeholders. In the next step you have to plan the co-creation method and setting.

! *Methods always follow the goals (not the other way around)!*

So, don't do a world café only because you are fond of the method. Know the advantages and constraints of the method and apply it deliberately according to your expected outcomes. Also, if you plan to host e.g. a big multi-stakeholder event, you will be well advised to start the planning early.

The basis of your co-creation strategy in RuralBioUp are the process and outcome requirements defined in the project contract. Take off from there to develop your hub-specific co-creation strategy.

RuralBioUp co-creation strategy, principles and requirements (as defined in the contract):

- Establish multi-actor regional platforms adopting **structured and continuous co-creation approaches**, aiming at removing barriers to the adoption and implementation of research results and small-scale bio-based solutions (SO2):

Each Regional Facilitator together with its local Hub Contact Point, (defined in this stage, members of the Advisory Board - AB) and other stakeholders of the Regional Hub will **co-create, co-decide and co-design the 2 value chains** on which defining the **Action Plan** (T3.2) to be implemented (and monitored, T3.3) and the strategy to make the Hub sustainable after the end of the project (T5.4).



The regional stakeholders will **co-design recommendations** and new actionable knowledge (T5.2); exchange and learn about best practices from other Regional Hubs and with other external regions (RuralBioUp Followers, T3.4); measure impacts of the project (T5.1). Finally, the whole RuralBioUp approach, methodology and results will be packaged to be easily adapted and replicated in other regions.



- RuralBioUp will address the “Do no significant harm” principle starting from the co-creation in the Hubs, where the possible **solutions** to be adopted at rural level will be discussed by all regional actors.
- **Citizens** have to be actively involved in the Hubs’ co-creation process and empowered with understandable and science-based tools to take informed choices.
- Co-creation within Hubs (T3.2, T3.3), networking activities (T4.3), study visits (T4.4), best practices and lesson learnt exchange (T3.4) will create **new inter- and intra-value chains collaborations**, bringing in the rural areas addressed new bio-based solutions that will be adopted by local farmers/foresters and companies, or developed in collaboration with researchers.
- Co-creation process within Hubs (T3.2-3.3) aims to **identify concerns of regional actors** (in particular T3) and to analyse and discuss barriers/solutions using trustworthy and science-based information shared by knowledge holders.

When we use terms such as “participation” or “co-creation” in our methodological approach, we should treat it in a clear and specific way. Often interventions claim to be participatory, but do not meet the standards. Be fair to your stakeholders and be transparent and honest about their role and decision power in the process. *“It also helps to understand participation as something deeply political, and to retain the notion of rights and empowerment.”*³

There are different levels of participation, which empower participants in different ways. An often cited reference in this regard is Arnsteins ladder of citizen participation (1969), which illustrates on a ladder with eight steps who has power when decisions are made (from nonparticipation to citizen control). We want to suggest a simplified model, which is used by the Institute for Participatory Design.

stage 1 	informative	participation takes place through the provision of information on issues. On some occasions participants might react to the information. Participants have no real power, but information is transparent.
stage 2 	deliberative	Communication among all stakeholders as in discussions, speaking events, opinion-forming and public discourses (world café, round table, etc.).
stage 3	collaborative	Information + communication + cooperation;

³ <https://www.participatorymethods.org/method/levels-participation>

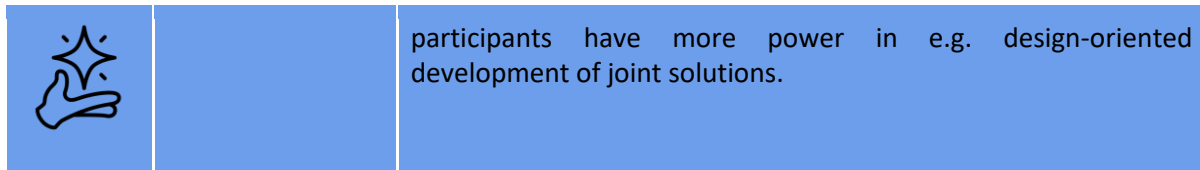


Figure 3: Source Institut für Partizipatives Gestalten, <https://www.partizipativ-gestalten.de/informative-deliberative-und-kollaborative-verfahren/>

We suggest that you plan your stakeholder engagement according to the above mentioned model. Think of different phases and expected results in the process and then assign levels of participation to stakeholder groups.

When you manage co-creation processes, make sure that you also consider the following points⁴:

a. Knowing the needs of your participants

When you co-create you invite multiple perspectives and different types of expertise. The balancing of perspectives is facilitated if needs, motivations and fears of target groups are understood.

b. Managing risks

Co-creation initiatives, like any collaborative endeavor, can come with certain risks (ie. Intellectual property protection, confidentiality and privacy issues, power imbalance of participants, conflict management, compliance and legal considerations, a.s.o). It is important to identify and manage these risks to ensure the success and effectiveness of the co-creation process.

c. Managing diversity

Co-creation is an inclusive process, which should not exclude anybody. Anybody who is (potentially) concerned by the topic should have the opportunity to participate.

Be aware to be inclusive as well in your language and outreach material (e.g. including all genders, all age-cohorts, different educational backgrounds, using pictures that express diversity, etc.). When you organize events, create a safe space, which enables participants to share their opinion. Think about inclusiveness of your event venue and timing (does everybody have access? Does the timing suit e.g. persons with caring responsibilities? etc).

d. consider ethics of co-creation

By integrating ethical considerations into the co-creation process, organizations can foster a culture of fairness, transparency, and respect. Adhering to ethical principles helps build trust among participants

⁴ Vlg. Ind, N. and Coates, N. (2013), Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders & Pieter Jan Stappers (2008), Seppä, M., & Tanev, S. (2011), Venkat Ramaswamy, Kerimcan Ozcan (2018 and 2020),



and ensures that co-creation initiatives contribute positively to societal, organizational, and individual well-being (Boucher et al., 2018; Von Hippel et al., 2011; Stilgoe et al., 2013).

Ethical aspects you might consider:

- Informed consent (Do I need one? For whom? Do I need to adapt the wording/length/format for my target groups so it is well understandable? It should include information on: aim of activity, method of participation, rights, data protection)
- Which ethical aspects are important:
 - appropriate length of method for involvement,
 - suitability of method for target group,
 - acknowledgment of participation and contributions,
 - access to participation opportunities - fair, unbiased, accessible
 - social value (benefit/risk ratio) - benefit for target groups, value for community
- Do I involve vulnerable groups (if yes, do they have special needs?)
- Data management (Who owns the data of the project? How do we deal with intellectual property and creative commons? Do I need to name all involved persons in my publications? Etc.)

4.3 Chances & challenges of co-creation: Why is it beneficial to work in a participatory/co-creative way?⁵

Working in a participatory way has many benefits for both organizations and stakeholders. Here are some of the key benefits:

Increased stakeholder engagement and ownership: By involving stakeholders in the design and development of a project or initiative, they are more likely to feel engaged and invested in the outcome. This can lead to increased stakeholder ownership and support for the project.

Improved decision-making: Participatory methods can help to ensure that decisions are informed by the input and feedback of stakeholders, leading to better decision-making outcomes.

Increased innovation and creativity: By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, participatory methods can lead to more innovative and creative solutions.

Greater transparency and accountability: By involving stakeholders in the process, organizations can increase transparency and accountability, leading to greater trust and support from stakeholders.

⁵ Vgl. Uzoma and Udensi (2020), Torfing, et al. (2012), Gsottbauer, et al. (2017), Löffler and Neumeier (2018)



Improved outcomes and impact: By tailoring projects and initiatives to the needs and preferences of stakeholders, projects can improve outcomes and have a greater impact on the communities they serve.

Overall, working in a participatory way can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions, as well as increased stakeholder engagement, ownership, and support. While co-creation can bring numerous benefits, it also presents several challenges. Here are some common challenges associated with co-creation:

Diverse Stakeholder Perspectives: Co-creation involves bringing together individuals with different backgrounds, expertise, and interests. Managing and integrating these diverse perspectives can be challenging, as stakeholders may have conflicting priorities, goals, or visions for the co-creation process.

Communication and Collaboration: Effective communication and collaboration are crucial for successful co-creation. However, coordinating efforts and maintaining consistent communication among multiple stakeholders can be complex. Miscommunication, information gaps, or conflicting schedules can hinder progress and impact the quality of co-creation outcomes.

