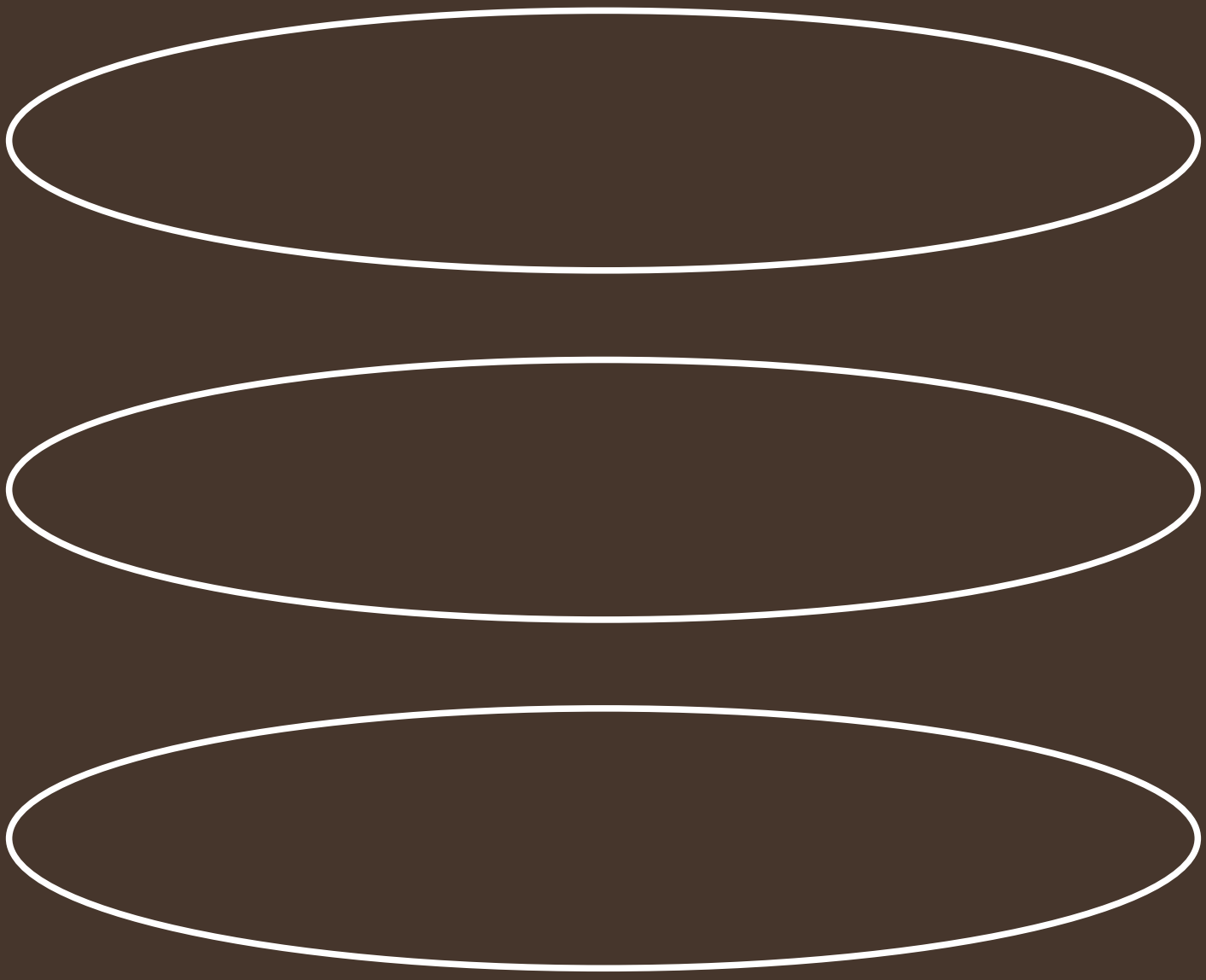
TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

A Guide to Increase the Transformative Impact of Social-Ecological Systems Research



