

Using the Innovation Canvas

Facilitators Notes

For leading groups through the Innovation Canvas



What is the role of the facilitator?



When using the Innovation Canvas with larger groups, a facilitator can be beneficial for ensuring that the group get the most value out of the Canvas.

The facilitator's role is to guide the group through a specific process to achieve an end goal.

This entails several responsibilities:

1. *Guiding the group through the Innovation Canvas process and providing knowledge about the Canvas.*
2. *Creating and protecting a meeting environment where everyone can contribute.*
3. *Agenda setting and ensuring the meeting stays to time.*
4. *Challenging or questioning assumptions or opinions which may be restricting or hampering outcomes.*
5. *Being sensitive to the emotional dynamics in the group and taking steps to ensure that the meeting remains productive and the group dynamic healthy.*

A facilitator is not a technical expert, or a teacher and they do not impose their opinions on the material. This guide will give you some useful guidance for facilitating the Innovation Canvas.

About the Innovation Canvas

What is the Innovation Canvas?

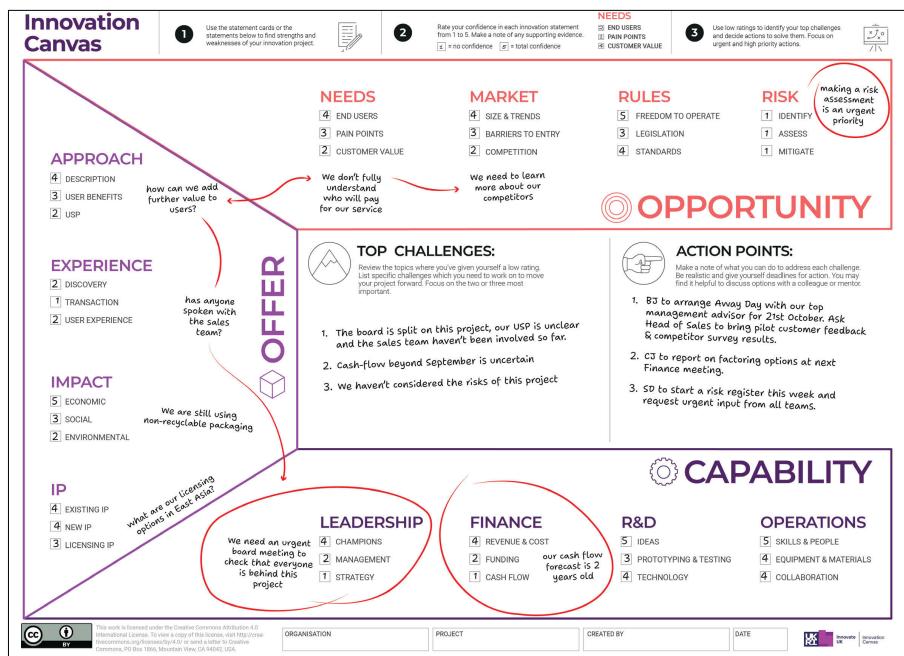
The Innovation Canvas is designed to stimulate conversation about an innovation project. Its core purpose is as a diagnostic tool, to assess an innovation project, so as to identify critical challenges and develop action points to overcome them.

The Innovation Canvas is a tool created by Innovate UK and combines the expertise and experience of over 150 innovation specialists. Furthermore the Innovation Canvas has been used by over 11,000 leaders to drive innovation across the UK.

Why is it used?

The Innovation Process is unpredictable, and it is easy to over commit too early to an idea, innovation or plan without considering all the variables involved and suddenly realise too late that the idea or innovation wasn't fully developed. This results in innovations that fail to satisfy the end-users or realise the original vision.

The Innovation Canvas was developed to provide a framework whereby innovators and businesses can evaluate their innovation project and identify any potential vulnerabilities early and take steps to overcome them. It is often used to help develop project delivery strategies for specific innovations.

