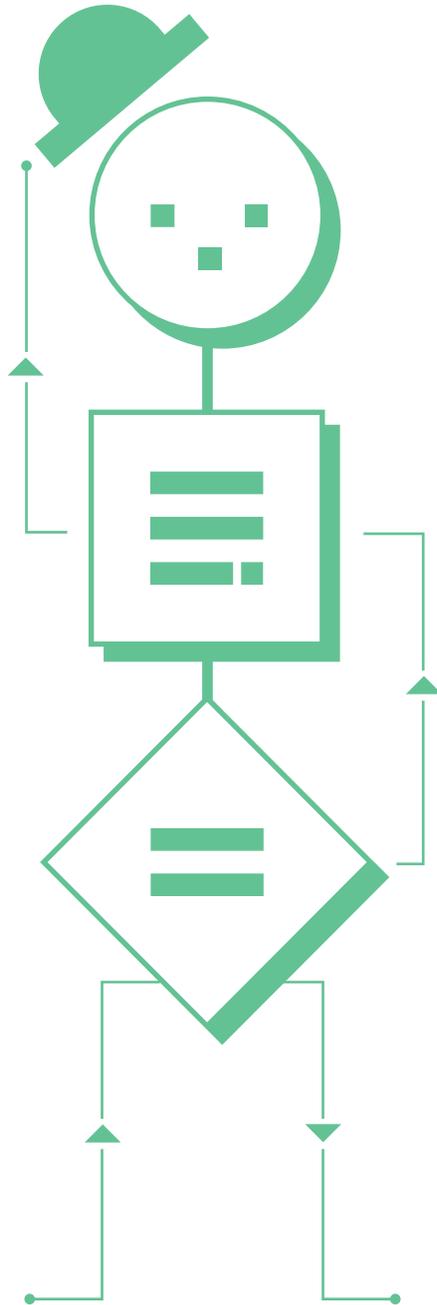


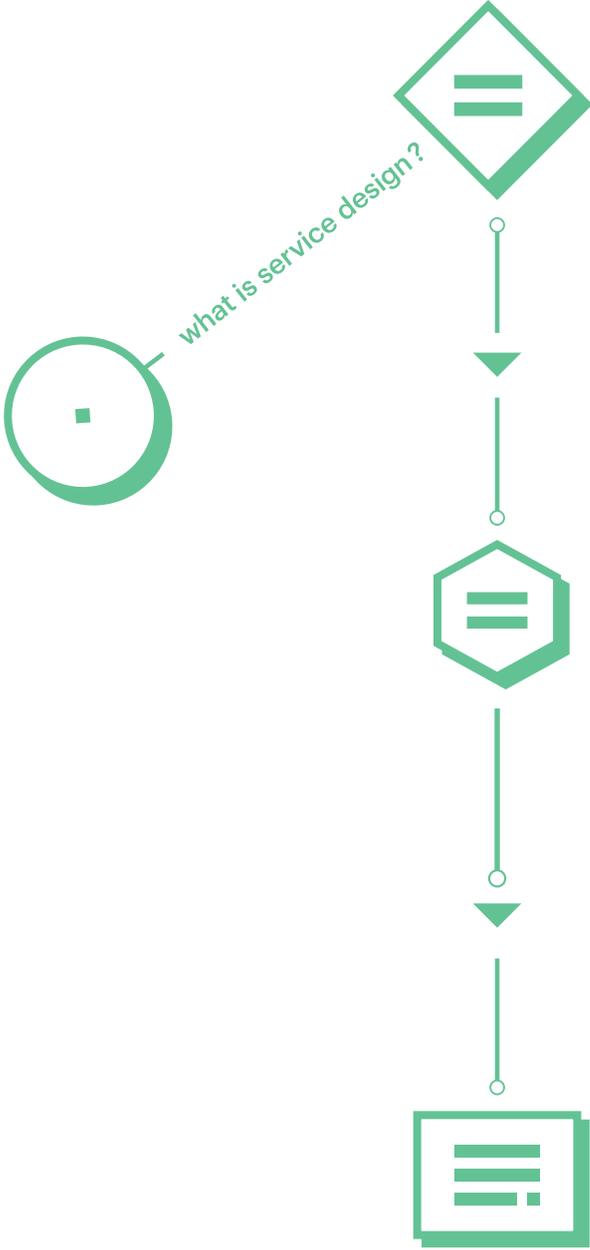
Public Service Design
A guide for the application
of service design
in public organisations



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what is service design ?

You are holding this guide in your hands because you are looking for information on service design for public authorities. It is important to step away from your connotations of design as only relating to expensive Italian furniture!





After all, just like products are being developed with great care, services can also be ‘designed’. This means that not only the material, but also the immaterial world around us can be designed. The proper design of a service is extremely important for public authorities, whose entire value offer consists of this immaterial world.

Service design is a method for inventing or improving services. It is an interdisciplinary method that — just like product design — makes use of ‘design thinking’. Service design helps with (re) designing services from the perspective of the user. Not by guessing what these users might want, but by truly co-creating relevant, effective and efficient services in collaboration with them. The basic principles of service design are that the designed service should be user-friendly and desired, and must respond to the needs and motivations of customers and citizens.

Many public services are not running smoothly, because they emerged initially from the objectives and opportunities from the public organisation itself, and do not sufficiently take the needs and motives of the users into account. Moreover, they are not always coherent throughout all channels and touchpoints.

In this, it is especially important for public authorities to understand that the designing of a service goes beyond simply the procedure at the counter. Both the front and back office processes need to be evaluated and aligned. In addition, the interaction between the user and the service provider often leaves room for a higher degree of efficiency. This is the only way to ensure that your full service provision to citizens can truly run efficiently and effectively. Therefore, service design as a comprehensive design method helps civil servants and policy-makers to make service provision a supporting principle of an overall management and policy cycle.

With service design you can develop an entirely new service for needs that have not yet been met.

In addition, service design can serve to:

- + make an existing service more efficient
- + simplify a number of operations
- + eliminate steps in a process
- + digitize components
- + transfer responsibility and initiative to citizens

In short: service design is a technique for applying time and resources more efficiently without having to diminish the quality of a service provision.

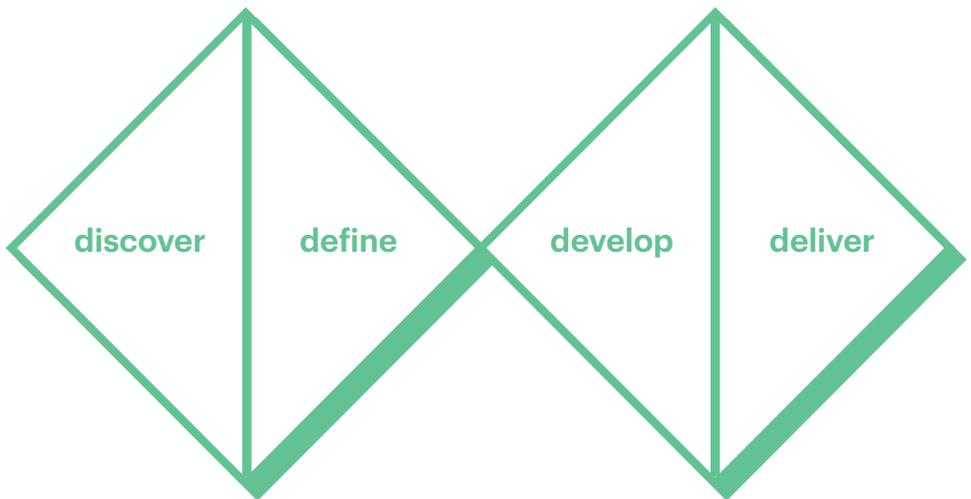
The process

Service design is an iterative process in which traditionally various stages are run through in succession. The major advantage of service design is therefore that it essentially comprises a complete method that can readily be applied to a specific case. Whereas many co-creative methods (*such as role-plays or brainstorming*) immediately start with looking for ideas, the advantage of service design is actually the freedom to spend nearly half the time on defining the problem, before designing the solutions for it. After all, the more exactly you can define the problem, the more suitable you can design the solutions.

Traditionally, service design uses the Double Diamond (a UK Design Council tool, illustrated in the diagram below) to present clearly the various stages in the process. The Double Diamond consists of four steps that alternate between a broadening and a narrowing movement in the process.

Generally speaking, steps 1 to 4 need to be executed in succession, which ideally leads to a new or redesigned service. However in some cases, a step needs to be revisited, during which extra information is gathered or extra features are tested.

The approach taken to this design process of course depends on the personal approach of the service designer you wish to take on board as the supervisor. Some will follow this process extremely closely; others will rather deviate from it. In addition, the choice for certain steps will also be determined by the scope and objective of the project. Therefore, you certainly need to discuss with your service designer what the process will look like and, if necessary, ask for a personal approach to your specific problem.



1. Discover

In the first phase of a service design process, the discovery phase, you start from the situation as it is at this very moment. You start off with searching for more information. On the one hand, during this diverging phase, you attempt to frame the situation (which could be for example a certain problem or some existing service) and define it as precisely as you can. On the other hand, you try to gather as much insights into the experiences of the users in connection to this central question as possible. After all, you could try to describe the heart of the situation yourself, but talking to people that have already gone through the service, or are experiencing the problem at hand will often provide you with new insights. Thus, in this first phase you try to support and refine the knowledge you think you have of the existing situation, in order to gain a broader perspective of what exactly is going on in your specific context.

ALSO
SEE
PERSONAS
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2. Define

In order to be able to make use of all the material you have gathered in this process, it is important to aggregate and channel all your insights. That is the only way that you will be able to start processing all these insights. In the second phase, the definition phase, you will therefore try to bundle everything together to arrive at a number of focused work instruments that you can use during the rest of the process. For instance, on the basis of user insights, manageable and appropriate personas are created — to help you understand the interact with the service from a user's perspective. Indeed, by creating personas in this phase you avoid having to constantly go back to every detail you gathered through the user insights until the end of the project.

This phase is also used to formulate a focused design challenge together with all stakeholders. Now that we have investigated and framed the situation, interviewed the users about it, and processed and condensed all this information namely, it is possible to get together with all stakeholders involved and summarise in one sentence what exactly it is that we will be designing. This focused design challenge will then function as a guide throughout the remaining steps in the process. After these first two steps you will have completed half of the service design process.

Step three and four again proceed with making the diverging and converging movement.

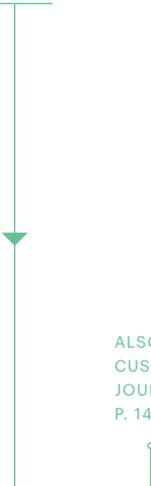
3. Develop

In phase 3, *the development phase*, classic brainstorming is finally permitted. In this phase, we search for many ideas, new thoughts and solution-oriented scenarios. Often, many different workshops with employees, users and external stakeholders are organised in this phase in order to get together and think about the design challenge. For instance, this can be done by means of looking for inspiring examples together. After all, you do not have to reinvent the wheel over and over again.

In order to stimulate your creativity and mutual collaboration you can use of various tools during this phase, including Serious Play®, during which a certain service is acted out in real life, e.g. with the use of Lego. During this step, it is extremely important to always take up the point of view of your users when designing the solutions you come up with. You can for example do this by referring to the personas and look from their perspective. In this phase, you create new ideas and bring them together to form a service system in which you take various customer journeys into account.

4. Deliver

Finally, in phase 4 – *the delivery phase* – the ideas and scenarios developed in phase 3 are tested and evaluated. This ensures that the solution you designed is as feasible as possible. The refinement of your ideas is namely considered to be an important and distinctive element of the service design process. For instance, in this step you test a certain service with users or build a small model to see how your solution will best fit in the space. By making use of this opportunity to prototype, you ensure that you avoid most future adjustment costs. After all, in this phase of the process you still have the possibility to implement any desired changes without major consequences. It is not until the very last step in the service design journey that you consider the viability of your plans, e.g. by also making a blueprint of all back office processes necessary for your new service to function.



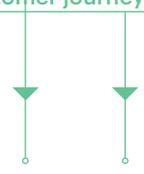
ALSO SEE
CUSTOMER
JOURNEYS
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Key principles

Service design takes a number of values as its central starting point. These elements form the basis of the method:

Service design is user-centred.

Service design aims to design services that first and foremost meet the needs of the users and stakeholders. This way you can be sure that the service you offer is desired and user-friendly. To this end, it is important to involve the users and stakeholders closely in the design process as co-creators. Therefore, the design process constantly takes place in collaboration with your users and employees from various departments in workshops. This does not only allow you to quickly arrive at additional insights, but also allows you to strengthen the general customer-focused mind-set of your organisation. Furthermore, the citizens are constantly taken into account in the service design process due to the [design of personas](#) and by looking into the entire [customer journey](#).



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Service design is sequential.

Service design uses techniques such as scenarios, customer journeys and blueprints in order to arrive at solutions that lead to a user experience in which various channels and touchpoints throughout time speak ‘with one voice’. Each step in a service is important, each link is essential; the experience before the service, during the service, and after the service. Therefore, it is important that a good service, and each touchpoint that the user has with it, constitutes a well-orchestrated whole in which the various steps follow each other in logical succession.

Service design is qualitative.

Because nobody is average, it makes no sense to design a service on the basis of figures for an average user. Techniques such as observations, experience interviews and personas yield qualitative insights from the perspective of the users of your service. This is the only way to discover what people truly want. The main objective here is to arrive at deep insights into ‘why’ people use your service. These — often emotional — motives can hardly be uncovered by means of questionnaires or other types of quantitative research. Thus, interviews are a much-used method of data collection in service design, but focus groups and workshops can just as effectively be used for obtaining user insights.

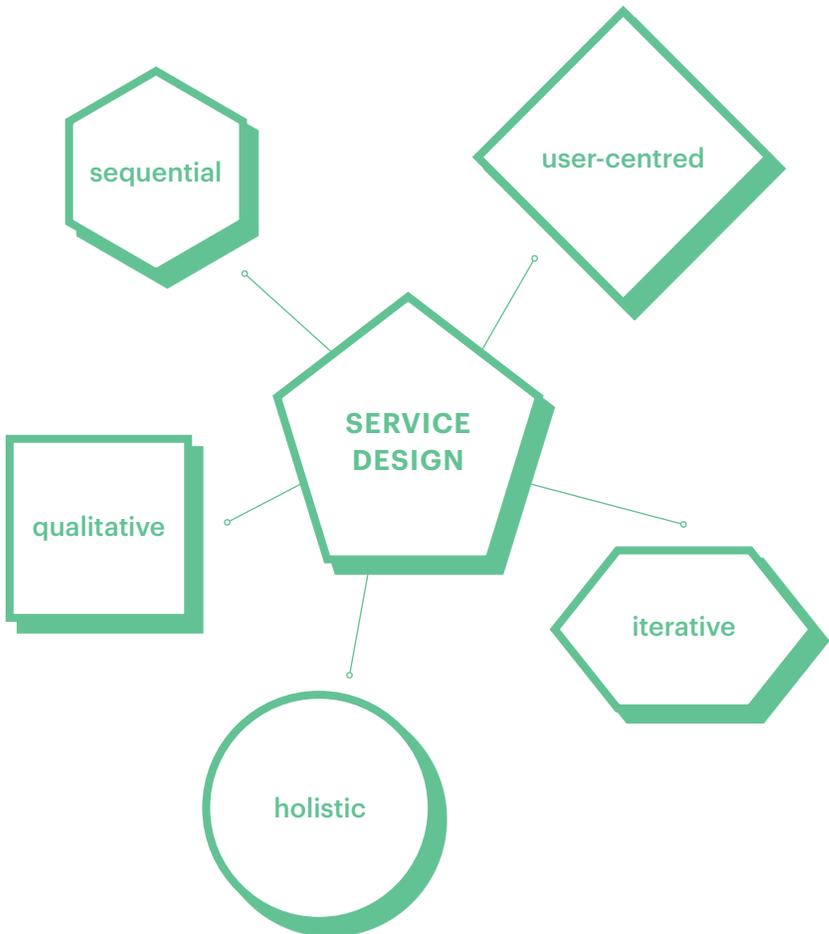
Service design is iterative.

