BIM
Ireland's
Seafood
Development
Agency

Unlock the Power of Innovation

BIM Innovation Guidebook

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Có-mhaoinithe ag an
Aontas Eorpach

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bim.ie

Contents

Welcome

THIS GUIDEBOOK WILL HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND:

WHY INNOVATION IS IMPORTANT

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET STARTED

HOW TO APPLY THE BIM INNOVATION FRAMEWORK

SO THAT YOU ACHIEVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

EXPAND THE RAW MATERIAL BASE

DECREASE COSTS OF GOODS OR SERVICES

INCREASE THE MARK UP PRICE

The Need for Innovation

Change is the one constant your company will face in its lifetime. As business environments become more complex, supply chains evolve and consumer demands increase, you need to understand how your company can use the power of innovation to embrace change.

To remain competitive during times of change, your company must find new ways to create and deliver products and services. To do this effectively, your company needs to be adaptive and agile. This cannot be achieved by focusing on 'business-as-usual' methods. Instead, you will need to think creatively and develop your ideas into viable solutions to manage the challenges ahead (Berinato, 2014).

Your company's ability to innovate will be a key determinant in its future growth and economic success (ISO 56000:2021, 2021).

Seeking new ways to grow your markets, becoming more efficient or staying competitive all involve a large investment in time, money, and labour, which can cause risks for any company. To reduce the risk whilst exploring ideas, An Bord Iascaigh Mhara (herein BIM) have developed a bespoke innovation framework that will enable your company, to develop and test an idea using a structured process.

This action-orientated framework will allow you to discover the merits of your idea before investing substantial resources into a scaled process or a commercial launch.

To start your innovation journey, this book is intended to act as an introductory guide to help you understand what innovation is, introduce the BIM Innovation Framework and the stages involved, as well highlight some key tools to help get you started.

> " The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.
>
> **- Socrates** "
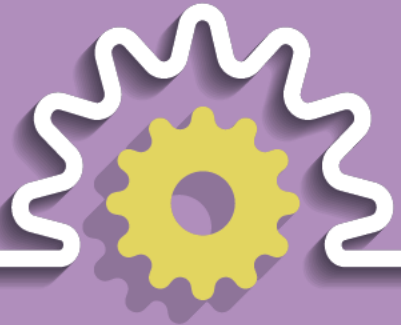
Part One

Understanding Innovation

Defining Innovation

As a term, 'innovation' is often cited and misunderstood.

To ensure that you and your team have a shared understanding of what innovation means, we have chosen to include a definition by author and serial entrepreneur, Bill Aulet.[1]

Innovation = Invention x Commercialisation

While short, we believe Aulet's definition goes right to the core of what innovation means for businesses and we hope it resonates with you too.

Innovation is the result of an idea **(Invention)** that has been applied by a company to create value for their business, their customer and/or the wider community **(Commercialisation)**.

It is important to note, that the idea itself only needs to be something new or different to your company, however, it can be new or different to the industry or the world.

> Innovation = Invention x Commercialisation
>
> - Bill Aulet
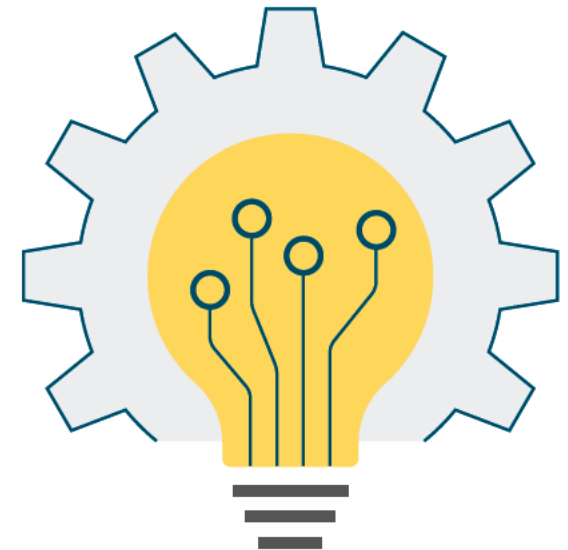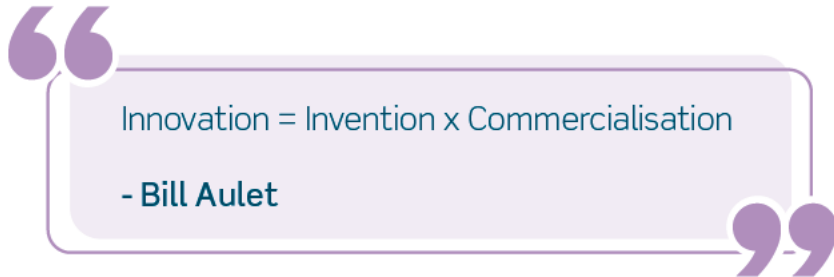
1: Further Reading: Disciplined Entrepreneurship, Bill Aulet (2013)

Areas of Opportunity

When thinking about innovation, many people believe it is all about creating new products. This perception is wrong.

Product innovation, while important, is often the easiest innovation for competitors to copy (Keeley et.al 2013). To create true competitive advantage, you need to expand your search for ideas to the other functions of your business (Drucker, 2002).

To help get you started, we invite you to review the 'Ten Types of Innovation' (Keeley et.al 2013) which will help you identify new areas of opportunity.

Ten Types of Innovation:

PROFIT MODEL	NETWORK	STRUCTURE	PROCESS	PRODUCT PERFORMANCE
PRODUCT SYSTEM	SERVICE	CHANNEL	BRAND	CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
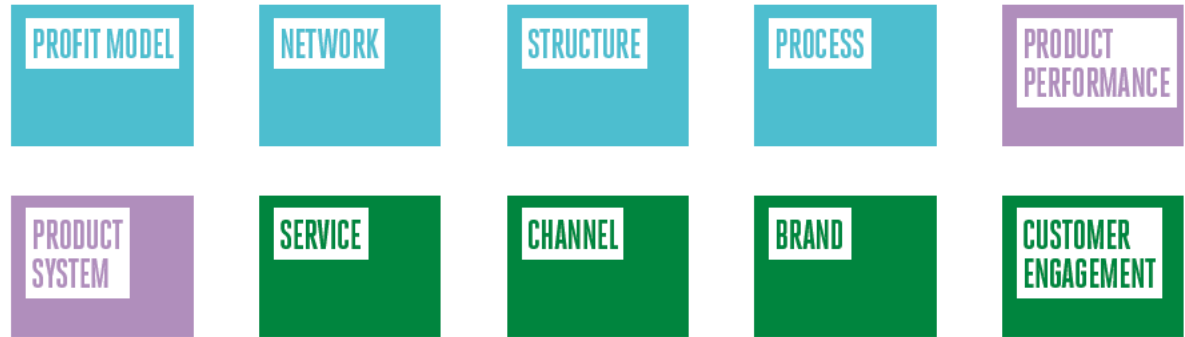
Source: Ten Types of Innovation, Keeley et.al, 2013

Ten Types of Innovation

| PROFIT MODEL | NETWORK | STRUCTURE | PROCESS | PRODUCT PERFORMANCE | PRODUCT SYSTEM | SERVICE | CHANNEL | BRAND | CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT |

DETAILS

| | | | | DETAILS | | DETAILS | | | |

This involves finding new ways for your company to make money. It could include changes to what you offer, how you offer it, what you charge and how you collect your revenues.

This involves finding new ways to create value through collaboration. By combining your strengths with the capabilities and/or assets of others, you can capitalise on opportunities that you might not be able to pursue on your own

These types of innovations focus on organising company assets - physical, human-in unique ways that create a competitive advantage that is hard to replicate.

