THE   ECOSYSTEM

PLAY BOOK

Coordinating
efforts to improve
innovation ecosystems

VINNOVA   RAMBØLL   Danish Design Center

(Purpose)

Why focus on ecosystems?

In a time of accelerating global change and economic transition, European regions face an urgent challenge and a major opportunity: to strengthen their innovation ecosystems to drive sustainable growth, competitiveness, and long-term resilience.

Strengthening ecosystems is not just a regional concern, but also defines global competitiveness. The 2024 Competitive Sustainability Index shows that Europe performs well in research but lags behind in turning innovation into scalable businesses. A key barrier is the lack of entrepreneurial activity and dynamism, especially in the final stages of innovation.

Many regional innovation ecosystems today are held back by lack of coordination, and short-term project thinking. Support structures and funding streams often operate in silos, and communities around innovative businesses are underdeveloped. As a result, actors compete for the same resources, and promising initiatives struggle to scale.

Building stronger, more connected innovation ecosystems is essential to closing this gap and staying competitive on the global stage.

To meet today's challenges, we argue for a shift in mindset, which means strengthening our understanding of how people, knowledge, infrastructure, capital, and culture interact and align to create the right conditions for innovation to thrive. Further, it means fostering a long-term direction and shared responsibility so that ecosystems can act more cohesively and effectively over time.

This playbook aims to strengthen innovation ecosystems by:

- Fostering coordinated and tailored support efforts that enable businesses to grow and scale effectively.

- Setting a shared direction for ecosystem development — helping actors mobilize around common goals, attract resources, and strengthen regional collaboration.

- Establishing a common language and national framework for analyzing, developing, and following up on innovation ecosystems, both regionally and nationally.

The playbook does not offer a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it provides a structured approach and guiding principles for working with ecosystem development in diverse regional and national contexts.

The playbook encourages reflection, dialogue, and experimentation. Recognizing that building strong ecosystems is not about controlling outcomes but about creating the right conditions for innovation to emerge, evolve, and scale.

Background & context

Vinnova introduces a new ecosystem approach

In 2023 Vinnova kickstarted an initiative to build regional capacity for innovation ecosystem coordination in Swedish regions. Through an open call process, four Swedish regions were selected for a pilot project: Jönköping, Värmland, Västerbotten, and Östergötland.

In close collaboration with Vinnova the four regions initiated the practical work of testing ways to improve their innovation ecosystem in their regions. This implied setting a clear direction for the innovation ecosystem, mapping the different support functionalities for businesses, finding ways to diversify funding streams, creating new structures to meet and coordinate, and cultivating a new ecosystem culture and mindset in the region.

Based on the practical experiences of the four regions' work, Vinnova, Ramboll and the Danish Design Center- DDC now introduce a playbook to aid the practical and methodological guidance of innovation ecosystem development.

While the point of departure for this work was Swedish regions, this report is targeted broadly at actors who can benefit from taking an ecosystem approach, both in regions, cities, or other locally based innovation ecosystems.

The playbook is developed in a partnership between Vinnova Ramboll and DDC.

Terminology

What is an innovation ecosystem?

The term 'innovation ecosystem' describes the living environment where innovative companies and their entrepreneurial and business activities are established and continue to develop. The innovation ecosystem is the interconnected web of people, organizations, resources, structures, and cultures that collectively enable innovation to emerge, grow, and generate impact within a region.

It includes both formal and informal actors — businesses, academia, public institutions, intermediaries, and civil society — and is shaped by how they collaborate, compete, share knowledge, build trust, and take risks. The ecosystem is supported by access to relevant resources such as infrastructure, funding, skills, and governance mechanisms, and it evolves over time through continuous learning and adaptation.

An innovation ecosystem is not centrally controlled. Instead, it functions through coordinated directionality — a shared understanding of where the region wants to go and why, enabling diverse actors to align their efforts while retaining the flexibility to innovate in their own ways.