Power Imbalances: Power imbalances between stakeholders can hinder the co-creation process. Certain stakeholders, such as larger organizations or dominant individuals, may have more influence or resources, potentially overshadowing the contributions of others. Ensuring equal participation and balancing power dynamics is essential for fair and inclusive co-creation.

Intellectual Property and Ownership: Co-creation often involves sharing ideas, knowledge, and intellectual property. Determining ownership rights, protecting intellectual property, and defining usage rights can be challenging. It is crucial to establish clear agreements and legal frameworks to address these concerns and ensure fairness and protection for all parties involved.

Time and Resource Constraints: Co-creation can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Coordinating schedules, organizing meetings, and allocating resources require careful planning and management. Limited time and resources may constrain the level of participation or the depth of co-creation activities.

Resistance to Change: Co-creation often involves innovation and change, which can encounter resistance from stakeholders who are comfortable with the status quo or have vested interests in existing systems or processes. Overcoming resistance to change and fostering a culture of openness and experimentation is necessary for successful co-creation.

Evaluation and Metrics: Measuring the success and impact of co-creation initiatives can be challenging. Traditional metrics may not capture the full value created through co-creation, making it difficult to assess its effectiveness and justify investments. Developing appropriate evaluation frameworks and metrics that reflect the unique nature of co-creation is essential.



Addressing these challenges requires careful planning, effective facilitation, strong leadership, and a commitment to fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment. By addressing these challenges proactively, organizations can maximize the benefits of co-creation and drive innovation, customer satisfaction, and business growth.

4.4 Guiding Principles of co-creation

The principles of co-creation guide the collaborative process and ensure effective and meaningful engagement among stakeholders. While there are various frameworks and models for co-creation, here are some fundamental principles that underpin a successful RuralBioUp co-creation:

1. **Inclusivity and diversity:** Co-creation should involve a diverse range of stakeholders, including end-users, customers, employees, partners, and other relevant parties. Inclusivity ensures that multiple perspectives are considered, leading to more comprehensive and innovative outcomes (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Ensure active participation and engagement from all stakeholders. Use facilitation techniques to encourage open dialogue, active listening, and idea generation. Create an inclusive environment that allows for diverse perspectives to be heard and valued. But also encourage creativity and innovation. Foster a culture of creativity and innovation during the co-creation process. Encourage participants to think outside the box, explore new ideas, and challenge existing assumptions.
2. **Shared Purpose and Goals:** Co-creation requires a clear and shared purpose or goal that aligns all stakeholders. Establishing a common understanding of the purpose and desired outcomes creates a sense of direction and ensures collaborative efforts are focused (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).
3. **Open and Trusting Relationships:** Co-creation thrives on trust and open relationships among stakeholders. Trust allows for open and honest communication, sharing of ideas, and effective collaboration. Building and nurturing trust is essential for successful co-creation (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). Establish and nurture relationships with stakeholders prior to the co-creation process. Foster trust and create an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas and perspectives.
4. **Mutual Value Creation:** Co-creation should aim to create value for all stakeholders involved. It should be a mutually beneficial process that enables participants to achieve their goals, meet their needs, and generate outcomes that are valuable to them (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Deal with your participants beforehand, so that you know which positions, expectations or resistances they might bring to the workshop (do they know each other? Why are they here? What are levels of hierarchies? What are their attitudes and agendas? Are there any conflicts of interests? etc). Know if you wear the “hat” of the moderator or the “hat” of an expert. As a moderator you must be neutral. If you want to bring in your opinion, it is better to have an external moderator.



5. **Iterative and Adaptive Approach:** Co-creation is an iterative process that involves continuous learning, feedback, and adaptation. It acknowledges that solutions evolve and improve over time through cycles of ideation, prototyping, testing, and refinement (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). Be well prepared! A thorough preparation is the basis of a good workshop. You should always have a detailed planning beforehand, which does not mean you are bound by it. The better the planning foundation, the more flexible you might react to any necessary changes!
6. **Co-design and Co-production:** Co-creation emphasizes the active involvement of stakeholders in the design and production of products, services, or experiences. It goes beyond passive participation to empower stakeholders to contribute and shape the outcome collectively (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Develop a clear plan for the co-creation process, including the timeline, activities, and methods to be used. Consider how to facilitate collaboration, manage conflicts, and capture insights effectively. Embrace an iterative approach during co-creation. Continuously evaluate progress, learn from feedback, and make adjustments to the process or activities as needed. Adaptability allows for continuous improvement and optimization of the co-creation experience.
7. **Continuous Learning and Evaluation:** Co-creation processes should emphasize continuous learning and evaluation. This involves reflecting on the outcomes, assessing the effectiveness of the process, and using feedback to inform future iterations and improvements (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). Plan documentation of your workshop results: do you need a very detailed documentation or do you want to use a creative method (e.g. graphic recording). Review and analyze the insights, ideas, and outputs generated during the co-creation process. Look for patterns, common themes, and potential areas of opportunity or action and evaluate Outcomes: Assess the outcomes of the co-creation process against the defined objectives. Evaluate the success of the process, the quality of the outputs, and the level of stakeholder satisfaction.
8. **Shared Ownership and Commitment:** Co-creation requires shared ownership and commitment from all stakeholders. Participants should feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process and its outcomes, fostering a collaborative and engaged mindset (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). Communicate the outcomes and results of the co-creation process with all stakeholders involved. Share the insights, recommendations, and any actions or decisions that resulted from the co-creation process. Implement the ideas, solutions, or actions that emerged from co-creation. Establish mechanisms to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of the co-created outcomes.

These guiding principles provide a foundation for effective co-creation initiatives, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, shared purpose, trust, value creation, adaptability, and continuous learning. By adhering to these principles, the RuralBioUp hub initiators will be able to foster collaboration, innovation, and positive outcomes in their co-creation endeavors.

These principles provide a foundation for effective co-creation and help guide hub creators and stakeholders in achieving meaningful collaboration, innovation, and value creation.



4.5 Role of a co-creation facilitator⁶

The role of the facilitator is essential. He/she needs to bring the right mindset. Being open minded, positive and forward-looking is essential. Also keeping the goal in mind supports the co-creation process in keeping the right focus. It is an added value if the facilitator is trained in moderation techniques and has lots of experience in workshop formats. Sticking to the time frame is essential for any meeting, but for co-creation processes essential. The same way being familiar with the art of hosting is an important aspect that needs to be considered: making participants feel comfortable and providing a safe space creates a trustful environment.

Consequently the role of facilitator is essential and is directed along the before/during/after process:

The role of a facilitator in co-creation processes is crucial in guiding and supporting the collaborative efforts of stakeholders. The facilitator acts as a neutral party responsible for creating an inclusive and productive environment for participants to engage in the co-creation process. Here are some key roles and responsibilities of a facilitator:

Designing the Process: The facilitator plays a pivotal role in designing the co-creation process. They determine the structure, activities, and methodologies that will be used to encourage participation, collaboration, and creativity among stakeholders.

Creating an Inclusive Environment: Facilitators are responsible for establishing an inclusive environment that encourages active participation and diverse perspectives. They create psychological safety, promote equal participation, and ensure that all voices are heard (Hansen et al., 2018).

Creating a Safe Space: The facilitator creates a safe and inclusive space where participants feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and ideas. They foster an environment that encourages open dialogue, active listening, and respect for diverse opinions.

Managing Group Dynamics: The facilitator manages group dynamics during the co-creation process. They facilitate discussions, ensure equal participation, and manage conflicts or disagreements that may arise among participants (Brown, 2005).

Guiding the Process: The facilitator guides the co-creation process, ensuring that the activities and discussions stay focused and aligned with the purpose and objectives. They keep the process on track, manage time effectively, and ensure that outcomes are achieved (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

⁶ Vgl. ThinkersO (<https://thinkersco.com/community/blog-en/tips-of-a-good-facilitator/>) summarizes general tips for good facilitation of workshops



Facilitating Collaboration: The facilitator promotes collaboration and teamwork among stakeholders. They encourage participants to build on each other's ideas, engage in constructive dialogue, and explore synergies between different perspectives (Bason, 2014).

Stimulating Creativity and Innovation: The facilitator fosters a creative and innovative atmosphere during the co-creation process. They introduce techniques, tools, and exercises that stimulate participants' creativity, help generate new ideas, and challenge existing assumptions (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017).