This involves identifying unique ways in which your company can use your in-house capabilities so that your company can be more efficient, be able to adapt quickly and to become more profitable.

This type of innovation involves looking at how you can improve your current offerings through increased value, features and quality or create entirely new products.

This involves identifying ways that your individual products and services can connect or be bundled together.

This involves identifying ways you can make your product easier to try, to use and, to be enjoyed more by your customers.

This involves identifying new ways to deliver your product/service to your customer to reduce friction and, to create higher customer satisfaction.

Brand innovations can transform products from ordinary to extraordinary in the eyes of the customer.

Understanding your customers and the touchpoints they have with your company will help you nurture and grow your customer base.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

| | | | | QUESTIONS TO ASK | | QUESTIONS TO ASK | | | |

How can your company make more money?

How can your company leverage the strengths of your network?

How can your company best organise and align your internal resources?

How can your company use a superior/ unique method in the way you produce your offerings?

How can your company develop an offering that has a unique feature or functionality?

How can your company create an eco-system of complementary products/ services?

How your company enhance and amplify the value of your offerings?

How can your company improve the delivery of your offerings?

How can your company elevate the brand within the marketplace?

How can your company create engaging interactions with your customers?

Adapted: Ten Types of Innovation, Keeley et.al, 2013

Three Lenses of Innovation
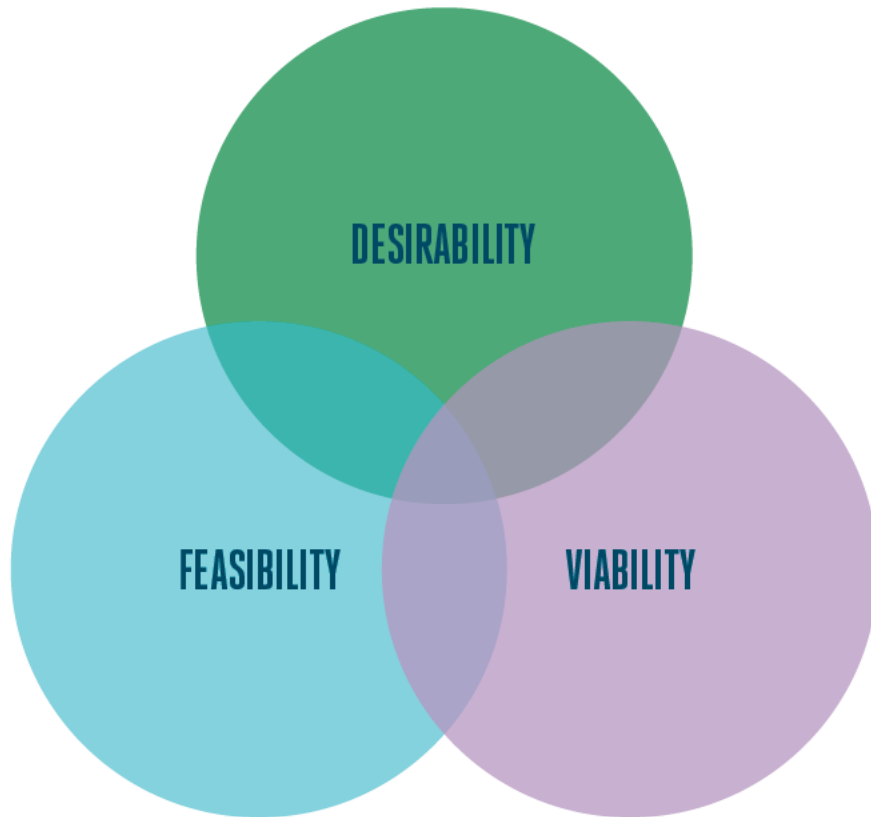
It is worthwhile to view ideas through the prism of the three lenses of innovation[2]: Desirability, Feasibility, Viability.

Initially, your idea may be stronger on one of these three lenses, but it is important that you assess what you know or don't know across all three lenses. This will help determine the gaps in your knowledge.

Throughout the timeline of your innovation project, you can assess how it is progressing by checking against these three lenses.

- **Desirability:**
  Who will benefit from your idea?

- **Feasibility:**
  How can you make it happen? What resources will you need? What skillsets are required?

- **Viability:**
  What value will this idea bring to the company?

Desirability

A critical part of turning your idea into an innovative product/service is to identify and understand who your potential customer and end consumer will be.

A **CUSTOMER**[3] is someone who will benefit directly from this idea, makes the decisions and/or pays you directly.

An **END CONSUMER** is someone who uses or experiences your idea but does not necessarily pay you.

All businesses need a customer or they do not have a business. Sometimes, the customer and the end-consumer can be the same person, however, not always. It is worth noting that your customer can also be internal to your business such as an employee.

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3   Note: For the rest of this guidebook, the term customer(s) will be used as a general description that encompasses both customers and end-consumers either externally to the market or internally within the business.

As an example:

Who is the **Customer** of a kid's ready meal?

The customer is the parent who makes the decision and pays for the product.

Who is the **End Consumer** of a kid's ready meal?

The end consumer of a kid's ready meal is the child. They consume and experience the product despite not paying for it.

Feasibility

Once you have identified your customer and understood their needs and wants, you will then tailor your idea to meet these preferences.

In this lens, you will be seeking to find out what is needed in terms of resources to bring your idea to life. This includes understanding what raw material, technology and capabilities are required to develop and implement the concept.

Viability

Once you have identified a customer segment and created a feasible solution, you must make sure it delivers financial value for your company, either by making or saving you money. The focus of this lens, therefore, is to look at the economic potential of your idea.

Knowing your numbers on how much your idea will cost to implement, what the break-even point will be and which of your customers are most profitable will help ensure financial clarity throughout the project.

> "There are only two things in a business that make money – *innovation and marketing, everything else is cost.*"
>
> **- Peter F. Drucker**

Innovation Mindset

Innovation requires a new way of thinking. As you begin your innovation journey, it is important that you adopt an innovation mindset to enable you and your team to create better solutions.

FOCUS ON PEOPLE

Build empathy with the customer by observing their actions and asking questions. In doing so, you will gain fresh insights into their behaviours and their values.

> " Curiosity doesn't kill the cat; it kills the competition. "
>
> **- Sam Walton**

Source: Lewrick, Link, & Leifer, 2018; Lokitz, Van Der Pijl, & Solomon, 2016

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Work visually with your team using simple drawings, diagrams, and even early-stage prototypes to share your ideas.

ACCEPT UNCERTAINTY

Accept that uncertainty is a key characteristic of innovation. Use a structured innovation process to reduce uncertainty as much as possible.

BE DRIVEN BY CURIOSITY

Adopt a beginner's mindset and ask questions.

EXPERIMENT & LEARN

By developing prototypes and small experiments, you will gain valuable insights into how your idea really works.

Strategic Innovation

Aligning Innovation with Strategy

Before you start applying innovation, it is worth considering how your efforts will align with your long-term business goals.

Developing an innovation strategy allows you to clarify your goals and helps your team focus their efforts on the purposeful innovations that could give your company a competitive advantage. In addition, an explicit innovation strategy that is linked back to your overall business goals will avoid different parts of your company pursuing conflicting priorities (Pisano, 2015).

Innovation can be learned and repeated by your company. However, first, you need to organise and operate your business in a way that supports this discipline. This starts with understanding where your company sits right now in terms of its capabilities, and skill sets (McGrath, 2021). Once assessed, this will help you to develop and implement any innovation strategy.

Depending on your company, your innovation assessment could be a simple high-level scan, or you may require a more in-depth effort including surveys and interviews to consider multiple perspectives.