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In this playbook we work with
three dimensions that make up the
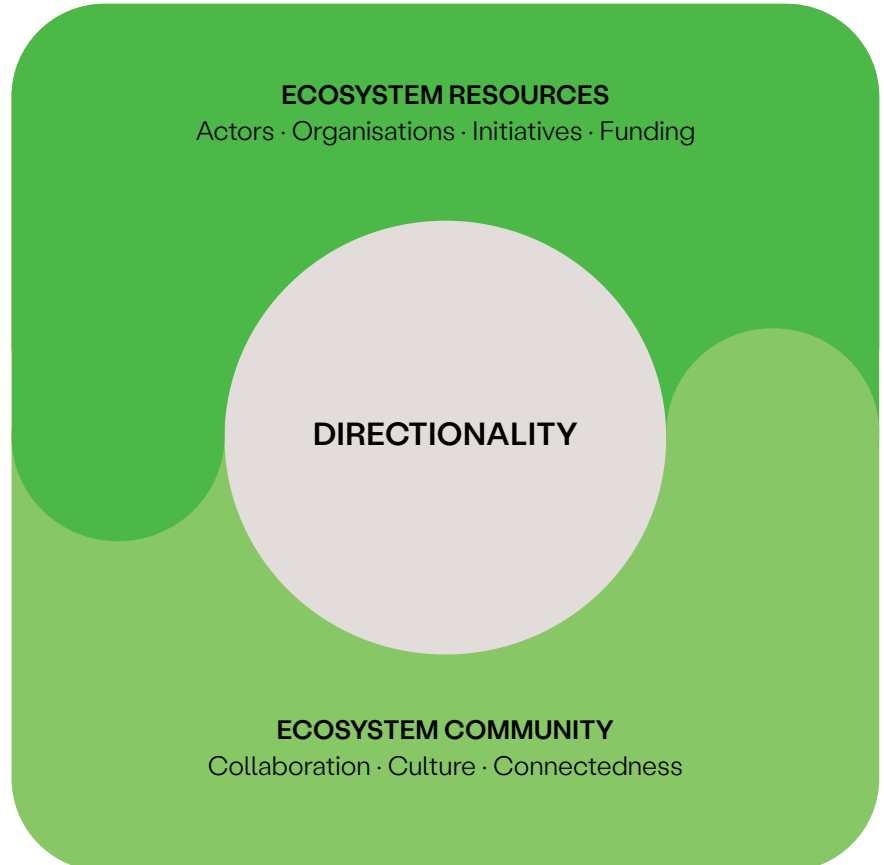innovation ecosystem:

Ecosystem directionality
The future state that the ecosystem
development strives for, both in the short
and long term, with the ultimate goal of
improving the living conditions for
ecosystem innovation.

Ecosystem resources
Attraction of new resources and effective
and efficient utilization of new and existing
resources. Resources can, for instance,
be: skills, knowledge, infrastructure,
and funding.

Ecosystem community
Building the culture, skills, and relation-
ships that create connectedness among
stakeholders in the ecosystem locally,
regionally, nationally, and internationally.

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Figure 01
Innovation Ecosystem Elements

ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES
Actors · Organisations · Initiatives · Funding

DIRECTIONALITY

ECOSYSTEM COMMUNITY
Collaboration · Culture · Connectedness

<div style="display:flex">

1

SELF ASSESSMENT

Describing the current
state, assessing strengths
& weaknesses today

2

DIRECTIONALITY

Picturing the desired future
for innovation ecosystem &
making strategic priorities

3

**ACTIVATING
THE ECOSYSTEM**

Bridging the gap between
today & the future by
identifying new values &
new practices to be imple-
mented in the region

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Playbook guide

How to use this playbook

Working with an ecosystem approach is challenging as ecosystems are large, complex, dynamic, continue to evolve, and frankly, impossible to completely control. With this playbook, we aim to reduce some of the complexity and provide a shared process and a common language for navigating this ecosystem approach.

The playbook provides a framework for three critical initial phases of working with the innovation ecosystem.

① Self assessment
② Directionality
③ Activating the ecosystem

Specific themes and supportive reflection questions have been developed to guide your focus throughout the process.

This playbook does not stand alone. It should serve as a support to start the conversation around the innovation ecosystem and to encourage new practices in the region. Once the work takes off, you will most likely find the need for new support, such as upskilling, counseling, networks, and funding that you can pursue in your specific context.

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We recommend working with the playbook in a small group of four to six people. Ideally, these people represent different actors from the innovation ecosystem. This will help you, at an early stage, understand the depth and dynamics of the various perspectives that shape the innovation ecosystem.

Playbook guide

Who is this playbook for?

To help you get the most out of this playbook, we invite you to read it through the lens that best fits your role — whether you are shaping policy, developing regional strategies, supporting businesses, or facilitating collaboration. Here are some suggestions for how this playbook might be relevant and valuable, depending on its reader.

Regional Authorities & Developers
— Map your region's ecosystem and assess its strengths and gaps.
— Set strategic priorities that align with local needs and long-term ambitions.
— Coordinate support structures and initiatives more effectively across sectors.
— Build stable, inclusive ecosystems that reduce fragmentation and foster collaboration.

National & Regional Policymakers
— Understand how ecosystem thinking supports long-term competitiveness and innovation capacity.
— Align regional efforts with national priorities while respecting local differences.
— Promote policy and funding mechanisms that support continuity and coordination — beyond project cycles.

Business Promoters & Enterprise Agencies
— Better understand how businesses interact with the wider ecosystem.
— Identify gaps in infrastructure, talent, and access to markets or capital.
— Strengthen your support offer and collaborate more effectively with other actors.

Ecosystem Builders & Intermediaries*
— Strengthen your role as a connector and facilitator across the ecosystem
— Help define shared values, build trust, and cultivate a culture of experimentation and learning.
— Identify opportunities to fill structural gaps and create more inclusive ecosystems.

