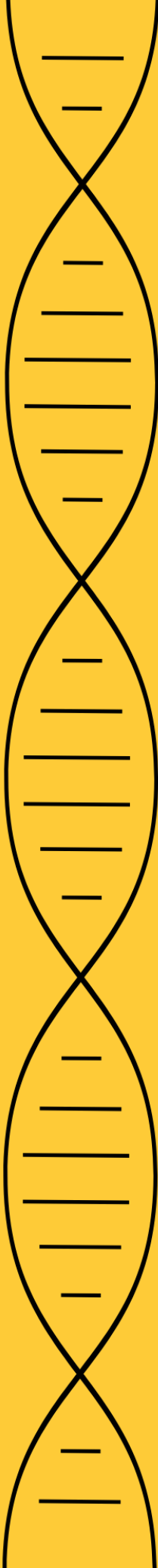
btrust

# A TOOLBOX for CO-CREATION



# A TOOLBOX FOR CO-CREATION

Straight questions give straight answers but often fail to get beneath the surface to uncover underlying thoughts and perceptions. A co-creative approach will allow us to get honest answers and input from the participants themselves rather than feeding them your own ideas and preconceptions.

## Main outcomes of a co-creation session

- ✖ Capturing thinking patterns
- ✖ Insight into the drivers of behaviour
- ✖ Non-biased and fresh outsider viewpoints and ideas

## A good co-creation session…

- ✖ …makes people inspire each other
- ✖ …results in ideas beyond ‘what first comes to mind.’
- ✖ …gives everyone the chance to speak their mind
- ✖ …values everyone's ideas and opinions

## Basics for a good co-creation session

- ✖ Provide an environment where people can relax and be themselves
  - Inspiring and welcoming location
  - Food and drinks
  - A fun and interactive set-up
- ✖ Set the rules
- ✖ Set a clear context and frame your central question: why did you invite them, what do you expect from them and what is going to happen with their input?
- ✖ Explain the practicalities, including GDPR-related rules and plans for publication of photos and results.

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# Tips for set-up, flow & moderation

## Adapt timing and set-up to your target group

Sessions should be organised on moments when your target group is available, and the duration should be adapted to their availability.

| | **Citizens /consumers** | **Self-employed and C-level representatives** | **Employees, participating in a work context** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Timing | Outside of working hours (e.g. evenings and weekends) | Depends, often more available in the evenings unless topic is core business | During working hours |
| Duration | Can be 3-4 hours, if combined with food & drinks | Restrict time investment to ~3 hours, unless combined with dinner | Restrict to ~2 hours in an online setting, physical meetings can be 2-4 hours, depending on how close topic is to core activities |

Also take into account low-availability periods like holidays, harvest time for farmers, important conferences on the same day for industry etc…

## Create a welcoming environment

Participants need to feel comfortable enough to be honest, so you need to create a relaxed, fun and positive atmosphere, where people are not afraid to say how they really feel, instead of answering to expectations.

This can be achieved by:

- ✖ Choosing venues with a ‘homey’ and inspiring vibe;
- ✖ Holding sessions in the evening, while serving them a nice dinner and drinks;
- ✖ Keeping everything informal and on first-name basis;
- ✖ Including aspects of ‘gamification’ to keep the participants engaged and enjoying the session.

# Tips for set-up, flow & moderation

## Take group dynamics into account

In order to get honest and relevant input from the participants in a consumer session, it is important to create a welcoming environment and to take into account several aspects of human behaviour to create a desirable group dynamic.

- ✖ **A good group dynamic for these sessions is reached in groups of 8-16 people.** This group size is large enough to cover diverse profiles and opinions, but not so large as to be intimidating for (most) people to speak in front of the whole group. However, the bigger the group, the more necessary it becomes to form smaller groups for the exercises, because as the group gets larger, fewer people will dare to take part in the plenary discussions.
- ✖ To make sure all participants' opinions are heard, **make sure there is a balance between individual assignments, exercises in small groups and plenary discussions.** If necessary, dominating individuals should now and then be asked to let the others speak.

## Set clear rules

A good co-creation session needs to be constructive and open to all opinions, so make sure to set clear rules to create an open and comforting atmosphere.