Assessments must be based on evidence and not individual opinions. This ensures that all future strategic decisions are grounded in validated data which will help avoid wasting resources in any future initiatives.

> "
> Strategy is about making choices, trade-offs; it's about deliberately choosing to be different.
>
> - Michael Porter
> "

Assess Innovation Capabilities

To help get started, you can consider some of the questions:

COMPANY GROWTH

How much growth do your expect or want to have in one, three or even five years from now?

―――

Where will growth come from?

―――

What are you working on today that helps identify options for the future and help close this growth gap?

CULTURE

What type of culture currently exists within the company?

―――

Is it one that supports innovation or impedes innovative activities?

―――

What changes can you make to empower your team to be more innovative?

RESOURCES

What resources are in place to help your team capture and understand ideas, as well as prototype and pilot ideas?

―――

What resources are needed in the future?

―――

What criteria will you use to allocate resources for innovation?

PROCESSES & TOOLS

What innovation processes are you currently using?

―――

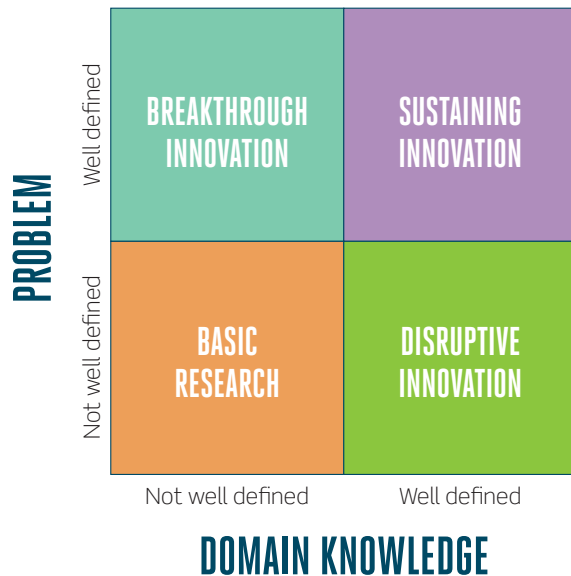How impactful have they been on your innovation goals?

―――

What processes will you need in the future?

Types of Innovation Strategies[4]

There is no one size fits all approach to innovation, so your strategy needs to reflect the iterative nature of this discipline and the different needs of each innovation project.

PROBLEM

Well defined

BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION | SUSTAINING INNOVATION

Not well defined

BASIC RESEARCH | DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

Not well defined | Well defined

DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE

When developing your innovation strategy, you might benefit from visually mapping out the ideas you want to focus on to determine what type of innovation it is. A helpful tool to use for this is exercise is the **Innovation Matrix** (Sattell, 2017). It will allow you to understand what type of innovation strategy you might need as it relates to each individual innovation project.

Two key questions you need to ask:

How well defined is your idea?

How well defined is the skillset & domain knowledge within your company to bring this idea to life?

Basic Research is needed when nothing is well defined. This exploratory research will reveal new ideas for your company as well as identify the skill sets required to bring those ideas to life.

Sustaining Innovation refers to innovations that improve and expand upon what is currently in existence. These are the most common type of innovations. Typically, you will have a well-defined idea and the skill set to solve it resulting in a 'do better' innovation for your company (Bessant, n.d).

Breakthrough Innovation refers to innovations that take a leap forward with a challenge[5] that is hard to solve. Typically, there is a well-defined idea, but your company do not currently have the skillset or domain knowledge in-house to bring it to life. By exploring diverse domains and skill sets external to your company, you may discover a new perspective as well as expand your capabilities to solve it.

Disruptive Innovations refers to innovations that are created with fewer resources and that successfully challenge established incumbent businesses. Disruptive innovations tend to get started in low-end or new -market footholds (Christensen, Raynor, & McDonald, 2015). Typically, disruptive innovations mean that your team have a well-defined skillset and you are looking for a problem to solve (Satell, 2017).

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4   HBR- The Four Types of Innovation and the Problems they Solve

5   Within the innovation discipline, you will often hear the term 'challenge' being used. This term is often used to refer to the idea, to the problem or, the opportunity you want to understand and explore.

Key Components of an Innovation Strategy[6]

As you have read, an innovation strategy is a commitment to undertake activities which aim to focus on the future growth of your organisation.

While no strategy is the same, they will contain some fundamental elements such as explicitly stating why you are pursuing innovation, outlining what your goals are over the short, medium, or long term and how you aim to achieve them.

By having clear innovation goals and a plan on how to achieve them, it will provide your company with a clear focus as well as improve your chances of success (MJV, 2019)

Key components to consider when formulating any strategy:

- Vision

- Goals

- Priorities

- Plan

- Resources

- Roles and responsibilities

- Indicators of how performance will be measured.

6   HBR- You Need an Innovation Strategy

Part Three

Applying
Innovation

Applying Innovation

Innovation is inherently messy. Adopting a structured approach to your innovation project provides your team with the guard rails to go from the inception of your idea right through to commercialisation.

There are many innovation methodologies out there to choose from. BIM's bespoke innovation framework has taken inspiration from Design Thinking.

This is a creative problem solving process that puts customers at the centre of every innovation project.

BIM INNOVATION FRAMEWORK

IDEA

DEFINE

DISCOVER

DEVELOP

DELIVER

IMPACT

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
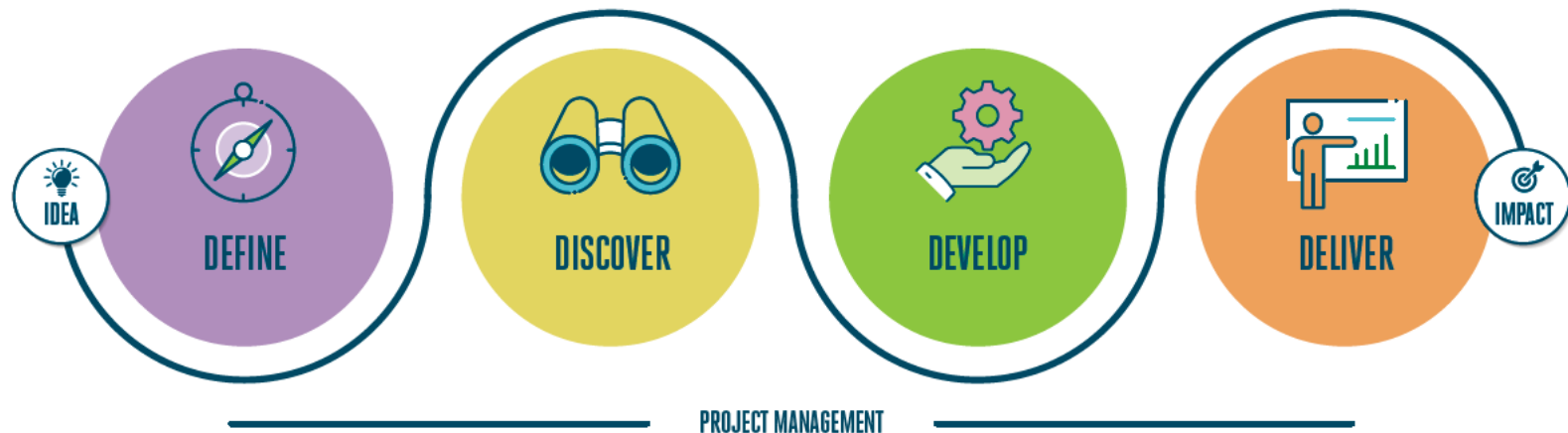
7. Ideo-What is Design Thinking?
8. HBR-Why Design Thinking Works?