Funders & Innovation Financiers
— Gain a system-level understanding of how to invest for impact. Not just individual outcomes.
— Support ecosystem functions that are underfunded but critical for long-term capacity (e.g. convening, infrastructure, trust-building).

*e.g. incubators, science parks, cluster organisations, innovation offices

UNDERSTANDING   THE   CURRENT STATE

1

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT STATE

(1)

Before effectively setting the direction and developing a thriving innovation ecosystem, we must first clearly understand the region's current situation and context. This chapter marks the first phase of that journey — a structured opportunity for self-assessment that will serve as the baseline for the future actions of this playbook.

As a regional actor, your role in this phase is to take a step back and assess the strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, gaps, and opportunities across your region's innovation landscape. This is essential groundwork for creating directionality, aligning efforts, and making strategic decisions that will shape your ecosystem over time.

Importantly, this is also an opportunity to establish a shared language, built trust with your team and align on the region's core challenges, understand the different positions, and agree on the chosen way forward.

Examining the region's strengths and weaknesses broadly and systemically is crucial to ensure a focused and impactful ecosystem approach. To guide this process, the playbook introduces seven consistent themes (see figure 2) relevant for regions to explore and work with throughout the playbook.

As you begin working with the themes in this chapter, bear in mind that each theme represents a broad and complex area, often encompassing numerous sub-themes and guiding questions. In-depth work within one of these themes can require years of focused effort and collaboration.

However, the goal at this stage is not to deep dive into the details of one theme. Instead, this exercise is designed to provide a broad, helicopter-like scan of each theme in relation to your regional context. By identifying your region's key strengths and weaknesses, you'll be better positioned to highlight areas that warrant more focused and in-depth work in the future.

These seven themes have been developed based on in depth research on what core elements to have in mind when working holistically with innovation ecosystem development.

THE SEVEN GUIDING THEMES FOR INNOVATION ECOYSTEM COORDINATION

Skills & Talent

Innovation Infrastructure

Corporate Fabric

Market & Customer Access

Competitive Advantage

Capital & Funding

Ecosystem Performance

Reflection card themes

Skills & Talent

A well-functioning innovation ecosystem depends on having the right skills in the right places. This theme focuses on how innovation ecosystems develop, attract, and coordinate skills and talent to meet current and future innovation needs. It includes identifying the unique competencies that characterize the innovation ecosystem, addressing talent shortages in key industries, and improving the region's attractiveness to skilled individuals. It also looks at whether there is effective coordination between actors to match talent supply with demand across the ecosystem.

Competitive advantage & collaboration

Every innovation ecosystem has unique strengths rooted in industry, research, geography, or talent. This specialization forms the foundation for competitive advantage. It helps shape identity, guide strategic focus, and attract partners and investments.

But specialisation alone is not enough. Innovation ecosystems thrive when strengths are shared across institutions, sectors, and regions. Through collaboration and joint value creation, regions can move beyond isolated excellence and become part of broader innovation networks.

This theme focuses on how innovation ecosystems can identify and leverage their distinctive strengths, build partnerships that unlock shared capabilities, and understand when to encourage healthy market competition and when to stimulate collaboration across the ecosystem.

Ecosystem performance

A high-performing innovation ecosystem not only enables innovation but also learns from it. This theme focuses on how innovation activity, support processes, and outcomes are understood, measured, and improved over time.

Strong ecosystems track how ventures move through different stages of development, how support is coordinated, and whether innovation efforts, both in startups and established firms — lead to meaningful results. By measuring progress and outcomes, regions can shorten innovation cycles, adapt more quickly, and guide continuous improvement across the ecosystem.

Market & Customer Access

For innovation ecosystems to thrive, companies must be able to understand, reach, and grow within key markets. Access to customers — locally, nationally, and internationally — is essential for scaling innovation and attracting strategic partnerships.

Ecosystems can support this by offering tailored programs, networks, and market expertise, particularly in emerging or complex sectors. Strategic support that helps businesses navigate new markets, validate customer needs, and build relationships plays a vital role in unlocking growth opportunities.

Capital & Funding

Capital and funding are critical enablers of innovation, but their impact depends on how well they are aligned with entrepreneurs' needs and the ecosystem's strategic direction. Different ecosystems will have different funding landscapes and models, but in all cases, it's essential that capital flows support long-term ecosystem development, not just individual projects.

A well-functioning innovation ecosystem is attractive to both innovators and investors. It offers clear pathways to funding, from early-stage support to scale-up financing, and fosters partnerships built on trust, shared goals, and mutual value.

Innovation Infrastructure

Innovation infrastructure includes access to resources, environments, and services that support companies, especially startups and SMEs, in developing, testing, and scaling new ideas. These resources are often too costly or risky for individual firms to invest in on their own, particularly in early innovation stages. There are two layers of innovation infrastructure:

1. Physical and technical infrastructure includes R&D labs, production facilities, testbeds, high-performance computing, or data platforms.