### How these rules could look like

- ✖ Be yourself!
- ✖ We want to know what *you* think. Do not try to tell us what you think we want to hear.
- ✖ We don't judge or disapprove other people's feelings and opinions. You can ask for explanations if someone has a different opinion, but you don't need to convince them your opinion is better.
- ✖ Take into account things that are confidential
- ✖ Let us know if there's anything you don't feel comfortable with. We understand, and you don't have to justify yourself.

## Experienced and neutral moderators

A good moderator knows how to make sure everyone's opinion is heard and valued, not just from the loudest talkers. For example by including one-to-one conversations and silencing dominant personalities if necessary.

Take also into account that moderators have opinions too, especially when the moderators themselves are involved in the research or have a commercial stake in the development of the technology. It takes training and experience to moderate a session while staying objective and put aside your own opinions that could steer participants.

# General outline for a co-creation session

in the framework of exploring acceptance of new innovations

## Setting the central questions

Before setting up co-creation sessions with affected stakeholders, it is important to clarify the 'central questions': which questions you want to see answered from these interactions?

The central questions are not necessarily asked directly during the session, but can be disguised through a set of tools and exercises. The central questions serve mainly as guidance for your set-up and session flow.

The central questions defined in the B-trust project, to investigate trust and acceptance issues on biotechnology were phrased as:

1. What is your general perception of the technology (innovation) and the specific case?
2. What is the potential (direct and indirect) impact of the technology (innovation), both in general and on you specifically? Positive (benefits) / Negative (risks) / Neutral (changes)
3. What are alternative ways to solve the same problem, and how do the risks and benefits compare?
4. Are the proposed mitigation measures adequate? Are there conditions to become more acceptable?
5. What types of communication would work for you? What type of messages, wordings or narratives and through which channels?

## Flow & build-up of the session

A co-creation session needs an appropriate build-up in order to generate good results:

- ✖ At the start of the session, it is essential to let people get to know each other and break the ice. Use an icebreaker tool as further described in the toolbox, to make everyone feel at ease, get rid of distractions and focus their attention to the group
- ✖ Gradually increase the depth of the discussions, by starting with easy exercises, and digging deeper later on. End on a light note with a creative exercise
- ✖ Build up the information gradually, in parallel with increasingly more in-depth discussions and challenging exercises. It is always interesting to see how viewpoints and discussions become more nuanced the more information they receive, and the more different opinions are being given

# General outline for a co-creation session

in the framework of exploring acceptance of new innovations

## Potential set-up for a co-creation sessions with citizens

The general outline for a co-creation session that was set up and refined in the B-Trust project, and worked well to address the central questions can be summarised as follows:

- Framing of the context: Why are we doing this session? What is expected from them in this perspective?
- Capturing intuitive responses on certain words, topics and aspects via an association exercise without much explanation. For example, on the words 'GMO', 'biotechnology' or 'micro-organism'. After the exercise a short explanation of the words is given, and can be combined with a discussion moment to reflect on their perceptions and misconceptions.
- Explaining the reasons for developing and implementing this technology: which problem can it (help) solve. For generally known problems it helps to incorporate an exercise where they think about the problem statement themselves, how it could be solved and how it affects their own lives.
- Explaining and/or an exercise about possible solutions for this problem, making clear that addressing 'the big challenges' will always be a combined effort and there is no single solution.
- Explaining how the technology works on a technical level (in a comprehensive and neutral manner)
- A scenario exercise on the possible consequences of implementing this technology, on its own or compared with 'doing nothing' or with other solutions (depending on the case).
- Presenting the risks (and mitigation measures) and benefits identified in the consequences mapping and comparing them with their own identified risks and benefits via an in depth discussion. Printing out the different risks and benefits, and letting them browse the information while giving them time to comment individually, combined with a plenary discussion afterwards makes the information less overwhelming for the participants than presenting them orally.
- An after-session questionnaire about their individual reflections and key takeaways.