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SUPPORT

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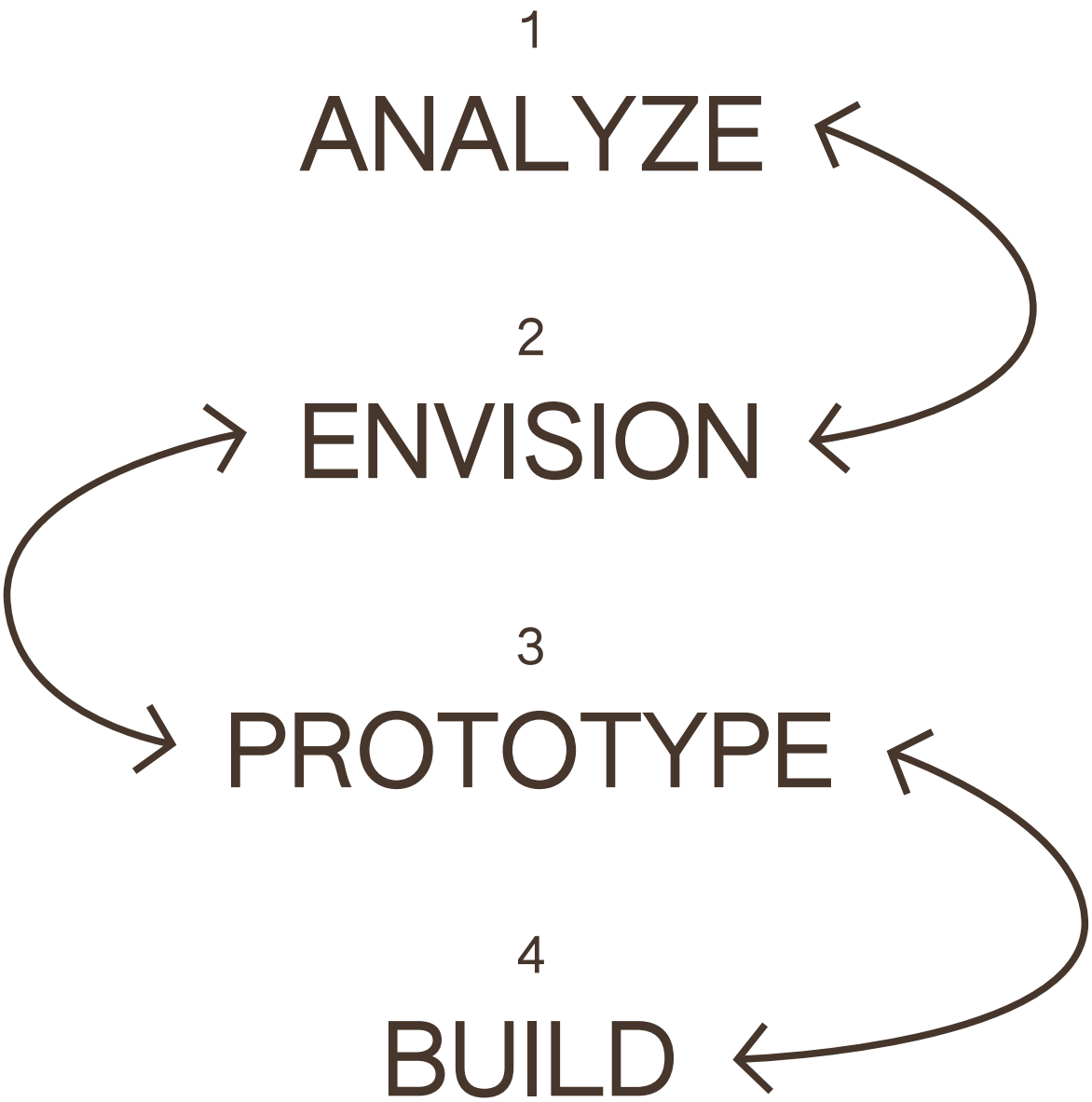
SUMMARY

How to increase the transformative impact of social-ecological systems research? As a response to the increasing need for rapid transformation of human societies, this guide aims to provide a clear outline of what to consider when communicating social-ecological systems research. It approaches mental path dependencies and outlines possibilities for strategic interventions. The guide is designed for researchers working on environmental issues, but aims to outline more general principles that could also be applied to other areas. Certainly, such guide can not guarantee any transformative impact and rather tries to make it more probable through strategic planning.

