# design nurture

Service Design Toolkit

A SIMPLE WAY TO DESIGN SERVICES

Many excellent books have been written about service design. This compact Toolkit helps organise knowledge – it gathers the most important principles and useful tips. Beginners will find the basics here to help them get started. For advanced users, it is a helpful resource for working with a team.

About Service Design
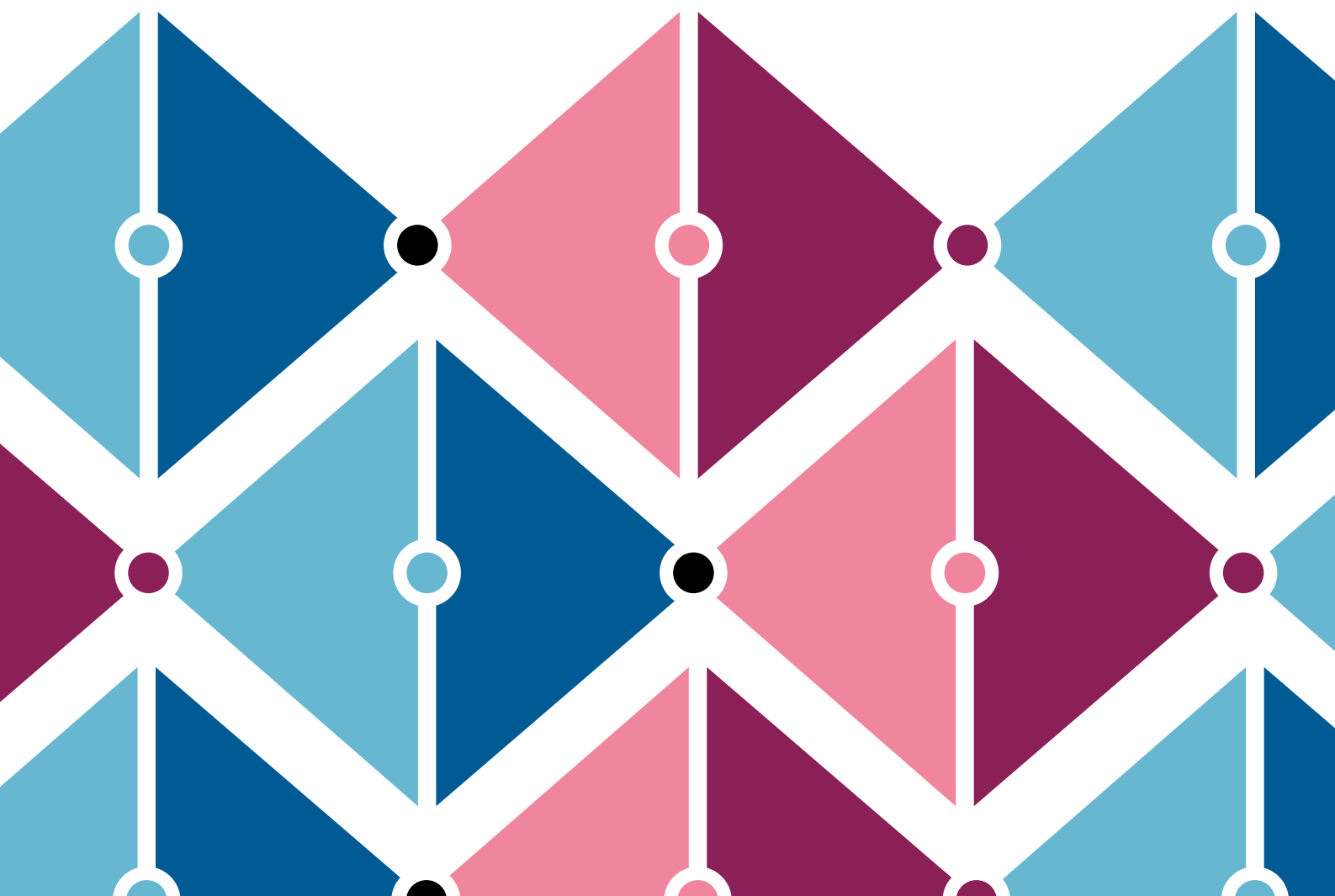
Service Design is about improving existing services or creating new ones based on values important to key stakeholders.