Active Listening and Questioning: The facilitator practices active listening to fully understand and acknowledge participants' contributions. They ask probing questions to deepen the discussion, encourage critical thinking, and provoke new insights.

Documenting and Summarizing: The facilitator ensures that the key insights, ideas, and discussions are documented and summarized accurately. They capture important points, decisions, and actions to be taken, creating a record that can be referred to later (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

Adapting and Iterating: The facilitator remains flexible and adaptive throughout the co-creation process. They assess the progress, gather feedback from participants, and make necessary adjustments to the process to enhance engagement and optimize outcomes (Williams & Brown, 2005).

Encouraging Reflection and Learning: The facilitator promotes reflection and learning among participants. They facilitate discussions to help stakeholders extract lessons from the co-creation experience and identify opportunities for improvement in future engagements.

The facilitator's role is to guide and support stakeholders, empowering them to collaborate effectively, leverage their collective wisdom, and co-create innovative solutions or ideas. They act as a catalyst for meaningful engagement, ensuring that the co-creation process is productive, inclusive, and results-oriented. Thus, the specific role of a co-creation facilitator may vary depending on the context, goals, and dynamics of the co-creation initiative.

Further reading and helpful literature

Elisabeth Gsottbauer, et al. (2017). Participatory Decision Making: Benefits, Costs, and Efficiency of Inclusive and Exclusive Governance

Hargadon, A.B., Bechky, B. (2006). When Collections of Creatives Become Creative Collectives: A Field Study of Problem Solving at Work. *Organization Science* 17(4):484-500.
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Institut für Partizipatives Gestalten: Ladder of Participation: <https://www.partizipativ-gestalten.de/>



Elke Löffler and Peter Neumeier (2018). "Co-creation in Public Services: The Role of the Citizen"

Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders & Pieter Jan Stappers (2008) Co-creation and the new landscapes of design, *CoDesign*, 4:1, 5-18, DOI: 10.1080/15710880701875068

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ThinkersO (<https://thinkersco.com/community/blog-en/tips-of-a-good-facilitator/>) summarizes general tips for good facilitation of workshops

Torring, et al. (2012). Co-creation and Co-production: Practices and Challenges of Public Sector Innovation in Scandinavia

Chika E. Uzoma and Robert O. Udensi (2020). "The Benefits of Participatory Approaches for Agricultural Research and Extension: A Review" by

Venkat Ramaswamy, Kerimcan Ozcan (2018). What is co-creation? An interactional creation framework and its implications for value creation, *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 84.

Venkat Ramaswamy and Francis Guillard (2010). Managing the Co-creation Process: Open Innovation Perspectives.

Williams, B.K, Brown, E.D. Double-Loop Learning in Adaptive Management: The Need, the Challenge, and the Opportunity. *Environmental Management* 62, 995–1006 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-018-1107-5>

4.6 Selected co-creation methods in the context of RuralBioUp hub creation - Which methods can you use?

Co-creation methods encompass a variety of approaches and techniques that facilitate collaborative and participatory processes to generate ideas, solutions, or value.

This is a selection of methods that we found useful and easy to implement in your hub, also with little experience in co-creation methods.

There are many different methods to promote collaboration. The appropriate method at a particular stage in the process depends (among other things) on



- number of participants
- how much time is available for developing the activity
- 'depth of collaboration': whether the process is about information, consultation or joint decision
- particular needs of the specific group of participants
- requirements stated for the solution
- skills of the facilitator

Within this limited framework of a handbook, we will refer to some easy to use examples with the intention to foster the understanding of different co-creation methods. At the same time we encourage the reader to look out for fitting co-creation methods that align well to the aim, the framework of the workshop as well as the targeted participants.

(1) Workshop openers & warm-up

Openers and ice breaking activities are very important for the team building in the workshop. As we want our participants to develop prototypes or detailed strategies, this stage of the workshop needs sufficient time and is crucial for the further process in the workshop. The length of the activity can differ, **but don't skip it for the sake of saving time!**

It is important to always choose an appropriate method for starting a workshop and warming up the participants. The focus of the methodology differs, depending on whether participants already know each other. If participants do not know each other, there is the need for a methodology addressing introduction and getting to know each other, like "Sociometry" or "Joint poster". If participants do already know each other methods to gather expectations and fears can be applied, like "Dreams and Nightmares".

Based on Birgit Baumann's "Blossoming Workshops and Seminars Guarantee to Succeed" (2015) this section provides a list of methodologies which we suggest as openers for the RuralBioUp co-creation workshops.

Method	How it works
The constellation	During the constellation, your participants line up in the room according to predefined questions. Questions can move from being very "light" ("who had more than 2 coffees today?") to more topic-specific ("how involved to you feel in the topic xy?"). As a facilitator you can go around and ask questions ("please tell us your name and explain why you stand where you stand").



Commonality Poster	Make a short group exercise and let groups collect commonality, which they find among themselves and write/draw on a poster. You might be very open on commonalities and focus on the “getting to know” each other (hobbies, food, etc) or ask also for more specific commonalities, which concern the workshop topic (backgrounds, expectations, etc.).
Artefact exercise	You provide a selection of different objects on a table (this can be anything from small toys to natural objects). Alternatively you can ask participants beforehand to bring an objective based on a reflexive question, but you need to have back-up objects. Participants choose an object based on a question that you give (“what represents your relation/feeling to today’s topic?”, etc.). You would then make a round where every person introduces himself/herself and explains why he/she chose a specific object. You might come back to the artifacts in the closing session and see what has changed or what represents the most important learning or take-away.
Two truths, one lie	Tell your players to think of two true statements, and one that is false, about themselves. Go around the circle, having each player share their three statements. The players vote on which one they believe is the lie and at the end of each round, the person who stated the three truths and one lie, tells which statement is the lie. One way to decide who goes first is to randomly choose one person. Then, if only one person guesses the lie correctly, that person goes next. Alternatively, the person sitting closest to the last person goes next. You can go around the circle as many times as you wish, giving everyone a chance to go at least once.

Table 2: Examples on Openers and Warm-ups

Further reading and helpful literature

Ice breaker ideas <https://icebreakerideas.com/>

(2) Collaborative Idea generation

Idea generation refers to the process of generating, developing, and exploring new ideas or concepts. It involves actively seeking and creating novel solutions, approaches, or opportunities to address a specific problem, challenge, or goal.



Idea generation is a crucial step in the innovation and problem-solving process. It is the starting point for creativity and the generation of potential solutions. The goal of idea generation is to produce a diverse range of ideas that can be evaluated, refined, and implemented to bring about positive change or achieve desired outcomes.

The process of idea generation typically involves techniques such as brainstorming, mind mapping, scenario planning, design thinking, and other creative methods. These methods help to stimulate thinking, encourage out-of-the-box ideas, and foster collaboration among individuals or groups.

Effective idea generation involves an open and exploratory mindset, where participants are encouraged to suspend judgment and generate as many ideas as possible, regardless of their feasibility or initial perceived value. This allows for the exploration of different possibilities and encourages the emergence of innovative and unexpected solutions. Idea generation is a dynamic and iterative process that often requires multiple iterations and refinements before arriving at the most promising ideas that can be further developed, prototyped, and implemented.

In summary, idea generation is the creative process of generating new ideas, concepts, or solutions to address challenges, seize opportunities, or drive innovation. It is an essential step in problem-solving and innovation, enabling individuals and organizations to explore new possibilities and develop unique approaches to achieve their goals.