PROCESS



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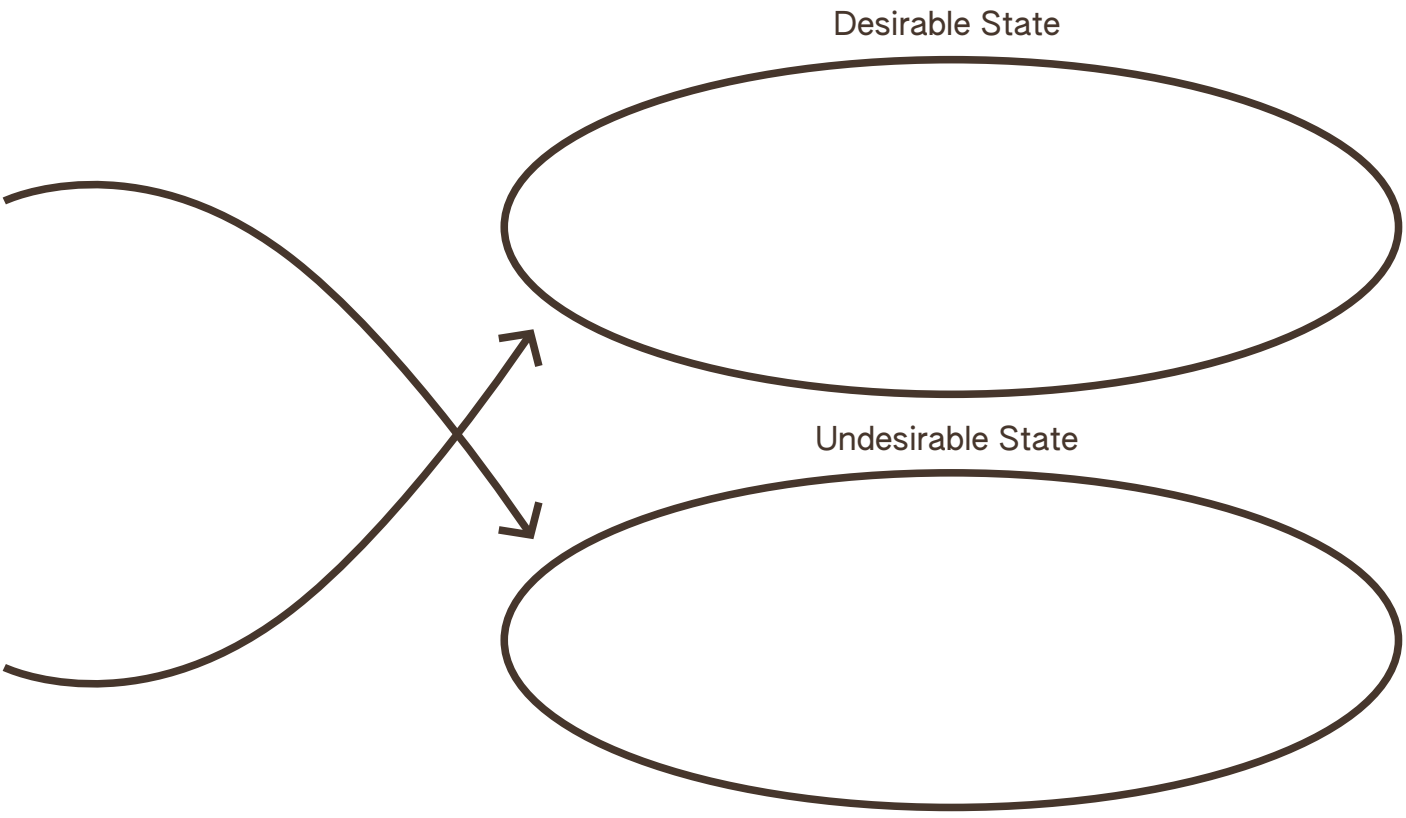
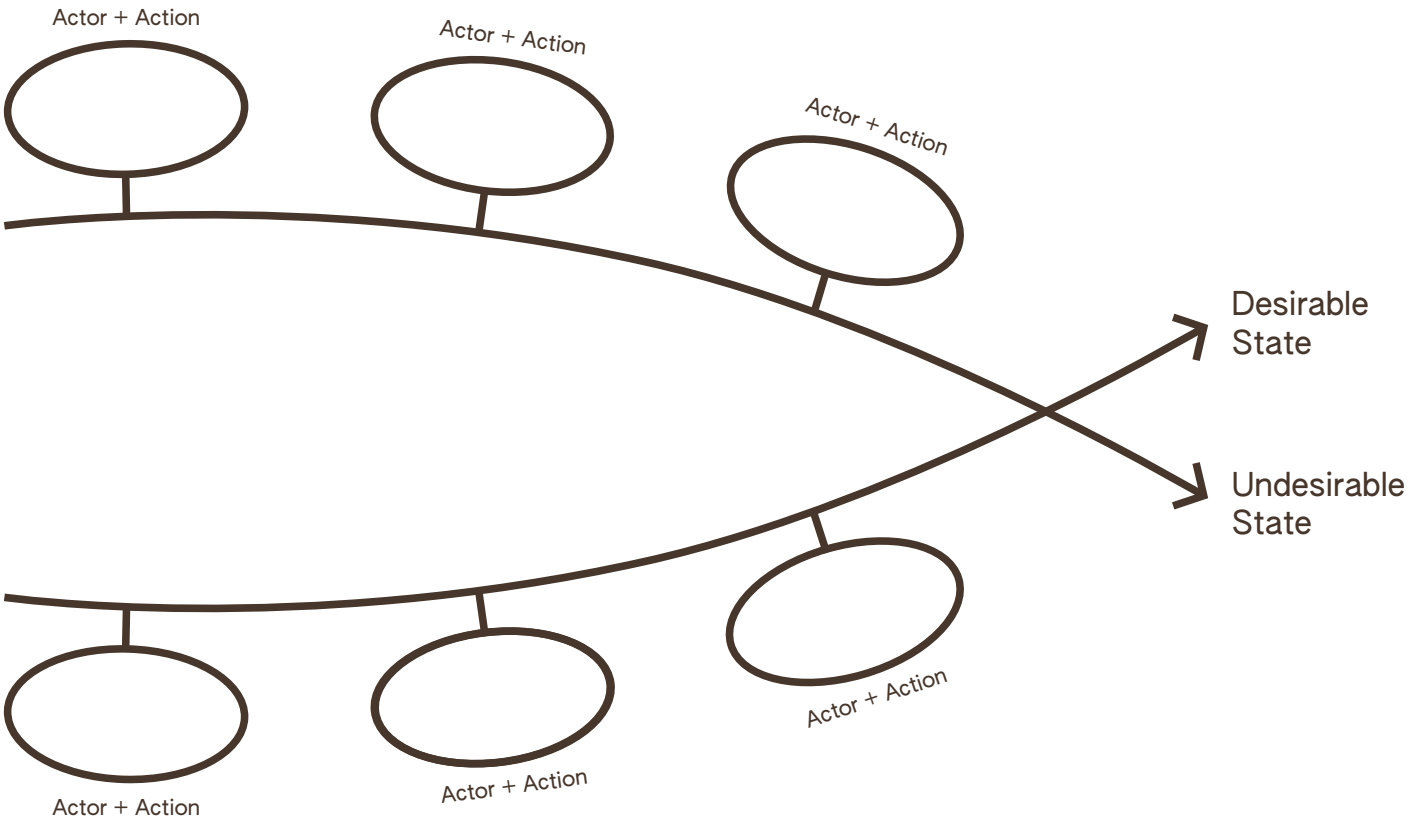
ANALYZE