The design team aims to describe how the organisation's structure, employees, and business strategy impact customers. The needs of customers, the employees involved in their service, and internal processes are examined. The insights are used to shape changes within the organisation so that all aspects of the company's operations are focused on achieving the best customer experience, employee satisfaction, and cost optimisation. The goal is to gain a competitive advantage in the area of customer experience and increase the company's profits.

Service design is increasingly extending beyond the boundaries of a single organisation and connecting with a new concept called Systems Design. This approach considers the company's environment – other companies, organisations, as well as communities, authorities, and phenomena that together form an ecosystem. Design teams working at the systems design level recognise relationships between distant phenomena and connect them for the benefit of people and the entire planet.

In service design, the following perspectives are always considered: user perspective (needs), business perspective (profitability), and technological perspective (feasibility). Today, due to the climate crisis, the Planet's perspective (the impact of designed solutions on the environment) is equally important.

TECHNOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

USER PERSPECTIVE

BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

PLANET PERSPECTIVE
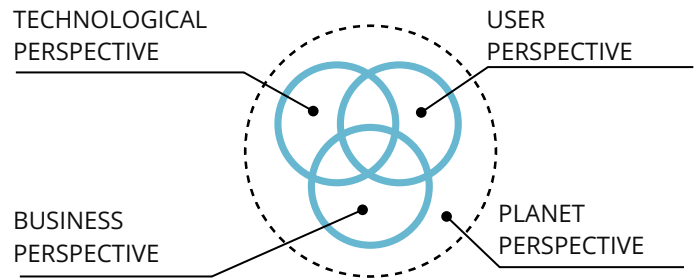
Double Diamond

The Double Diamond is a general model that presents the design process. The four phases – Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver – provide a framework for every design activity. The Toolkit follows the logic of this model.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

DISCOVER

DEFINE

DEVELOP

DELIVER

PROBLEM

SOLUTION

SCOPING, or START

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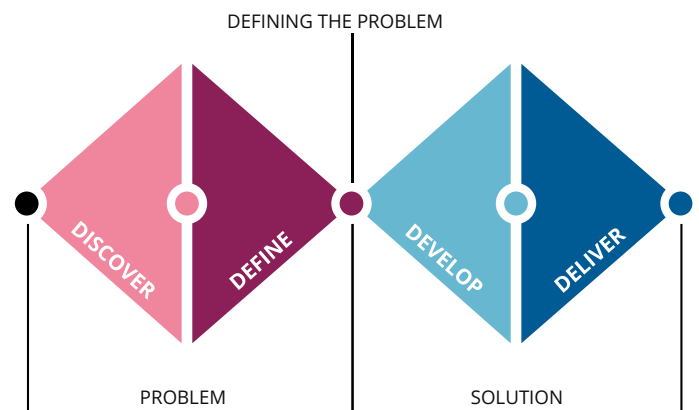
Before starting the project, it is important to describe the expectations of the stakeholders within the company/organisation and gather the knowledge that is already available. At this stage, it is necessary to define the scope and confirm the project goals. It is also essential to design the process itself – planning the activities that the team will carry out.

The quality of preparation determines the quality of project execution, which is why it is important to:

- identify business expectations by understanding the perspective of key stakeholders in the context of the given challenge, and document expectations and goals
- formulate an initial design challenge from both the business perspective and the user experience perspective
- gather reports and data available within the organisation, analyse them, and record initial conclusions
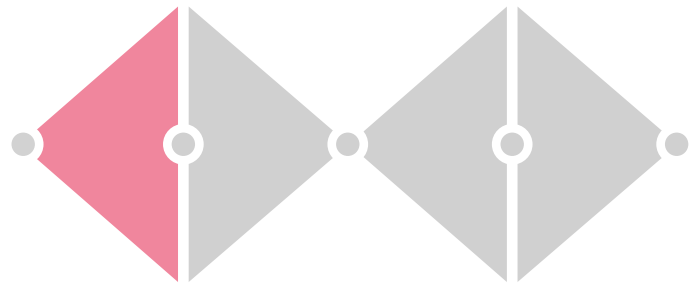
Key tasks:

- establish the core team, ensuring it brings together various perspectives important to the challenge
- create a list of stakeholders and internal personnel who may possess knowledge that the team will need
- develop a project plan and timeline, broken down into phases (e.g., Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver)
- organise a project "Kick-off" meeting or workshop involving the team, stakeholders, and experts, so that all key participants can get familiar with the challenge and discuss it together
- conduct a session in which the team agrees on operating principles (e.g., using a Team Canvas)
- establish a shared understanding of the project goal: discuss the initial challenge within the team to ensure everyone has the opportunity to express how they interpret it
- discuss the current situation: describe the factors that led to the challenge and the data supporting its relevance

Good ideas at this stage:

- conduct interviews with stakeholders
- record initial expectations in the form of project questions, known as HMW (How Might We) Questions
- define the success metrics for the project that should be achieved within a certain timeframe after implementation
- determine whether the challenge involves creating a new product, process/service, or optimising an existing product, process/service
- map the broader context of the project, including, for example, competition, services customers use that are not direct competitors, and trends, economic, social, or political phenomena that may impact the challenge

DISCOVER, or EXPLORATION

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The first phase of the process is discovery, understanding both the user's and the company's/organization's perspectives, as well as the contexts in which they operate. At this stage of design, openness and empathy are crucial, along with all available tools that help in observing users and uncovering their goals, needs, and motivations. Interaction with users and qualitative research are essential sources of information.

Key tasks:

- conduct Desk Research and gather available data within the organisation
- develop a Research Plan – what is already known, what needs to be discovered, from whom and how, how long it will take, and how much it will cost
- immerse yourself in the user experience (e.g., try the existing service yourself by conducting a "Service Safari" exercise); list hypotheses: what goals and values do the users have according to the team, and what are their needs
- sketch the current state of the user's situation, how they are coping (initial version of the "as is" Customer Journey Map)
- plan and conduct qualitative research: individual or group interviews with users, observations, etc. (remember to consider the various available methods)

Good ideas at this stage:

- create Proto-Personas, which are user profiles based on the team's knowledge: what are their goals and values, and what are their needs (team hypotheses)
- ask open-ended questions, frequently ask "why?", and be curious about what people say, do, and think (you can use the "Empathy Map" tool)
- remember that users are not only end customers but also employees of your company
- look for so-called "extreme users," those with specific needs, such as people who use the service intensively or have particular limitations
- enrich interviews with photos (e.g., photosort) that may relate to the topic, and suggest drawing together (e.g., mapping issues, adding to a timeline, etc.) to increase respondent engagement
- record everything (audio, written notes, photographs), don't rely on memory to capture important insights
- while taking notes, avoid interpreting; preserve the original style of user statements and document their natural behaviours

DISCOVER → DEFINE

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How to know it was successful?

The DISCOVER stage should conclude with
a complete immersion in the context of the
challenge and a deep understanding of the
perspectives of stakeholders (including users)
involved in the challenge.
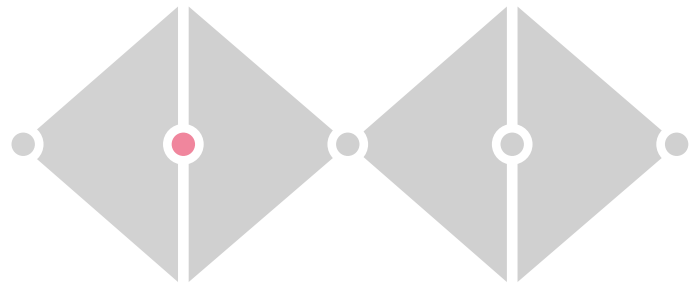
Before moving to the next phase, check the following:

- Does the project team feel both inspired and surprised by what they have discovered?
- Have the gathered information and insights come from various sources? (They may still be unstructured)
- Are the needs of users and internal stakeholders within the company/ organisation aligned, or are there discrepancies?

