Analyse your portfolio

What major challenges is the government in this country struggling with?
How is UNDP helping them?
What major issues do you expect that the government will be dealing with in the next five years?
How is UNDP going to help them?

Analyse your portfolio

Identify opportunities for future work

Before initiating a new project you might consider how it fits within the current portfolio. But to stay relevant as an organisation, you may need to consider the future portfolio as well. How might UNDP best serve the government in tackling their most challenging issues? The Analyse your portfolio tool helps you assess your existing portfolio and identify opportunities for portfolio development.
Build empathy

What do you know about the people you work for?

How do they experience the service you are trying to improve?

How much time have you spent with them to understand how they live?

Learn about the people you work for

Learn how users experience your services by using the Map your users’ journey tool. Alternatively, you may use Explore a day in the life tool to learn about the daily routines, or Develop a persona to capture your insights and develop profiles of the people you work for. For a more advanced level, you may consider using the Map stakeholders tool to map stakeholder networks and identify potential leverage points.
Is there someone else who has already solved the challenge you are working on?

What other solutions are out there, that try to tackle a similar issue?

Which existing solution could you potentially re-purpose for your issue?

Scan your horizon

Find examples of who has already solved the problem

Often, a quick internet search gives you various examples of initiatives that have already solved your problem, or a part thereof. Devising a keen search strategy helps you to find these examples. The tool Create a search strategy helps you generate the entry points (keywords) for your search. You can Explore your personal network to map out your weak ties. In addition to this tool you might use the Reverse engineer a solution tool to take apart an existing solution and learn how it’s constituent elements are related. It helps you identify which elements can be replicated for your context.
Challenge your assumptions

What are the underlying assumptions of your problem statement/project plan?

How can you tell for sure that you know what you know?

What if... your project plan is a series of hypotheses that need to be tested?

Test your assumptions

Translate your assumptions into a testable hypothesis

Before you start allocating vast amounts of time and resources on furthering your plan, it is important to be aware of your assumptions. The Test your assumptions tool helps you to identify your assumptions and translate them into a testable hypothesis. Alternatively, you might take a different perspective on your challenge by using the Reframe the problem you are working on tool.

Identify positive deviants

In every community there are a few individuals or groups whose uncommon but successful behaviors and strategies have enabled them to find better solutions to problems than their peers, with the same resources. This tool helps you shift your attention from problem space to solution space by identifying the “unusual suspects” to learn from their solutions.

Challenge

What is the issue that you are trying to solve?

Common behaviors

What are currently common behaviors or strategies to address this problem?

Why are these behaviors or strategies ineffective?

Search strategy

In what places, communities, or networks are you going to look for actors who successfully tackled the problem with uncommon approaches?

What are you going to do to identify “the deviants” in the local context or community (e.g. “snowballing”, data analysis, online search, network analysis etc.)?

How might you mobilise the community to identify the deviants themselves?

What other groups or individuals outside the current community or context that have already solved this problem or have developed solutions that could be useful to tackle your issue? (N.B. you might need to look for actors in different countries, cultures, networks).

Positive deviants

When you look at the wider community, who has already solved the problem?

What are the uncommon behaviors or strategies that make these positive deviants successful?

How might you use these approaches to your challenge?
5 Build prototypes

How does your solution look/work/feel?

Have you created a prototype that demonstrates your solution?

Have you evaluated this prototype with your target audience?

What do these evaluation results mean for your project?

5 Build prototypes

Materialise ideas to test them at an early stage, to learn fast and fail early. Having a clear Prototype Plan helps you to focus on specific assumptions you want to test or feedback you want to get on specific features of your solution. In order to do this, the Plan your first prototype tool helps you quickly align your problem statement, solution, and prototyping goals.
Running multiple parallel experiments

Find out what the best approach is

Doing multiple experiments at the same time helps you to try an array of possible solutions, enabling you to uncover what works and what doesn't. The Plan your advanced prototype and the Plan your experiment portfolio tools help you think about the different options, and devise a plan of developing and evaluating those options.

What approach are you currently using for your project?

How can you tell that this is the most effective approach?

What other approaches have you tried?
Know when to pivot

How can you tell that you’re going in the right direction?

Fixation on implementation may lead you into a blind alley. Just like a skipper, you have to verify your course frequently. The Adjust your course of action tool helps you to evaluate where you are, and pivot, to change your course if necessary.

Instructions

Start with the following questions:

What has been your current course of action?

What was your main idea?

At what point do you feel you are stuck?

Why do you think this is?

What might you do to overcome this?

Consider the different navigation tips and apply them to your current situation.

After answering the 'navigation tips' consider which one could progress your process, and follow that up. Try to refer to these 'navigation tips' when your process comes to a stand still.

Are you addressing the correct problem?

What if you think of your problem as an opportunity instead?

The Problem Pivot

The User Pivot

The Technology Pivot

Is the problem correct, but the wrong user has been identified?

Is the problem correct, but your choice of technology use to implement a solution an ill fit?
How might you scale your solution?

How do you make sure that your project has system wide impact?

How do you develop wide spread solutions that take into account local needs?
Reflect on your process

If you look back on your project, what were the key moments/decisions?

What are the most important lessons learned?

How can you transfer this knowledge to other projects?
Make your solutions sustainable

What happens after the project is over?

Who will be doing what, once you are not there?

How will you make sure that the change is system wide?

Think of what needs to be done to embed your solution in the daily practice and spread it across the wider ecosystem.

What if UNDP ceased to exist, what would your partner(s) do? Will they go back to their old routines? Or will they adopt and further develop your solution? The Make your solution sustainable tool prompts you to adapt, or adopt, in order to generate possible future scenarios that make your solution sustainable.