Sometimes the process of service design needs to be run **through various times**. This allows for a constant feedback loop in the design process. Just like with product design, services can also be converted into a prototype. This first test phase is used for collecting direct feedback according to which the service can still be adjusted before it is implemented on a bigger scale. Thus, trial and error is an important element of service design.

ALSO SEE
THE DOUBLE
DIAMOND
P. 9

Service design is holistic.

Service design constantly views the service in its entirety. Large organisations are often organised in independent silos, what typically leads to a lack of alignment between the various channels and touchpoints with customers, resulting in a scattered user experience. Therefore, service design also takes the environment in which the service takes place into account. The designed service namely needs to take more into account than just itself, and needs to be adjusted e.g. to the culture and reputation of the organisation.

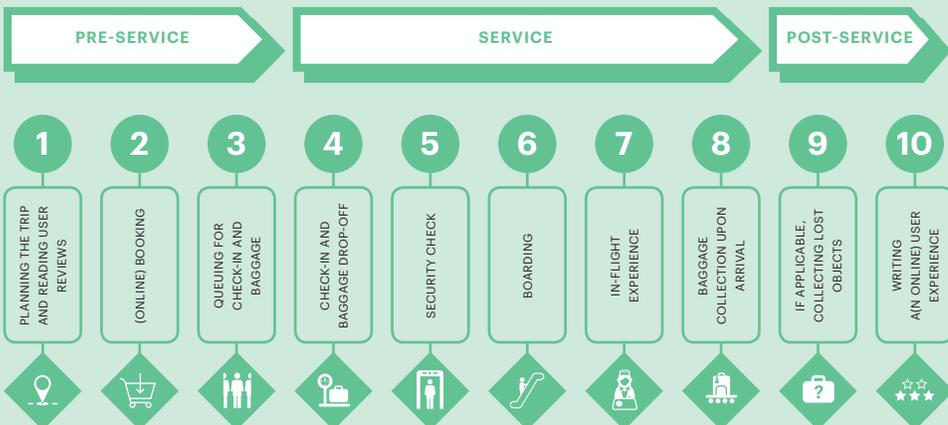


Customer Journey and Touchpoints

A customer journey is literally the route a customer or user takes to make use of your service. It is important to also consider the route the customer must take before using the service, and what happens after he has made use of your service. This means that all elements pre- and post-service also need to be taken into consideration when designing.

Each moment at which a user comes into contact with your organisation, or is expected to do something, is referred to as a 'touchpoint'. Therefore, in designing a new service it is important to continually think in terms of the entire customer journey, and to design all touchpoints as user-friendly as possible.

An example of a customer journey with 10 touchpoints
Airline companies inherently offer a service that allows you to move yourself from A to B across a great distance. However, the actual experience that users have of this service goes way beyond the mere transportation. Both before and after taking the airplane there are a number of steps that the passenger must or can complete. Furthermore, the touchpoints are much more extensive than just the moment that you spend in the airplane. This also goes for services offered by public authorities.



Public Service Design

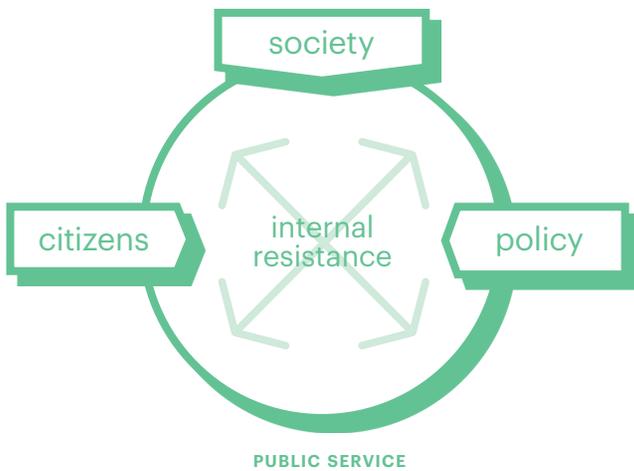
Service design is a method that is being used both in private and public organisations. This publication however specifically aims at targeting service design applications in the public sector. Governments namely are the ultimate service providers. Whether it concerns consultancy, information provision or record-keeping, public organisations offer services that often reach thousands to millions of people.

Hard figures give an indication of the impact of service provision, in particular in the public sector: services represent about three quarters of the European economy; the public sector as a whole is by far the largest supplier, responsible for about 45% of the European GDP.

Services provided by the public sector ensure that the society functions. They can have an incredible impact on our common wellbeing. At the same time, everyone is familiar with the frustration that results from malfunctioning public service provision. This is a double shame, as it means that the services which are supposed to make our lives easier, are actually making them harder; and that providing badly organised services also involves a waste of public resources, which are becoming increasingly scarce as it is.

It is crucial that services respond to realistic needs and are provided in an effective manner. This is only possible if they are designed in a conscious and thoughtful manner from the beginning. Service design is the method for achieving this.

Well-thought-out services are becoming increasingly important for the public sector. Not only the business world acknowledges the need for innovation. The public organisations feel an ever-increasing pressure to create public value. The old methods used by public authorities often no longer suffice for this. It is often necessary to look for radically new ways of providing services. Service design offers a framework for searching for innovative approaches and new ways to serve the citizens of the future even better.



Public services exist in various forms and at various levels, offered by different organisations and aimed towards different target groups. What they all have in common however, is that they are under increasing pressure.

1. EXTERNAL PRESSURE FROM SOCIETY

Societal life is becoming increasingly complex and many social domains are facing great pressure. Our society is increasingly confronted with wicked problems: problems that are so broad and obsolete that there really is no clear-cut, unequivocal solution to them. For example, think of themes such as mobility, aging, climate change, urbanisation, employment, energy management, etc.

At the moment, governments are ill equipped to handle such problems. The current service delivery model might not remain sustainable in the future. The large social challenges require innovative solutions from a proactive government that dares to think across (policy) domains.

What service design does

Service design is extremely suitable as an instrument for taking into account the great social challenges. Their complexity requires a multidisciplinary, holistic and systemic approach. Moreover, design can make that complexity more comprehensible for all parties involved by means of visual and other tools. Service design also creates space for creativity and disruptive thinking.

ALSO SEE KEY
PRINCIPLES
P. 12

2. EXTERNAL PRESSURE FROM CITIZENS

Citizens have increasing expectations from their governments and measure the performance of public services against that of commercial services. They expect quick access to services and preferably in a manner that best suits them. Citizens expect an agile, individualised and effective public service proposition. Public services must meet all these expectations regarding flexibility, transparency, responsiveness and effectiveness. Citizens are becoming increasingly outspoken, self-aware and demanding. Therefore governments should come out and take into account these aspirations of citizens in order to respond to these higher expectations.

ALSO SEE KEY
PRINCIPLES
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What service design does

Service design stands for the uncompromising involvement of end users in the design of a service, for instance by means of co-creation. That way, wider support for the service will be guaranteed from the beginning. Government services sometimes lose their points of contact with citizens, while design is exactly focused on those tangible touchpoints.

3. EXTERNAL PRESSURE FROM POLICY

Confronted with shortages, policy-makers increasingly often choose for scenarios that place great budgetary pressure on the policy-implementing organisations. All public service provision needs to occur at a lower cost. Across all of Europe public organisations are stimulated to save on the budget, yet increase their impact; to 'do more with less'. Services are being centralised. Moreover, the cyclic nature of the democratically elected policy level can also have a devastating influence on public services: political shifts and changing policy choices can simply put a halt to running projects. This is devastating for the motivation of employees.

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What service design does

Service design returns to the core of a service and ensures that the proposed solution has support from its providers and users. Elements such as the testing of prototypes ensure that the final service is efficient and effective.

4. INTERNAL RESISTANCE

Government organisations can encounter many internal hindrances in their services. Often, government organisations are inward-looking and put up walls. Governments sometimes are too much focused on the current state of affairs, paying attention to the improvement of internal processes, and to the continuity. They have a great degree of 'path dependence': the actual service is often the result of earlier choices, of achievements or habits; the ill-considered result of a long history, rather than an answer to the actual needs and wishes of citizens.

Changes or improvements are generally merely incremental and officers are often not used to taking a step back to radically rethink their service propositions. Other barriers are an oppressive hierarchy and compartmentalization, risk-averting behaviour, a lack in experience in creativity and innovation, a lack of leadership and management autonomy, etc. The reaction from citizens is one of distrust and low expectations.

However, many officers do feel the need for urgent changes. They are searching for fresh ideas and alternative approaches to service deliveries.

What service design does

Service design stimulates services providers to radically rethink their service. By involving everyone in the design process, it creates support of colleagues and removes internal barriers. Furthermore, service design, by being an interdisciplinary approach, connects the various kinds of knowledge from different employees and in that manner also increases capacity.

ALSO SEE KEY
PRINCIPLES
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Efficiency or Effectivity?

Design brings empathy, a focus on the user and usefulness to public service deliveries. This results in services that work, not only because they are efficient, but also effective.

Government organisations are often concerned with the **efficiency of doing things right**. Under the pretext of ‘measuring is knowing’, quantitative KPIs are generally prioritised. However, this often occurs at a moment after an intervention, on a point where often no engagement or budget is left to implement any changes. Moreover, quantitative evaluations often only indicate that something is not working. And leaves all open for guessing at what that ‘something’ then might be. Therefore, something about your service might go fundamentally wrong, but what that is cannot only be deducted from quantitative investigations.

Service design ensures efficiency by streamlining the service processes, removing unnecessary elements and reducing costs.

The thing governments are usually less occupied with, is striving for the **effectiveness of doing the right things**. Service design first and foremost aims for a qualitative service delivery. The ultimate touchstone of that quality is not provided by numerical internal indicators, but rather by the experience and valuation of the users. Service design seeks creating value by designing services that are relevant. That relevance comes from user insights.

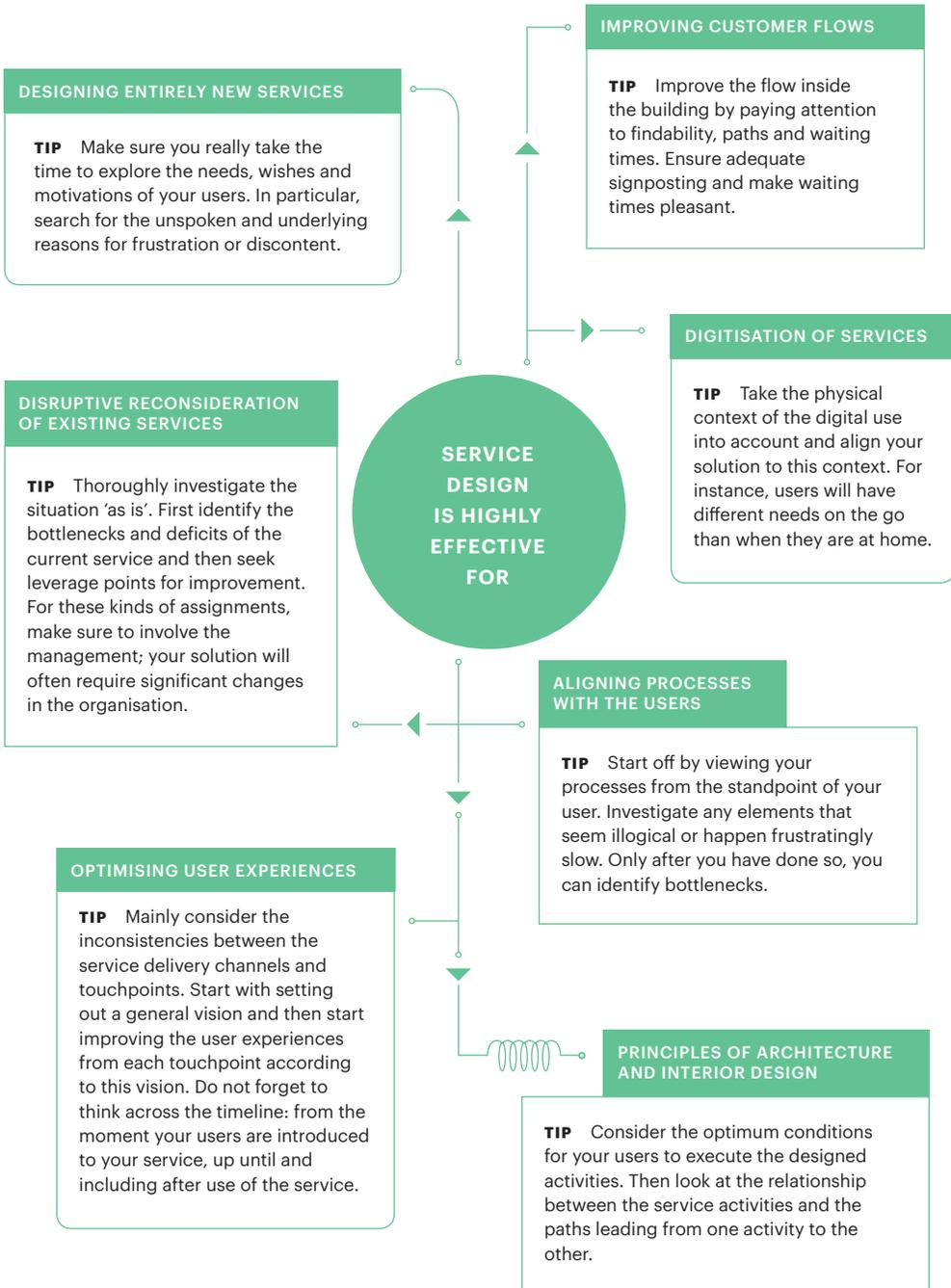
Naturally, there is a mutual connection between efficiency and effectiveness: solutions that are effective, are also always more efficient, as irrelevant services per definition constitute a waste.

A good example of this is presented by computerisation and digitisation. Currently, this area evokes great expectations with regard to cost-reduction. However, it is important not to confuse the means with the end. ICT technology in no way guarantees that you will offer your services more efficiently and more effectively. It is only the manner in which ICT resources are used to deliver your service that will determine whether this indeed constitutes an efficient process. After all, a digitisation that is not accepted by the users or the operational employees is a waste of resources and therefore not effective, nor efficient.