Additional questions

From a business perspective:
- Which parts of the company/organisation are (or will be) involved in delivering the service?
- What are the implementation conditions – how much time is available, and what tools are at hand?
- What indicators will demonstrate the success of the project?

From the Planet's perspective:
- How does the existing service, or other similar services, impact the environment?
- What can be eliminated, and what opportunities and risks do you see from an environmental perspective?

If you have answers to these questions, you can move on to the next phase, which is DEFINE.

DEFINE, or ANALYSIS

The second phase of the design process is defining the challenge based on the results of the exploration. At this stage, curiosity and discipline are essential, along with tools that help organize information and identify patterns in user behavior. Team sessions and discussions that lead to specific conclusions are key.
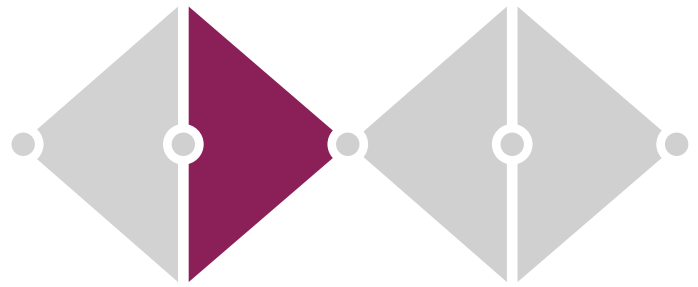
Key tasks:

- organise a "Braindump" session where all team members share confirmed assumptions, their biggest surprises, ideas, and additional observations
- discuss with the team whom you met during the exploration – who were the users, note key characteristics and needs, and pay attention to emotions, both positive and negative; it's helpful to create a profile (summary) for each respondent
- conduct an analysis – how are users different, and in what ways are they similar, what behaviours are repeated, and which are unique or surprising, what drives specific behaviours, what delights users (gains), and what do they perceive negatively (pains), what motivates them, and what guides them (their needs)
- create a "Customer Journey Map" of the current state ("as is") based on the knowledge gathered during the research
- define user needs and motivations, and summarise the key findings in 2-3 sentences (insight)
- create Design Scope, documenting the most important user needs and aligning them with business goals and feasibility

Good ideas at this stage:

- discuss the results of the exploration with the team and build affinity diagrams based on recurring themes and keywords
- identify extremes (what differentiated respondents and what made them similar) – these form the basis for identifying Personas, which represent the most important characteristics and needs of users in the context of the specific challenge
- remember that even with similar demographic characteristics, people may have different needs, goals, and preferences
- build Personas and select the most important one (Primary Persona) – note: increasingly, experienced design teams forgo building Personas and often validate Proto-personas after the research
- look for interesting quotes, unique statements, and typical phrases
- use the Value Proposition Canvas tool and fill in its right side (Customer Profile)

How to know it was successful?

The DEFINE stage should conclude with a full understanding of the primary problem faced by the users for whom the team will be designing, as well as the key business opportunities.
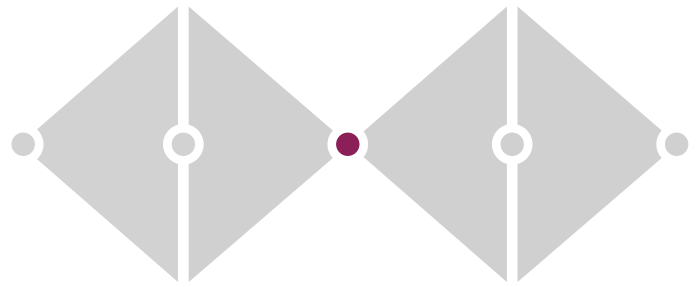
Before moving to the next phase, check the following:

- Do you know who the users are, what problems they have, what causes these problems, what motivates them, and why?
- Has the specific user problem and insight that forms the foundation for design actions been defined?
- Have the technological feasibility conditions and the organisation's business goals been determined?

Additional questions

From a business perspective:
- What are the key business goals the designed service must fulfill?
- Which existing internal processes could be helpful in addressing the challenge?
- Have any obstacles or new information emerged that could pose a threat?