1.1 Describe a situation you want to change through research and the communication of it

1.2 Define a desirable and an undesirable future state of that situation



1.3 Map all actors and actions that are needed to create this future state

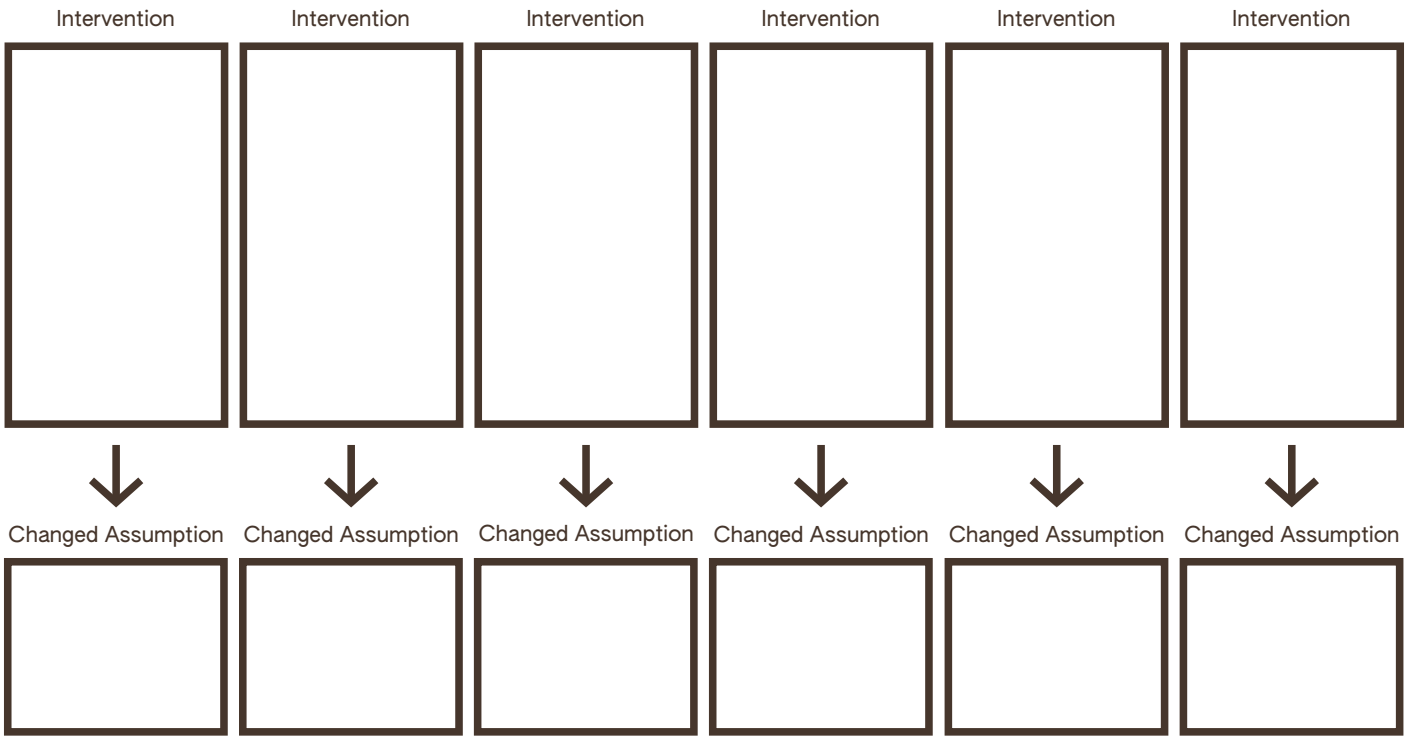


1.4 Figure out what are the assumptions and beliefs that hold these actions back

Actions	Assumptions

ENVISION

2.1 Ideate through which communicative intervention you could change each assumption



Categories: Awareness Raising, Discursive Spaces, Knowledge Transfer, Tool Development, etc.

2.2 Take each intervention and consider through which medium it could reach actors effectively

- ☐ Interactive Storytelling
- ☐ Film
- ☐ Comic
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Manual
- ☐ Artefact
- ☐ Book
- ☐ Repository
- ☐ Citizen Assembly
- ☐ Press
- ☐ Dictionary
- ☐ Building
- ☐ Urban Space
- ☐ Visual Framework
- ☐ Podcast
- ☐ Dialogue Format
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Platform
- ☐ Course
- ☐ Event
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Workshop
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Product

☐ Other: .....