At the very least, service design reduces the costs involved in the launch of a new service, by reducing the financial risk through extensive testing in advance. Employees are more motivated and the users get a service they actually need.

What service design can (not) do

Due to its multi-purpose nature, service design is often seen as a miracle cure that can suddenly offer a solution to any kind of situation. Therefore, we want to be clear at the start of this publication where service design starts and ends. What questions can and can't the service design methodology solve?



CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Service design can help with change management, but is not sufficient in itself. Service design can form a part of change management (e.g. in order to make a service more user-friendly or radically digitise it). Service design, in particular the co-creation approach, can be one of the tools for shaping the complex process of a change management project, but can never be the only instrument. Ask for assistance from change specialists.

COMMUNICATION

A service design process involves users and stakeholders, but only with the purpose of the design objective. Service design is however something entirely different from setting up a structured dialogue with users and/or stakeholders for communication or marketing purposes. In the area of communication and stakeholder management, service design can certainly offer a contribution, but it does not provide a complete solution.

SOCIAL ISSUES

A social issue is always complex and can never be solved with just one service. First investigate the systemic coherence of the problem and then collaborate with other service providers to find a solution.

**SERVICE
DESIGN
IS LESS
EFFECTIVE
FOR**

ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

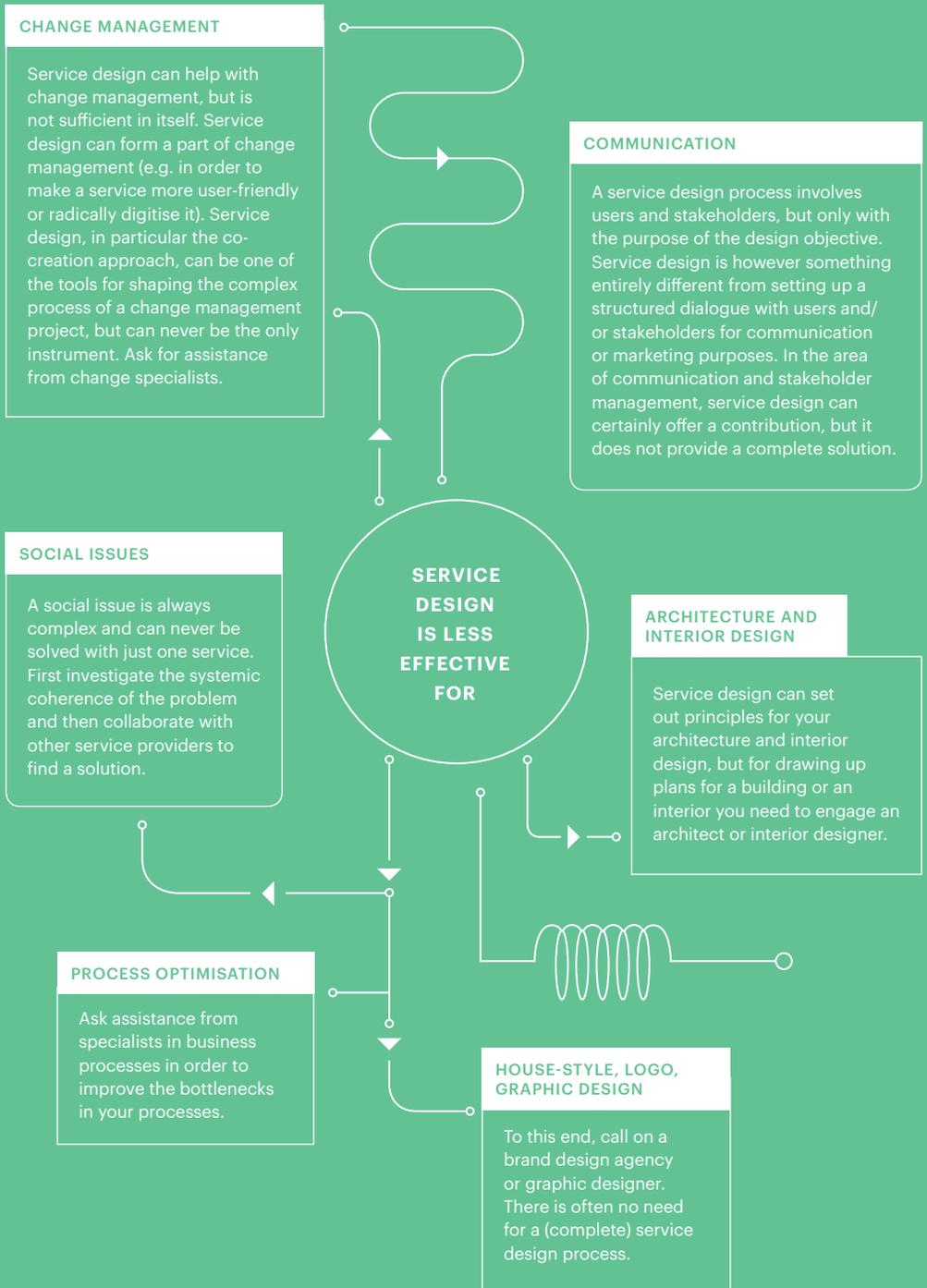
Service design can set out principles for your architecture and interior design, but for drawing up plans for a building or an interior you need to engage an architect or interior designer.

PROCESS OPTIMISATION

Ask assistance from specialists in business processes in order to improve the bottlenecks in your processes.

HOUSE-STYLE, LOGO, GRAPHIC DESIGN

To this end, call on a brand design agency or graphic designer. There is often no need for a (complete) service design process.



The limits of service design

A designed service can cover quite a broad scope. Therefore, other disciplines are often also necessary in order to work out the new service concept. For instance, implementing a new service sometimes means that you need to adjust the processes in your organisation. Thus, service design certainly helps to understand which processes need to be better attuned to the users, but the **redesigning of the business processes themselves** is another discipline.

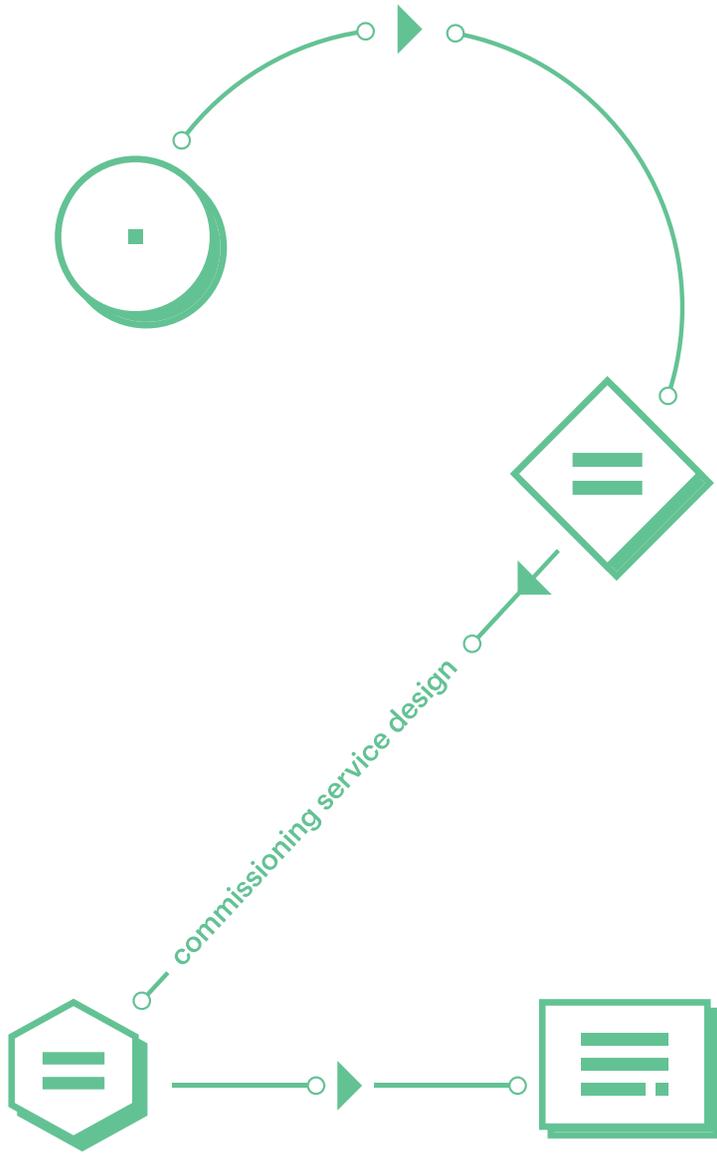
A new service often requires a change in the working method within your organisation or a change in the attitude of your employees. The co-creative approach of the method partly ensures that a base of support is created in the organisation, but this is insufficient. Especially in large and established organisations, an additional **change management process is necessary, including a communication plan** and a step-by-step outline.

A new service sometimes requires an **adjustment of the strategy and the business model** of the organisation. Although the method starts from a comprehensive knowledge of the business objectives, service design is not a method for changing and elaborating on these objectives in themselves.

Finally, some forms of services cannot be improved merely by service design. In particular, this goes for services with a profound social goal. In these cases, the underlying causes are usually extraordinarily complex and connected to services from other organisations. Thus, **for social design a systemic analysis in a preparatory phase is recommended** in such situations.

Frequently, a new service also requires **additional expertise from other design disciplines** such as product development, interaction design, interior architecture, brand design, graphic design, marketing and communication. However, these are all distinct types of expertises. Involve experts from these other disciplines, if you already know them, in your service design process by e.g. inviting them to your co-creation workshops.





Commissioning service design

How can you get started with service design? Well, some aspects of service design are DIY-proof. Attitudes such as user-centeredness and systemic perspective can for instance help you on a daily basis to obtain insights into your current services and can serve as a basis for future improvements. However, if you wish to see real results, it would be wise to call in help from experts. After all, it is important to respect the internal logic of the service design method.

Designers offer communicative skills and are adept at visualisation, problem solving and creative skills. In a number of places in Europe, service designers are even employed by governments, but this still remains an exception. Therefore, you will probably have to look for an external designer.

Hiring external service designers

A quick search on the internet can already offer you a list of service designers that are active in your region. If you are not able to find them, then most countries will have organisations that support design and can help you in your search for a suitable designer. At www.beda.org you will find a list of European design organisations.

The tendering for service design in the public sector is not always the most straightforward procedure, for instance due to various regulations and unadjusted award criteria. In addition, governments often think in terms of problems and usually already have their own idea on how those might be solved, which results in a restrictive set of requirements. Service designers prefer to think in terms of ‘solutions’ and the way those emerge as the a result of the complete Double Diamond process.

This does not mean you will not have to offer a clear framework, or borders that indicate what is possible. It is important that service designers are aware of this before they respond with an offer. Include limitations (in time, resources, etc.) in the design brief.

Don’t expect the offer of service designers to include proposals for possible solutions to your problem definition. Tendering for service design is not a matter of selecting a certain solution, but rather the team and their approach that will guide you to the right solution. Every solution strongly depends on the context of the problem. A great part of service design is about mapping out that context.

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Draw up a **design brief** and use this as the basis for your call for tenders and the interviews and negotiations that will follow. Your **design brief** should include the most important information for the designers to be able to answer your question. In addition to the design brief, it may sometimes be appropriate to organise personal interviews with multiple designers or joint information sessions. Especially complex problems are hard to summarise on paper and an additional verbal explanation, during which you can respond to questions from interested designers, often clears up many of the aspects involved.

Public organisations often need to comply with a legally determined tendering procedure. Make sure that you contact a sufficient number of service design agencies for a call for tenders and request an elaborate offer in writing, with a detailed budget, a plan of action, project planning and timing, an introduction of the team, their competences and their portfolio of past assignments. In assessing the offers, you can take the portfolio of the

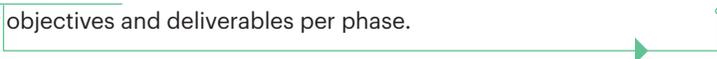
candidates, their plan of action and their price into consideration. However, do not get blinded by the cost price and do not let this be the only decisive factor in awarding the tender. It is much more important that you feel that the designer has understood your question and considers it an important one.

Inquire into the experience of the designers with the service design method and with projects similar to yours. If desired, you can ask for feedback from references. It is not necessary for service designers to have substantial expertise in your domain, but you can always include previous experience or affinity as an asset.

As a conceptual framework, service design is sufficiently open for various designers to be able to propose different plans of action. You then choose the approach that you deem most appropriate for your question and your organisation. Together with the design brief, the plan of action forms the basis for everything that follows. This plan of action can best be divided into various phases.

The Double Diamond can, for instance, serve as a basic structure, with clear objectives and deliverables per phase.

ALSO SEE P. 9



In tendering for a service design project, it is important that the commissioning party and the design agency have some time to get acquainted. After all, you will be going through a process together, and in such cases it is good to start off with a productive atmosphere. On the one hand, this is a matter of sharpening the objectives and clarifying the assignment, but a personal rapport between the commissioning party and the designer is additionally beneficial.

Working with external service designers: why, how and when?

Each service design project is different, has its own challenges, and its own bottlenecks. Thankfully, also its own solutions. No two projects are the same. Not in terms of substance, nor process, form or participants. Dealing with that diversity in service design requires skill, knowledge and experience. Not in order to work according to fixed routines, but to recognise difficulties and thresholds early on in the project, to offer solutions, to maintain the flow, and to bring out the best in the participants in terms of creativity and effort.

Are you not better off doing it all yourself?

After all, you do know the service that you wish to improve or set up like no other. You know the target group of the service, the context in which the service needs to function, who you need to involve, etc. So why hire external forces, who are not familiar with all this material? All of the above might indeed be true, but an external designer can compensate for any weaknesses you might have. For instance, are you sure that you are able to initiate and support a creative process in a group of 20 people? Do you know how to draw up user profiles of the people that will make use of your service? Or how you can motivate users to participate in workshops? An external force can help you with these very diverse tasks. He or she can help you get this project going and keep it running.

And, moreover, being experienced in your own sector might offer advantages, but it certainly also has its disadvantages. Do you have enough distance? Is your perspective broad enough in order to give creative solutions a chance? Are you open to new ideas? A good service designer will help you create that distance anew, broaden your perspective, and open you up. That external view can offer new perspectives and angles.

More than wisdom from books

Techniques for service design can be found in books, toolkits, and websites. But much more than the basic techniques cannot be gathered from these sources. Professional service designers go much further. They combine knowledge with practice, and content with process. Service designers have their own tools and working methods. On the basis of their knowledge and experience, they will propose a mix of techniques, taking the problem at hand, the context, the participants and the time frame into account.

One example: and ideal co-design workshop takes time, because the group needs to get into a certain 'mind-set' in order to truly tap into their creativity. However, it is often quite difficult to motivate users to participate in a workshop that takes a whole day. This is a challenge with which professional service designers are confronted on a daily basis and for which they have solutions.