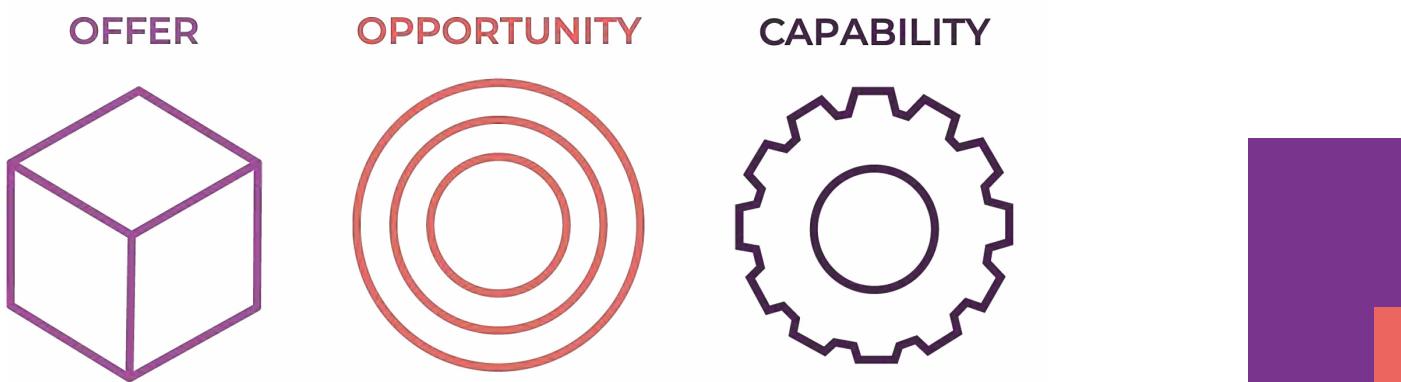


About the Innovation Canvas

How does it work?

The Innovation Canvas takes a “snapshot” of the innovation project across three different innovation drivers – opportunity, offer and capability. The Canvas provides a framework and structure to thoroughly interrogate each driver to identify any potential vulnerabilities with the innovation project.

Essentially by working through the statement cards and giving a confidence rating between 1 and 5, participants can identify vulnerabilities or topics they had not previously considered. From this assessment, challenges and reciprocating actions can be determined. Detailed instructions are included in the canvas packs, online or on the Paper Innovation Canvas. We will explore some of the best ways to facilitate this process with groups.



The Innovation Canvas is a versatile tool which can be used in a variety of ways and contexts. This guide provides instruction, tips and advice on how to use the Innovation Canvas with groups. Some alternative contexts can include:

- One-to-one (mentor to mentee, advisor, consultant)
- Framework for steering/monitoring meetings
- Evidence for investors
- Innovate UK programmes such as ignite labs
- Design sprints
- Professional Development Innovation Skills assessment

About the Innovation Canvas

Benefits of using the Innovation Canvas

There are a number of benefits to using the Innovation Canvas. We have listed some of them below.

- *Identify and overcome important challenges*
- *Facilitate cross-functional collaboration and consensus building*
- *Anyone can get involved as no previous innovation experience required*
- *Innovation context agnostic*
- *Spot gaps in your capability to innovate*
- *Test assumptions that may be hindering progress*
- *Clarify areas of risk and uncertainty*
- *Invite and secure team buy-in*
- *Improve the likelihood of success*



As with virtually all creative or design approach-based tools, collaboration enhances the quality of the outputs. For any use of the Innovation Canvas, collaboration and discussion are highly recommended, whether in real time or asynchronously.

Using the Canvas in a Workshop

The Canvas can be a powerful focus for a session with a larger group, either as a stand-alone activity or in the context of a longer training or development workshop. These may involve innovators working on the same project but the Innovation Canvas can be used with a mixed group of innovators from different sectors and markets.

The Innovation Canvas workshop is often structured into three main acts with an optional pitching time at the end.