2.3 Conceptualize the main building blocks of each of your interventions

1 Creating Attention: Capture actors attention through an introduction that relates to their life situation

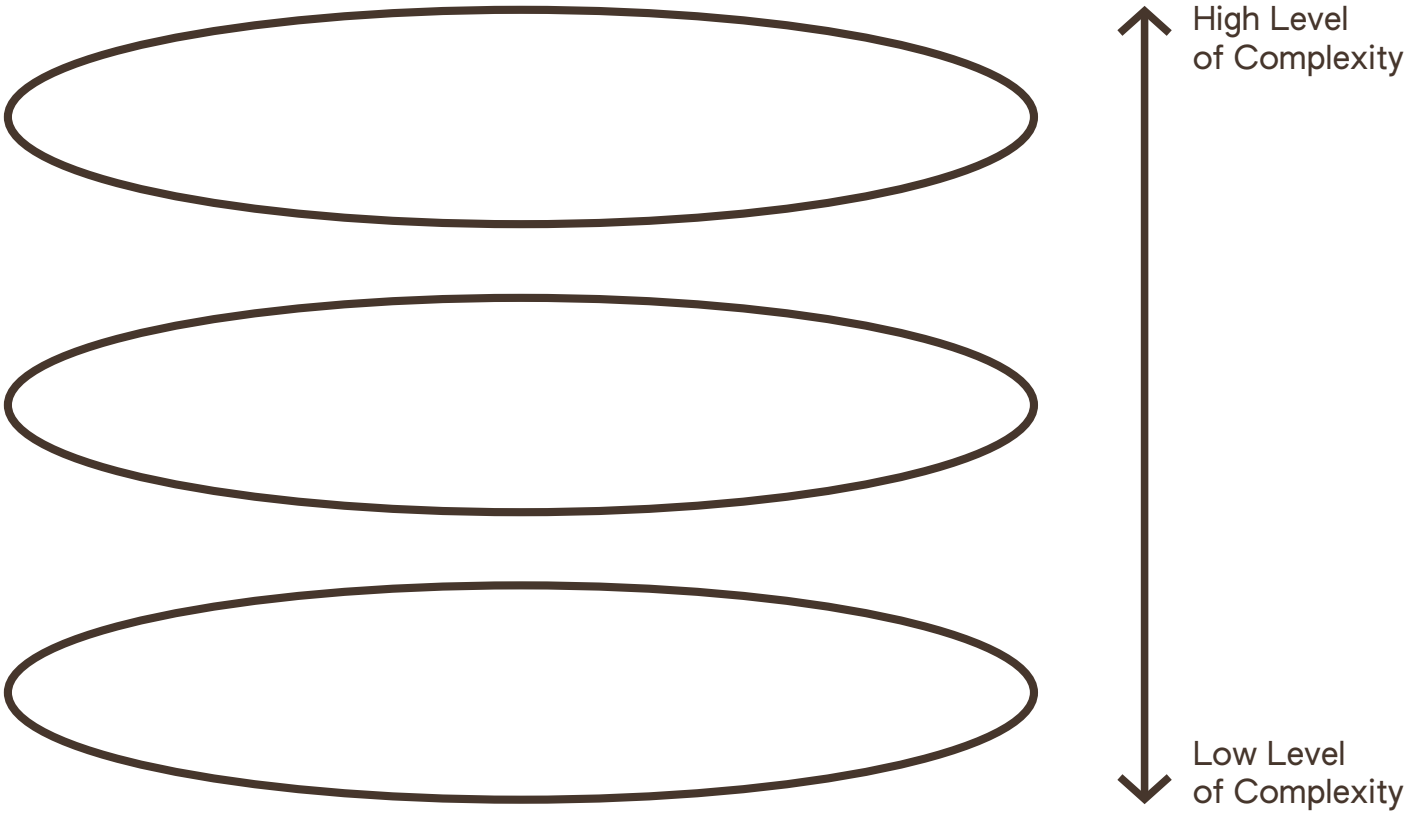
2 Designing Experiental Futures: Invent a story or narrative that makes the desirable future state emotionally experienceable