2. Support infrastructure — including incubators, accelerators, science parks, and cluster organisations that offer guidance, networks, and access to expertise.

These infrastructures are not tied to a single innovation journey. Instead, relevant ressources are designed to be shared and reused across multiple actors and initiatives, making them vital building blocks for a resilient and efficient innovation ecosystem.

Corporate Fabric

The corporate fabric of a region refers to the established companies that shape its business landscape. These firms can act as anchors for innovation and bridges to global markets, or remain disconnected from the region's broader innovation efforts. The theme includes two key layers:

1. Industrial Structure – Who They Are and How They're Connected
This refers to the industries, capabilities, and relationships of established firms. It considers how they collaborate and compete within the region and beyond. A strong industrial structure supports a well-connected, dynamic ecosystem where knowledge and opportunities flow.

2. Cultural Structure – How They Behave and Lead
This covers how firms think and act — their values, leadership styles, openness to innovation, and how they engage with startups, talent, and the community. It includes how they support entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and skills development.

Below is the canvas that we you will be working with through-
out the playbook.

You recommend downloading the seperate pdf, to print out the
canvas for each stage as a working sheet for you and your team
to continously fill out and returen to. It will make it easier for you
to revisit you earlier work.

PLAYBOOK   CANVAS

1

Current state

3

Bridging state

2

Desired state

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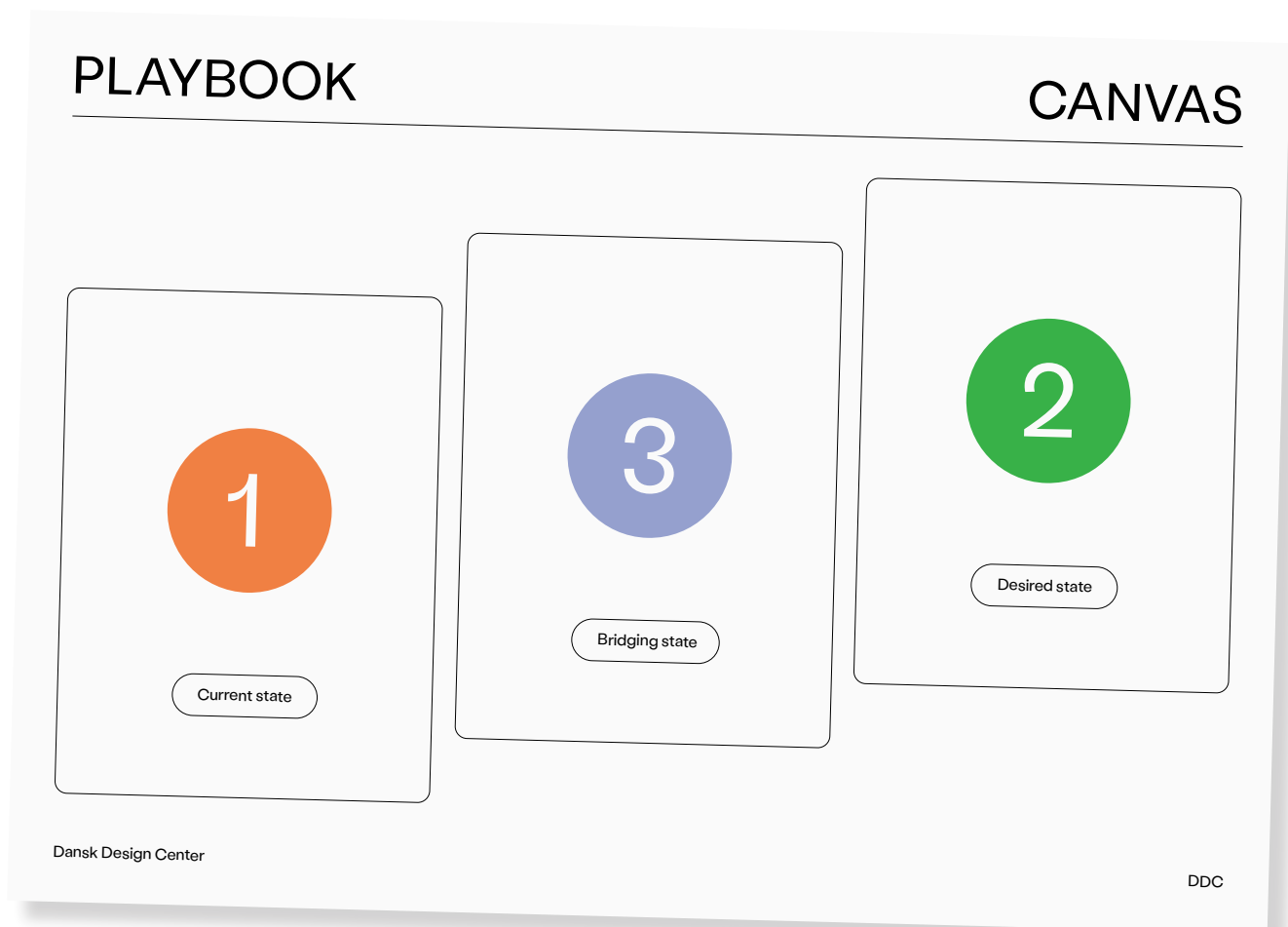
Current state canvas

Working with the canvas
This exercise is designed to support a structured group conversation that helps surface key insights about your ecosystem's current position.