## Adaptations for co-creation sessions with stakeholders acting from a professional stance

- There is less need for 'gamification' of the exercises, although fun and interactive exercises are often appreciated here too.
- Focus on how the innovation might affect the future of their profession or their work environment, instead of how it affects them personally. It might also be interesting to start with an exercise on how they see their profession or work environment evolving in the future in general (regardless of what your innovation is and how it might contribute)

# Tools and exercises

The following tools and methods will enable participants to dig deeper into the core of the problem and get sufficient input that provides answers to the central questions.

The following tools can be found in this toolbox:

- ✖ TOOL #1: Icebreakers
- ✖ TOOL #2: Association exercises
- ✖ TOOL #3: Metaphoric representations
- ✖ TOOL #4: Scenario exercises
- ✖ TOOL #5: Camp division & argumentation
- ✖ TOOL #6: Role Playing
- ✖ TOOL #7: Problem exploration

For each tool is indicated what the estimated timing of the exercise is, what materials are needed, and what type of questions it can give an answer to.

# TOOL #1: Icebreakers

There are many tools to break the ice and get the mindset to shift to more out-the-box thinking. Many can be found on the internet:

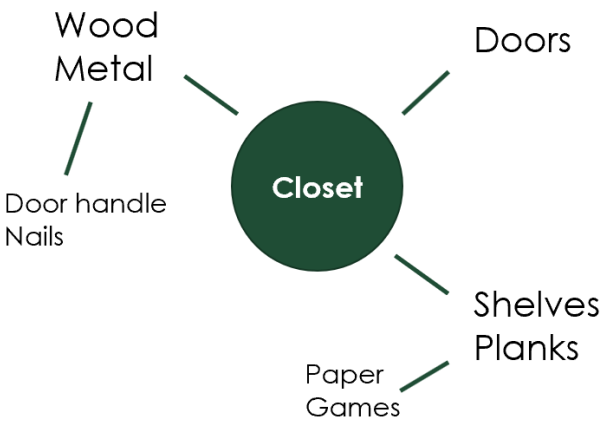
- ✖ Blind portraits or blind Pictionary
- ✖ Find the common characteristics between two seemingly unrelated items, such as a rhino and a banana
- ✖ Use the presentation round to start being creative:
  - Let them associate with an object, a country, an animal, …
  - Tell them to state an interesting fact about themselves (a hobby or talent) - this works good in case the participants are present in a work-related stance
- ✖ Use conventional games, like 'Black stories' or 'Dixit'
  - 'Black stories' are unconventional and fun riddles
  - 'Dixit' cards can be used to make participants tell something special about themselves. You can also use a collection of interesting photographs instead.

When participants present themselves in an unconventional way, it also takes away hierarchy and removes social differences, and puts them all on the same level.

Materials needed
Depends on the exercise

Timing: 10 minutes

# TOOL #2: Association exercises



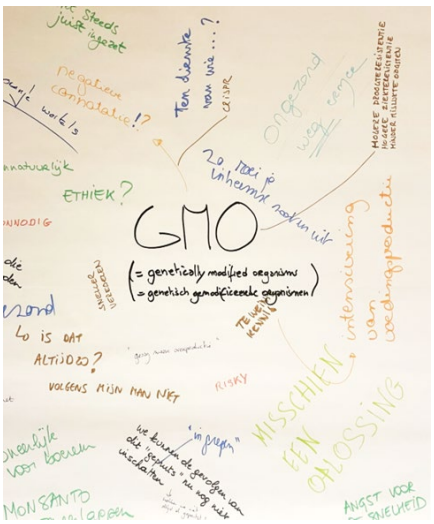

Association exercises are a great way to start a session: it is easy and fun, and it gets the group dynamic flowing.

- ✖ It gives you a lot of information on how people perceive a certain principle, image, brand or word(ing), and can also reveal knowledge gaps, worries and opportunities.