3 Outlining Importance: Use scientific evidence and rational argumentation to show large scale implications

4 Enabling Discourse: Create space to reflect, share, discuss and change assumptions

5 Offer Support: Outline possible paths for action and offer support to cope with them

2.4 Conceptualize different layers of complexity that make each intervention accessible and engaging



2.5 Think about which kind of collaborations you need to create the conceptualized interventions

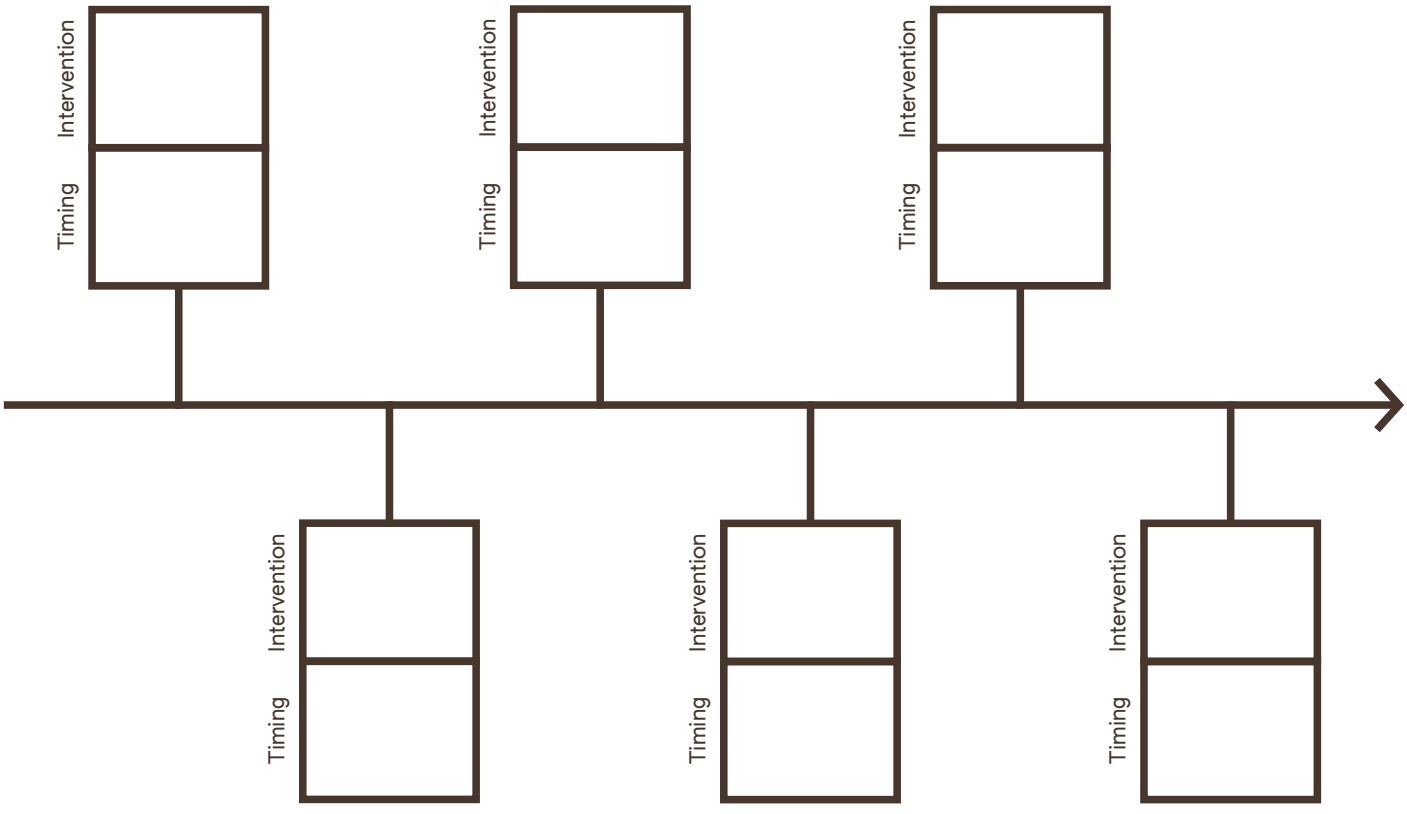
Creation

Designers, Artists, Storytellers, Film Makers, Lecturers, Journalists, Curators, etc.

Distribution

Newspapers, Online Platforms, Museums, Media Companies, Conferences, Universities, Governments, etc.

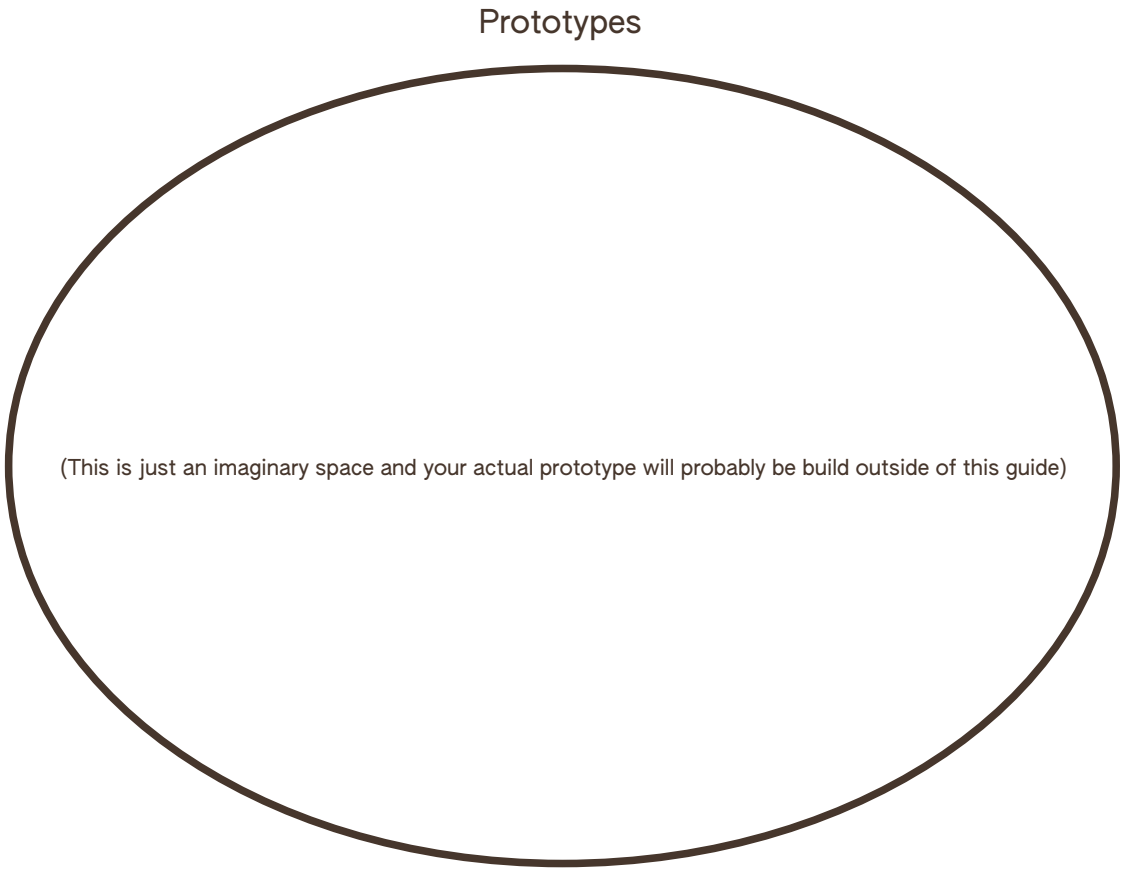
2.6 Create a roadmap for launching all interventions that considers when actors are most receptive