1. Introduction to the Innovation Canvas
2. Completing the Innovation Canvas
3. Discussing the responses and developing the action plan
4. Peer Support and Feedback

What you do in each of these sections and how long you spend doing it will vary depending on numbers of participants and the context of the session. This tool has been used with groups of up to sixty people; however, the exact design of workshop differs as group size increases.



7 Preparation: Designing your Workshop

Consider the **agenda** for your workshop;

- What will the workshop cover, and in what order?
- How are you going to talk through the Innovation Canvas? Slide show, demonstration, etc.
- Which project(s) is the Innovation Canvas going to be applied to? if known
- What are the desired outputs/outcomes of the workshop?
- Is the workshop only going to cover the Innovation Canvas or are their other complementary activities that it will augment?

For example, if you are planning to use the Innovation Canvas as a framework for a monitoring or steering meeting, then one to two hours will probably be long enough to introduce the canvas, complete it and have discussions. If you are planning to use it in a design sprint then you will need to consider where it will fit with the other activities and when it is going to be most useful, and you may want a bit longer.

We recommend a **minimum of one hour** to introduce, complete and discuss the Innovation Canvas. This is a *rapid* progression through the content, which may not be appropriate for your group. This is a recommended minimum time, and you may want extend this to match the pace of your group (ensure that you decide this before sending the agenda and not halfway through the session.)

If time is a challenging constraint, participants can be asked to have a go completing the Canvas individually ahead of the workshop, and bring their work with them. This "Homework" method tends to work better for more seasoned Canvas users and groups where the "homework" will actually be completed.



Tip: Respect the time participants have put aside for this workshop. Start and finish when you said you were going.

Other things to consider when planning your workshop:

- Do the participants know each other, or will they need to do introductions? Do name badges need to be printed?
- Are the participants all working on the same project or for the same organisation?
- Is this an in-person meeting or a virtual one? For in person workshops you may need to consider travel time, the physical space, technical set up, and space set up.
- Group size.

We recommend a **group size of four to six participants**. For large workshops, you may have to have multiple smaller groups. If you have multiple groups, it is important to have multiple co-facilitators who can answer questions about the Canvas and guide the groups through the process.

Find out as much as possible about **the space** available for the Canvas session. The ideal configuration is a room laid out cabaret style with four to six people at each table. Each participant will receive an Innovation Canvas Pack. The tables must be large enough to accommodate all the participants working simultaneously on an A3 canvas. Consider if you require any **technical set up** such as a projector etc.





***Tip: Consider
if it would be
beneficial to have
a subject matter
expert present?***

For situations where you are facilitating a group which are working on a mixture of projects

Before the workshop, ask the participants to arrive with a specific innovative project to focus on. It can be a good idea to ask participants to plan a short 2 minute presentation for the rest of the group, to be delivered at the beginning of the session. Ensure they cover:

1. *What is the need their project addresses?*
2. *What is their approach to meeting that need?*
3. *What are the quantifiable benefits of their approach to meeting the need?*
4. *What is their competition and why is their approach superior to it?*



2 Welcome and the First Act: Introducing the Innovation Canvas

Welcome everyone to the session.

Encourage participants to introduce themselves to their group if they don't already know each other.

Once everyone has arrived, introduce how the session is going to run, the order of events and when you plan to finish. This is an opportunity to set the tone for the workshop. Establish the expectations and desired outcomes for the session. If time permits, you might also ask them what they hope to get out of the session.

Once the initial introductions have been completed, it is time to introduce the Innovation Canvas. Use the information provided in the first section of this booklet to help you explain what the Innovation Canvas is and how it is used.

To consider:

- **When will the Canvas Packs be handed out?**

While it may seem trivial make sure you consider when you plan to give out the Innovation Canvas packs, or if you plan for them to already be on the tables when participants arrive. The main consideration is to ensure that people are listening while you talk and are not distracted by looking at the Canvas and the question cards.