The BIM innovation framework consists of four stages:

DEFINE

DISCOVER

DEVELOP

DELIVER

All innovation projects start with an idea and they end with some type of impact, such as new learnings or successfully commercialising and/or scaling a new concept.

Once you have captured your idea, please contact a member of the Seafood Innovation Hub to discuss your initial thoughts about the idea's potential.

The idea will be assessed to evaluate its suitability as an innovation project, and thereafter, the innovation process will begin.

When working with the Seafood Innovation Hub team, we will be using our bespoke innovation framework. This framework consists of four stages and the Seafood Innovation Hub team will support you as you journey through each stage of this framework.

As innovation involves a degree of uncertainty, please note that the process is not linear. As new information emerges through the process, you may find that some stages overlap, some stages need repeating, or the project can cycle back to the start. This is normal. We encourage you to stay the course and trust the process.

It is worth noting that at the final stage (Deliver), the project will be handed back to you. At this point, you will have gained valuable insights across the three lenses of innovation which will support your decision making on the future of your idea.

A project management process underpins the BIM innovation framework.

Project management enables innovation teams to focus on bringing the idea to life whilst a project manager ensures that the project timelines and deliverables are met. When working with the Seafood Innovation Hub, you will be supported by a project manager over the lifetime of your project.

Idea

IDEA

As the business world becomes more dynamic and the pace of change speeds up, there is a need for companies like yours to search for new opportunities as well as generate creative solutions to your business challenges.

Every day, you are generating ideas about how to improve, adopt or create innovative approaches to your business. Often, these ideas get dismissed or forgotten due to pressing needs.

Sometimes though, one idea stands out and you can't help but think that this idea could be truly transformative for your business.

If this resonates with you, we encourage you to capture your idea down on paper. Consider your idea within the prisms of the three lenses of innovation: desirability, feasibility, and viability.

Questions you might ask:

What is the idea?

Why it is important?

How does it fit into your business goals?

What do you know about your customers?

What resources and capabilities do you need?

What value will it create?

At this point, if you are seeking to evaluate and implement this idea, the Seafood Innovation Hub can support you on your path to innovation.

KEY ACTIONS

Speak with a member of the Seafood Innovation Hub to discuss your idea and complete a project scoping document. From this initial scoping exercise, your idea will be assessed for its suitability to enter the innovation framework. In the case that it is not, you will be referred to an appropriate person within BIM.

OUTPUTS OF THIS STAGE

Project Scoping Document

> Ideas won't work, unless you do.
>
> - Author unknown
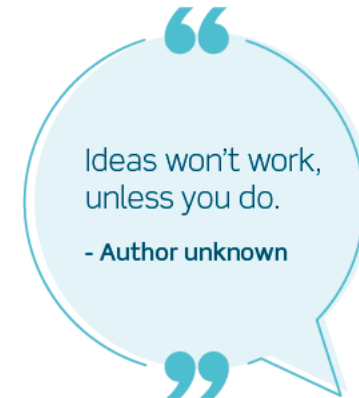
Stage One

DEFINE

The 'Define' stage is critical to any innovation project.

Rather than investing a huge amount of time, money or labour into a raw idea, this stage allows you to take a deliberate pause before pursuing the idea any further. This stage seeks to expand your understanding of what the idea is, as well as, what you know and do not know across the three lenses of innovation.

INPUTS TO THIS STAGE

Project Scoping Document

KEY ACTIONS

It is important before resources are committed, that you have a complete understanding of what you want to achieve. Clarifying what you want to accomplish and when you want to accomplish it by, will provide you and the team with the direction you need to move forward with any innovation project. In addition, sharing what is known currently about the idea as it relates to the three lenses of innovation will help identify knowledge gaps. Once these gaps have been highlighted, you can then identify ways to close these gaps down.

To enable these discussions to happen, a structured discussion session known as a **'Challenge Workshop'** will take place. This will be facilitated by a team member from the Seafood Innovation Hub.

During this session, several types of focused conversations will take place on the project goals, timelines, resources, and constraints as well as a discussion on the three lenses.

To prepare for this session, we encourage you to do some quick secondary research to see if your idea has been identified and implemented elsewhere in the world. Any reports or data you can gather will assist your discussions with the team during this workshop.

OUTPUTS OF THIS STAGE

Project Management Plan, Business Model Canvas, Persona, Research Plan, Process Flow Map and, early-stage Financial Analyses.

A project management plan will be prepared with support from a BIM Project Manager.

> "
> If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.
>
> **- Alice in Wonderland**
> "

Stage Two

DISCOVER

Whether you are developing a new process, product or even a new market, the primary concern is always to reduce risk.

During the discover stage, you will attempt to close any of the gaps in your knowledge that were identified in the previous stage. In addition, you will undertake exploratory research across the three lenses of innovation (desirability, feasibility, and viability). This stage can involve multiple research approaches.

INPUTS TO THIS STAGE

Project Management Plan, Business Model Canvas, Persona, Research Plan, Process Flow Map and, early-stage Financial Analyses.

KEY ACTIONS

As part of the discover stage, the main goal is to close knowledge gaps that exist while expanding your understanding of the challenge across the three lenses. In doing so, you will glean insights about your concept and how it might add value to the lives of your customers.

This can be achieved by immersing yourself in all available secondary research which will give insight into the background. Thereafter, your research will move to speak directly with customers, suppliers, experts, and other stakeholders to understand their point of view on the challenge space.
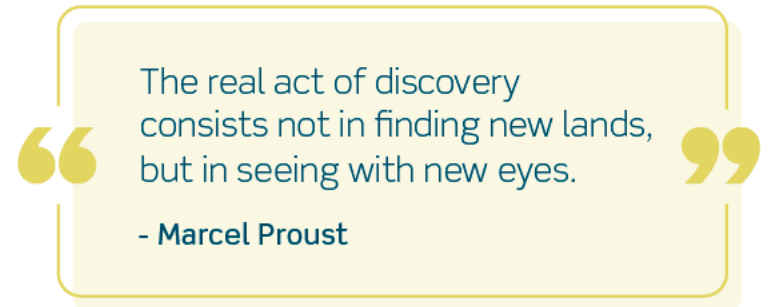
A key milestone of this stage is an **'Insights Workshop'**. This is a structured session that will allow you and your team to review the information collated, discuss, and generate insights about what it might mean for your innovation project.

OUTPUTS OF THIS STAGE

Updated versions of the following: Business Model Canvas, Personas, Process Flow Map, Financial Analysis. In addition, you will have some type of document that defines the criteria you will need to prototype your idea. This is known as a 'Design Criteria' document.

For example: If you have an idea for a new product, it may be a product specification.

> The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.
>
> **- Marcel Proust**

Stage Three

DEVELOP

During the develop stage, you will be bringing your idea to life to discover what is truly possible. The first step will be to successfully develop a prototype which once refined can then be used to pilot your idea. This two-step process enables you to get tangible feedback on your concept before a full-scale launch.

INPUTS TO THIS STAGE

Updated versions of the following: Business Model Canvas, Personas, Process Flow Map, Financial Analysis.
Design Criteria Document

KEY ACTIONS

Prototyping allows you to bring your idea to life quickly and cheaply with the sole purpose of learning and evolving the prototype through multiple iterations. Your first prototype will not be the end solution but a starting point to share and test with others. This step will help you capture initial feedback about what works/does not work and assess what appropriate refinements you might need to make. Crucially, it will help you decide if you need to change direction or stop pursuing the idea altogether (Dam & Siang, 2020) ((Catmull & Wallace, 2014)

Once this step is complete, you will have defined a minimum viable product (MVP) which is an initial production version of your idea with the minimum features required to deliver value ((Ries, 2011)

Your next move will be to test your fundamental business idea through some type of pilot program. A pilot program will allow you to fully execute your solution on a small cohort of customers to understand what works and learn if it is truly scalable before a full investment of resources (Ries, 2011).