It will form the foundation for setting direction and identifying areas for future focus.

This exercise is not about being exhaustive. It's about starting a shared conversation that helps you define the ecosystem's current state and set the stage for future action.

In your group, reflect on each of the seven themes and discuss the following:

1

Identify strenghts and weaknesses
What are our regional strengths?
— Where do we see clear assets, capabilities, or structures that already support innovation and collaboration?
— What is working well today?

Where are our challenges or weaknesses?
— Where do we see gaps, friction, or underdeveloped areas in the ecosystem?
— What might be holding us back?

What opportunities or areas of curiosity are emerging?
— Are there signals of change, new initiatives, or unexplored ideas that could offer potential for future development?
— What sparks interest or excitement?

When you have discussed the three questions fill out the top box of the self assessment canvas.

2

Choose and discuss three pathways for you journey
Now that you've explored the ecosystem's strengths and weaknesses, it's time to zoom in on concrete themes for working with innovation ecosystem coordination in your specific context.

Open the seperate Reflection Cards pdf. Each theme has 3-4 pathways per stage. These pathways are formulated as questions. Your job now, is to choose **the three most relevant pathways** across the seven themes for you to continuously explore in all three stages of the playbook.

Choose these pathways based on where your ecosystem has the most potential to make meaningful and realistic progress. And which themes spark your curiosity? You are always welcome to rephase or come up with other questions.

When you have chosen the three questions. Fill out your response to the questions in the "current" stage in the bottom three vertical boxes of the canvas.

CREATING ECOSYSTEM DIRECTIONALITY

2

CREATING   ECOSYSTEM   DIRECTIONALITY

(2)

Directionality is the shared strategic orientation of an innovation ecosystem — a collective ambition that defines where the region is heading and why.

Directionality reflects a common understanding of the challenges to tackle, the opportunities to pursue, and the principles and values guiding decisions across all stakeholders. Think of it as the ecosystem's north star: not a fixed goal, but providing a focused movement that can adapt to changing contexts. It aligns multiple actors toward a shared goal - creating better living conditions for ecosystem innovation.

When working with innovation ecosystems, it's important to resist the urge to predict and control the future. Unlike traditional planning approaches, ecosystem development is not about prescribing fixed outcomes — **it's about creating the right enabling conditions for innovation to emerge, take shape, and grow over time.**

A region's directionality should be ambitious, time-bound, measurable, and designed to spark new collaborative constellations. It operates on two levels: a bold overarching ambition, and strategic focus areas that outline how the region will move towards it.

Start out by getting familiar with the guiding principles for the directionality and then move on to the exercise.

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Tip
Innovation ecosystems can gain inspiration from working with scenarios, trendspotting, and signal scanning in the direction-setting process to stay relevant and future-ready. These tools help anticipate change, challenge assumptions, and identify emerging opportunities or risks early. Scenarios allow regions to explore multiple plausible futures and stress-test their strategic focus. Trendspotting highlights technological, societal, and policy shifts that may influence the ecosystem's direction. And by monitoring weak signals, regions can detect early signs of transformation and adapt proactively.

Together, these foresight tools strengthen directionality, ensuring it remains both visionary and grounded in a rapidly evolving world.

Guiding principles

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Put Thriving Business Innovation at the Centre
The purpose of an innovation ecosystem should align around enabling innovative businesses to thrive. This means shifting focus away from isolated projects or institutions and placing entrepreneurial activity, value creation, and scalable innovation at the heart of ecosystem development. When business innovation is the guiding star, coordination efforts gain clarity and impact.

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Design for the Future, Not Just the Present
Directionality involves imagining a different, better ecosystem — one that may not yet exist. This requires looking beyond the current system's constraints, values, and institutional logic. What new structures, partnerships, or capabilities are needed to support future innovation? Which existing models must be rethought? Long-term transformation starts with bold questions.

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Build from Regional Strengths
Directionality must be rooted in what makes the region unique. That means identifying and harnessing existing assets — local industries, historical legacies, geographical advantages, skills, networks, and cultural traits. Successful innovation ecosystems do not start from scratch; they evolve from what is already strong and meaningful in the local context.