Method	How it works
Mindmapping	<p>Mind mapping is a powerful technique for visualizing ideas, concepts, and relationships in a co-creation workshop. It helps stimulate creative thinking, encourages collaboration, and captures the collective knowledge of participants.</p> <p>Set the Objective: Clearly define the objective of the mind mapping session. Determine the specific topic or problem you want to explore and encourage participants to generate ideas related to it.</p> <p>Gather Materials: Provide participants with the necessary materials for mind mapping, such as large sheets of paper, sticky notes, markers, or digital tools if preferred. Ensure that everyone has access to the materials they need.</p> <p>Explain the Process: Introduce the concept of mind mapping and explain how it works. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong ideas and encourage participants to think freely and associate ideas with one another.</p> <p>Select a Central Theme: Start by identifying a central theme or topic related to the objective. Write it down in the center of a large sheet of paper or use a digital mind mapping tool. This central theme will serve as the focal point for generating ideas.</p> <p>Generate Ideas: Ask participants to brainstorm ideas related to the central</p>



	<p>theme. Each participant can write their ideas on separate sticky notes or directly on the paper around the central theme. Encourage them to be concise and use keywords or short phrases.</p> <p>Make Connections: As ideas are generated, encourage participants to identify connections and relationships between different ideas. They can use arrows, lines, or connectors to visually represent these connections, linking related ideas together.</p>
Brainwriting	<p>Brainwriting is a creative technique for the collection of ideas, which has the advantage that dominant participants don't set the tone as it is a silent activity.</p> <p>Start the Brainwriting Rounds: Instruct participants to write their ideas on the brainwriting sheet within the specified time limit. Encourage them to write one idea per section or template cell, and emphasize that they should keep their responses confidential during this stage.</p> <p>Pass the Sheets: After the time limit expires, ask participants to pass their brainwriting sheets to the person sitting next to them (clockwise or counterclockwise direction). This rotation allows for the exchange and expansion of ideas.</p> <p>Read and Build Upon Ideas: Instruct participants to read the ideas written by the previous contributor on the brainwriting sheet they received. Encourage them to build upon these ideas by adding new ones, expanding on existing ideas, or providing alternative perspectives.</p> <p>Repeat the Brainwriting Rounds: Repeat the brainwriting rounds multiple times, with participants passing the sheets to different individuals in each round. This process enables the ideas to evolve, grow, and benefit from collective input.</p> <p>Encourage Collaboration: Throughout the brainwriting process, encourage participants to read and draw inspiration from the ideas written by others. They can add comments, annotations, or build upon existing ideas. This collaborative approach stimulates cross-pollination and amplifies the creative output.</p> <p>Reflect and Discuss: After the brainwriting rounds, facilitate a discussion where participants can share the ideas that emerged from the process. Encourage participants to explain their thoughts, elaborate on connections, and discuss the potential value and feasibility of the generated ideas.</p> <p>Capture and Document: Ensure that the ideas generated through brainwriting are captured and documented for further analysis and reference. This can be done by collecting the brainwriting sheets or transcribing the contents into a digital format.</p> <p>Synthesize and Prioritize: Once the brainwriting session is completed, synthesize the ideas, identify common themes, and prioritize the most promising or impactful ideas. This can be done through group discussions, voting, or other decision-making techniques.</p>



<p>Brainwalk</p>	<p>Brainwalk is a useful method to tease out knowledge and experiences of participants by walking silently in a room.</p> <p>Before you start, make sure that there is enough space for the participants to walk around without stepping on each other.</p> <p>Depending on the aim of the brainstorm, write either a topic or a question on the posters and spread them across the room. Make sure that there is sufficient space around each so that several participants can interact with them at the same time.</p> <p>To inspire a wider range of ideas, you may vary the topic/ question on each poster.</p> <p>Set a timer between 3 and 15 minutes, depending on the group size and the complexity of the topic. Every participant receives a block of post-it notes and a marker.</p> <p>Silently, they walk around the room and share their ideas about the topics/ questions on the posters by sticking post-it notes on the poster. Remind participants to apply an open "yes, and" approach which means that they should build on each other's ideas and try to make them work instead of pointing out weak points or deal breakers.</p> <p>Make sure that participants use one post-it note per idea. This will make it easier to remove redundant ideas and cluster the remaining.</p> <p>Before any brainstorming exercise, I always remind the participants that "Good ideas come from bad ideas as long as there are enough of them." (Seth Godin).</p> <p>When time is up, you can either debrief with the entire group or split the group into small teams who work on the different posters and then share their results with the group.</p>
<p>Open Space</p>	<p>“Open Space” is a technique for running meetings where the participants create and manage the agenda themselves. Sessions can be for between five to 2000 plus people (providing you have a big enough venue). This method is ideal if you want participants to gain ownership of an issue and come up with solutions. Participants agree on the areas of discussion that have importance for them and then take responsibility for facilitating the session. An Open Space meeting will typically begin with introductions by the facilitators. They will introduce the purpose of the discussion and will explain the self-organising process of ‘Open Space’. Group members then post their topic areas of choice on the bulletin board at a designated stall and time. As each member posts their topic on the board they tell the group what they have written. If there are more topics than times and market stalls, the facilitators can support the wider group to decide which discussions should be prioritised.</p> <p>Any participant can suggest an issue – but they must have a real passion and the ability to start a discussion. They must also ensure that notes of the discussion are written. When all issues have been allocated a time and place, participants</p>



	<p>sign up to attend those individual sessions. Sessions typically last up to one and a half hours; with the whole gathering usually lasting anything from a half day up to two days! The opening and agenda creation takes a maximum of an hour, even with a very large group. Now it's time for the individual groups to get to work. With participants moving from discussion to discussion.</p>
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Table 3: Examples on Collaborative Idea generation

(2) Collaborative Sorting & prioritizing:

When it comes to co-creation, sorting and prioritising methods can help to facilitate effective collaboration and decision-making among participants.

Remember that the choice of sorting and prioritising method will depend on the specific context, the number of participants, and the desired outcome. It's essential to select a method that aligns with the goals of the co-creation process and encourages meaningful participation from all stakeholders involved.

Eventually your aim is to arrive at decisions that the whole group can support. The advantages of reaching decisions collaboratively is that you will reach a greater commitment and trust for the implementation.

There are however challenges in collaborative decision making, such as the dealing with different hierarchies in the group (e.g. HiPPO effect - **H**ighest **P**aid **P**erson's **O**pinion: A group follows assumed opinions of a supervisor without raising direct questions to the supervisor.). Also be aware of the so-called "confirmation bias" (tendency that people select information that supports their prior beliefs) or the tendency of participants to prefer harmony over conflict.

This is why a good process and facilitation in this phase are important.

Some strategies to confront challenges might be:

- keep the working groups small (3-7 people)
- enable heterogeneity in groups
- include methods, which deliberately look for opposing attitudes and therefore challenge the striving for harmony (e.g. Devil's Advocate Technique)
- provide a "safe space" for discussion
- no "blind trust" in experts

Some common methods are:

Method	How it works



Octopus cluster	A fast clustering method for bigger groups of participants. Five rows of participants sort dozens of sticky notes in minutes. Every row has a specific duty: the first row actively sorts, whereas the rows behind discuss and support. Rows take turns. (https://www.thisisservicedesigndoing.com/methods/octopus-clustering)
35	This is a very energetic way to sort and rank a large number of options. Everyone stands in a group holding a piece of paper. They move through the group, exchanging papers randomly and repeatedly. Then, in pairs, they compare the two papers they're holding and assign points to each. The exercise repeats several times and the results for each paper are summed. https://www.thisisservicedesigndoing.com/methods/benny-hill-sorting-thirty-five
Quick voting	Conducting a voting process within co-creation workshops can help prioritise ideas, make decisions, or gather preferences from participants. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the specific purpose of the voting process. Clarify whether you are seeking to prioritise ideas, make a final decision, or gather preferences on a particular topic. 2. Choose the Voting Method: Select a suitable voting method that aligns with the purpose of the workshop and the number of participants. Some common voting methods include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dot Voting: Provide participants with a limited number of dots or stickers, and ask them to place their dots on the ideas or options they prefer. b. Secret Ballot: Distribute ballots or slips of paper to participants, and ask them to write down their choices privately. Collect and count the votes. c. Electronic Voting: Use polling software or dedicated voting systems to conduct electronic voting, allowing participants to cast their votes using smartphones, tablets, or other devices.
ONE sentence; or elevator pitch	Formulate your collected ideas within one single sentence; Elevator pitch: An elevator pitch, elevator speech, lift speech or elevator statement is a short description of an idea, product, or company that explains the concept in a way such that any listener can understand it in a short period of time. This description typically explains who the thing is for, what it does,



	why it is needed, and how it will get done, presented in a very limited time span (ie. 60 sec.)
Matrix	Prioritise on an idea matrix: define two axes (e.g. “impact on target group” and “feasibility”) and visualise a graph. You can tape the axes to the floor with tape or draw posters where you clearly indicate the axes. Ask the group (or sub-groups) to allocate each idea on the graph (0 to 10 points for each variable). The final picture helps you to make a diversified selection. (exercise for Action plan?)
MoSCoW	This technique categorises items into four prioritisation levels: Must-haves, Should-haves, Could-haves, and Won't-haves (or Will-not-haves). It helps in distinguishing between essential and optional features or requirements, allowing you to focus on the most critical aspects first.