The disadvantages and limitations

Does an external service designer not come with any disadvantages? Of course it does. First and foremost, the costs. Service designers are usually **not cheap**. Service designers are trained professionals with years of training and experience. As with other industries good quality service providers are valued and this is reflected in their costs. A well written brief and procurement process should ensure that you get best value for money. Therefore, make sure to be economical when you hire external forces and be selective with regard to the projects and tasks for which you want to hire a professional external designer. Do it in order to learn for yourself (or your team or your staff members) and/or for the projects that are extremely important, or too extensive or complex to tackle on your own.

But never outsource everything. Never leave the entire service design process in the hands of an external agency. The core of service design means that you do things jointly. You, your team, and your organisation have unique substantive knowledge that is relevant and should not be wasted. Your hired service designer will usually have a certain level of content-

specific knowledge of the project, but will usually not know the details that are truly important. You or your organisation do have that knowledge. On the other hand, the external service designer does have the knowledge of how the process can best be handled. In sum: finding the right balance between external and internal knowledge offers the key to an effective service design process.

Pitfalls and focal points

What should you pay attention to in hiring an external service designer? Among other things, to the rate. And be careful with **dumped prices**. However, do demand dedication and creativity from your hired service designer, both in terms of process and content. A good external service designer is more than an expert in the process. Designers need to add value to the results that come from the users and the co-design workshops, and they shape the visualisations and prototypes. Many service designers merely act as consultants that use participatory techniques and hardly 'design'. Avoid them.

ALSO SEE
COSTS AND TIME
INVESTMENT P. 41

ALSO SEE COSTS AND
TIME INVESTMENT P. 41

Design brief

You are convinced and do wish to get started with a service designer? In the tendering process, pay extra attention to the 'design brief', i.e. the part in which you specify what kind of design services you wish to procure exactly.

A design brief lists every important piece of information that designers need before they can get started. Such a design brief is not set in stone and can be revised multiple times, for instance after feedback from the designers themselves. Regardless, the result from a service design process can be miles apart from the original design brief, for instance because half-way through the process your problem definition from the start might turn out not to cover the problem that matters. Nevertheless, it is necessary to get started with a clear design brief.

The design brief does not only clarify the assignment for the designers, but also functions as a touchstone for the interviews between the management, stakeholders, employees, policy-makers, workshop participants, etc.

What?

A design brief is:

- + a written communication in which a common goal is defined
- + a description of a collection of requirements (the criteria that needs to be met) and wishes (the criteria that needs to be met to the greatest extent possible): cost price, durability, weight, development time, aesthetics, etc.
- + for a product or service to be designed
- + a definition of the prerequisites and limits
- + a first small step in the direction of the solution
- + a recording of the legal framework
- + a basis for the evaluation afterwards
- + a contract between two equal parties (there is co-ownership of the project)
- + also called: a specification document, a creative brief, a programme of requirements, a marketing brief, a project description, a job ticket, an innovation brief, ...

A design brief is often used when an independent designer (or agency) designs something for a customer. There is no fixed structure for a design brief, as different kinds of design and different kinds of assignments will call for varying content-related requirements each time. A design brief can consist of both written text and information in bullet points, even though the latter is less preferred. Often, graphs, illustration and tables are added. Below we offer some suggestions of elements that make up a proper design brief.

An effective Design Brief format might be:

1. Title page

2. Table of Contents

3. Executive summary

4. Description of organisation profile

- + Concise history
- + Specialisations, objectives, sector
- + Structure of the organisation
- + Profile of already realised designs
- + Brand and image
- + Achievements
- + Competition/market overview
- + Stakeholders: who needs to be taken into account in the process?
Who can one count on for help?

APPROXIMATELY 1 PAGE, INCLUDING OBJECTIVE, TIME, BUDGET AND OWNERS

INCL. VALUES, MISSION, UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

5. Problem definition

- + Description problem
- + Hindrances and opportunities of the project
- + Budget
- + Time frame
- + Extra aspects such as safety, environment, aesthetic design

6. Objective

- + What exactly needs to be solved? Demands and wishes.
- + What functions are certainly necessary: list of specifications
- + How will the design contribute to the corporate objectives?
- + For which target group(s)?
- + Deadlines
- + Attention for creation, distribution, use, disappearance of design

IF POSSIBLE, DESCRIBE THIS WITH THE USE OF THE PERSONAS

ESTIMATE OF WHAT THE SOLUTION SHOULD AT LEAST CONTAIN

7. Solution analysis

- + Costs/benefits
- + Risks/advantages
- + Earlier planned solutions
- + Sketches, floorplans, etc.

HAVE STEPS BEEN TAKEN AT AN EARLIER STAGE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

8. Synopsis

- + Evaluation: how to measure success?
- + Conclusion/summary
- + Any intellectual property issues you might want to address
- + Appendices

DOCUMENTS WITH RESEARCH DATA, CONSUMER SURVEYS, MOOD BOARDS, PHOTOS, AUDIT MATERIAL, EARLIER DESIGN BRIEFS OR PROJECTS, ETC.

How to get started?

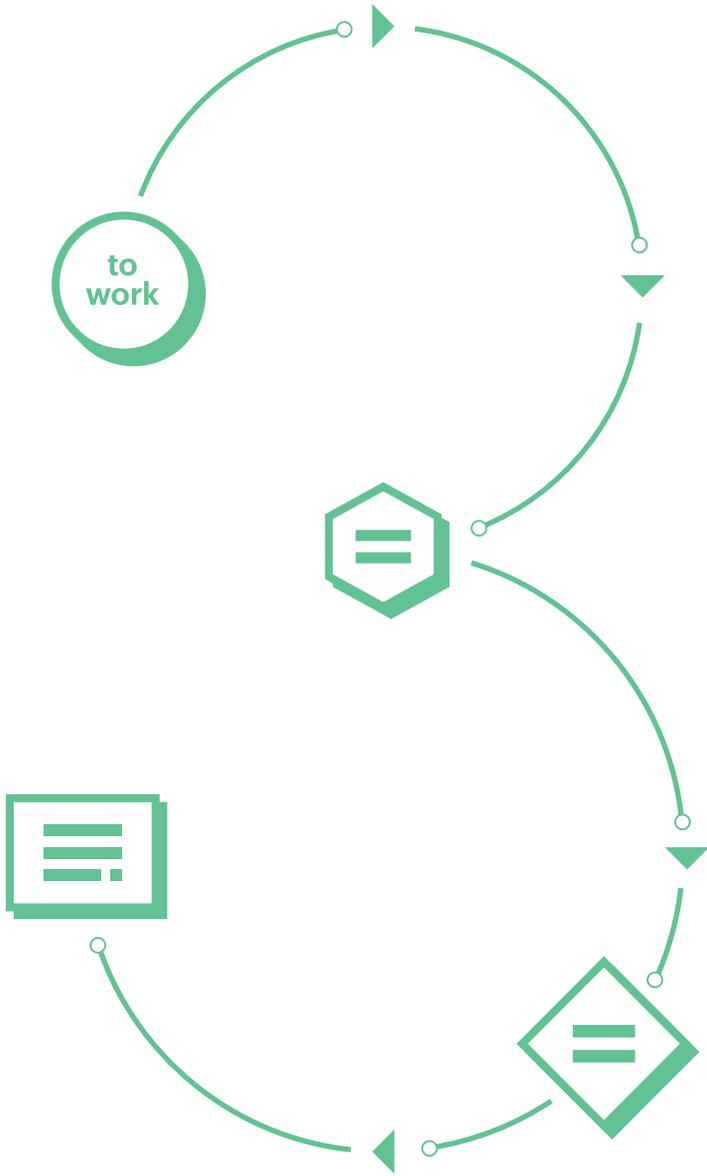
After granting the job to a certain design agency, organise a kick-off meeting. In the first step all parties (designer, public authority, other stakeholders) involved get together for this one-on-one meeting. Per partner, 2 or 3 people will join the table. You can discuss here a number of core questions, to ensure that all parties have a clear overview of the project. Such questions might be:

- + what are the first objectives of this project?
- + why is this project really necessary?
- + why is it necessary to do this project at this time?
- + which wider impact is expected for the commissioning organisation?
- + who are all the stakeholders in this project?

Draw up a report of this meeting and use it as input for the potential fine-tuning the design brief. Clearly determine who will process this input, and how feedback on this will be provided. Make sure all parties are aware of the fine-tuning of the design brief, and the extra agreements that are made at this point.

Tips for a successful design brief

- + Do not prescribe any solutions: don't give in to the temptation to tell the designer what to design. Instead, make it absolutely clear what problems need to be solved, so that the designer can explore ideas. This is where you truly need the expertise of the designers, as they are the 'design advisors' and, as such, need to be trusted in their role.
- + Before the final release of the design brief, ensure that all stakeholders have reached a unanimous agreement on the proposed approach, process, budget and timing.
- + Make no assumptions. Many design projects fail because someone 'assumes' that someone else knows what they know.
- + The commissioning party and contractor are partners: co-owners. Partnership means working with people, not for people.
- + Do not take standard written material as your starting point and be careful with copying and pasting existing material. After all, a customised solution supposes a customised assignment description.
- + Design briefs can be adjusted during the process, on the condition that the changes support a better solution to the problem and all co-owners agree with the changes. A design brief is a living document, much like a business plan.



Tools

Service design is a method that makes extensive use of tools. The nature and order of the tools are generally best determined by a service designer, who constantly keeps both the users and the final objective of the process in mind.

However, the Service Design Toolkit by Design Flanders and design agency Namahn does offer a standard example of what such a process might look like. This Toolkit doubles the four phases of the Double Diamond to create eight different steps. For each step, 2 tools are offered, which brings the total number of tools up to 16.

Particular to the Service Design Toolkit is that it offers an overview of the different phases, and depicts these in a circle, which continually allows a repetition of the process. In principle, the 16 tools can be used for any service design project, but of course they only offer a selection of the tools that exist in general. Using service design means to implement the steps of the Double Diamond in succession.

Only if you are thoroughly familiar with service design, you can use the tools from the toolkit separately within a project. This, on the condition that you know exactly what kind of information you need in which phase. If you are not confident about the use of the service design tools, their following order, or their validity at a certain moment in the process, then definitely ask advice from a service designer.

The paper manual of the Service Design Toolkit can be ordered at www.servicedesigntoolkit.org. From this website you can also download the accompanying workshop posters. Below we will already give you some examples of tools that can be used in two steps of a service design project.

Persona tools

Personas are profiles of the typical users of your future service. These are fictive characters that capture as many of the various needs and desires of the different target groups as possible.

First, use this tool to identify the main characteristics of the users of your service. In particular, investigate and select those characteristics that have a great impact on your service. Then define the two extremes of these characteristics in order to make the sample of personas as diverse as possible.

An example of this exercise could be

- characteristic: age
- extremes: elderly and young.

Finally, combine various extremes to form realistic combinations that together could constitute a single fictive person using your service. Create about 6 to 8 different personas, until the majority of potential typical users is covered. Feel free to make your personas extreme. This will help you to keep your solutions sharp. If your service works for the most extreme cases, it will most likely also work for the more average ones.

The worksheet is titled "3 PERSONAS PERSONA OBTENCIÓN" and includes a progress indicator with 10 dots, the first of which is filled. It is divided into two main sections: "CHARACTERISTICS OF THE USERS" and "PERSONAS".

The "CHARACTERISTICS OF THE USERS" section features a table with three columns: "EXTREME" (left), "CHARACTERISTIC" (center), and "EXTREME" (right). The table contains 10 rows for recording characteristics and their extremes. A green arrow at the top of the table points from the "EXTREME" column to the "CHARACTERISTIC" column, and another green arrow at the bottom points from the "CHARACTERISTIC" column to the "EXTREME" column.

The "PERSONAS" section is located below the table and contains six boxes, each with a person icon. The icons are colored as follows: grey, grey, green, grey, grey, and green. Arrows point from the "EXTREME" and "CHARACTERISTIC" columns of the table above to these person icons, indicating the combination of characteristics to form each persona.

3 PERSONAS 2

PERSONA

NAME

OCCUPATION

OTHER (Other elements that are of relevance to your service)

SERVICE ATTITUDE
How does your persona typically respond to service or the lack of it?

DO-IT-YOURSELFER ADVICE SEEKER DELEGATOR

DESCRIPTION
Describe your persona. Describe who he or she is in the context of the desired service. What are his or her objectives, both rational and emotional? Use any and all the characteristics that you mentioned in the previous poster.

MOTIVATING
What will motivate your persona to use the service?

DEMOTIVATING
What will hold your persona back from using the service?

In the next step, use this tool, which is designed as part of the Service Design Toolkit for further developing your 6 to 8 personas.

Per persona, choose a photograph, a name, an occupation, and other elements that might be salient for the identity of your persona. Decide whether the persona will be a DIYer, an advice seeker or a delegator. Then, using all the elements of the first (characteristics) poster, describe your persona: who will he or she be in the context of the (future) service? What are his or her objectives, both rational and emotional? How can he/she be motivated to use the service, and what will hold him/her back?

In the design phase, you will regularly test your solutions from the point of view of these 6 to 8 personas, in order not to have to take the full sample of users into account every time.

Personas come in different guises and can be as elaborate as you want them to be. Examples of more complex personas can be found on www.wereldvannestor.be where they have been developed in the context of a social welfare project.

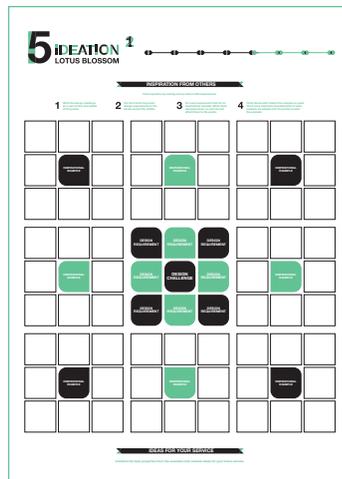
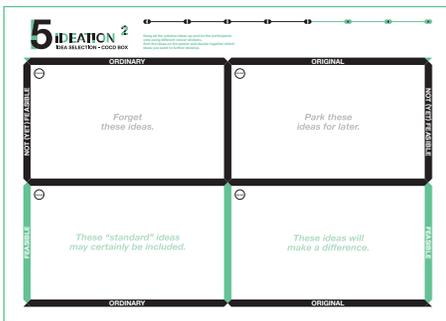
Ideation tools

The major advantage of service design is that half of the journey has already been completed by the time a thorough brainstorm is permitted. This ensures that all the people around the table know exactly what needs to be solved. This saves time that might otherwise have been wasted on blind brainstorming, yielding ideas that eventually don't result in solutions for the users of the service.

The Service Design Toolkit offers two tools for the Ideation phase: a tool for finding ideas, and a tool for organising those ideas for further use.

Because it is pointless to reinvent the wheel and to brainstorm at random, the **Lotus Flower tool** offers an association exercise. In this exercise, you search for good examples of the design requirements determined at an earlier stage, both nationally and internationally. The Lotus Flower tool helps you to look for the elements that make these examples so great, which will certainly lead you to new ideas for the design of your service. After all, you are looking for new solutions and those will generally not be the ones you thought of beforehand.