PROTOTYPE

3.1 Prototype each intervention as quickly as possible

Materials:
Hand-Drawn Sketch
Mobile Phone Video
Paper Model
Social Situation
Role Play
Storytelling
Fictional Essay
Speculative Product
etc.



3.2 Test all your prototypes with a real audience and take notes of your observations

Test Audience	Observations

Test Audience	Observations

Test Audience	Observations

Test Audience	Observations

Test Audience	Observations

Test Audience	Observations

3.3 Structure your notes and assess each prototype

What Worked	What Could be Improved
Further Questions	Further Ideas

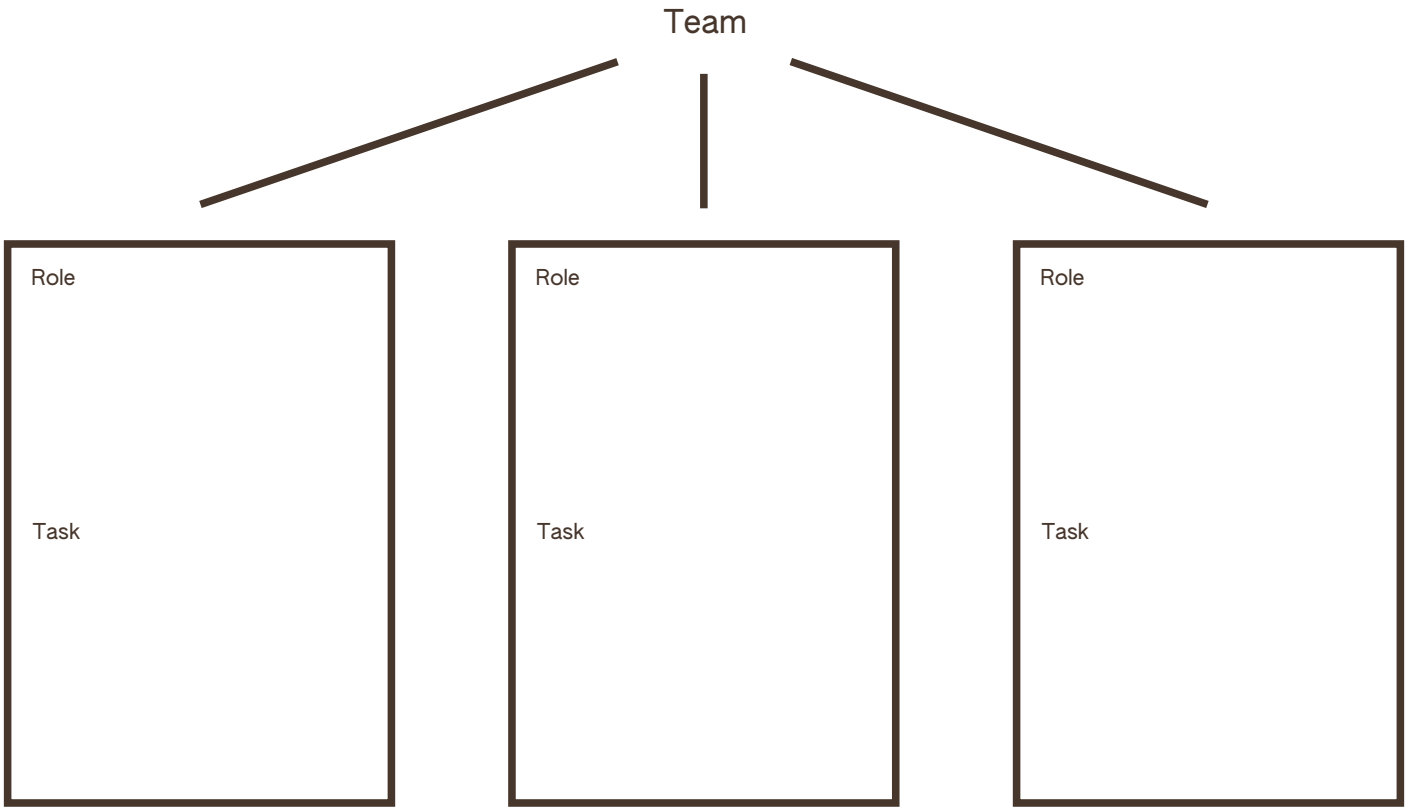
3.4 Redesign each communicative intervention based on the insights from prototyping