Table 4: Collaborative Sorting & prioritising

(3) Co-creation of solutions

When it comes to generating solutions through co-creation, there are various methods and techniques that can be employed.

Method	How it works
Lean Canvas	The Lean Canvas is a strategic planning tool that helps participants to visualize, validate, and iterate on their ideas. It is a one-page document that condenses the key elements of a project plan into a concise format, allowing for quick and effective communication. By using the Lean Canvas, participants can quickly communicate their idea, identify potential flaws or gaps, and focus on the most critical aspects of their venture. It promotes a user-centric approach and helps to minimize risks and optimize resource allocation.
Prototyping	Prototyping is an experimental process where design teams implement ideas into tangible forms from paper to digital. The prototyping model is a systems development method in which a prototype is built, tested and then reworked as necessary until an acceptable outcome is achieved from which the complete system or product can be developed. This model works best in scenarios where not all the project requirements are known in detail ahead of time. It is an iterative, trial-and-error process that takes place between the developers and the users.



<p>Backcasting - Methods</p>	<p>Participants work backwards from the desired future/s, which have previously been developed by applying futures thinking tools. While backcasting, you don't try to predict the future. Instead, you design it. You imagine your ideal dream scenario and picture exactly what that situation would look like. What follows is a thought experiment; you imagine looking back, pondering the changes that were necessary to give rise to this situation.</p> <p>Step by step, you work your way back towards the current situation. You're basically drawing a treasure map back from the destination to the starting point. You describe exactly what is required to reach the desired situation. What you'll end up with is a roadmap with smaller goals that, combined, lead up to a big change.</p>
<p>Create a Design Persona</p>	<p>Personas are fictional characters, which you create based upon your research to represent the different user types that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way. Creating personas will help you understand your users' needs, experiences, behaviors and goals. Creating personas can help you step out of yourself. It can help you recognize that different people have different needs and expectations, and it can also help you identify with the user you're designing for. Personas make the design task at hand less complex, they guide your ideation processes, and they can help you to achieve the goal of creating a good user experience for your target user group.</p>
<p>Gallery Walk</p>	<p>This discussion technique allows participants to be actively engaged as they walk throughout the meeting room. They work together in small groups to share ideas and respond to meaningful questions, documents, images, problem-solving situations or texts.</p>
<p>Headstand</p>	<p>With this method, you reformulate your challenge and twist it into exactly the opposite. They literally turn the problem upside down to generate new perspectives and ideas.</p> <p>Ask your participants to think about what doesn't work, what goes wrong or which measures never solve a problem. The headstand technology works immediately and especially for inexperienced teams.</p> <p>In the first step, those measures and events are collected which would prevent the achievement of a desired result, or as many weaknesses of an idea to be examined as possible are collected. After this "destructive" phase, solutions to the identified obstacles and problems are sought. The rules of regular brainstorming apply to both phases.</p> <p>The advantage of this method compared to normal brainstorming is that you first identify the cause of a problem (measures and events that prevent the</p>



	achievement of a desired result) and then solve it. This kind of approach to problem solving generates different and new ideas.
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Table 5: examples on Co-creation of solutions

(4) Energizers

Using energizers as methods in co-creation can bring several benefits to the process and the participants involved. Energizers are activities or techniques that are designed to invigorate and energise participants, promoting engagement, collaboration, and a positive atmosphere. Remember to select energizers that are appropriate for the participants and the overall goals of the co-creation process. Energizers should align with the tone and objectives of the session and be designed to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere. The key is to balance energizers with the core work of co-creation, ensuring that they serve as supportive elements rather than distractions.

Method	How it works
Group order	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask participants to mill around the room for about a minute. 2. Blow the whistle and ask the participants to line up, according to a specific criterion selected from this list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ distance from home to the workplace ○ birth date in the calendar year ○ number of different countries visited ○ number of letters in his or her middle name ○ number of pets 3. After the participants line up, blow the whistle and have them mill around the room for a minute or so. 4. Blow the whistle again and have the participants line up according to a different criterion. 5. Repeat the procedure as time allows.
Stand up if ...	<p>Prior to the workshop the facilitator prepares a list of questions which can only be answered with yes or no. These questions should begin with "Have you ever...?" or "Stand up if...".</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you ever been to Asia?



	<p>2. Have you ever been horse riding?</p> <p>3. Have you ever done bungee jumping.</p> <p>2. The facilitator reads out the questions or statements one by one. For each statement the participants stand up if they could answer the statement with yes.</p>
Rock, Paper, Scissors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a partner 2. Play "Rock, Paper, Scissors" against each other until the first win. 3. The winner has to find a new opponent. The losing player becomes a fan of the winner. 4. The winner plays against the new opponent, while their fan cheers for them. 5. The winner of the second game searches for a new opponent, while the losing team joins their fan base. 6. Repeat until there are only two opponents with a huge fan base cheering for them. The last two have to play until one player has won 2 times.

Table 6: examples on Energizers

(5) Closure

Using closures as methods in co-creation can be beneficial for several reasons. Closures are activities or techniques that help bring a sense of completion and reflection to a co-creation session or project. Incorporating closures in the co-creation process demonstrates a commitment to reflection, learning, and acknowledging the contributions of participants. It helps create a sense of satisfaction and closure, while also setting the stage for future initiatives and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration.

Method	How it works
ABC-method	Divide your group in sub-groups and let each group find one term for each letter of the alphabet asking e.g. "what stays in your memory from today's meeting?" (A -fternoon coffee, B -enchmarking, etc.). Participants write down terms on a poster. This is a good way of summing up what you did during the workshop.



Quiz	Make groups; each group notes down 3 questions on a flipchart (on any content/learnings of the meeting); groups change place and try to answer the questions; answers are presented in an elevator pitch to the whole group.
What do I take, what do I leave	Ask each participants “what do you take a way from todays’ workshop” and “what do you leave here” (e.g. “I leave my fear of...”)

Table 7: examples on Closures

Further reading, helpful literature & links

Matti C, Rissola G., Martinez P., Bontoux L., Joval J., Spalazzi, A. and Fernandez, D. Co-creation for policy: Participatory methodologies to structure multi-stakeholder policymaking processes, Matti, C. and Rissola, G. (editors), EUR 31056 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-52215-7, doi:10

Kerstin Kurzhals, Katrin Uude, Eva Sormani, Choiwai Maggie Chak, Madleen Banze (2022) Das Co-Creation Toolkit. Methoden für eine erfolgreiche Kooperation zwischen Hochschule und Gesellschaft. Springer Gabler Wiesbaden <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-36411-3>

Online resources & Design toolkits, tools and methods

A Design Thinking Toolkit by Domain7:<https://domain7.com/designthinking>

CO-CREATE consortium (2022). The co-create handbook. <http://www.cocreate.training> (retrieved on: 16.06.2022)

Collective Action Toolkit, Frog Design: <https://www.frogdesign.com/work/frog-collective-action-toolkit>

Design Kit: <http://www.designkit.org/>

Design Library: Practical resources to support the process of design:<http://library.ac4d.com/>

Design Sprint with Google:<https://designsprintkit.withgoogle.com>

Ethnography: The First Step in Design Thinking: [https://medium.com/](https://medium.com/media-ethnography/ethnography-the-first-step-in-design-thinking-d3c533278978) media-ethnography/ethnography-the-first-step-in-design-thinking-d3c533278978

Guides by Adaptive Path:<http://adaptivepath.org/guides>Hyperisland:<http://toolbox.hyperisland.com>



Ice breaker Ideas: IcebreakerIdeas.com

IDEO Kit: <https://www.ideo.com/post/design-kit>

Method Kit: <https://www.facebook.com/methodkit>

Seeds for Change: <https://seedsforchange.org.uk/tools.pdf>

Session Lab: <https://www.sessionlab.com/>

Service Design Tools for Co Designing: <http://www.servicedesigntools.org/taxonomy/term/1>



5 Part 3 – RuralBioUp Hubs co-creation Kick-off in practice

As outlined, creating a co-creation workshop involves several components to ensure its effectiveness. These type of workshops have much potential to engage your stakeholders and even more possibilities and methodologies to design them.

The following section describes a practice example that can be used to launch a co-creative process, kicking off the hubs. As mentioned, this is only an example that may be used by the hubs but need in any case adaptation to the individual needs of participants, the moderator and the environment of the workshop.