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Focus & Prioritize
Effective ecosystems do not try to do everything. They focus. Setting a few, clearly defined strategic priorities helps unite diverse stakeholders and channel limited resources toward shared goals. Priorities should be ambitious but realistic, and most importantly, easy to communicate across actors and sectors.

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Think Beyond Cycles
Innovation ecosystems take years to grow. That's why adopting a mindset that extends beyond project lifetimes and political cycles is essential. Directionality must be anchored in long-term thinking, strategic patience, and resilience. Building trust and continuity between actors over time is as critical as any technical solution.

Desired state canvas

How to use the canvas
This exercise is designed to Envisioning the future. To shape a strong sense of directionality, it helps to start with a shared vision of what success looks like.

1

A headline from the future
For the first step, we want you to zoom out and fast forward to the future, five years from now.

Imagine your innovation ecosystem has achieved meaningful progress. What does that future look like? What kind of innovation culture has taken root? How are businesses, communities, and public institutions working together? What impact has the ecosystem had — locally, nationally, or even globally?
To bring this vision to life, try this exercise:

Write a future newspaper story
Imagine your region makes the front page of a national or international newspaper.

—   What is the headline?
—   What is the story behind it?
—   Why does it matter?

Fill out the newspaper story in the top box of the canvas
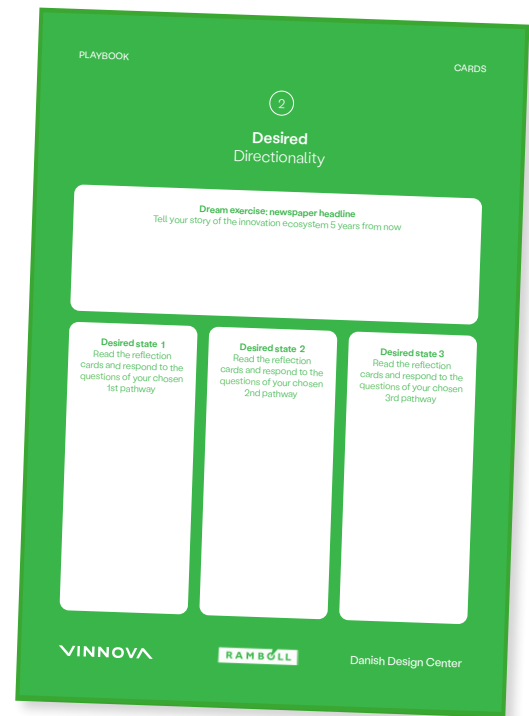
2

### Zoom in on the desired future for the chosen three pathways

—   Return to your reflections cards
—   Read aloud the questions regarding the desired state for your chosen pathways - you can mix them up, and add another question if it pops up.
—   Define the desired state for each chosen theme and fill out your response in the bottom three boxes on the canvas.

ACTIVATING THE ECOSYSTEM

3
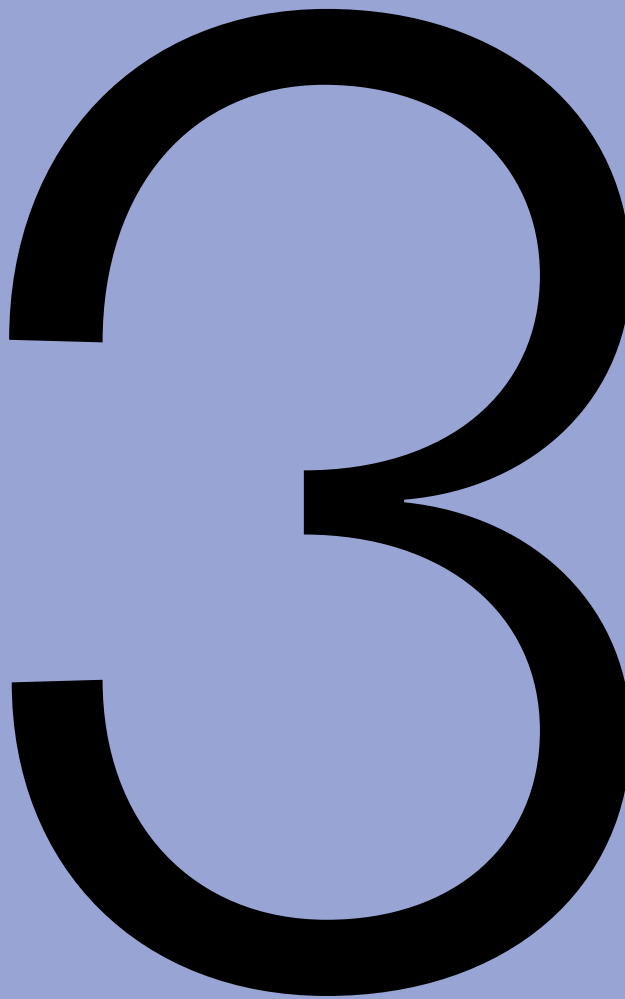
ACTIVATING   THE   ECOSYSTEM

(3)