OUTPUTS OF THIS STAGE

A Minimum Viable Product (MVP), Customer Insights and, Financial Analyses.

> "If a picture is worth a thousand words, a prototype is worth a thousand meetings"
>
> - IDEO.Org

Stage Four

DELIVER

The purpose of this stage is to reflect on the findings from the prototyping/piloting phase. These findings will help you make decisions about whether you take the next step and scale up to commercialisation or stop before investing more resources.

INPUTS TO THIS STAGE

A Minimum Viable Product (MVP), Customer Insights and, Financial Analyses.

KEY ACTIONS

At this point in the innovation process there has been a lot of information gathered, insights garnered, and the idea has been prototyped and tested. A final presentation of findings will take place with key recommendations based on what has been learned throughout the innovation project.

This presentation concludes the BIM innovation process, and the project is handed over to you.

From here, you will have to make decisions about the future direction of your concept.

OUTPUTS OF THIS STAGE

Project handover document

> " The goal is to transform data into information, and information into insights
>
> **- Carly Fiorina**

Impact

IMPACT

Once the project is handed over to you, there are some key decisions you will need to make.

WILL YOU SCALE UP & COMMERCIALISE THE IDEA?

After going through the innovation process, the best-case scenario is that all three lenses are present and clearly indicate that you are in a good position to scale and commercialise your idea.

At this point, we encourage you to revisit the findings from the innovation project and scrutinise all elements of your proposed business strategy.

You may need additional support to help you scale and we encourage you to seek out those resources before making any big investments.

Whilst you are busy scaling one idea, do not forget to keep building your innovation portfolio with new projects.

WILL YOU PUT THE IDEA ON HOLD?

Sometimes after an innovation project has been executed, the findings are not as expected. For example, two of the lenses could be strong but the third lens may be weak.

At this point, to reduce the risk, the best option may be to put the idea on hold until new information is available.

Whilst you wait, you could take the learnings from this innovation project to start your next project. This will help you keep the momentum going in your quest to capture new opportunities.

WILL YOU STOP PURSUING THE IDEA?

The findings from the innovation process highlight that the idea is weak across all three lenses

The only option is to stop pursuing the idea.

Do not be disheartened, this should be seen as a success. Instead of investing huge amounts of resources, you have quickly and cheaply discovered that the idea was not scalable.

Your next step could be to take the learnings from this innovation project to start your next project. Alternatively, start afresh with a new idea. Whatever you do, keep innovating.

> " Whenever you see a successful business, someone once made a courageous decision. "
>
> - Peter F. Drucker

Part Four

Complimentary
Processes & Tools

Introduction to Processes & Tools

Alongside an innovation framework, there are two complimentary processes that we recommend you consider to ensure your innovation projects have the highest chance of success.

The first is a stage-gate process which allows you to assess each innovation project to ensure it is ready before moving forward to the next stage.

The second is a project management process which helps support your team to achieve their goals in any given project. A further explanation of both these processes can be found within this section.

Alongside these two processes, you will need to develop a research plan for your innovation project. To that end, a brief introduction to research types is included within this section. This will help you and your team understand what types of research you might need to employ throughout the various stages of your innovation project.

Lastly, you will have to consider what innovation tools you will need for any given innovation project. Innovation tools are best defined as 'something which helps get a job done' (Bessant, n.d)

These innovation tools can range from a checklist to more detailed computer analysis and are designed to help you focus on a problem area. Some tools can help you clarify what you know and what gaps you have, other tools help you implement something or monitor and control what is happening.

Innovation tools can be very useful but like any tools, you don't need to use all of them, and you may end up having some favourites. When picking a tool to use, you need to be clear about why you are choosing that tool and what you are hoping to achieve from using it. After that, it is a matter of learning when it is best to use it and how to use it well. This will take practice.

To help get you started, we have provided a key innovation tool for each lens which links back into our core innovation process (Bessant, n.d). Once these three tools have been employed, the Business Model Canvas (BMC) is a great way to bring all this information together on one page.
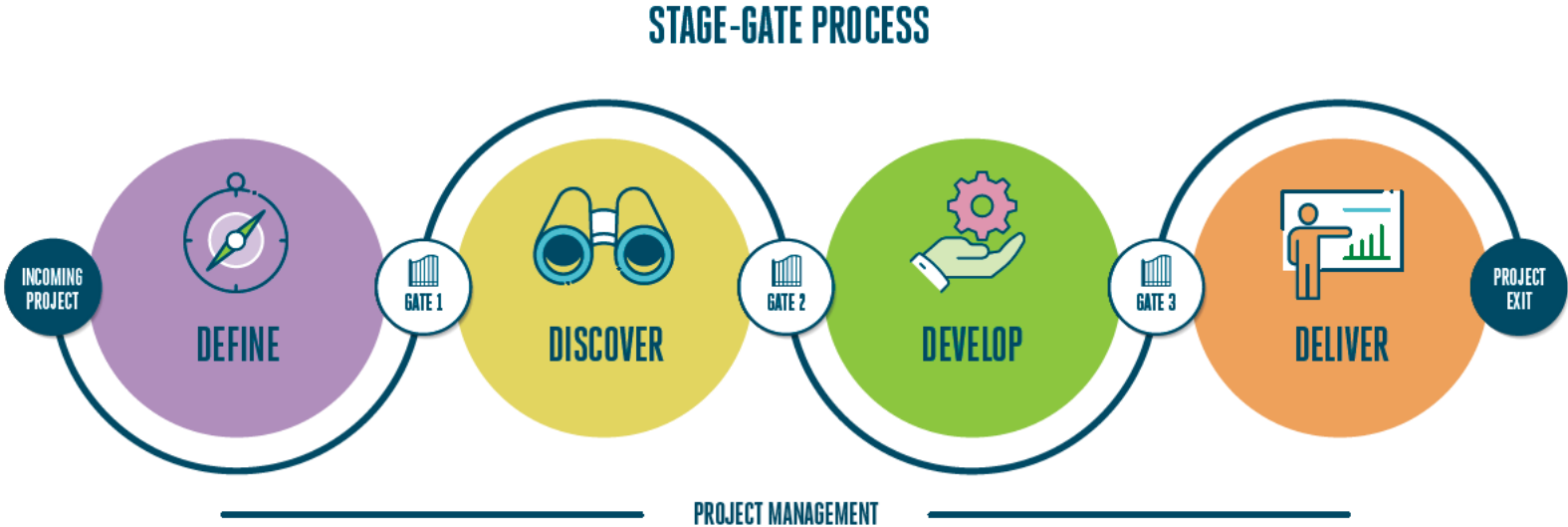
> " Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
>
> **- Muriel Strode**

Stage-Gate Process

The stage-gate process is an important governance and risk reduction model in the management of your innovation projects.

Each innovation project is broken into stages and at the end of each stage is a gate. Each gate evaluates the project's progress to ensure that it meets the key deliverables for that specific stage. Until all deliverables are met, the project will not advance to the next stage.

STAGE-GATE PROCESS

INCOMING PROJECT

DEFINE

GATE 1

DISCOVER

GATE 2

DEVELOP

GATE 3

DELIVER

PROJECT EXIT

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

During a stage-gate meeting with your team, reflect on your innovation project and answer the following questions:

- At this stage of the project, are all three lenses still present?