5.1 A RuralBioUp hub co-created event – an example

Goal: Identify/specify two priority value chains for your region

Method: Interview
Participants interview/reflect in groups of 4 (one interviews and asks questions, the other 3 report) on the bioeconomy potential of their region (topic, stakeholders, facilities, ...) - They note down important aspects on post its. (30 min)
After that, each group presents their main findings and put their post its on a flip chart.
Moderator structures/clusters according to certain aspects:
(a) most important (for those who need to identify the value chain - cluster by topic!!).
(b) moderator clusters by different categories

Method: Voting
participants receive sticky dots and **vote** on two value chains they prefer

Goal: Develop a future vision for your region

Method: Brainwork - 10 Minutes - single work - people sit silently and work for their own

Give following instruction: Think about bioeconomy in your region in 5 years. Describe your desired region in 5 years. How would the ideal situation be for you in 5 years. How has your ideal bioeconomy value chain developed?



After 10 minutes of single work, participants explain collected visions and note them down on post its on the floor. Then the moderator clusters them into different groups (ie. education, outreach, industry, policy measures, ...)



Figure 4: Example of brainwork

Method: Prioritization Method: One sentence

Give following instruction: 1. Split in groups that you clustered on the floor - each group should formulate one vision sentence summarizing the most important aspects of each category. The sentence should describe as exact as possible. Start with "In 5 years ..."

Goal: Co-Create activities for future implementation in your region

Step 1: Collect ideas

Method: Brainstorming

Give following instruction:



1. Stay in groups: each group has the future sentence and the collected aspects in front of them. The group should answer following questions:
 - * What steps do we need to take to make the vision reality? Which activities will be needed to reach this vision?
2. Note down all answers on a post-its with a color pen.

Step 2: Prioritization Method Matrix

Method: Prioritize activities in Matrix

Give following instruction:

1. Post the activities on the matrix below by adding following answers to each activity.
 - * What are the conditions to reach these goals?
 - * Who can support these efforts? With whom can we collaborate?
 - * How can I motivate the stakeholders to be part of the activities?
2. Add to each positioned activity in your matrix the respective answers on a post it and stick it to your activity.



Figure 5: Example of RuralBioUp Priorisation Matrix

Alternatively use the Now-How-Wow Matrix⁷:

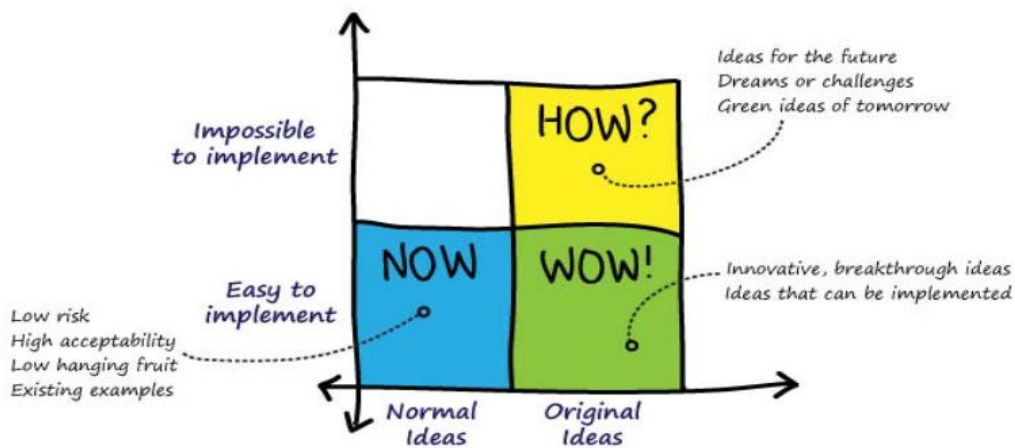


Figure 6: Now-How-Wow Matrix

⁷ The How-Wow-Now Matrix is adapted from work done by The Center for Development of Creative Thinking (COCD). Information about the COCD Matrix was published in the book, "Creativity Today" authored by Ramon Vullings, Igor Bytsebier and Godelieve Spaas.



Step 3: Share and present

Method: Press Conference

Give following instruction:

1. Each group is organizing a press conference where the respective actions get presented to journalists and the general public.
2. While one group is presenting, the other groups take the role of journalists (who will ask questions to the press team) and the general public (who take the role as citizens affected by the bioeconomy activities).
3. Each group holds its press conference; the other groups will challenge them by asking questions.

Alternatively you can ask each group to name a rapporteur that summarizes the results and presents it to the others.

Creating an overview file helps you with the planning before the event and provides guidance during your workshop.



Example of a **moderation sheet** for a RuralBioUp Kick-off event aimed at:

(a) selecting value chains, (b) co-creation of a common future vision and (c) co-development of actions:

start	end	Dur.	topic	details	methods	Results	materials
x	x	00:10	Openers	<p>Ask 3 questions - people have to position themselves according to the questions. As a facilitators you can go around and ask questions ("please tell us your name and explain why you stand where you stand")</p> <p>Who had more than 2 coffees already? When have you heard the first time about bioeconomy? What area do you come from? (sort by industry, policy, regional development, education, research,...)</p>	constellation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>overview of participants</i> - <i>open mindset of participants</i> - <i>positive atmosphere</i> - <i>working culture understood</i> - <i>established trust among participants</i> - ... 	



x	x	01:00	<p>(a) defining value</p> <p>(b) two value chain</p>	<p>Participants interview/reflect in group of 4 (one interviews and asks questions, the other 3 report) on the potential of their region (topic, stakeholders, facilities, ...) - They note down important aspects on post its. (30 min)</p> <p>After that, each group explains their outcome and put their post its on a flip chart.</p> <p>Moderator structures by different clusters:</p> <p>(a) most important (for those who need to identify the value chain - cluster by topic!!).</p> <p>(b) moderator clusters by different categories</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>for (a) participants receive some sticky dots and vote on two value chains they prefer</p>	<p>group interviews and gallery walk</p>	<p><i>a) 2 co-created value chains</i></p> <p><i>b) potentials/chances/risks for value chains</i></p>	
x	x	00:20	<p>Develop a Future vision for your region</p>	<p>Brainwork - 10 Minutes - single work - people sit silently and work for their own</p> <p>Instruction: Think about bioeconomy in your region in 5 years. Describe your desired region in 5 years. How would the ideal situation be for you in 5 years. How has your ideal bioeconomy value chain developed to?</p> <p>After 10 minutes of single work all the collected visions get explained by each participants and go on post its on the floor. There the moderator clusters them into different groups (ie. education, outreach, industry, policy measures, ...)</p>	<p>Future Vision - forward thinking</p>		<p>sheets or post ist; colour pens (no writing pen: difficult to see on pics)</p>



x	x	00:10	Future vision	1. Split in groups that you clustered on the floor - each group should formulate one vision sentence summarizing the most important aspects of each category. The sentence should describe as exact as possible. Start with "In 5 years ..."	one sentence	<i>Definition of common goal of the region</i>	flip chart
x	x	00:45	actions	Stay in groups: each group has the future sentence and the collected aspects in front of them. The group should answer following questions: * What steps do we need to take to make the vision reality? Which activities will be needed to reach this vision? Note down all answers on a post-its with a color pen.	group work	<i>Brainstorming on different actions and activities needed to reach the aimed goal (vision)</i>	post ist
x	x	00:10	structure activities	Give following instruction: 1.Post the activities on the matrix below by adding following answers to each activity. * What are the conditions to reach these goals? * Who can support these efforts? With whom can we collaborate? * How can I motivate the stakeholders to be part of the activities? 2. Add to each positioned activity in your matrix the respective answers on a post it and stick it to your activity.	Method Matrix	<i>Priorisation of activities and actions aimed for</i>	for each group one Matrix poster
x	x	00:10	break				



x	x	00:50	Share and present	<p>Each group is organizing a press conference where the respective actions get presented to journalists and the general public. While one group is presenting, the other groups take the role of journalists (who will ask questions to the press team) and the general public (who take the role as citizens affected by the bioeconomy activities).</p> <p>Each group holds its press conference; the other groups will challenge them by asking questions.</p>	press conference		
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Table 8: moderation sheet example



Capturing results within a poster is an effective way to visually present and communicate key findings, outcomes, or data in a concise and impactful manner. When creating a poster to capture results, identify the main result or findings that you want to communicate through the poster.