- **Who is working with who?**

We recommend that participants work in pairs for the discussion phases, and it is beneficial to organise the pairs at this stage. If there is more than one person working on the same project, it is usually beneficial to put them in the same pair.

3

The Second Act: Filling out the Canvas Individually

Once you have explained how the canvas works give the participants some time to fill out their own canvas **individually**. Get them to read the statement cards and rate their confidence in each innovation statement from one to five;

1 = no confidence,

2 = low confidence,

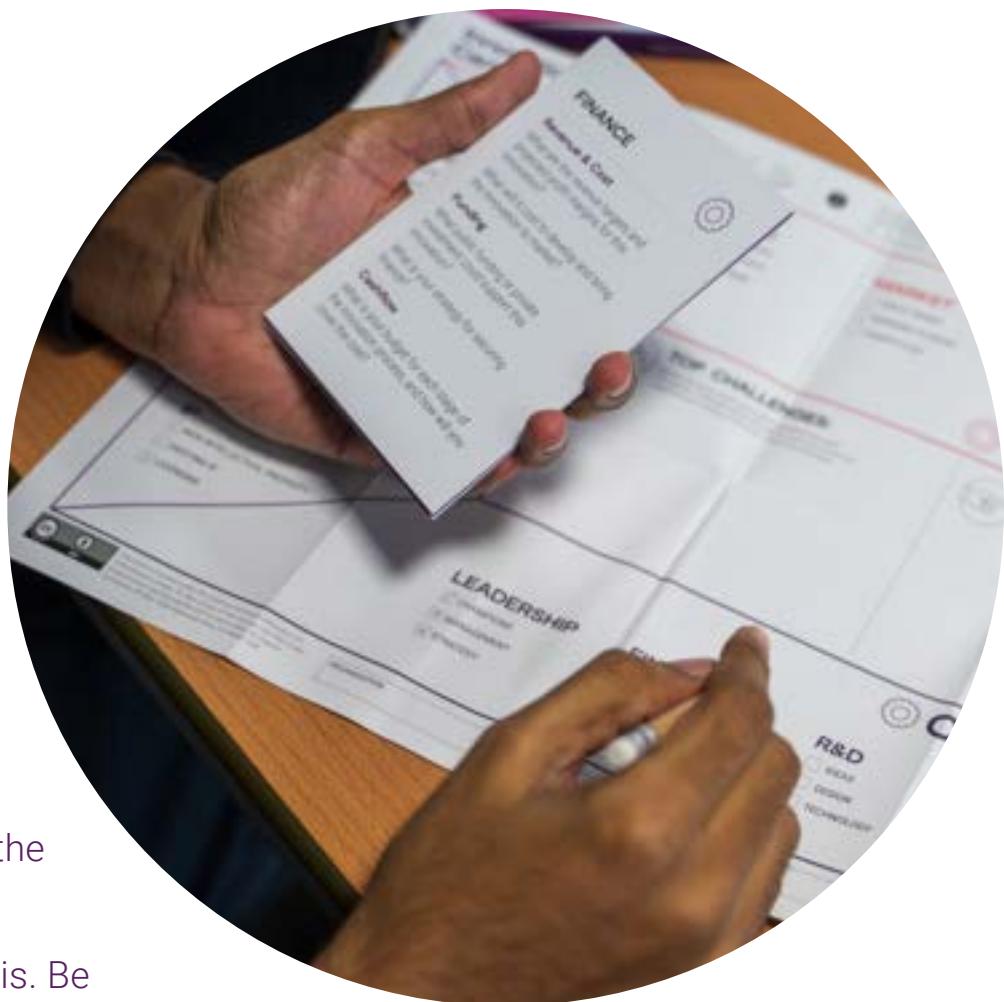
3 = moderate confidence,

4 = high confidence,

5 = total confidence.