An ecosystem is more than structures and funding. It is a living system shaped by shared values, practices, and relationships. A thriving innovation ecosystem depends on more than strategic alignment — it depends on deep trust, shared purpose, and a culture that encourages collaboration and smart risk-taking.
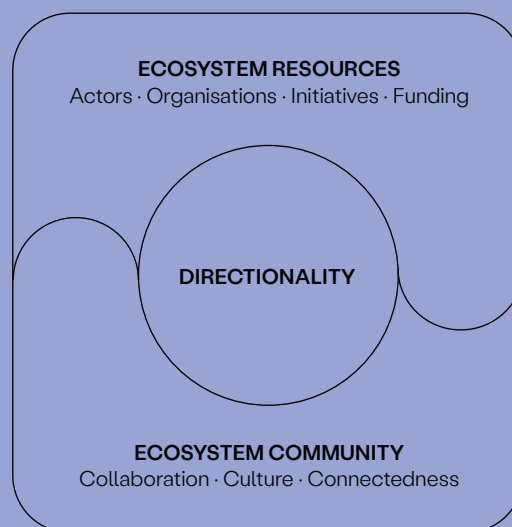
In this third chapter, we examine the interplay between ecosystem resources and the ecosystem community, as visualized by the green arrows in the ecosystem model.

This is where strategy begins to take shape through action. The objective here is to determine how your region can bridge the gap between the current and the desired state of the innovation ecosystem. To do this, you will work with the full set of available resources in the region — organizations, skills, funding streams, infrastructure, knowledge,

and networks — and most importantly, the community of actors across public, private, and civic sectors who play the crucial role of activating the resources.

This phase is about activation: identifying what needs to change and how to move from strategy to practice.

Start by familiarizing yourself with the guiding principles for the ecosystem activation, and then proceed to the exercise.

ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES
Actors · Organisations · Initiatives · Funding

DIRECTIONALITY

ECOSYSTEM COMMUNITY
Collaboration · Culture · Connectedness

GUIDING PRINCIPLES   22

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Recognize All Sources of Value
Innovation emerges from many places — formal organizations, informal networks, public institutions, private enterprises, civic actors, and grassroots initiatives. A resilient ecosystem acknowledges this diversity and ensures that different kinds of value creation are seen, supported, and connected.

⊙→

Design for Efficiency and Impact
Strong ecosystems make the most of their resources. This means continuously exploring how structures, responsibilities, and initiatives can be improved or reconfigured — whether that means setting up new functions like incubators, adjusting the role of existing institutions, or collaborating with actors who already have the needed capabilities. The goal is better performance, not just more activity.

⊙→

Build Bridges Within and Beyond the Region
No single ecosystem can meet all its own needs. Strategic collaboration — across regions, sectors, and borders — creates opportunities to access resources, infrastructure, expertise, and markets. Working with others, nationally and internationally, allows regions to scale their ambitions and tap into larger innovation systems.

⊙→

Empower People and Back Initiative
The health of an ecosystem often depends on the energy of its people. Identify and support individuals and organizations who are making a difference. Invest in their ideas, create space for experimentation, and reward initiative. Leadership doesn't always come from the center — often, it grows at the edges.

⊙→

Cultivate a Strong Innovation Culture
Culture shapes behavior. Encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship, continuous learning, and collaboration. Foster practices like peer support, openness, and pay-it-forward generosity. Most importantly, build a shared sense of community, where all actors feel part of a collective effort to co-create the region's innovation future.


Activating the ecosystem

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Working with values
For the final phase of the playbook we urge you to cultivate specific values. And by introducing new practices, you will develop concrete and practical ways to incorporate these values among ecosystem participants.

In the context of an innovation ecosystem, **values** are the shared beliefs, principles, and attitudes that shape how actors behave, collaborate, and make decisions. Values provide a sense of direction and define what is considered important or desirable — for example, openness, trust, inclusivity, curiosity, or long-term thinking.

Practices refer to the concrete actions, routines, and ways of working that bring values to life within the ecosystem. These include how people interact, share knowledge, make decisions, take risks, and support each other — both formally (through programs, policies, or structures) and informally (through everyday behavior and culture).
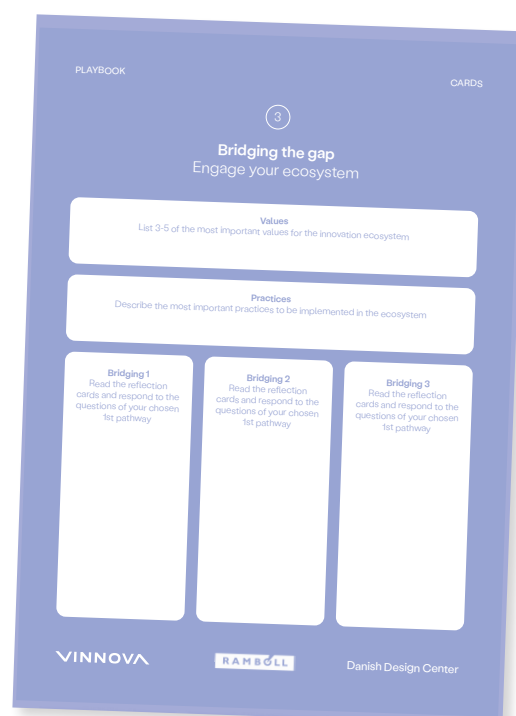
1