**Set-up:**

- ✖ Write a word down on a big piece of paper. You can also start from photos/pictures, objects, phrases, concepts, etc.
- ✖ Let participants write down (or draw) whichever pops up in their heads by seeing this word or image.
- ✖ The associations can be positive, negative, or neutral. Associations can also be formulated as questions

*In the margins of this type of exercise interesting discussions can bubble up and triggering questions from the participants may surface.*




## Materials needed

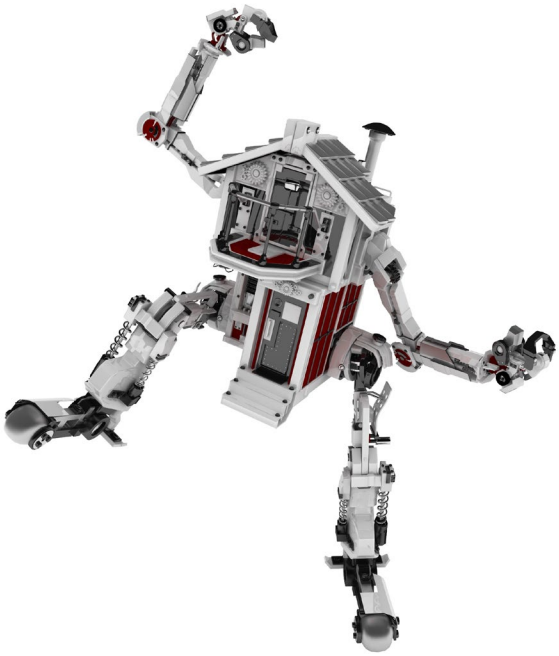
- ✖ Big white paper (flipchart paper or paper tablecloth on roll)
- ✖ Markers in different colours
- ✖ Pictures, demo items (optional)

Timing: 20 minutes

## Main questions answered

Ideas, perceptions, preconceptions and misconceptions and questions on certain ideas and principles

# TOOL #3: Metaphoric representations



Participants can also try to draw or build a metaphoric representation of a word, principle, concept or idea.

- ✖ Can be done by drawing, making images using AI software, using image cards or with Lego, other toys and random objects.
- ✖ Each participant explains their metaphoric representation, and what each of its added elements indicates.

This metaphoric representation gives the participants the opportunity to ventilate and explain their feelings, concerns, etc. around a specific word or principle in an indirect and safe way.

## Materials needed

- ✖ Lego, toys, random objects

Timing: 20 minutes

## Main questions answered

Ideas, perceptions, preconceptions and misconceptions and questions on certain ideas and principles

# TOOL #4: Scenario exercises

- In this exercise participants are asked to generate a (science-fiction-like) scenario, about a future with a certain condition put forward. For example: a future where normal agriculture is impossible, due to extreme climate change.
- They can also be asked to draw up a worst-case or best-case scenario related to a possible implementation of a technology.
- Their scenarios can be delivered under the form of a story, an image (or sequence of images; AI can support in generating images of these hypothetical futures as shown in Figure 7), or video.
- When visualising best and worst case scenarios, there can be discussion about the assumptions made, and the preconditions to make this scenario come true.

## Materials needed

- Colourful pens and paper (preferably A3)
- Computer with AI (optional)

Timing: 30-45 minutes

## Tip

Good examples to refer to are existing movies and series, like the Netflix series 'Black mirror' or movies set in the future.

## Main questions answered

Participants views on the potential consequences of your technology / innovation, their concerns and even worst fears, what advantages they see and what needs it can fulfil.

# TOOL #5: Camp division & argumentation

A division into camps is a versatile and useful exercise to initiate and encourage a discussion.

- ✖ Participants are asked a question with two possible answers, like yes/no, pro/con or two different outcomes (e.g. morning person versus evening person, cat person versus dog person, to give a few simple examples).
- ✖ They then have to physically move to the side of the room that corresponds with their answer.
- ✖ They can also position themselves in between ('undecided' or 'neutral'), or elsewhere ('other').
- ✖ They are then asked for the reasoning behind their choice.

This exercise can both be used as a warm-up (with simple questions like 'are you a cat or a dog person'), or as part of the discussion, with serious statements being put forward like:

- Genetic modification is always dangerous, no matter whether is applied to plants, animals or micro-organisms;
- Biotechnology has great potential, but it needs to be handled with care as it can have profound adverse effects;
- Biotechnologists act out of ideology: they want to make the world a better place, and see this technology as an answer;
- Gene transfer between species does not occur in nature and is therefore unnatural and even dangerous;
- A ban on GMO technologies may hamper the road to a sustainable future and a cleaner earth.