A poster can help you to organize the content. Structuring the poster in a logical and visually appealing way by dividing into sections or columns that flow logically will guide the participants's eye.

The poster can help convey information quickly and make it more engaging for the viewer. When using the poster, include a brief introduction or background section that provides necessary context for the results presented in the poster. This will help viewers understand the significance and relevance of the findings.

Emphasize the most important results or findings by underlining text/post its, or color important text. This will draw attention to the critical information and make it stand out. Consider to summarize the main implications or recommendations arising from the results presented. This could be a brief conclusion or a call to action for further research or implementation. Remember, the goal of a poster is to capture the most important results of your workshop, present information clearly, and provide a good overview.



Figure 7, workshop poster template, specification of value chains (to be found on the project share drive, WP3)

5.2 Ways to move forward with your activities



The RuralBioUp action plan will provide a summary of all the activities that have been collecting. However, the next step is to determine how to proceed with these activities. Although the activities may vary significantly, it is recommended to have an overview for each activity to assess their potential, impact on specific target groups, barriers, and needs. This overview will not only help in understanding the activities better but also enable you to prioritize them within your hub and maximize their impact.

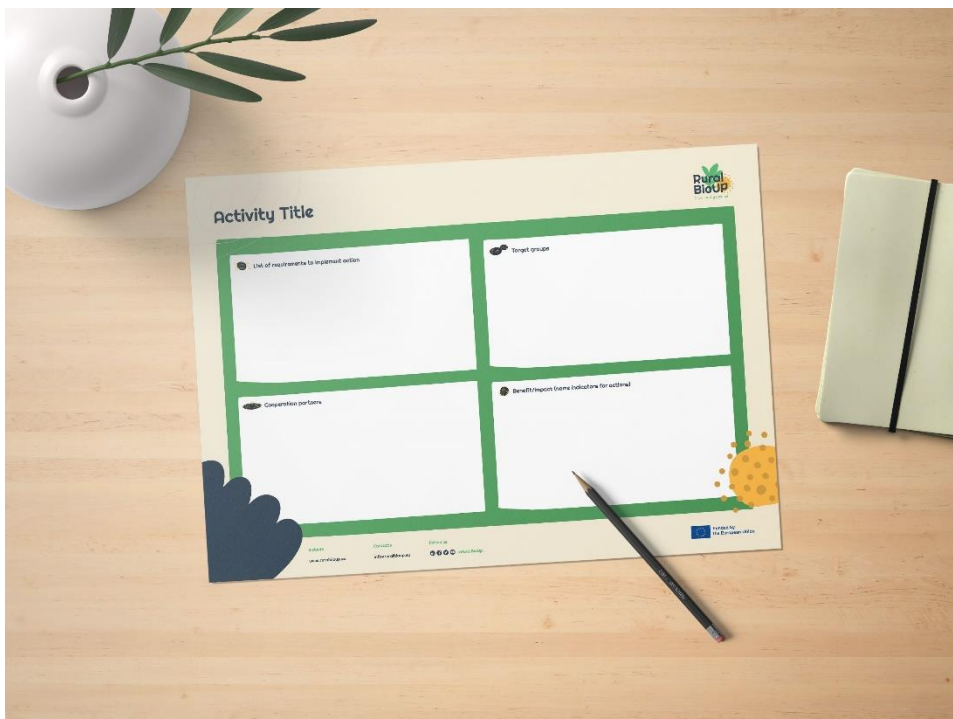


Figure 8, Workshop poster template, specification of activities



6 PART III

Monitor, adjust, sustain

Monitoring, adjusting, and sustaining co-creation RuralBioUp processes is essential to ensure their effectiveness and success.

6.1 RuralBioUp key performance indicators (KPI)

Start with your identified aims, objectives and desired outcomes for your co-creation process in line with the defined KPIs of RuralBioUp. This will provide a framework for monitoring progress and determining whether adjustments are necessary. Based on your identified objectives, identify specific metrics or indicators that can measure the success of the co-creation process. These KPIs should align with the goals set in the previous step and help track progress over time.

For the hubs, we divide between the expected outcome after the 3 years of running RuralBioUp as well as the expected impact after 5 years:

RuralBioUp expected outcome	To be implemented per hub
150 inter- intra-value chains collaborations; 50 farmers/foresters involved in collaborations start to use their resources in bio-based business models	17 inter- intra-value chains collaborations; 6 farmers/foresters involved in collaborations start to use their resources in bio-based business models
>500 new stakeholders collaborating in Hubs and new regions adopting RuralBioUp approach	50 new stakeholders collaborating in Hubs and new regions adopting RuralBioUp approach
9 Hubs structured in a permanent way	1 hub per region
100 small-scale bio-based solutions adopted	11 small-scale bio-based solutions adopted
market uptake of 50 bio-based new products/services	market uptake of 5/6 bio-based new products/services
10 new companies start-up	1 /2 new companies start-up
>110M€ of private/public investments in Bioeconomy Hubs	12 M€ of private/public investments
>15 regions or other entities use the RuralBioUp One-Stop Shop results and recommendations to improve their strategies	N/A



>100 actors (T1, T8, T9, T10) reuse RuralBioUp actionable items	N/A
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Table 9: Expected outcome of hubs after 3 years of project implementation

RuralBioUp expected Impact	To be implemented per hub
Sustainability (processes, business, etc.) improvement > 20%	Sustainability (processes, business, etc.) improvement > 20%
bio-based materials replacing fossil-based ones: >30%	bio-based materials replacing fossil-based ones: >30%
new jobs in rural areas >10%	new jobs in rural areas >10%
companies' turnover >10%	companies' turnover >10%
Differentiation in farmers/foresters incomes: >25%	Differentiation in farmers/foresters incomes: >25%
Bioeconomy maturity improvement (a.l. 1 level)	Bioeconomy maturity improvement (a.l. 1 level)
Regional innovation ecosystem improved (>5%);	Regional innovation ecosystem improved (>5%);
New jobs in bioeconomy sector >10%	New jobs in bioeconomy sector >10%
New jobs in bioeconomy sector >10%	New jobs in bioeconomy sector >10%
Bioeconomy awareness in Regional Hubs >10%	Bioeconomy awareness in Regional Hubs >10%
Increasing uptake of bio-based solutions and technologies >10%	Increasing uptake of bio-based solutions and technologies >10%
Increase of bioeconomy relevance in rural areas' policy priorities (bioeconomy strategy delivered or updated; >20% budget in EAFRD;	N/A
bioeconomy sector addressed by Operational Programmes for ESF	N/A

Table 10: Expected Impact after 5 years of project implementation

When considering the predetermined outcomes and expected impacts, an important question arises: How can we efficiently monitor progress and make any necessary adjustments?. Consequently, the next chapter will give a short overview on what elements have to be considered when monitoring and adjusting activities.



6.2 How to apply effective monitoring

For an effective monitoring, adjusting, and sustaining of the co-creation processes following steps should be considered to enable their effectiveness, optimize outcomes, and maintain long-term engagement and value creation.

1. Use and adapt the RuralBioUp key performance indicators (KPIs): Start with your identified aims, objectives and desired outcomes for your co-creation process. This will provide a framework for monitoring progress and determining whether adjustments are necessary. Based on your identified objectives, identify specific metrics or indicators that can measure the success of the co-creation process. These KPIs should align with the goals set in the previous step and help track progress over time.
2. Regularly assess progress: Continuously monitor the co-creation process to gauge its effectiveness. This can be done through regular evaluations, surveys, feedback sessions, or progress meetings with the participating stakeholders. Assess the KPIs and gather insights on the process's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
3. Foster open communication: Encourage open and transparent communication among the stakeholders involved in the co-creation process. Regularly share updates, insights, and challenges to maintain alignment and ensure everyone is on the same page. Effective communication will enable timely adjustments and course corrections when necessary. Gathering the feedback and insights by collecting feedback from participants is crucial for understanding their experiences, perceptions, and satisfaction with the co-creation process. Feedback helps identify areas for improvement, potential issues, and unmet needs (Sloep et al., 2011).
4. Adapt and adjust: Co-creation processes often require adjustments and iterations based on the feedback and insights gathered. Adapting involves making changes to the process, activities, or methodologies to enhance engagement, address challenges, and improve outcomes (Edvardsson et al., 2011). Based on the assessment and feedback received, be prepared to make necessary adjustments to the co-creation process. This could involve modifying the process flow, reallocating resources, or revisiting the goals and objectives. Flexibility and agility are crucial to respond to emerging needs and ensure continuous improvement.
5. Nurture stakeholder engagement: Sustaining co-creation processes requires active engagement from all participating stakeholders. Foster a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages collaboration, participation, and idea sharing. Recognize and appreciate the contributions of each stakeholder to maintain their motivation and commitment to allow a sustainable integration into the hub.