From the Planet's perspective:
- Which institutions or organisations could support the team?
- What is the biggest challenge from an environmental perspective?
- What environmental values are important to the users?

If you have answers to these questions, you can move on to the next phase, which is DEVELOP.

DEVELOP, or IDEATION

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The third phase of the process is ideation, a time for creative work and generating solutions. At this stage of design, boldness and creativity are crucial, along with techniques that support the visualisation and materialisation of concepts. Team sessions should be structured and well-prepared, using insights from the previous phases of the project as inspiration.
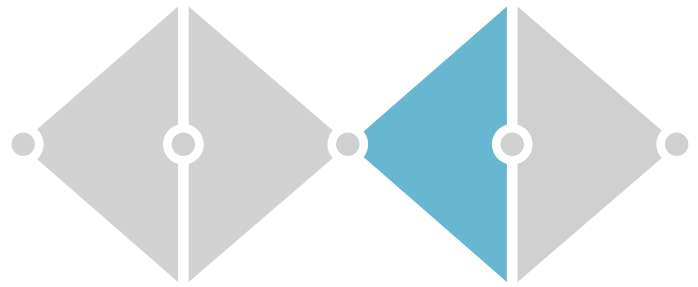
Key tasks:

- organise ideation sessions, placing users at the centre, utilising the team's knowledge and expert input
- during ideation, adhere to the design guidelines defined in the DEFINE phase
- create new versions of the "to be" Customer Journey Map
- materialise and specify ideas in the form of sketches, storyboards, or prototypes (note: prototypes don't have to be, and shouldn't be, perfect)
- use iterations: test prototypes with users, gather feedback, and quickly develop new versions that incorporate improvements
- strive to create the optimal version of the service based on qualitative tests with users and describe it in a way that shows how it aligns with the Design Scope

Good ideas at this stage:

- aim to generate as many solutions as possible, don't be afraid to propose unconventional concepts, and use various creative methods (brainstorming, brain-writing, visual techniques, co-creation with users, etc.)
- during solution creation, avoid criticism – it's much better to support and inspire each other
- strive for the minimum number of interactions that provide maximum value to users
- organise "friends & family" tests before testing with recruited users
- hold a co-creation session with internal stakeholders who will be involved in implementing the solution
- after the ideation session, organise the ideas and apply selection methods, such as based on originality and feasibility criteria
- constantly check potential solutions against business goals and the organisation's implementation capabilities (Design Scope)
- use the Value Proposition Canvas tool and fill in its left side (Value Proposition)

DEVELOP → DELIVER

How to know it was successful?

The DEVELOP stage should conclude with the creation of potential solutions that address the needs of the main Persona, meet business goals, and are feasible.
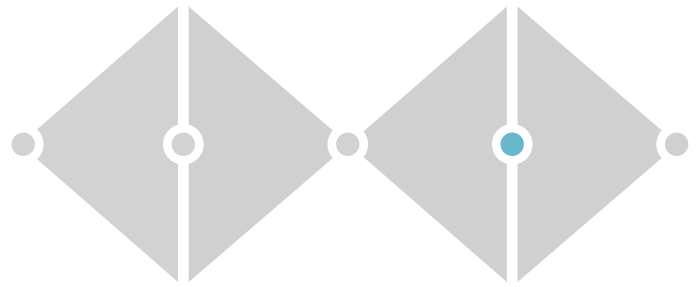
Before moving to the next phase, check the following:
- Have the created solutions been validated through qualitative tests with users?
- Does the project team believe that the solutions address the specific, main problem of the users?
- Has the value proposition of the service been defined?

Additional questions

From a business perspective:
- Does the service concept create new business opportunities?
- Have new stakeholders within the company/ organisation emerged in relation to the new concept?
- What costs need to be considered in the context of potential implementation and maintenance of the service?

From the Planet's perspective:
- What positive environmental impact will the service implementation bring?
- What environmentally friendly behaviours does the service encourage in users?
- How will users learn about the service's positive impact on the environment?

If you have answers to these questions, you can move on to the next phase, which is DELIVER.