Because the Lotus Flower step will probably lead you to generating a vast number of ideas, the toolkit also offers a **COCD box tool**. This tool allows you to classify and select all the resulting ideas. You write each idea on a post-it and stick it into the correct quadrant. This allows you to take into account the question of whether or not they are feasible, and whether they are original or ordinary. This way, you will be certain to end up with the best ideas (in the section feasible and original) to work with in the next steps of the process.



Workshops

Co-creation, developing a service together with all the stakeholders, is a value central to the service design philosophy. Therefore, most of the service design exercises and tools have been compiled in such a manner that they facilitate maximum collaboration between everyone in the project.

Under the slogan ‘together you know more than alone’, the co-creation workshops offer an ideal way to share experiences and insights with one another. This helps progression, and will usually yield more innovative solutions. But that is not the only advantage. By collaborating on all levels, the bottom-up service design solutions created are usually closer to the citizens. Moreover, all that experience with collaboration between the stakeholders is useful during the implementation of a solution. Another advantage is that both civil servants and citizens understand where a certain change comes from, as they came up with it themselves. The resistance to implementation will then most likely be less extensive.

Co-creation workshops differ in duration and scope, depending on the question and the nature of a certain service design project. Usually, collaboration takes place between a highly diverse group of stakeholders (citizens, civil servants, designers, management, etc.), in groups of 6 or 8 people. Sometimes workshops are organised for just 1 kind of stakeholder, sometimes for multiple target groups together. Co-creation workshops work most effectively if no more than 18 to 20 people at a time participate. A co-creation session can last anywhere between 1 and 7 hour(s), and in order to arrive at extra innovative solution can best take place in a neutral location (thus not at the organisation itself). During a workshop, various groups make use of tools, do exercises or conduct brainstorming. Participants generate ideas, scrap ideas, discuss, draw and play. Please note: a co-creation workshop is not about making democratic decisions, but rather about identifying as many relevant ideas, directions and perceptions as possible that will then be filtered, refined and tested at a later stage.

It is important to note that the successful incorporation of the co-creation into a service design project is often the job of a specialist. Hiring a service designer as a moderator can help to solve sore points and to guide the group towards results more quickly. Moreover, not all results from a co-creation workshop are useful for the following stages, and a service designer can often ensure that the output will still head in the desired direction, for instance by posing additional questions.

Recruiting workshop participants

Recruiting users for the co-design workshops is often a challenge. You can best ask yourself: who uses this service or will make use of it? What are the profiles of these users? Where will I find the right people to take part and how can I motivate them? That motivation namely is essential: motivated participants yield more valuable contributions than your average, hardly interested citizen.

However, please note: users consist of both customers of the service and employees of your own organisation that will help deliver or execute the service. In recruitment for the workshops you need to strike a balance: between types of customers, and between customers and your own employees. Furthermore, it is not the quantity that counts in a co-design workshop, but the quality. Mainly look for people who are prepared to dedicate their efforts and offer constructive criticism.

Moreover, it is often difficult for civil servants to offer monetary compensation to the users that participate in the process. Why offer people payment, a gift or an incentive, when the objective of the process is to offer them a better service? Nevertheless, it is quite ethical to offer something in return if you need something from someone, especially if that person has offered a valuable contribution to your own organisation. Again, the message here is to get creative and find a fun incentive that is also acceptable to the organisation.

Costs and time investment

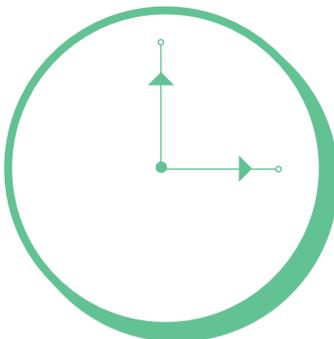
Apart from the substantive engagement in a service design process, such a process also entails an investment of time and resources. This section will discuss these two practical needs.

TIME

The duration of a project will strongly vary according to the scope of the project. A shortened version of the service design process can take place in as short a period as one (highly) intensive week. On the condition that the management offers its unconditional support, and the stakeholders and users are well known beforehand. However, this is a highly exceptional way of working that can only be brought to a successful conclusion by professional service designers with an expertise in this manner of working.

Therefore, the general rule is: you need time, time, and more time. This is because service design constitutes a process that progresses through various phases — listening, designing, testing, following up. Therefore, it is recommended to take time in between the various stages in order to let ideas sink in and develop. In addition, to get support from the management, or in order to inform the users involved in the meantime, it is better not to conduct all the steps in succession without pausing.

Therefore, service design processes at the local government will usually run for 4 to 7 months, or in case of more complex projects for an even longer period. You are advised to take this into consideration when drawing up your plans, and during the tendering procedure.



COSTS

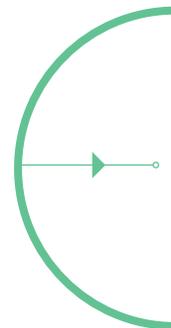
Of course, a service design process is anything but free. First off, a project manager will (partly) have to clear his/her schedule to be able to shape and steer the process. In addition, the hours of the employees responsible for the delivery of the final service and participating in the workshops must also be taken into account.

Furthermore, for the success of the project, working with an external service designer is **highly recommended**. Naturally, he/she will also have a cost price. The applicable rates will fall within the scope of other hired experts, such as a good engineer, or a management consultant. You will have to take a daily rate starting from EUR 500 up to EUR 1000 into account. However, this rate strongly differs between various European countries. Be sure to request multiple offers, and conduct a thorough search into what service design agencies are active in your region.

Be careful not to opt for an offer that is too cheap. Negotiating is allowed, possible, and even a good idea. But don't push beyond the limits. You might know the saying about peanuts and monkeys. External designers who offer bottom prices will generally not have much experience or will only dedicate moderate efforts to your project. Someone who delivers professional quality will not work for dumping prices.



ALSO SEE
P. 14



Managing the process

Service design is an 'open' process, but that does not mean that it is a vague, dispersed or non-binding process without contextual or methodological restrictions. Service design needs to be tightly managed within a well-defined methodological framework. Here are some tips to take in mind when working on a service design process in your organisation:

Pay sufficient attention to creating a base of support within your own organisation before you start the service design process. Explain what the intention is and what the advantages are for all parties involved. You could opt for leaving this to the service designer you have commissioned, but there is also something to be said for doing it yourself. For instance, you could use this publication to that end. To create the maximum of support, it is important to keep in mind that support is crucial at all levels. The engagement of the top management is for example a necessary condition for success. Also, many employees will be involved in the process and need to be motivated to dedicate their efforts. This is only possible if they are convinced of the importance of the project and that conviction starts at the top. The engagement of the employees that are closest to the user is no less important: for instance they deliver valuable input and feedback during workshops, but will eventually also be responsible for the implementation of a new or renewed service. Creating support for service design is to a high degree dependent on the organisational culture: especially in closed, hierarchical organisations that work top-down this requires sufficient attention.

If you will be working with external service designers, be careful not to consider them as consultants who will be working on a solution you have ordered from a distance. Generally, service designers get highly involved in a service design process, which means they are also entitled to a piece of ownership. A great deal of involvement and effort is required from both the service designer and the commissioning party. Service design is a collaboration between various parties, based on good rapport, trust and mutual effort. The best projects are those that are done together, from start to finish.

Even if the service design process is guided by external design professionals, it will still be necessary to manage the process internally and follow it tightly. The service designers ensure the validity of the method, but there is also an important task that lies with a project manager, who needs to make sure that everyone inside the organisation also stays with the program. One individual or a small project team will thus need to take ownership of the project and defend it, take on the administrative and financial

management of the process, coordinate the activities and create a base of support. This project manager or process facilitator is the first point of contact, knows the organisation inside out, provides the service designers with essential insights, points out limitations to them and leads them to important stakeholders. This person has been given the authority to do so from the management, with which he or she maintains direct lines of communication and consults at moments that crucial decisions need to be taken. It is preferable to keep all these tasks concentrated with one person.

In addition to these internal process facilitators, it can also be convenient to establish a steering group, especially for projects in which multiple stakeholders are closely involved in the service provision. A design project namely continuously assumes a shared responsibility between the commissioning party and the contractor. Therefore, it is important that both parties are able to schedule sufficient consultations or steering meetings during the process and that the management of the commissioning party keeps making itself available for participation in workshops and brainstorms, if necessary. The practical and day-to-day coordination then remains the responsibility of the process facilitator, but the steering group can act as a steering force. After all, usually a service design project presents multiple options and the steering group is then given the responsibility to make crucial choices on the continued direction that needs to be taken. It is important that the composition of the steering group remains the same for the duration of the process and that clear agreements are made on the decision-making procedure, so that the steering group speaks with one voice.

ALSO SEE
TOOLS, P. 35

It is important to maintain the integrity of the service design process. That means that you need to go through the process or journey in its entirety. If necessary, some phases can be executed in a shortened version or on a **smaller scale**, but the internal logic and the phasing of the process does need to be **respected**. Be careful not to take off with a random detail or preliminary result and lose sight of the 'bigger picture'.

ALSO SEE
DOUBLE
DIAMOND,
P. 9

Service design yields no advice and does not provide any academic answer to a research question. Service design is an open process in which sufficient room is necessary to allow for 'free' thinking and exploring unexpected routes. For instance, often a step back is taken to find out the background behind the identified problem. Perhaps the question needs to be reformulated, or the question is not concrete enough, or just a bit too concrete? Ensure enough space and openness in order to be able to respond to unexpected opportunities during the process and change course. Additionally, take into account that

your perception of your service might be different from how your customers experience it. After all, shifts in content can sometimes also mean that the instruments for its delivery need to be changed.

Manage expectations. Clarify for yourself, the stakeholders and the designers what constitutes a sound result to you. That way, you will not face any surprises at the end. You might be aiming for a quantitative goal, in which case try to also take the value of the qualitative insights into account. For instance, you might have the objective of attracting more users, while a better user experience can also be a valuable result.

Possible pitfalls

Service design is not a magic formula, and projects are often complex. There are a number of prerequisites for service design to succeed; moreover, a service design intervention is usually not enough in itself. You also need to tackle a number of underlying matters in your organisation. What is service design actually most appropriate for? What are the prerequisites in order for a service design project to be successful, and what limits does service design run into? A number of tips to ensure you will end up with good results regardless:

The most frequently made mistake in a service design project is jumping to solutions too quickly. A service design project does not start with a brainstorm but with a thorough effort to understand what the possibilities, opportunities and challenges are. This also means that you take a good look at the possibilities and limitations of your organisation itself, so that the solutions can be 'win-win', taking the strengths of the organisation and the needs of the users hand-in-hand.

Sometimes you are so 'deep' into the service or organisation you wish to reform, that you are blind to the outside world. This myopia usually comes to the surface during the first two phases of the Double Diamond, especially in the collection of user experiences. Possibly, the distance you are able to take from your own project is not great enough. Dare to accept this and adjust course.

A possible pitfall is listening too closely to the standpoint of the end users and too little to the needs and wishes of your employees and/or colleagues. In addition, sometimes there is too much a focus on the interaction between the citizens/customers and the employees, and not enough attention for what needs to happen behind the scenes in order to make this a reality.

Scepticism from stakeholders also might occur during service design. People do not like changing their habits. Perhaps your employees are not too keen on this either. They might view this ‘exercise’ as the umpteenth attempt to change, while the past has proven that those attempts hardly lead to any improvement. Why would now be different? Well, perhaps because this time they — together with their ‘customers’ — can indicate what their needs are and what solutions they have in mind for those from the very start.

An important advantage of service design is its ‘fail fast’ principle: a design of a service that does not meet the expectations and objectives will already be removed in the concept phases, for instance, at the moment the prototype is tested through role-play. But also in the very first phase — the listening phase — you can test whether you are not being too ambitious and make adjustments if necessary. However, it takes courage and a strong backbone to throw something into the garbage basket and start over. Nevertheless, it is better to give up a project in the brainstorm phase than to set up a service that does not work. That truly leads to loss of face and expenses wasted.

Finally, do not start too ambitiously. Start with a project for which the problem is not too complex, but the impact is potentially large. It is better to score with a simple project than to crash with a major project. Those who have little experience with service design can best start with a modest project, this also to learn for yourself what you can achieve with service design, and what you cannot. After your first successful experience, you can scale up to more ambitious projects. Together with your organisation, learn which approach works best and how far you can go and take the time to embed service design into the context and culture of your organisation.

Service design in local authorities: a testimonial

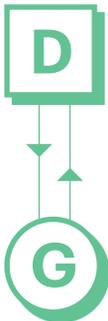
Dominique Luyckx works at the municipality of the Belgian city of Geel as the Board Secretary of quality assurance and strategic planning for a service design project. In Geel, the Public Centre for Social Welfare (ocmw) will be merged with the social services of the city. In order to merge two different services and organisational structures, the city has made extensive use of service design in recent years. Dominique acted internally as the process facilitator, and therefore has a good overview of the practical progression of such a project. We asked her for some of her findings:

How does the practical collaboration between a designer and a government occur?

A designer views a government mainly through the eyes of a user. However, in a number of cases, the government has quite a 'logical' explanation to offer for the 'bureaucratic' service provision of the government. For instance, there are often legal limitations that you need to take into account and that are often not known by the users in particular, and therefore then also experienced as a 'nuisance'.

Often, a designer has a fresh, practical view and thinks in terms of solutions, while our employees mainly think in terms of problems, which means their response initially often starts with: *"No, that is not possible, because..."* It requires some adjustment from the employees involved to make the switch from 'problem-thinking' to 'solution-thinking', but over the course of the project all the people involved do make that switch.

The principles of service design and co-creation in general constitute a major adjustment in the local government. This requires policy, management, employees and citizens to grow. Not everyone does so at the same pace. Consultation and making clear agreements are keywords in this process.



How do you find and select users and colleagues to participate in the project?

During the pilot project, the users who took part in the workshops were invited to participate by the colleagues. In addition, we also focused on interviews and through a survey other users were also invited to voice their opinion. During the testing of the prototypes, we mainly ask those people that are making use of the service at that moment to share their experiences.

Colleagues are involved in mutual consultation and, at certain points in time, we organised a feedback session to all employees of a service in order to hear their responses and keep them involved in the process.

How do you convince the selected users and colleague to actually participate in the process?

Word of mouth is the best form of advertising here. If I now look back on that which has been achieved, I see a service provision concept and a translation to labour organisation that struck a good balance.

However, in the meantime it has become clear to me that you cannot please everyone. This project has completely altered the role of the union and that party poses much resistance and pressure. As a participant, the most important thing is that you participate with an open mind and feel out the possibilities. That openness of mind is not always easy when you are looking at the past and can only think in terms of problems.

How do you maintain an overview of the service design project conducted in your city/municipality?

By starting with service provision and labour organisation, we dove right into a highly impactful theme, which certainly does not make things easy. The fact that you can continuously revisit parts of the project also requires much time and energy. The disadvantage is that not everyone has the same timing, which could lead to many contradictions in the organisation, with all the necessary commotion as a result. Therefore, it is important to constantly refer back to the entire framework and to highlight what has already been completed and how the process will continue.