- As you exit a stage, has all the work been completed? Have all deliverables been met?

- As you enter the next stage, what resources do you require? What risks might exist in this new stage? How might we solve them or reduce their impact?

> 66
>
> ## The straight line, a respectable optical illusion which ruins many a man.
>
> **- Victor Hugo**
>
> 99

The ultimate objective of the stage-gate meeting is to decide the following:

GO — The business case is strong, and the project should continue.

HOLD — One or more lenses are missing information. The project needs to stay in the current stage, until the information has been gathered. Potentially, the project may even need to go back to an earlier stage.

STOP — One or more lenses are completely absent from the project and the business case is no longer valid.

Project Management

Project management is a process that supports teams in achieving their goals within the given constraints of any project (Phillips, 2004).

There are many different project management methodologies for you to choose from. Given that innovation is built on change, whatever methodology you choose, must allow 'flex' in the project plan. You can adopt key aspects from several methodologies to create a customised project management approach that will suit your specific project needs.

At BIM, our project management approach takes inspiration from multiple methods. There is a structured framework as well as a dedicated project manager to oversee each project. This helps ensure that the project runs as smoothly as possible whilst identifying and minimising risks as they appear on the project horizon.

Here are the key points you need to consider for any project:

1. DEFINE:
It is important before commencing any project that you identify key roles and responsibilities within your team, identify who the key stakeholders are and level the of information they need to have, what the project deliverables are and agree on your project timelines.

2. PLAN:
To enable flexibility within the project, it should be broken up into smaller phases to allow for changes to be made as new information is discovered.

3. EXECUTE:
Communicate often with your project team on project deliverables and adjust the plan as needed.
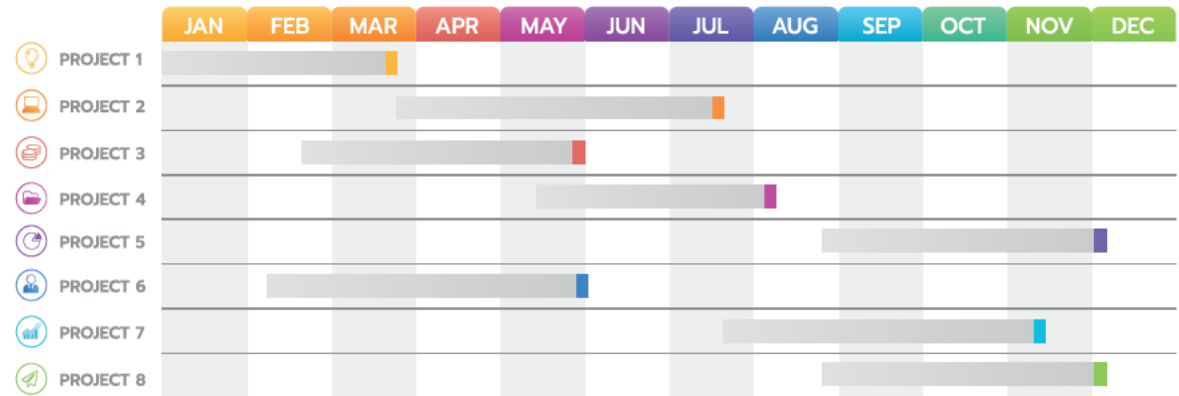
4. CLOSE:
Reflect with the team on what worked across the project, what did not work and how you might approach the next project differently. This type of retrospective is critical for continuous improvement.
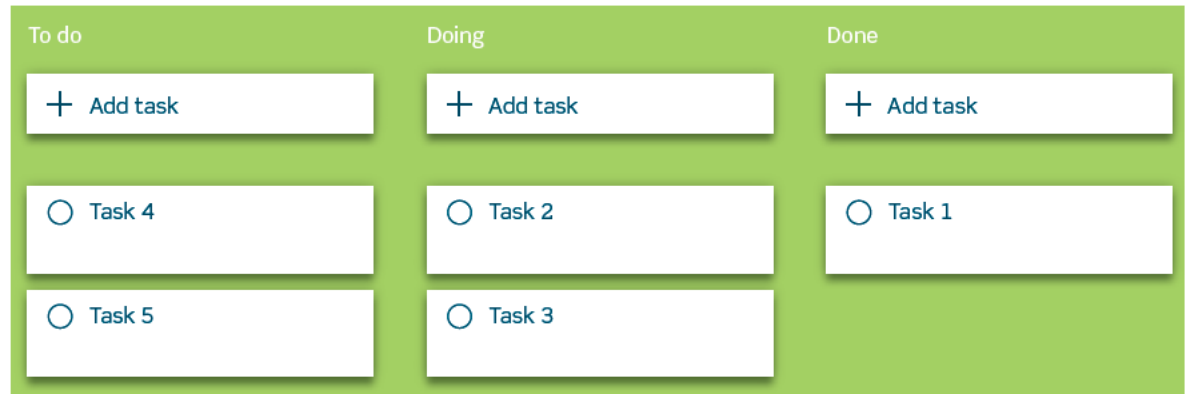
Project Management Tools

As with anything, there are a variety of tools and platforms that you could use for project management.

When starting, you can keep it simple by using Microsoft excel to capture and share project details.

GANNT CHART

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
PROJECT 1												
PROJECT 2												
PROJECT 3												
PROJECT 4												
PROJECT 5												
PROJECT 6												
PROJECT 7												
PROJECT 8												

KANBAN

To do	Doing	Done
+ Add task	+ Add task	+ Add task
○ Task 4	○ Task 2	○ Task 1
○ Task 5	○ Task 3	

Types of Research

Research is a core activity within any innovation project, therefore, a research plan will need to be developed. This plan should outline how your team intends to close down any information gaps you might have, as well as, outline how your team can learn more about the subject area. To achieve either you will need to employ multiple research methods.

> Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods. Every time you do so, you will be certain to find something that you have never seen before."
>
> **- Alexander Graham Bell**

SECONDARY RESEARCH

Secondary research is where you gather background information on the challenge space.

This information may come from your business such as sales information, costs, process details and so on. It can come from secondary sources such as the internet such as market data and forecasts. The information gathered with this approach is often historic and describes **what** has happened and **how** it has happened. Whilst desk research is a great starting point and can be helpful to start understanding the challenge space, it can only tell you so much.

For example, discovering through a report that on average Irish people are estimated to consume 22kg of fish per annum (BIM, 2019) is interesting but it still does not tell us why Irish people consume fish. Yes, you might have some opinions about this statistic but to really know the underlying reasons you need to ask consumers directly.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Primary research is where you can gather first-hand information from sources such as suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders. This may involve observation, surveys, and interviews. This type of research will help you understand potential customers, hear from experts, and learn from them about **why** they behave in certain ways and **why** they make certain choices.

By seeing the idea from your customers' point of view, your perspective of the challenge space will expand and help evolve your concept further.

Desirability Tool

Personas

A persona is a tool that creates a profile of your potential customer. The persona represents a group of customers who may have the same needs/wants, attitudes, values and behaviours as they relate to the focus of your innovation project (Goltz, 2014).

This information is gathered through observation and interviews with current and potential customers. You may have many customer groups and therefore will need multiple personas (Siang & Dam, 2022).

There are several benefits to using personas including putting a face to a potential customer group. This tangible example helps your team connect to the customer group by building empathy and allows the team to design with this persona in mind (Goltz, 2014).

There are several types of perspectives you can take when developing your personas and your person should be developed based on your project needs (Nielsen, n.d).

When developing your persona, there are four main steps involved:

- Research and analysis of data

- Some type of segmentation and targeting process applied.