Ensure that they make a note of any supporting evidence or information for their level of confidence, that they may want to bring up in the discussion later.

Allow **15 to 20 minutes** for this. Be available to answer questions, check in with people to ensure that they know what they're doing



*They **do not** need to complete the Top Challenges and Action Points at this stage.*

While it can be tempting to try and fill the Canvas out as a group, we highly recommend that you give everyone time to complete the Innovation Canvas individually. **This has several benefits** including, that it gives everyone **time to think** about each part of the canvas, it also encourages each person to give their **true perspective** rather than be influenced by the opinions within the group.

4

The Third Act: Discussion and Action Plan

Once everyone has had chance to complete their Innovation Canvas individually, bring the group or pairs together to begin to discuss their answers. A good place to start can be to quick poll of how confidence in each topic was rated across the group/pair, and to then drill down on to topics where there was significant variance in confidence or where confidence was low.

The objective of the discussion is to identify if low confidence is because of potential problems or because the topic hadn't previously been considered. You can also look to clarify why some topics may have mixed levels of confidence. This discussion time is to help the groups verbalise and identify the challenges their project faces.

The goal is not to try and turn all the ratings into fives.

After the discussion the groups should note down the three most urgent challenges to their project in the 'Top Challenges' box. Encourage them to be succinct and specific in describing the challenges.

From the prioritised challenges, the group/pairs can decide on the actions that they need to take to overcome them. Detailing in the 'Action Points' section:

- What needs to be done?
- Who is going to do it?
- When does it need to be done by?

If you are finishing the session here:

bring the group back together, invite any final questions and comments, and ensure that each participant has made an record of their identified challenges and next actions.





5

Optional Fourth Act: Peer Feedback

As the final part of an Innovation Canvas workshop you may invite participants to pitch their projects to the rest of the group for advice and feedback

Presenters are required to be articulate, concise and accurate in describing their project and its value. This is the point in the workshop when the participants can deliver the short pitch that they've prepared. They should end it with an outline of the challenges that they identified while completing the Canvas. The presentation should invite support, insight and advice from an interdisciplinary panel of observers.

Allow 10 minutes for each project: 3 minutes pitch based on the Need Approach Benefits Competition (NABC) model for value propositions and outlining the Top Challenges that were identified using the Canvas. This is followed by 7 minutes of feedback and Q&A from the group.

Some pointers for running this part of the session are:

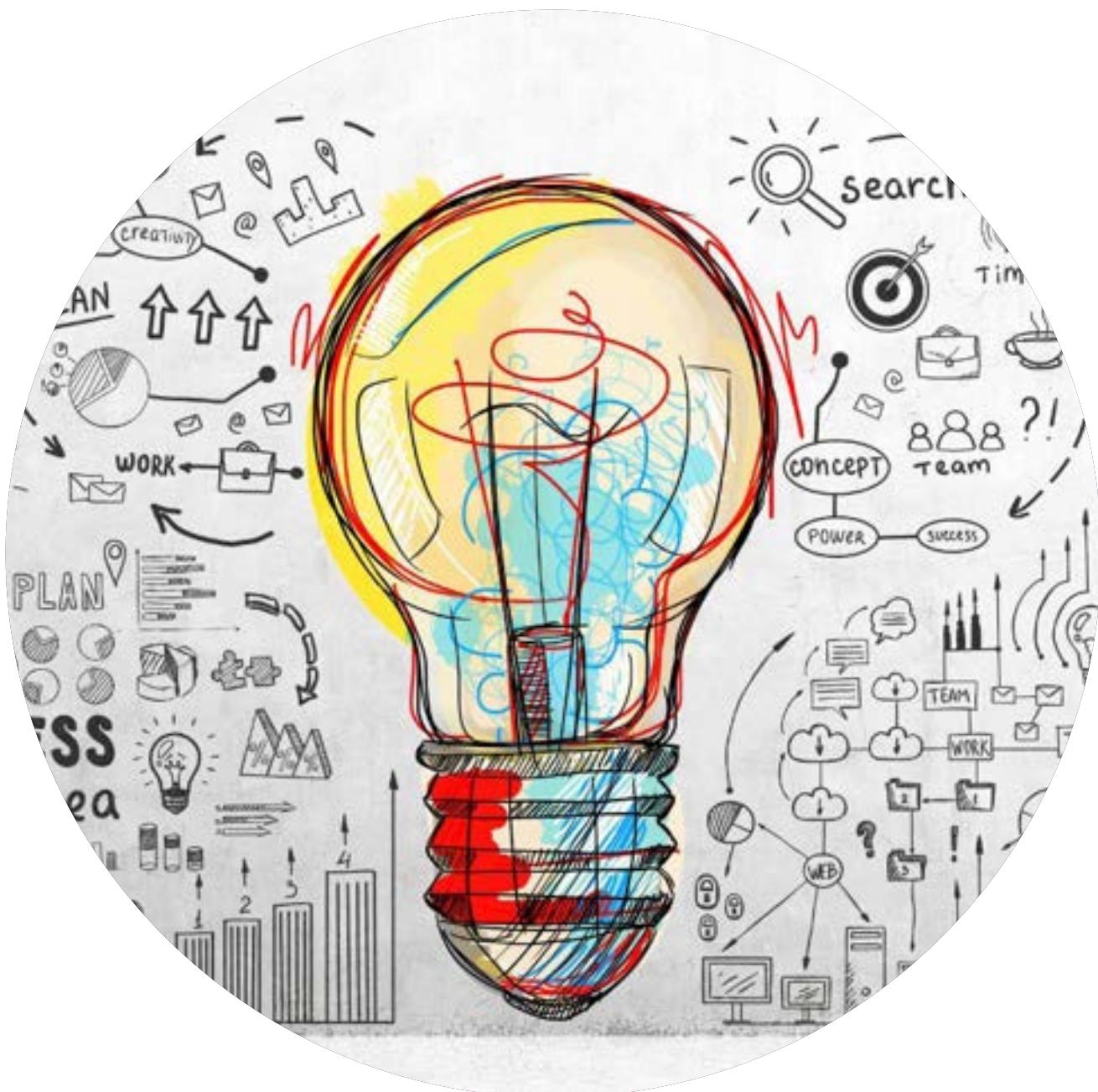
Ask innovators to prepare a pitch in advance or provide them with some time to draft one.

Offer guidance on the feedback that the group should give. Broadly there are three kinds:

- Positives: what's working well, supporting insights, encouragement.
- Problems: these can be phrased as questions related to issues and concerns, risks and obstacles to prompt the presenter about areas they maybe haven't considered before.
- Possibilities: suggestions for builds and further opportunities, new ideas, suggestions for potential collaborators etc.

Advise the presenters that they don't need to respond to every point; they should use their time to get as much feedback as possible.

When the presentations are finished, bring the group together, invite any final questions and ensure that participants have made a record of their challenges and actions.



7

Our top tips for running a canvas workshop

1. Arrive early to get the lay of the land, check the room, modify the set up as required, and ensure AV is working
2. Send your slides ahead of schedule if working with a venue you do not control
3. Consider having some spare batteries (microphones, slide clickers, remotes, etc. can easily have unexpected flat batteries and you don't want to be running around looking for spares)
4. How will participants enter the space and be greeted? Do you need to have name badges available, or refreshments. Will they know where to go?
5. For in-person workshops, we recommend that you discourage or prohibit laptop/ smart phone usage unless it is necessary for specific accessibility reasons. These devices can be a substantial distractions and take focus away from the activity.
6. Some noise maker (bell, whistle, buzzer, etc.) can be handy to get the room's attention and bring the everyone together if you are in a big space or have a large audience.



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