Why is service design the most appropriate method for a government to design its service?

Service design is a visual method and encourages creativity. This creates a positive drive in the sessions to look for solutions. Those that have participated are generally very positive after the experience. By viewing everything from various perspectives, you will often arrive at solutions from which each stakeholder benefits. It also encourages constant further innovative thinking, leading you to see what elements you will want to tackle next.

Follow-up and implementation

The service design process is completed with the [delivery phase](#). However, it is important to understand the scope of this delivery, as this will hardly ever constitute the end of your project. Service design is a methodology for designing services, which means that the trajectory ends with the delivery of a service concept rather than its real-life implementation.

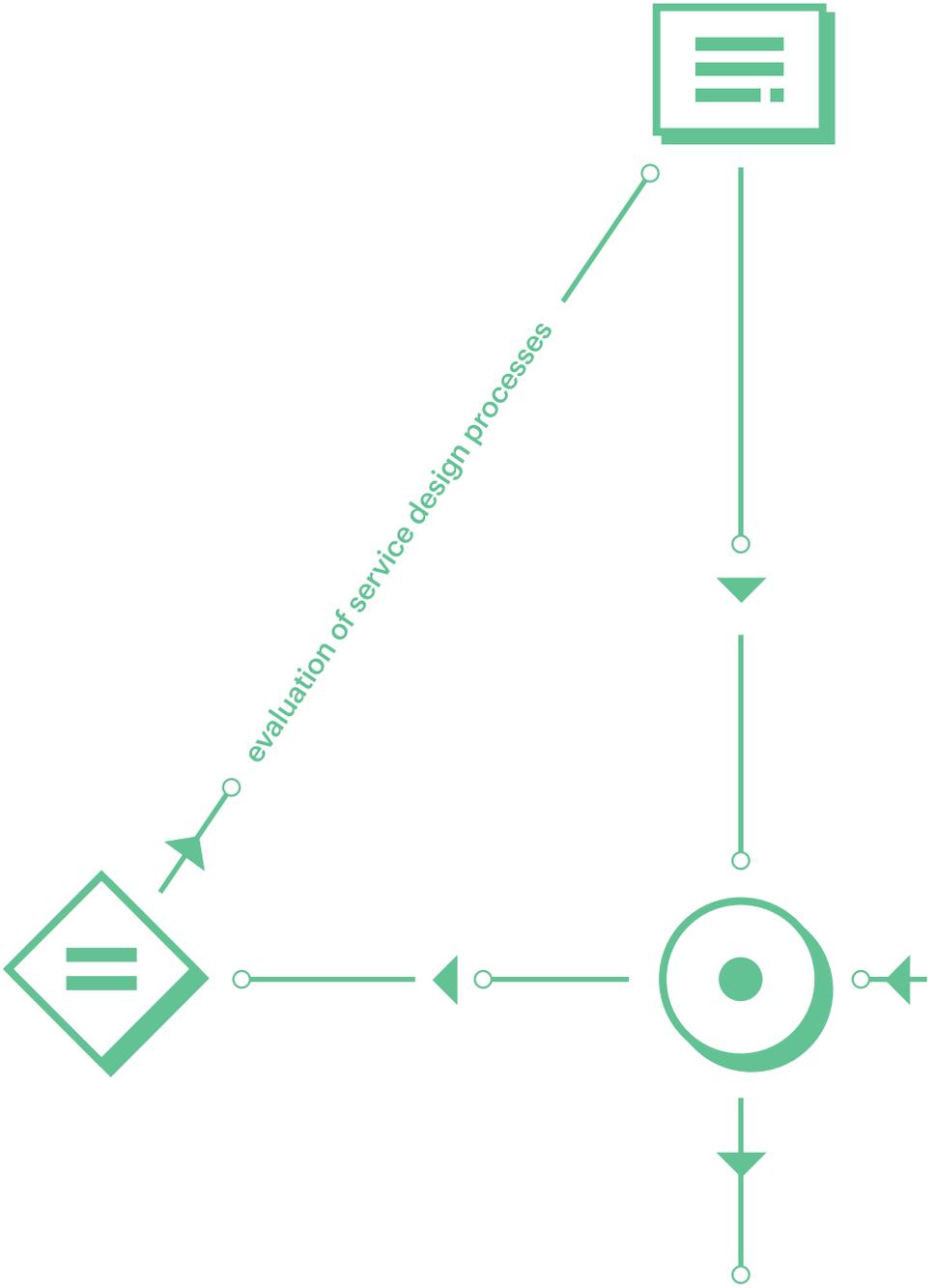
ALSO
SEE
P. 11

Once the delivery phase is completed, most service design projects result in a new or renewed customer journey and a detailed service blueprint. The latter maps out both the back and front office processes needed to deliver the designed service and create the desired customer journey. However, the shape that the results of a service design process take on can greatly vary, for instance:

- + roadmaps
- + concepts and guidelines
- + (im)material prototypes
- + policy recommendations
- + architectural recommendations
- + architectural models
- + implementation scripts
- + etc.

Because a service design trajectory ends with the delivery of a service concept rather than the implementation thereof, it is important to know that you will still need a rollout phase after this. Indeed, the implementation of the developed service concept is not necessarily a part of the service design process itself. Moreover, the implementation will often require professionals other than designers, for instance architects, politicians, (non-) profit companies, programmers, etc. It is important to keep this in mind, so you can plan the time – as getting more professionals involved afterwards will take extra time – and the resources – building a new office will require more money than only building a new service – necessary for the full rollout of your project.

It is good to note that, in addition to experts in service design, some service design agencies are also specialised in a specific part of the implementation. For example, some agencies also have e.g. an interior design department, a product development department, or a digital platform building department, or employ architects. These agencies can therefore both develop the service concept and aid in the implementation thereof once the service design process is finished. It might be interesting to look into and ask for these 'extra' capacities of service design agencies in the procurement process.



Evaluation of service design processes

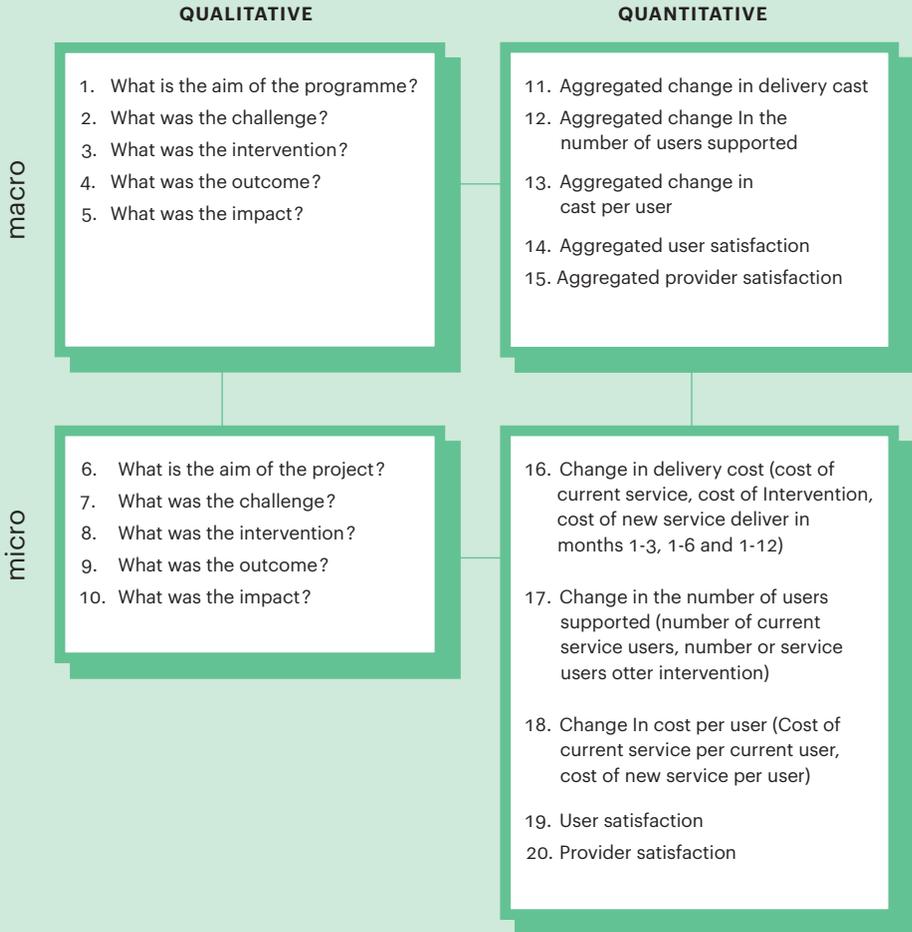
It is recommended that you evaluate your service design journey. Only then can you really capture the improved impact, and sustainably convince stakeholders of the added value of dedicated efforts. Moreover, keeping a record of a number of key figures is also always useful for the launch of any follow-up projects.

However, measuring the impact of service design is not always that simple. The reason for this is that this concerns a method that can be measured both in figures, in terms of costs and time saved, and for instance by looking at [efficiency and effectiveness](#). Nevertheless, service design projects must also be evaluated in a 'softer' manner. Indeed, just like the process starts with the collection of qualitative insights in order to identify the underlying motivations of the users, at the end the changes in these motivations can be assessed once more.

SEE ALSO
P. 19

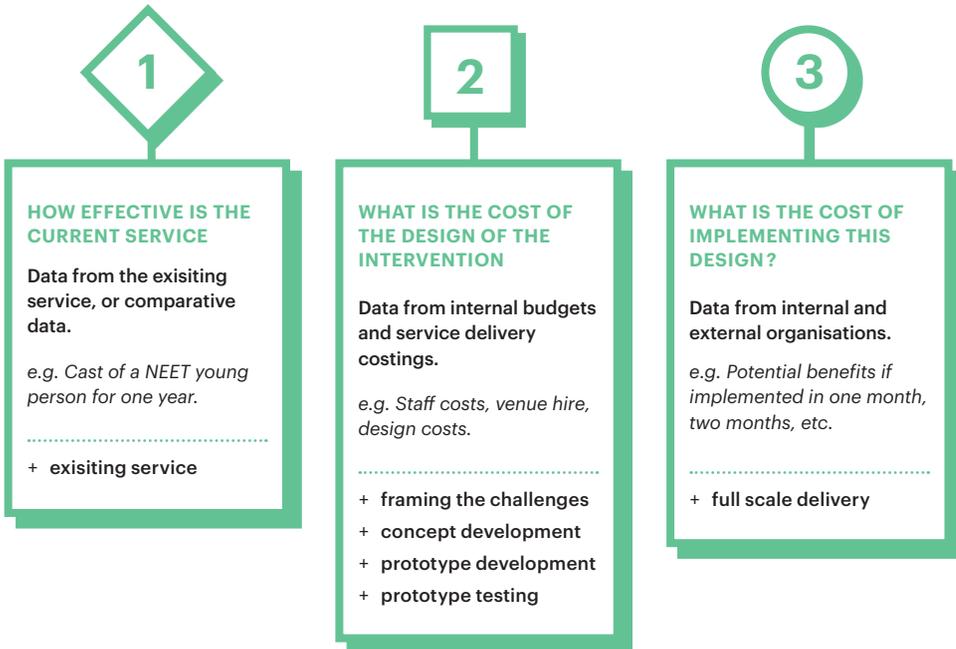


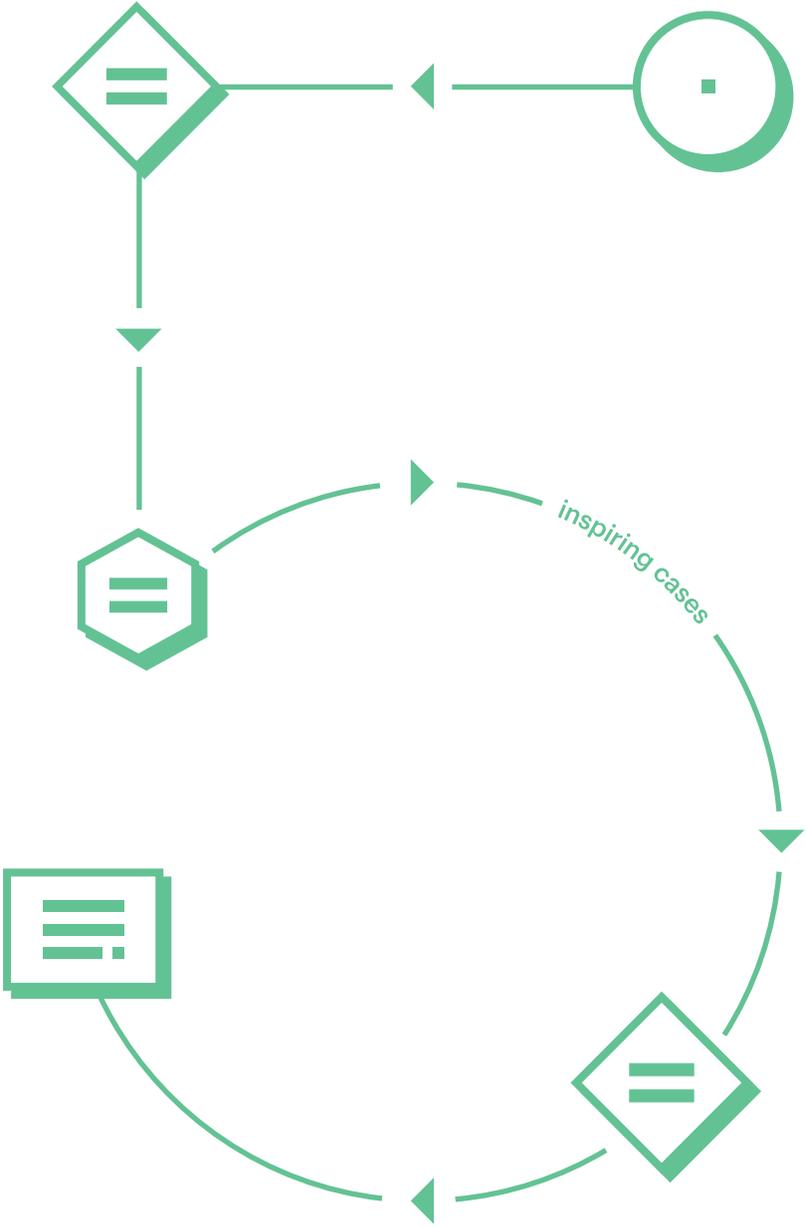
This guide proposes a double evaluation model with 20 criteria, both qualitative and quantitative. Moreover, in order to know the true impact of the process it is important to measure these 20 indicators both at the start and after in order to be able to make a comparison. Evaluation can be conducted by the internal process facilitator or, as the commissioning party, you can also ask for the help from your external service designer. However, do not forget to make the zero measurement before starting with the implementation of the results.