- Persona development

- Building scenarios to understand how your idea might fit in with their current needs/wants

- Socialise the persona with the wider project team to gain acceptance and generate ideas on how to best design with this persona in mind.
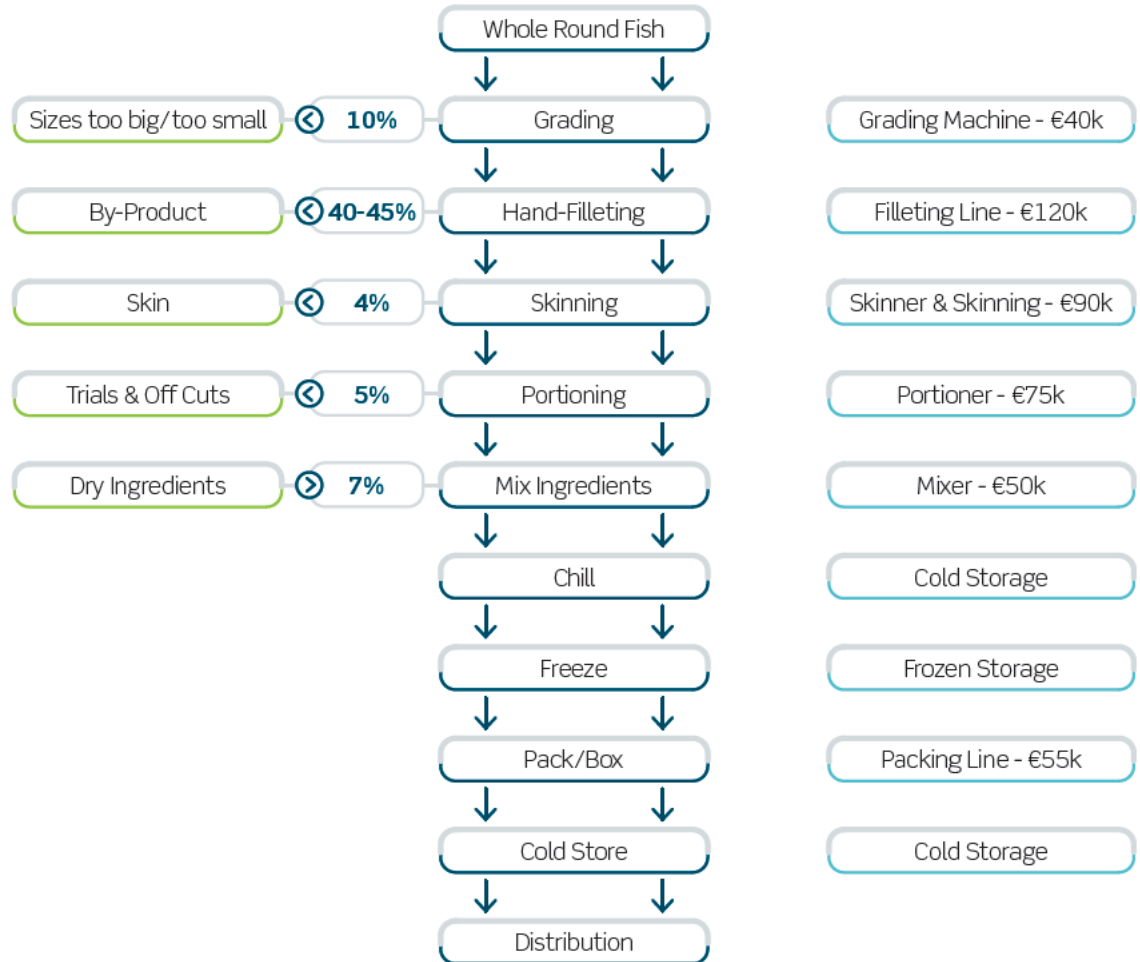
Feasibility Tool

Process Flow Map

A process flow map visually shows the steps involved in bringing your idea to life.

When mapping a process, you should include what equipment/machinery is required and identify inputs/outputs of each stage as well as who will be involved at each step.

Using a process map allows you to understand what might be needed as well as communicate the process to the wider team, stakeholders, or customers.

There are several process-maps you can use depending on what your needs are. To ensure best practice, here are some tips on how to develop your process flow map:

- Identify the start and end points of the process which will assist with setting limits to the process.

- Include only the necessary details on the process map

- Use the correct map symbols at each stage and use a legend to communicate what each symbol represents.

	Whole Round Fish	
Sizes too big/too small ◀ **10%**	**Grading**	Grading Machine - €40k
By-Product ◀ **40-45%**	**Hand-Filleting**	Filleting Line - €120k
Skin ◀ **4%**	**Skinning**	Skinner & Skinning - €90k
Trials & Off Cuts ◀ **5%**	**Portioning**	Portioner - €75k
Dry Ingredients ▶ **7%**	**Mix Ingredients**	Mixer - €50k
	Chill	Cold Storage
	Freeze	Frozen Storage
	Pack/Box	Packing Line - €55k
	Cold Store	Cold Storage
	Distribution	

Viability Tool

The goal of viability is to determine if your idea makes financial sense before making any significant investment. There are several analysis tools that can be used with the key steps highlighted.

1. Calculate Capital Investment

You should have a good idea of machinery/ equipment costs from the process flow map. As well as machinery/equipment costs, identify any other ancillary works required. Factor in the annual depreciation of the machinery/ equipment. Speak to your bank about interest rates if a loan is required.

2. Analyse Potential Volumes

Identify the volume of raw material & ingredients that you will require. Work the volumes through your process flow map to identify where yield losses might occur or where additional ingredients will be required. This will help you establish the volume of the finished product.

3. Calculate Production/ Processing Costs

Firstly, establish the throughput of the machinery/equipment, this will help you identify Per KG costs. Some of the main costs may include the following: Raw Material & Ingredients/ Yield Adjustment/ Labour/ Energy & Water/ Packaging & Pallets/Sales & Marketing/Overheads (Light, heat, insurance & admin).

4. Research Potential Price Points & Volumes

Once you have established what comparable products are selling for, work back to estimate your potential margin. Deduct the following (as applicable) from the selling price: VAT, Promotional Discount, Retailer/Foodservice Operator/ Wholesaler Margin, Distributor Margin &Tariffs. This will help you establish if there is a residual margin for you.

5. Forecast Sales over 3–5 Year Period

Forecasting sales over a medium to long term period will help you highlight Gross Revenues & Costs, Taxation and Funding implications. From this you will be able to determine the Net Present Value, Payback Periods & Internal Rate of Return of your project.
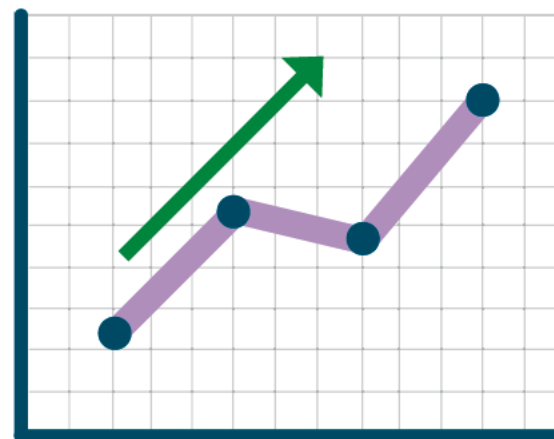
Business Model Canvas[9]

A business model describes how your company creates value for your customer, how you deliver that value to your customer and finally, how you capture value from your customer in return (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010)

When considering any business idea such as a new product or process, you must be clear on what type of business model will help you deliver the most value to both your customer and your company. To help you with this process, the Business Model Canvas (BMC) is a great tool that can be readily communicated to your team to help initiate shared discussions on your business ideas and create new strategic alternatives (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) (Osterwalder, Alexander, 2013)

The BMC comprises of nine building blocks which will show the logic of how your business intends to make money from your idea.