Values and practices
In your group, define the values you wish will shape how you interact in the ecosystems and introduce new practices that will help further these new values. You can focus on enhancing existing values, replacing counterprodutive values or introducing new ones.

To guide this conversation, you can turn to the supporting questions on the next page.

Fill out the chosen values and practices in the top boxes of the canvas.

PLAYBOOK   CARDS

③

Bridging the gap
Engage your ecosystem

Values
List 3-5 of the most important values for the innovation ecosystem

Practices
Describe the most important practices to be implemented in the ecosystem

Bridging 1
Read the reflection cards and respond to the questions of your chosen 1st pathway

Bridging 2
Read the reflection cards and respond to the questions of your chosen 1st pathway

Bridging 3
Read the reflection cards and respond to the questions of your chosen 1st pathway

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2

Bridging the gap
Return to your reflection cards.

In the group, discuss how to bridge the gap for each of the chosen pathsways. Remember, you are always welcome to reframe the questions so they fit better to your specific focus and context.

Fill out the three vertical boxes on the canvas with your response to the three questions.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

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**Which values should drive the culture
of your innovation ecosystem?**

What behaviors and attitudes do we want to see more of in our ecosystem
(e.g. openness, trust, curiosity, generosity)?

What rituals, norms, or shared practices already exist in the region that can
be reinforced or scaled?

Are there unspoken values or dynamics today that are holding collaboration back?
How might they be challenged or reframed?

How do we support a culture where sharing knowledge and helping others
is rewarded, not penalized?

Do we have an inclusive culture — one where actors from different backgrounds
(e.g., startups, municipalities, academia, civil society) feel equally valued and engaged?

→

**What new practices and concrete initiatives are needed
to build stronger relationships & partnerships?**

What would encourage more "pay-it-forward" behaviors, such as mentoring, peer
learning, or pro-bono advice, particularly from experienced actors to emerging ones?
How can this be embedded in the culture, not left to chance?

Are new roles needed to weave the ecosystem together, such as connectors, ecosystem
guides, and conveners that may help bridge gaps and foster stronger relationships?

What spaces for trust-building are needed? Are there neutral meeting places or
informal arenas where actors can connect beyond formal agendas — to build
relationships, share ideas, and test collaborations in a low-stakes environment?

What kind of governance structures and partnerships sctructures —
formal or informal — would enable actors to make joint decisions, align efforts,
and share responsibility for the ecosystem's development?

Respond to the questions an fill out values and practices on the canvas
(on the next page).
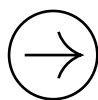
Now what?

Moving Forward: Continuing the Ecosystem Journey
By working through the three phases of this playbook — self-assessment, setting direction, and bridging the gap — you've taken meaningful steps toward building a stronger, more connected innovation ecosystem. But this is not the end of the process.
In fact, it's only the beginning.

Innovation ecosystems are living systems — shaped by people, relationships, institutions, and external forces that evolve over time. That's why the work you've done here should be seen as a first steps, not conclusions. Many of the insights developed through this playbook are based on assumptions that must be validated in practice. That's why strategic learning is key. The insights and priorities you've developed will need to be revisited, refined, and re-anchored as your context shifts.

We encourage you to treat this playbook as a living tool that supports:

— Re-assessing your current position as conditions evolve,
— Recalibrating your direction as new knowledge emerges,
— And refining actions as you learn what works — and what doesn't — in practice.

This is not about starting over, but about building reflexivity into your ecosystem work.

Seek the Support You Need to Keep Learning
To deepen and sustain this learning journey, look for opportunities that match your region's needs and ambitions. Depending on your context, this might include:

— Funding mechanisms designed for long-term ecosystem development
  and experimentation
— Peer-learning networks with other regions and countries,
— Capacity-building initiatives for ecosystem actors and conveners,
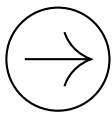— Or strategic support from national or EU-level partners.

Share the ecosystem approach
Ecosystem work is peer-to-peer by nature. It is built on relationships, shared values, and mutual support. We hope you will not only use this playbook — but also share it. Talk about it in your networks.

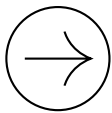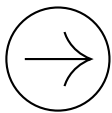Use it to guide joint discussions. Invite others into the work.
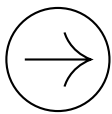
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