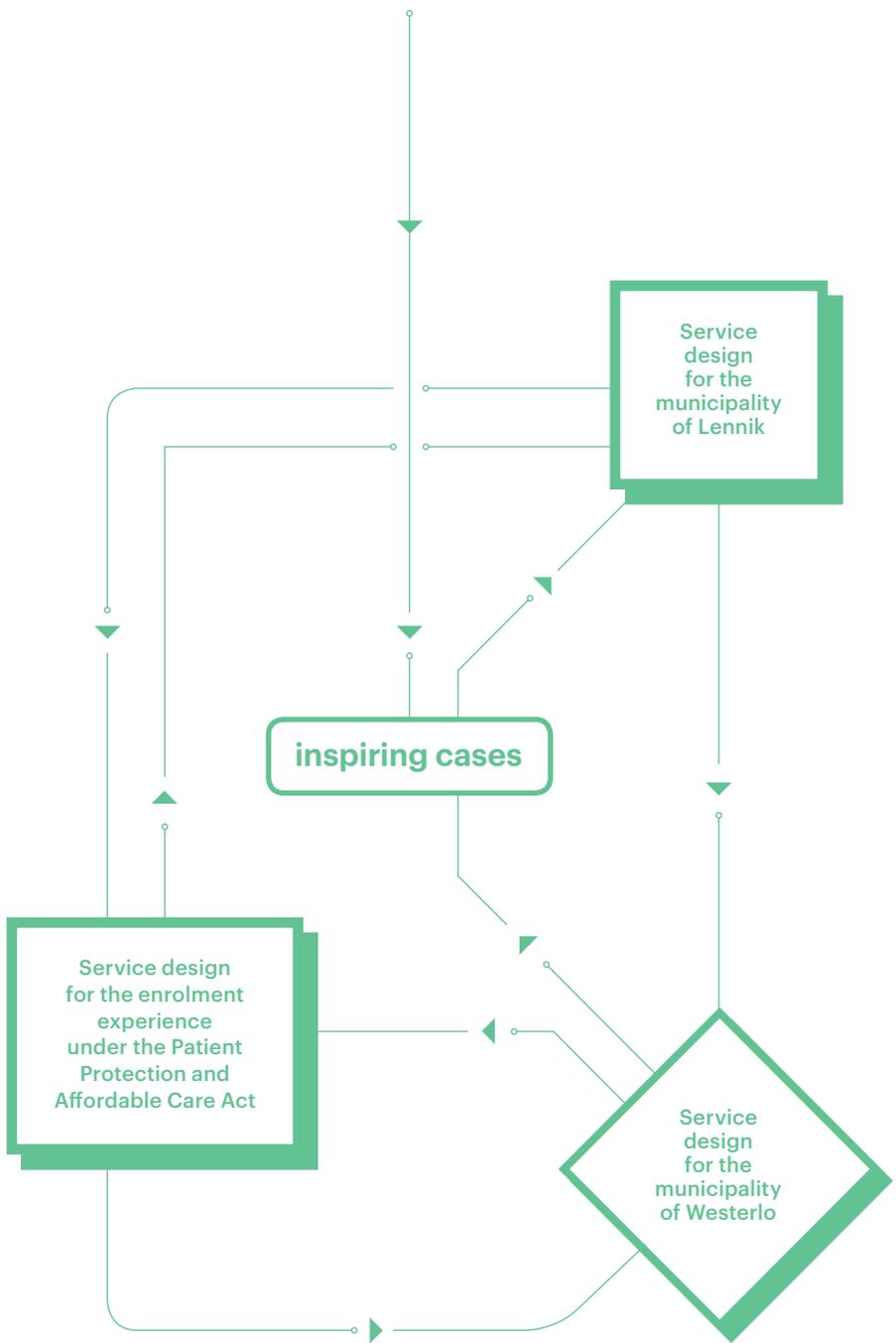


For instance: evaluation of criterion 16

In order to be able to measure the difference in delivery costs, it is important to map the current service, the costs of the service design process itself, and the costs of the implementation of the service design process. This way, you can demonstrate at the micro level, quantitatively and across a certain time period, what costs were saved by making the user the central focus and by fully redesigning the customer journey and touchpoints in a user-centred manner.







How to locate public service delivery in an old castle?



What was the problem ?

The Belgian municipality of Westerlo has a town hall that not every municipality can boast of. It uses a century-old castle as its location for weddings, receptions and exhibitions. However, the building is not always that practical for providing modern services and receiving customers and visitors. Installing network cables in walls of one meter thick, and improving the accessibility via the twenty-step staircase are only two examples of this. For instance, the entrance hall is enormous, which is terrible for its acoustics and makes its indoor climate humid and draughty. This is why the information desk was hidden behind a Plexiglas wall in a corner. The simple act of moving this information desk, however, would require no fewer than seventeen preconditions. This castle is a historical listed and protected building, which implies inherent limitations with regard to renovation and the requirement of close collaboration with the Flemish Department of Immovable Heritage. Therefore, Westerlo decided to examine the reception point with the help of customers, staff and local authority officials, to be certain that the new service would be optimally effective.

What did they do ?

Westerlo did not have any experience with service design at that point. With the support of Design Flanders, they launched a tendering process to find a service design agency. The Pars Pro Toto agency from Ghent was selected, as their passionate and systematic approach was found particularly appealing. The service design process itself consisted of several successive steps, each with a different focus. The objective of the first analysis (a tour of the building) and the on-site observations was to identify the information desk's operations and related functions. This led to a list comprising a number of problems that were then discussed again by the project group. The team consisted of approximately ten different members of staff from the various departments.

Additionally, on four separate occasions, Pars Pro Toto performed on-site observations to effectively assess the perception and the weight of each of the problems cited. During these sessions, the number of visitors was counted, the route they took was mapped out, the duration of their visit was recorded, etc. Visitors to the town hall were briefly interviewed at the end of their visit for two out of the four observation sessions. The questionnaire included both factual (e.g. *“What was the reason for your visit?”*) and subjective questions (e.g. *“Did you have to wait long before you were helped?”*), which were given a value between one and five. This was then used to provide a transparent overview and was presented in several graphic illustrations. Staff from the Reception and the Civil Affairs department were also observed in their workplace. The most difficult exercise would take place in these departments at a later stage, as this was where they experienced most of the disadvantages of the atypical building. All the employees also received a questionnaire, asking for a description of their job and workstation, the advantages and disadvantages of the current situation, and possible options for improvements in the future. These analyses resulted in a concise report that served as the input for a creative session. It highlighted the main problems and several possible solutions. Subsequently, the project group conducted field research at two other local authorities: Turnhout and Zoersel. The completely different approach and infrastructure of both of these practical examples provided considerable inspiration for the project group.

The objective of the subsequent creative session was to devise conceptual spatial solutions with the project group. The latter was spilt into two smaller groups and guided step by step to convert a spatial scenario into a scale drawing: where should each service be located, how much space does each need, and what should it look like. Each of the scenarios and plans was presented to the other group and discussed. The resulting compromise (achieved at the end of this extensive half-day collaboration) was used as the basis for a synthesis report, jointly created with and including contributions from employees from the various departments. The most valuable components and proposals were highlighted and the priorities were effectively listed.

What was the result?

The entire process lasted three months and Pars Pro Toto delivered a final report. It outlined the journey taken by visitors to the town hall in order to obtain their desired product and also presented proposals for the town hall's spatial organisation and operations. This document could be employed as the basis for compiling the specifications necessary for finding a designer. Design Flanders published the call for tenders and we involved the employees in the decision on what agency to proceed with. Alinea Interior Architects from Geel had our preference, as their design corresponded the closest to the requirements in the final service design report by Pars Pro Toto.

The result is an oval-shaped information desk, positioned at the centre of the town hall's entrance. The Civil Affairs department has been divided between a front and back office. The intention is eventually for all brief visits to the town hall to be handled by the information desk. These relate not only to traditional administrative services, but also, for example, to the purchasing of tickets for the cultural centre. A waiting room will be constructed in the former chapel, which opens onto the entrance hall. This means that visitors will be able to wait their turn in comfort. A number system is there to provide order, especially during particularly busy moments. Signage in the building will be improved and access to the building will be optimised.

In all of the above, considerable attention was dedicated to the improvement of working conditions for employees. The area is no longer draughty, the temperature and lighting have been adjusted optimally, and the acoustics have significantly been improved. The entire service design process and experience at Westerlo, motivated them to further renovate their historical town hall in accordance with the principles of service design.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.parsprototo.be

www.westerlo.be



CONCEPT PARS PRO TOTO
DESIGN ALINEA INTERIOR ARCHITECTS

**Service design
for the enrolment
experience
under the Patient
Protection and
Affordable
Care Act**

How to make health insurance more easily accessible online?

What was the problem ?

Forty million Americans were to become newly eligible for health coverage as soon as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) would fully be implemented in 2014. Some would be enrolling in health insurance for the first time, while others were to experience changes that would provide increased access to affordable health coverage. In anticipation of this transition, the law required the development of electronic enrolment options for health insurance plans operated by state and federal governments under the ACA. To assist public and private agencies in meeting these requirements, a coalition of nine national and state-based foundations, led by the California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF), worked on a project to develop a digital enrolment prototype for Americans seeking health coverage. The goal of the project — called Enroll UX 2014 — was to create a detailed reference design of an easy-to-use consumer health insurance enrolment experience. Design agency IDEO was selected to lead the consumer research and design effort. After a yearlong collaborative process, the resulting 300-page design specifications manual and design reference prototype illustrates a customizable and human-centred approach to public and private health insurance enrolment.

The core challenge was to create a flexible set of design standards that could make it easier for Americans to enrol online for healthcare coverage. The scope and complexity of this design challenge required a multi-part design solution that was inclusive, responsive, and respectful of state-to-state variation and resource constraints.

What did they do?

The project began with extensive research into the needs of Americans. First, the design researchers interviewed dozens of healthcare workers, insurance experts, potential applicants, public employees, and policy-makers. In-person interviews were conducted by the team in three states. In addition to demographic, situational, and language diversity, interviewees represented different perspectives and experiences with commercial and public health insurance enrolment and coverage. Synthesis of these findings informed the development of interaction frameworks and design principles, which in turn led to the creation of potential design directions. Rapid iterations of review and feedback led to the final design specifications manual and digital reference prototype.

Fifteen states participated in the project via three extensive in-person workshops and numerous digital meetings held to discuss project updates, customization options, and implementation requirements. Throughout the design process, design review

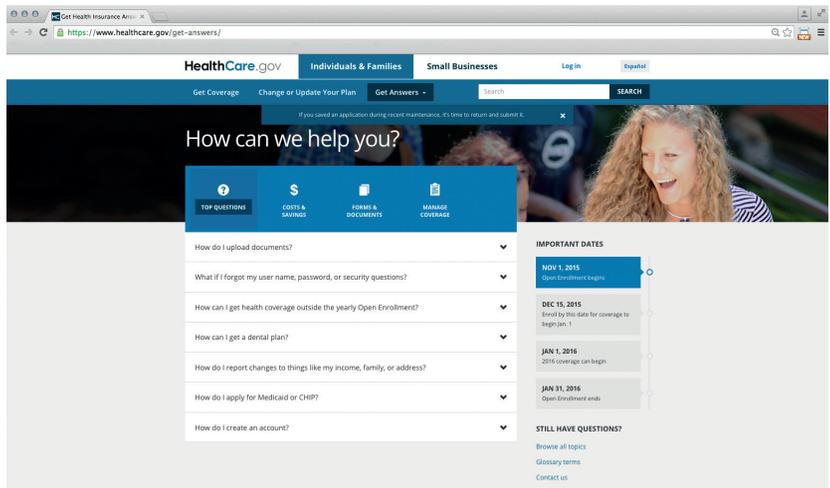
and information sessions were held with state and federal staff members, healthcare industry experts, IT experts, and Americans from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

What was the result?

One result is the ACA's Affordable Insurance Exchange concept, "a new transparent and competitive insurance marketplace where individuals can buy affordable and qualified health benefit plans." Each Exchange offers a choice of health plans that meet certain benefits and cost standards, as well as information about eligibility for health programs and tax credits that make coverage more affordable. The Exchange concept was implemented in all 50 states as from October 2013, at which point each state was required by law to have its own State Health Exchange or default to the federal Exchange. Various state-level offices are engaged in exchange planning, development, and execution. Presented as a customizable toolkit, the final design specifications manual is divided into 11 chapters aimed at enabling federal and state government agencies to help millions of Americans engage successfully with the online health insurance enrolment process. The companion design reference prototype shows how the core design standards interact during the enrolment experience.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ideo.com/work/consumer-health-insurance-enrollment-experience



How to optimise a service delivery model?

**Service design
for the
municipality
of Lennik**

What was the problem ?

Lennik, known for its rich history and vast educational landscape, is the beating heart of the Pajottenland region. With almost 9000 inhabitants and a favourable location, Lennik is a trade and service hotspot in the region. Lennik’s municipal services were known for their strong digital focus, but over time both the digital and personal service model became somewhat outdated.

The following provides the municipality of Lennik with huge opportunities: (1) the future expansion of the town hall with the old fire station building becoming available; (2) The willingness to rethink the town’s service offering from a service flow and infrastructural point of view for both the town’s employees and the citizens of Lennik; (3) the anticipated renewal of the current website and e-portal, and; (4) the (mandatory) integration of the Sociaal Huis (centre for social services) and municipal services.

Major requirements throughout this project were the ability to combine short-term and long-term goals and ensuring that all outcomes would fully be aligned and mutually supportive.





What did they do?

The initial plan of the municipality to subcontract different external parties (e.g. an architect, web designer, consultant, etc.) to execute the desired changes was challenged early on in the process by Design Flanders. Why not bring a Service Design team on board to help create one integral vision, strategy and action plan that would affect all the different channels (*processes, infrastructure, digital, people*)? Indeed, this would support Lennik in briefing different contractors later on, so all outcomes would be aligned and reinforce each other.

Design agency MADE applied multiple design research methodologies throughout the project: observations of the current service design offering, interviews with employees, citizen consultations, visits to learn from best practices, role-play and website audits. All pivotal findings were shared with the team to support the definition of the project needs and to guide the design phase of the project. In this design phase, 4 specific co-creation sessions and workshops were organised in which (1) the current process flows were blueprinted and process optimisations were defined, (2) digital priorities were determined and wireframes were drawn, (3) long- and short-term infrastructural plans were built and tested on a life-size scale, and (4) a general understanding of what it means to provide a good service and be a good service provider was arrived at with all colleagues (*in collaboration with system theory experts from De Interactie-Academie*). All this, to make sure we were working on a shared vision and all pulling together.