Redesign

(You can draw here or use additional materials)

BUILD

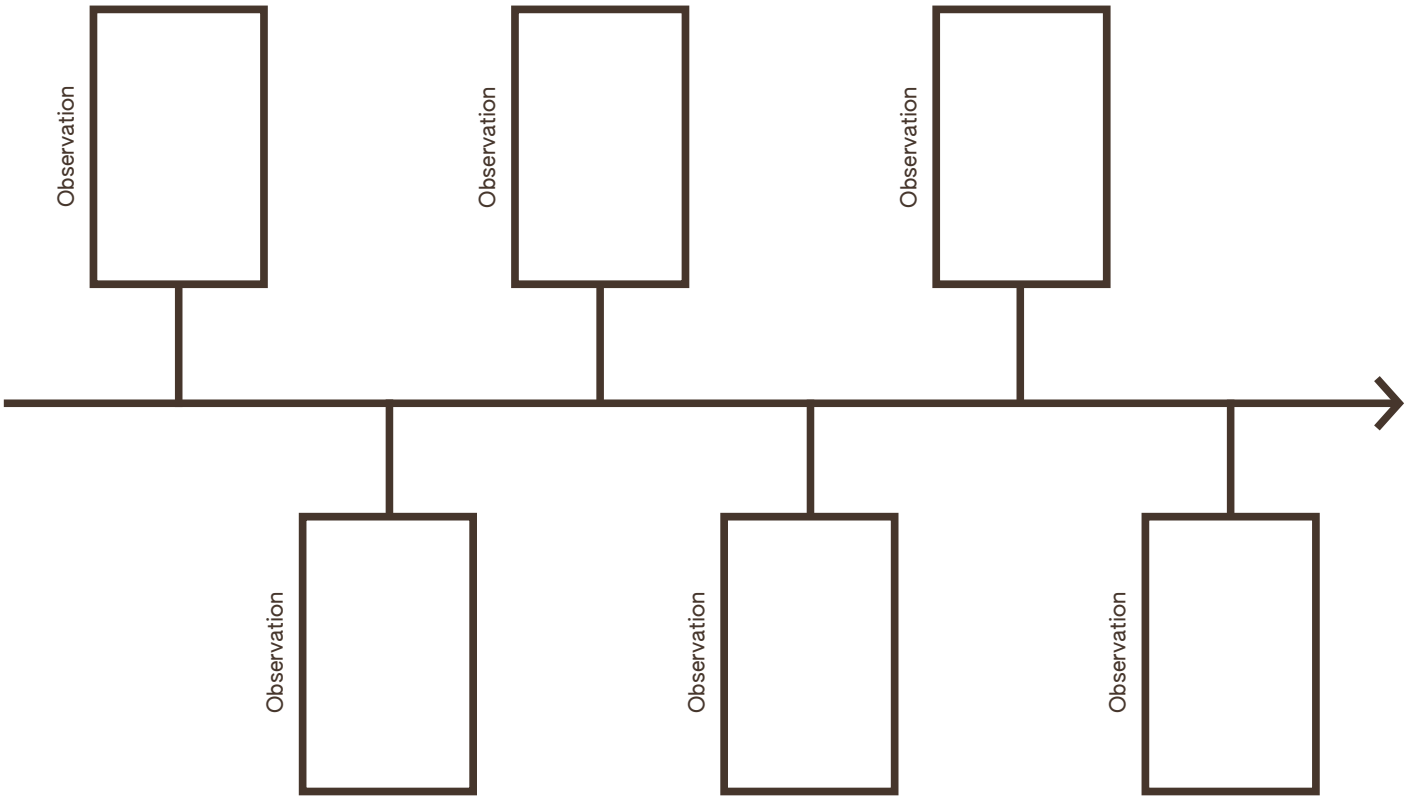
4.1 Reach out to possible collaborators, build a project team and define tasks



4.2 Develop the interventions

(You can document your final interventions here)

4.3 Publish each intervention on the basis of your roadmap and observe their impact



4.4 Map possibilities to scale each of the interventions and act accordingly

Network Effects

Create a network of people you could collaborate with to bring the interventions into relevant contexts

Reproducibility

Sketch a transferable template of your intervention that can be reproduced across contexts

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