The nine blocks cover all three lenses of innovation:
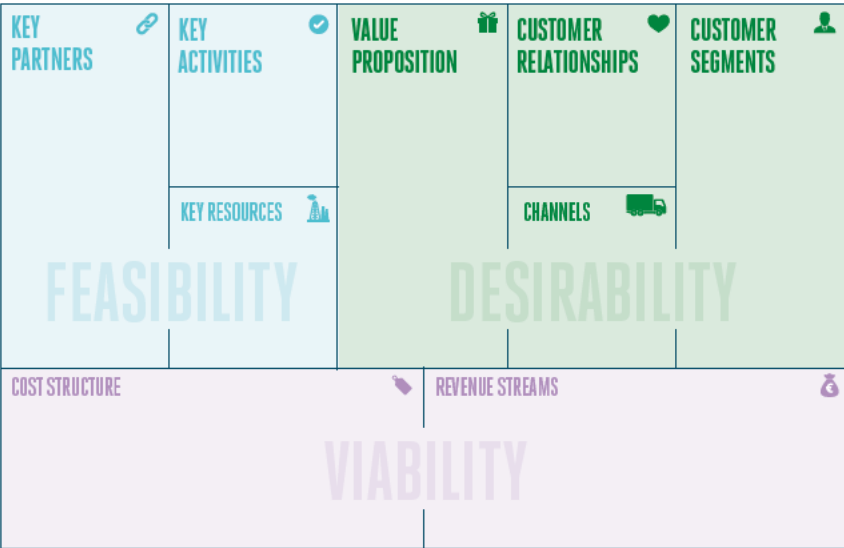
DESIRABILITY

Customer Segments

Value Proposition

Customer Relationships

Channels

FEASIBILITY

Key Partners

Key Activities

Key Resources

VIABILITY
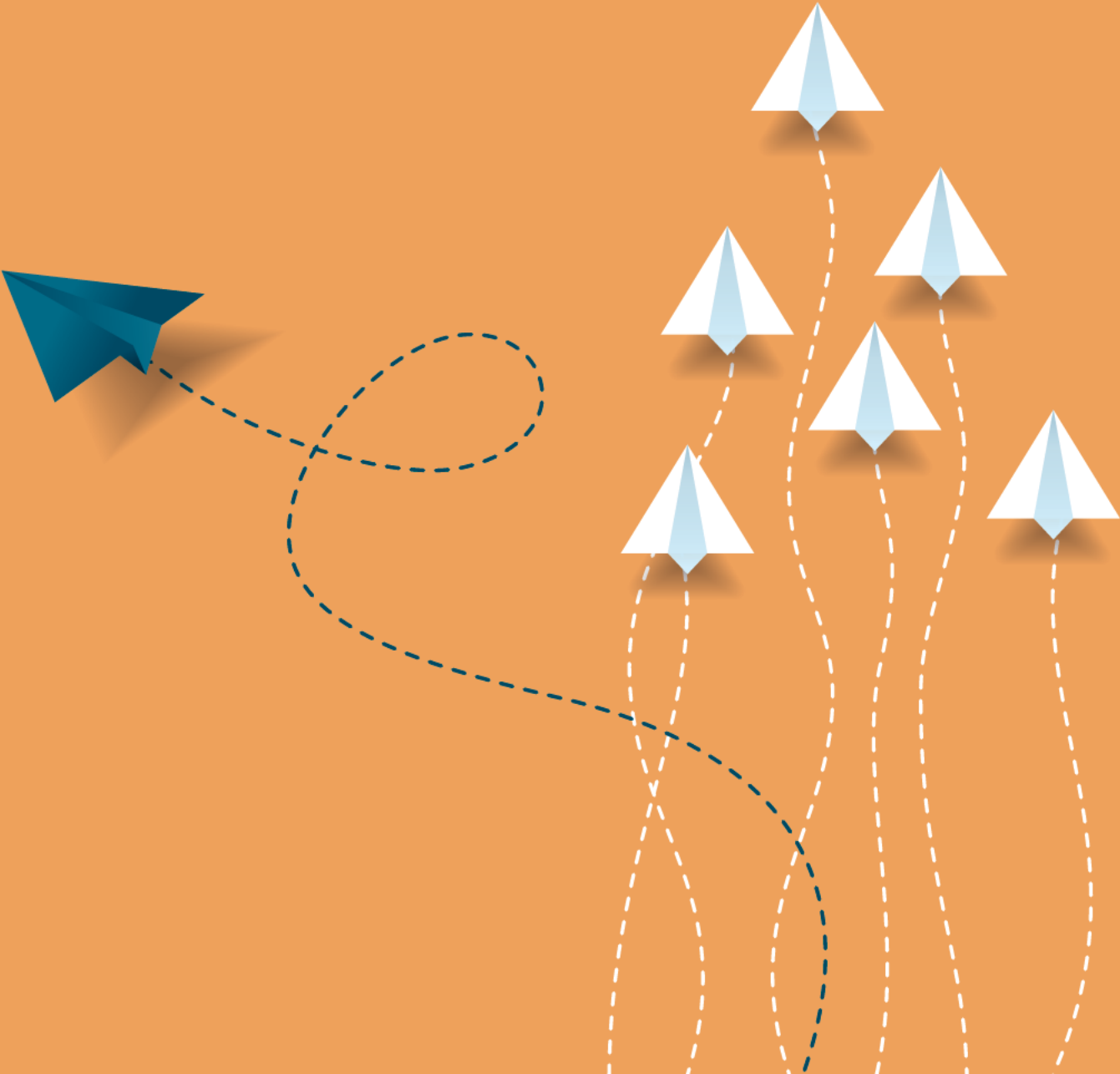
Cost Structure

Revenue Streams

Business Model Canvas

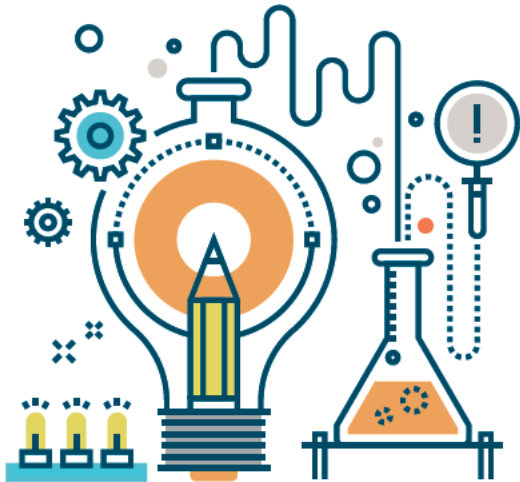9. For a 2-minute explainer, search youtube.com using the key terms 'Business Model Canvas Explained'

Part Five

Conclusion

Conclusion

The business environment is changing, and the speed of this change will continue to accelerate. Rather than take a business as usual approach, we encourage you to embrace change.

Embracing changes means that you and your company will need to step outside your comfort zone and take the first step towards a more innovative future.

In adopting an innovative mindset and implementing a structured approach to your innovation projects, we are confident it will allow you to capture the next great opportunity.

We hope that this guidebook has provided you with an understanding of why innovation is important, provided an opportunity for you to reflect on your current innovation efforts, and empowered you with a framework and tools to get started on your next project.

If you would like further support in this area, then please get in touch with a member of the Seafood Innovation Hub.

> The best way to predict the future is to create it.
>
> - Alan Kay,
>   Computer Scientist

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