## Tip

As an add-on, participants can be asked to find arguments to try and convince the other camp, which can give more insights into trade-offs and conditions for acceptance.

## Materials needed

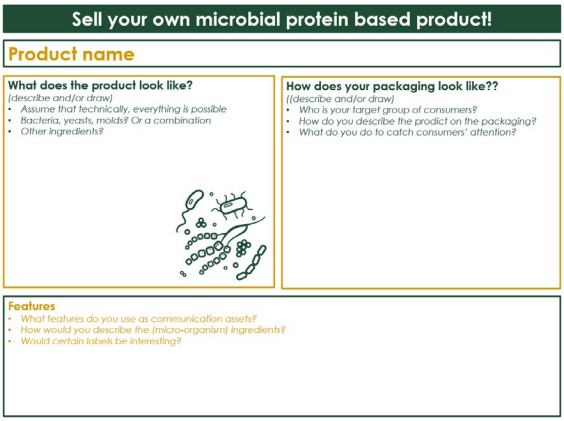
✖ none

## Timing: 2-10 minutes per question (depending on discussion)

## Main questions answered

This exercise is very versatile, ideal for starting discussions and finding out arguments and reasonings behand choices.

# TOOL #6: Role Playing




Role playing exercises can take many forms, for example

- ✖ Participants are asked to assess the technology through the eyes of a different (also important) stakeholder. It gives them the opportunity to explore another side of the story, empathise with the viewpoint(s) of this other stakeholder and see where conflicts of interest may arise.
  For example, citizens can take on the role of scientists that are working on the development of a new technology. When the "scientists" are being interviewed (by other participants) on the reasons for developing these new technologies, they might relate more to the intentions of the scientists.
- ✖ Participants are asked to take on the role of the developer of the innovation, and to come up with a business plan, a marketing plan or a communication plan of the innovation. This is best supported by a fill-in template (which can be a simplified version of a real business model canvas or similar). Questions to be added to the template are for example:
  - How would you refer to the technology? How would you name it?
  - What communication channels would you use to inform your stakeholder group about this technology?
  - Which assets would you focus on in your communication? How would you formulate it?
  - What would you put on the packaging (if any)?
  - Etc.

## Materials needed

- ✖ Preparatory work (see tip), in the format of a fill-in template or pre-defined interview questions
- ✖ Colourful pens
- ✖ Computer with AI (optional)

Timing: 30-45 minutes

## Tip

These exercises work best well-prepared, formulating guiding questions in advance.

## Main questions answered

Finding USP's, conflicting information and trade-offs participants are willing to make, and positive communication narratives.

# TOOL #7: Problem exploration

Problem exploration can be broadly interpreted, but in this context it is an exercise to explore what the alternatives for your innovation are.

- ✖ Participants are divided into small groups of 2-4 people.
- ✖ Each group is asked to dig into the central problem a technology is solving, and finding alternative solutions to solve the same problem.
- ✖ If relevant, you can break up the exercise in two parts:
  - A first part where they explore the central problem: What are the causes for this problem? Does the real problem lie somewhere else?
  - A second part where you find (alternative) solutions to solve this problem. They do not need to be experts, they can start from their personal opinion: how would *they* solve the problem?
- ✖ After the exercise, each group shares their findings with the rest of the group

## Materials needed

✖ (Colourful) pens and paper

Timing: 30-45 minutes

## Main questions answered

✖ Where does your innovation fit in?

✖ Does your innovation tackle a real need?

✖ Does your innovation solve the right problem?

# Analysing qualitative data

Analysing data from a co-creation session is not straightforward. But there are some rules and guidelines to make sure your analysis is thorough, objective and complete.

## Preparation

A good analysis starts with good data. Note-taking alone is often not sufficient. Analysing the data often requires a reconstruction of the interaction in your head, so all types of information help to make this reconstruction as complete and accurate as possible.

- ✖ Make sure to get people to write down things themselves.
- ✖ Take pictures or even videos and audio recordings.