6. Learning and Knowledge Management: Sustaining co-creation processes requires capturing and managing the knowledge generated throughout the process. It involves documenting insights, best practices, and lessons learned to facilitate organizational learning and inform future co-creation initiatives (Choi & Majchrzak, 2014).
7. Learn from experience: Capture and document lessons learned from the co-creation process. These insights can inform future iterations and help refine the process for better outcomes. Continuously refine and improve the co-creation process based on the knowledge gained through experience.

Remember, co-creation is an iterative and dynamic process that requires ongoing attention and nurturing. By actively monitoring, adjusting, and sustaining the co-creation process, you can enhance collaboration, drive innovation, and achieve meaningful outcomes.

Concrete tools and guidelines are not covered in this handbook, but has an own Task dedicated (pl. see T3.3 and T5.1 of the RuralBioUp DoA). To access the detailed tools and guidelines for monitoring and adjustment, we refer to Task T3.3 and T5.1 in the DoA document of the RuralBioUp project. These tasks are likely to provide specific instructions, methodologies, and tools designed for the impact assessment and monitoring of the hub building process.

Further reading and helpful literature

Centre for cultural Values: How to... co-create an evaluation

<https://www.culturehive.co.uk/CVlresources/how-to-co-create-an-evaluation/>

Erbguth, J., Schörling, M., Birt, N. *et al.* Co-creating innovation for sustainability. *Gr Interakt Org* 53, 83–97 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11612-022-00619-8>

Keup-Thiel, E., Bathiany, S., Dressel, M., El Zohbi, J., Rechid, D., Schuck-Zöller, S., Suhari, M., and Timm, E.: Evaluation of co-creation processes in climate services - Development of a formative evaluation scheme, EGU General Assembly 2022, Vienna, Austria, 23–27 May 2022, EGU22-4090, <https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu22-4090>, 2022.



7 Conclusions

In conclusion, co-creation is a powerful approach to elaborate value chains in bioeconomy for a region and foster innovation actions that involves actively engaging stakeholders, end-users, and experts in the process of establishing a RuralBioUp hub. Co-creation methods and techniques have been proposed to facilitate collaborative and inclusive decision-making, generating innovative and contextually relevant solutions. Throughout this handbook, we have explored various aspects of co-creation, including understanding its principles, sorting and prioritizing methods, as well as techniques to identify its stakeholders.

Co-creation methods play a crucial role in ensuring the success of collaborative efforts in a hub. By involving diverse perspectives, co-creation enhances decision-making, solution quality, and stakeholder engagement. It fosters creativity, innovation, and ownership among participants, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions for regions. Additionally, co-creation methods promote inclusive and participatory approaches, empowering individuals and communities to have a voice in shaping their own future.

The major challenge is to motivate stakeholders to join the co-creation process. For that it is necessary to communicate the value of the activities for society and the individual in a convincing and honest way, to give real power to participants and create a trustworthy and fun atmosphere.

The handbook has highlighted several key aspects to co-creation methods, tools and approaches that can be employed at different stages of the RuralBioUp hub development process. However, co-creation is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and the selection of methods should be based on the specific context, problems, value chains, and participants involved. It is essential to consider the goals, resources, and constraints to ensure the most suitable approach is chosen. Effective facilitation, active listening, and clear communication by the facilitators are also critical to the success of the RuralBioUp hubs.

Overall, this handbook serves as a guide to understanding and implementing on how to build a RuralBioUp hub. By embracing co-creation principles and utilizing the tools and approaches outlined here, partners can harness the collective wisdom of their region, the creativity, and expertise of stakeholders to address complex challenges and achieve impactful and sustainable solutions in bioeconomy. The proposed agenda and methodologies may work in many different hubs and regions, however, they will need to get adapted to the individual needs of stakeholders and their region. By doing so, the co-creation approach will empower individuals, further foster collaboration in bioeconomy, and enable innovation, ultimately driving positive change and creating a better future for all.



8 Appendix

Annex 1: Stakeholder Tools

Stakeholder Brainstorming



Step 1 - Stakeholder Brainstorming

At this stage, identify all stakeholder groups and stakeholders who (a) have an interest in your field/hub/results (b) will be affected by your work along the way, and (c) their input can directly impact hub outcomes.

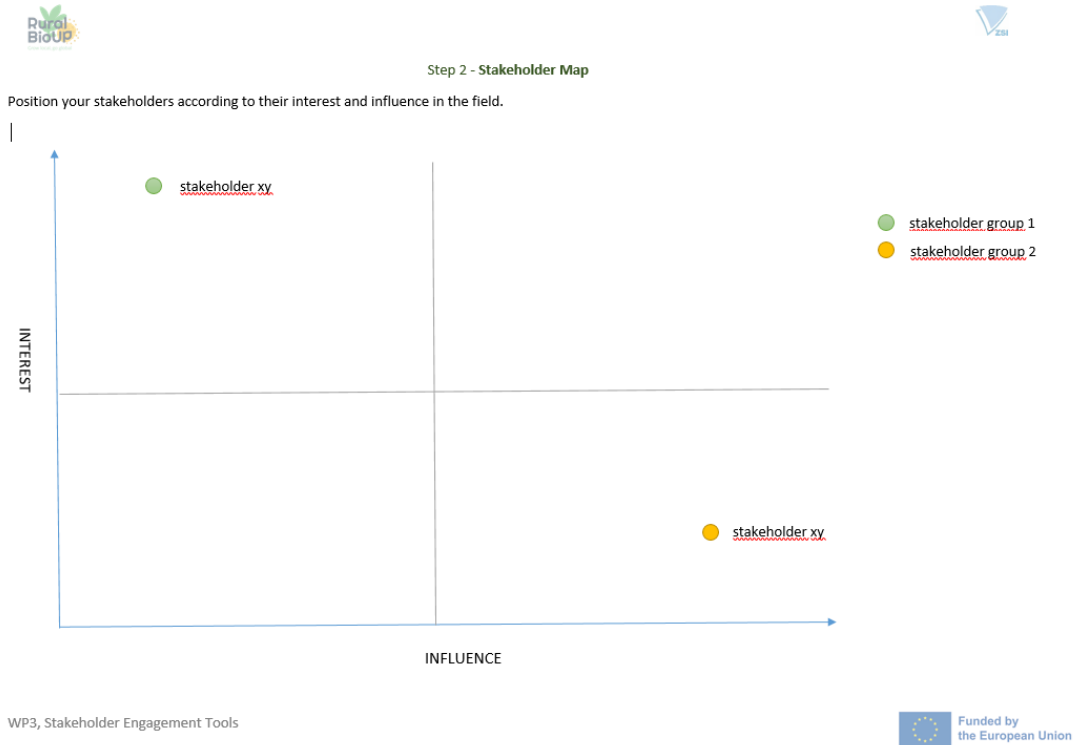


Wp3, Stakeholder Engagement Tools



Stakeholder Map

Position your stakeholders according to their interest and influence in the field.





Stakeholder Placement

Understand how each stakeholder can influence your hub, how involved he/she should be.

Step 3 - Stakeholder Placement

Understand how each stakeholder can influence your hub, how involved he/she should be.

Who do you need in your **Hub Core Team**?

Who needs to be **involved** to reach your hub goals?

Who wants to stay up to date and can provide inputs/feedback if needed?

Informed

Involved

Core Team

WP3, Stakeholder Engagement Tools

Funded by the European Union



Systematization of stakeholder information

You can use “personas” to think about the role, relevance, needs, etc. of different stakeholders in your project and how you can find arguments to motivate them to join your mission.



stakeholder group	Persona (think of a hypothetical person who could represent this group well) e.g. a multiplier, unusual suspect, a policy maker, ...	Short description of persona (position, involvement, attitudes, alliances, conflicts, etc.)	Relevance in project	Arguments to motivation her/him to get engaged (key messages, ...)	Communication needs (ideal formats, tools, frequency, timings, language etc.)
S (1,2,3,4)					
S					
S					
S					

Rural BioUp

Grow local, go global

Our Consortium



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