DELIVER, or IMPLEMENTATION

The final phase is where the team prepares the solution for implementation. At this stage, determination and precision are crucial, as well as flexibility in planning the next steps. Close collaboration with stakeholders is essential.
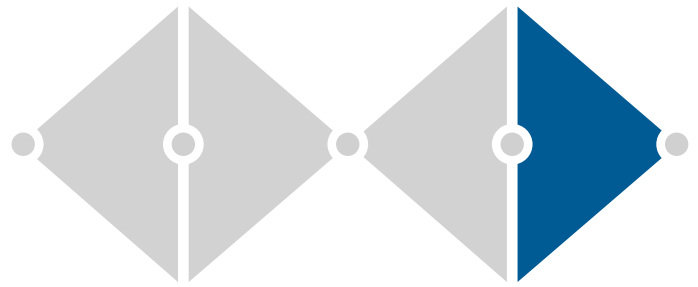
Key tasks:

- create a service scenario (Service Blueprint), which is a "to be" Customer Journey Map that includes specific internal processes necessary for users to benefit from the service
- specify what will be implemented first (Minimum Viable Product), and plan the remaining elements for later stages of implementation
- identify the owners of key internal processes crucial for the implementation of the solution/process
- build a presentation that explains the solution from the perspective of different stakeholders involved in the implementation, so they can see the real value for their part of the organisation
- define specific metrics to monitor whether the solution is delivering the expected results

Good ideas at this stage:

- involve individuals who will participate in the implementation in the development of the Service Blueprint
- conduct a pilot to test the entire solution on a limited scale
- if the solution includes screens (online/mobile application), a "pixel perfect" version should be created
- develop an implementation plan with a specified timeline and necessary resources (who is needed on the team, what are the estimated costs)
- establish internal processes to ensure quality control of the designed solution and its continuous improvement

How to know it was successful?

The DELIVER stage should conclude with a detailed description of the solution, which has been validated through user testing, and a concrete implementation plan.
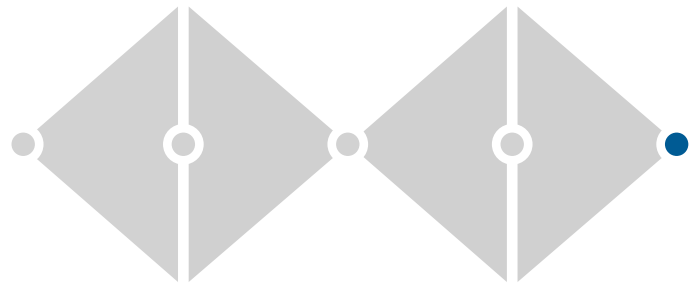
Before moving to the next phase, check the following
- Has a full description of the service been created, including the internal processes that support it?
- Have the conditions for the organisation's service delivery been defined? Is there a detailed and executable implementation plan?
- Do you have key stakeholders on your side who will support the implementation?

Additional questions

From a business perspective:
- Which elements of the service create the most value for the company/organisation?
- Who within the company/organisation will oversee the implementation?
- How can the implementation be accelerated?

From the Planet's perspective:
- Which group of users of the new service will most strongly identify with the values important to the Planet?
- How can the environmental values of the service be communicated?
- How does the service support the overall sustainable development strategy in your organisation?

If you have answers to these questions, you can finalise the project and hand it over for implementation.

design nurture

We are a boutique team of professional designers specialising in designing processes, services, and experiences. We nurture attitudes of openness, curiosity, creativity, and innovation in ourselves and others. We use our knowledge and experience to provide long-term support to companies and organisations in executing well-planned design processes. We share our knowledge and experience to help develop individuals and organisations that wish to fully harness the potential of design. The term "design nurture" means fostering and cultivating the design process, as well as providing care, encouragement, and support for growth in the context of design.

What we do:
- We plan and execute design processes to create products and services that meet people's needs and achieve the business goals of organisations.
- We conduct training and develop educational programs for companies and organisations that want to leverage the potential of design methods.
- We are developing the psychometric tool, Design Mindset Detector™, which defines the starting point and helps plan the development of a Design Mindset.

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