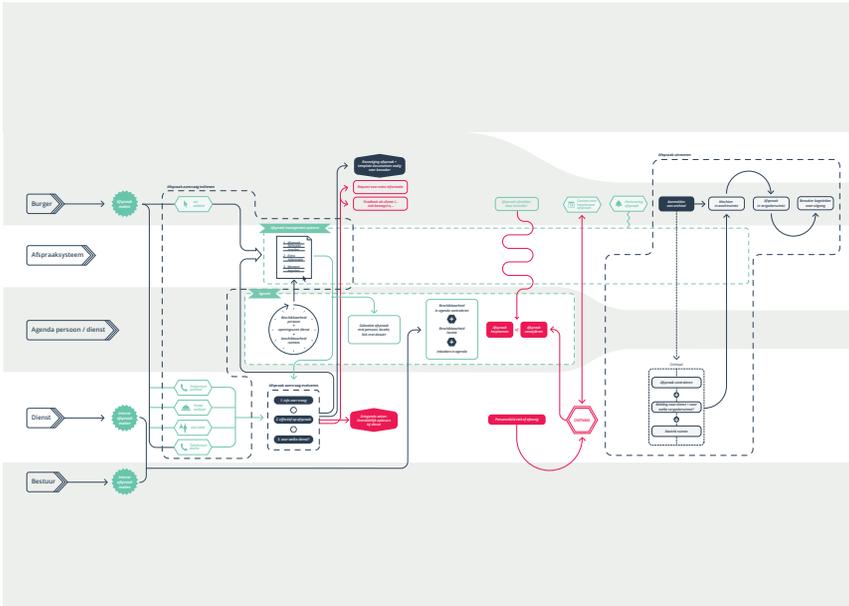
What was the result?

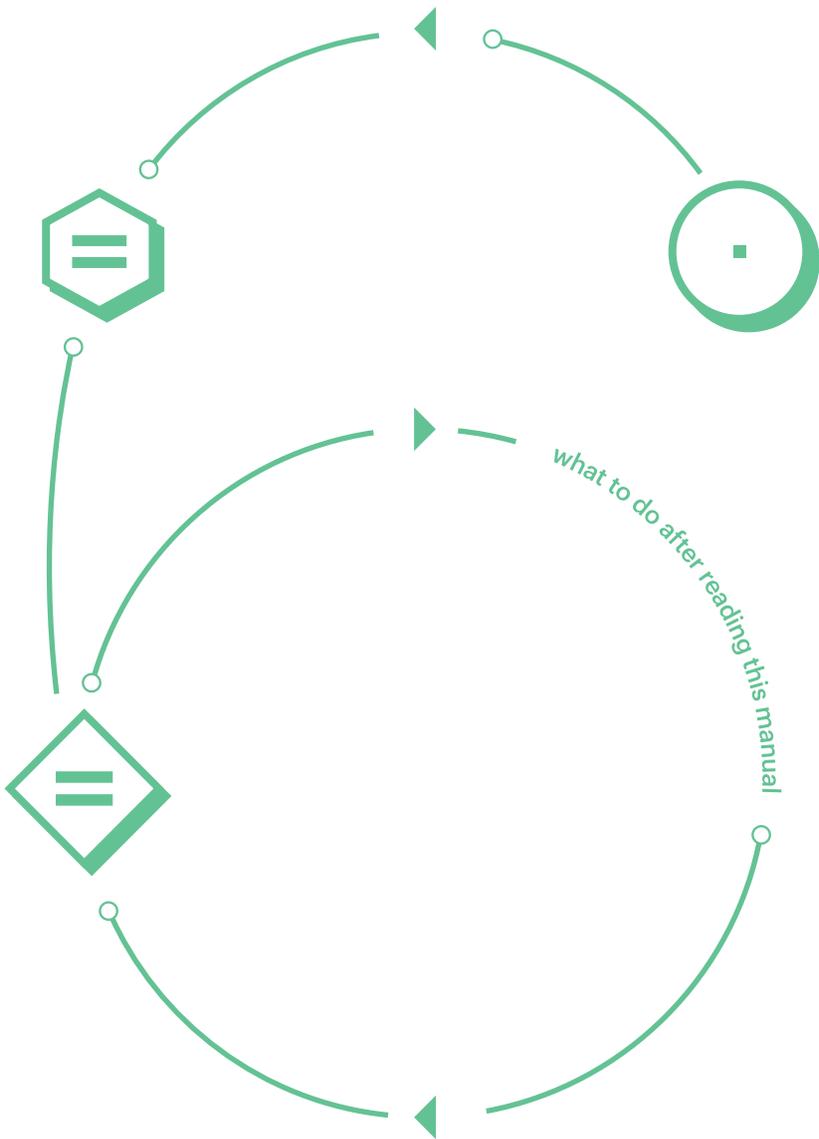
An overarching and shared service vision was developed for the municipality of Lennik. All testing and co-creating resulted in: (1) a workflow and prioritisation for setting up internal projects to improve internal services aligned with the newly developed service vision; (2) a long- and short-term infrastructure briefing, allowing an architect to execute the new infrastructural parts of the new service design offering, including the introduction of a reception desk, discussion rooms and location-based tasks; (3) wireframes and guidelines for the web designer to build the new website and e-portal integrated in the service workflows. This allows for a full briefing of the subcontractors implementing the service components, so that they will work within the same overarching service vision.

In addition to these tangible results, all stakeholders (*civil servants, the mayor and aldermen*) were involved in the process and started talking to each other again. This has resulted in increased empathy for each other's wants and needs. Moreover, it ensures that the service vision remains integrated in all the municipality's tasks, even after the service designers of MADE pass on the torch to the internal working groups.

FURTHER INFORMATION

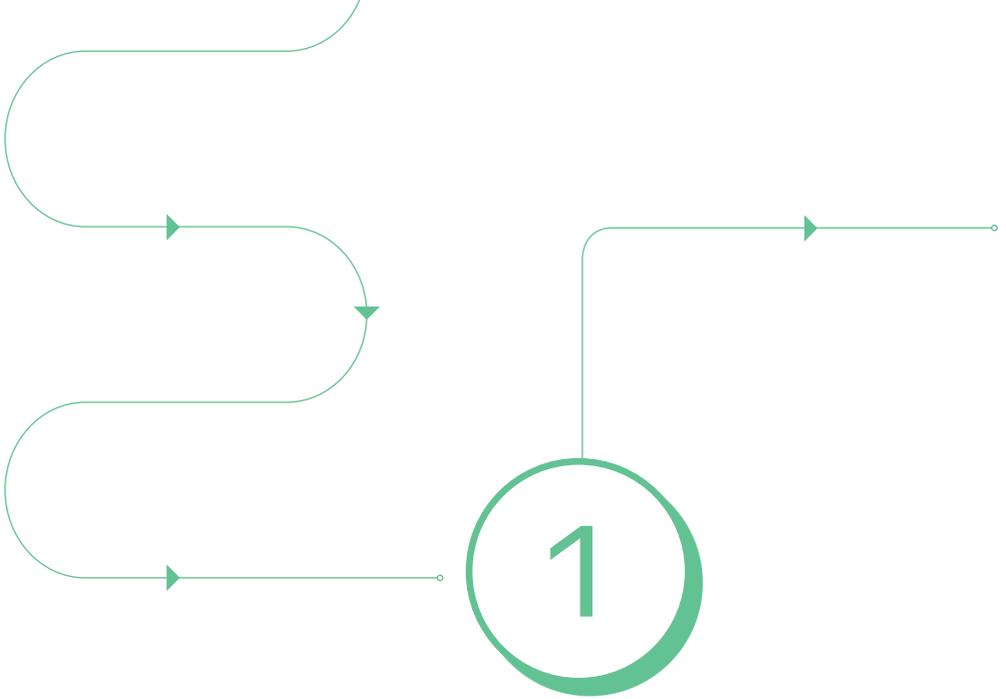
www.haveitmade.be





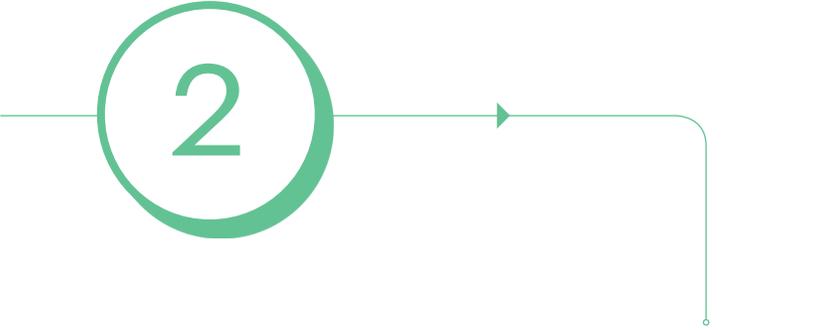
What to do after reading this manual?

You have already applied service design before and wish to continue with what you have learned? We gladly point you towards further possibilities of design in a government context



Design capacity

Applying service design will naturally lead to the increase of the design capacity in your organisation: officers will see the added value for themselves and the importance of design. They will apply the design principles themselves and demonstrate a design attitude, which is expressed as an increased attention for the needs of the end users. They apply design as an operational principle and know how to follow up and evaluate procured design advice. Officers that develop design competences, can play a crucial role in organisations: using design, organisations can continually question themselves and investigate new ideas and service concepts by experimenting and prototyping.



2

Policy design

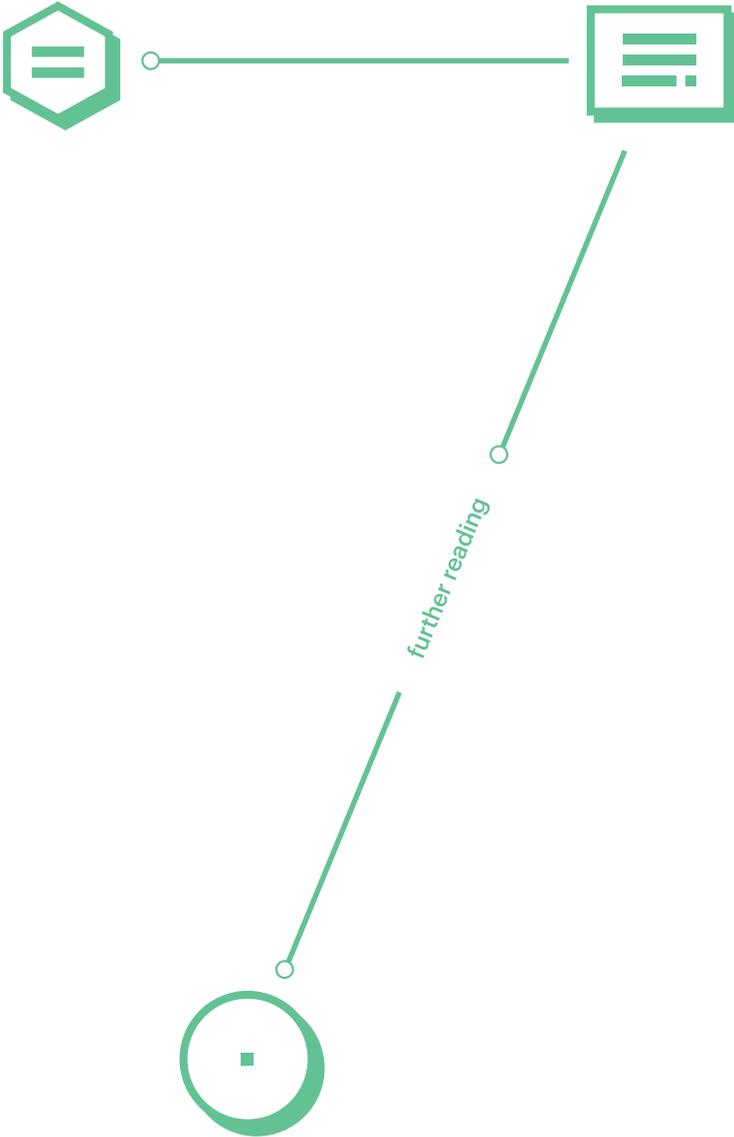
In all of the above, we have examined the value of design for policy implementation. However, design can also be applied in systemic matters and strategic decision-making. Policy design means that service design is used e.g. as a strategic tool in policy-making. Indeed, design offers a number of advantages we have already seen in policy implementation, but which are also important for the development of visions, policy preparation and choosing between policy options: holistic, systemic, user-focused, risk-reducing, interdisciplinary, horizontal, etc. Policy design is relatively uncharted territory, but we are convinced of the need for it. The human perspective of design is crucial for every government that wishes to be in close contact with its citizens.



3

Design leadership

Change comes from people, such as officers at various levels that are open to innovation and collaboration. Therefore, it is important to introduce design competences from the private sector to the public sector. Design leadership is about developing a vision and being open to constant innovation and transformation from a design perspective. To an increasing extent, design leadership will also become important to public authorities that wish to be responsible, transparent and innovative. Governments are no longer expected to respond passively to challenges and crises, but to anticipate changes and actively search for solutions. Design stands for a fundamental rethinking of challenges, which is why design-driven innovation also has its place in a government context. Public managers need to become public entrepreneurs, and that is only possible by changing the mentality to a design mind-set, with enthusiasm for experimenting.



Further reading

Curedale, Robert (2013)

“Service Design: 250 essential methods”

DESIGN COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS, LOS ANGELES

— 357 PAGES

Curedale, Robert (2013)

“Design Thinking: Process and methods manual”

DESIGN COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS, LOS ANGELES

— 383 PAGES

Design Council (2013)

“Design For Public Good”

WWW.SEEPLATFORM.EU/DOCS/DESIGN%20FOR%20

PUBLIC%20GOOD%20MAY%202013.PDF

— 97 PAGES

Design Flanders (2011)

“Service Design: Een sterke strategie voor het lokale bestuur”

— 90 PAGES

Design Flanders (2009)

“Een Design-Strategie Voor Uw Gemeente: Kwaliteitsvol aanbesteden”

— 131 PAGES

Hancock, Marion (1992)

“How to buy design”

ASHGATE PUBLISHING, FARNHAM

— 96 PAGES

Kimbell, Lucy (2014)

“The Service Innovation Handbook: Action oriented creative thinking toolkit for service organizations”

BIS PUBLISHERS, AMSTERDAM

— 240 PAGES

Klaar, J. Margus (2014)

“How to have your cake and eat it too: An introduction to service design”

BIS PUBLISHERS, AMSTERDAM

— 106 PAGES

Liedtka, Jeanne, Andrew King & Kevin Bennett (2013)

“Solving Problems With Design Thinking: 10 stories of what works”

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS, NEW YORK

— 216 PAGES

Meroni, Anna & Daniela Sangiorgi (2011)

"Design for services"

GOWER, SURREY

— 273 PAGES

Noels, Bart (2012)

"Toekomst Voor Dienstverlening:

Inspiratie voor het vormgeven van dienstverlening in lokale besturen"

POLITEIA, BRUSSEL

— 178 PAGES

PDR (2013)

"Designing Effective Public Services:

A practical guide for public service managers"

WWW.DESIGN-SILESIA.PL/PL/FILES/MULTIMEDIUM/

MANUAL_WWW.PDF

—80 PAGES

Polaine, Andrew, Lavrans Løvlie

& Ben Reason (2013)

"Service Design: From insight to implementation"

ROSENFELD MEDIA, BROOKLYN

— 202 PAGES

Phillips, Peter L. (2004)

"Creating the Perfect Design Brief:

How to Manage Design for Strategic Advantage"

ALLWORTH PRESS, NEW YORK

— 192 PAGES

Stickdorn, Marc and Jakob Schneider eds. (2010)

"This Is Service Design Thinking:

Basics — tools — cases"

BIS PUBLISHERS, AMSTERDAM

— 373 PAGES

colophon

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SPIDER