### Tip

Make sure you have enough background knowledge on the topic to make the correct interpretations. There is no need to be an expert, but a basic comprehension of the concept and subject is imperative, so it is necessary to do some reading on the topic in advance.

## Transcription

The analysis should be done shortly after the interaction, but not immediately. Let the information sink in for at least a few hours, but make sure you are still able to recall the event(s) when doing the analysis.

The first step is to type out as much data and information as possible. A written out (typed out) reconstruction of the session/interaction, with the data gathered from each exercise grouped together, makes it easier to obtain a complete picture. Non-verbal cues and behaviours can also be written out, like in a film scenario.

This report forms the basis of your analysis. Reading and rereading the report and the data makes it possible to make connections between the different types of clues and information.

## Attention points

- ✖ The group is optimized to represent maximum diversity, but is not representative for your population
- ✖ Do not attempt to quantify the data, even though it is tempting to do so. When clear (quantitative) tendencies are present, interpret them as an indication that needs to be validated quantitatively, not as facts;
- ✖ Analysis of qualitative data is prone to bias. Be vigilant of your own opinions and biases, and do not to let them interfere with the analysis.
- ✖ Consider the implications and limitations of your set-up:
  - Group discussions may create peer pressure;
  - Presence of researchers may intimidate participants and reduce openness;
  - Presence of involved parties may reduce honesty (out of politeness) or have a negative effect on opinions (out of prejudice);
  - Providing specific information and the mode of communication can create biases in answers;
  - Your selection of participants may not be varied enough;
  - …

# Analysing quantitative data

## Clustering and coding

**Clustering**

Certain data, like from association exercises, can be clustered into categories. For example the words can be assigned to a certain emotion (negative, positive, neutral) or into groups with a common denominator (for example 'summer', or 'bland', or 'love', etc.), as shown in the examples in Figure 12.

The same approach can be applied for arguments, comments and behaviour linked to the division into camps, open discussions or explanations from metaphoric representations.

**Coding**

Exercises like scenario thinking or communication templates can go a certain direction, that can often be coded with one or a few keywords (like 'humour', 'transparent', 'sustainable', 'nostalgic').

These codes and keywords can then also be assigned to information from other exercises. The different exercises often tend to add-on or validate each other.

## Highlights

- ✖ Mark specific wordings the participants use to describe the concept or idea that is the central theme of the interaction.
- ✖ Take special notice of the questions asked, as they indicate where gaps in knowledge are and which items are not well understood (or misunderstood).
- ✖ Take note of misconceptions and ideas on which they base their decisions, and where or from whom they get those ideas from.

ASSOCIATIONS WHEN TASTING A CERTAIN PRODUCT?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Feelings** | Cozy<br>Happy<br>Warm |
| **Flavours** | Vanilla<br>Orange<br>Coffee |
| **Context** | Christmas<br>Winter |

GMO ASSOCIATIONS

- Niet steeds juist ingezet
- Negatieve connotatie!?
- Oranje wortels
- Ten dienste van wie…?
- CRISPR
- Onnatuurlijk
- Ongezond – Weg ermee
- Hogere droogteresistentie – hogere ziekteresistentie – minder mislukte oogsten
- Zo roei je inheemse soorten uit
- Sneller veredelen
- Ethiek?
- Onnodig
- Proefvelden die bestormd worden
- Ongezond (→ is dat altijd zo? Volgens mijn man niet)
- "Graag meer overproductie"
- Risky
- Te weinig kennis
- Misschien een oplossing
- Angst voor de snelheid
- We kunnen de gevolgen van dit "gepruts" nu nog niet inschatten (→ hebben we niet altijd al geprutst?)
- Prutsen met eten
- Oneerlijk voor boeren
- MONSANTO = smeerlappen

Red = Negative
Green = Positive
Black = Neutral

## Tips & tricks

- ✖ Let at least two people analyse the data, and use AI as external validation
- ✖ AI can also support clustering and identification of recurring themes, but should never be the sole analysis tool
- ✖ There is more data than what is being said, written or drawn. Give attention to the things that were not being said, the way things were said, facial expressions, physical behaviour and body language of the participants.

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