

# sonar

Deep diving under the surface  
of public innovation



We can no longer govern  
in the same way. OK.  
It looks like «innovation»

## *Survival map*

To help you find your  
way, a map with the  
main resources available  
today.

>> Pages 5-6

will save us. Really?  
What are the currents, the  
groundswells that threaten  
to sweep us away? This  
original document, fruit of  
a collective work, will allow  
you to probe the depths...

>> Page 2

## *Quick test*

Identify in 6 questions your  
«innovation style»

>> Page 3

## *How to get there?*

Trajectories and mechanisms  
analyzed in detail.

>> Poster

We can no longer govern as before, like a captain facing the storm. The level of distrust in government has never been higher, the issues are increasingly complex, the technological tsunami is permanent... For all that, will innovation really save us? It isn't so easy. The siren song of innovation lures us as much as it repels, with its strange creatures known as big data, Mooc, collective intelligence or open innovation...

What are the currents, the groundswells that threaten to sweep us away? How can we see down through the froth without losing sight of the horizon? What is the route to

safe harbor? What could be the role of metropolises in this vast ocean?

Agents from the cities and urban

districts of Nantes, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Montpellier, Dunkirk, Rennes, Strasbourg, Angers, Bordeaux and Saint-Etienne set off on a scouting expedition with support from France urbaine and the 27e Région. Here we present the initial results from their investigations: markers, landmarks, provisional maps. Not a solo round-the-world voyage, but a collective adventure in which each one can find their own way. Now it's up to you, elected officials, decision-makers and public officials to prepare yourself and set off on your own the adventure!

## «Will innovation really save us?»

And you, what's your

# style ?

Because in matters of innovation as much as in matters of fashion trends, everything is portable, but not by everyone.....

### 1- Your inspiring model of innovation in public administration is:

- § the creation of a lab within an administration
- ≠ participatory budget to support citizens' initiatives
- × the figure of the hacker in public administration
- ∩ immersion in the field in order to better understand uses

### 2 - You have set up a service or device, but it is underutilized. To improve it, ...

- § you do a cross-analysis of use
- ∩ you meet with non-users to understand their reasons
- × you design a service V2 based on the expertise of field professionals
- ≠ you set up a resolution forum bringing together associations and private actors

### 3 - Over the past two years, you have noticed a disturbing demotivation among your public agents:

- § you experiment a 360° evaluation to explore all aspects of the problem

- ≠ you organize learning tours in private companies to rethink your organization
- × you propose a more flexible work organization (telecommuting, agile mode...), to empower and re-energize your agents
- ∩ you conduct a survey on agent welfare in the workplace

### 4 - You are planning to transform a brownfield site, you want to integrate citizens to the project :

- ≠ you organize a round table with neighborhood associations to design the project
- § you appeal to the public to submit projects as a source for good ideas
- × you ask your project management team (or the internal Lab) to interview neighborhood residents in order to identify their expectations
- ∩ you give carte blanche to a temporary project on the site to test the usage options before making your final decision

### 5 - For you the first recipients of opening up data are:

- § private institutions and partners in the territory: the provision of public data, in the first instance, enables the creation of economic and social value in the territory
- ∩ users: it's a tool for developing everyday services
- × administrative agents: it's a tool for optimizing the public service fabric
- ≠ citizens: open data is a tool for transparency and strengthening democracy

### 6 - The statement that best sums up your philosophy is:

- ≠ government is like a parachute, it doesn't work if it isn't open
- × the journey is as important as arriving at your destination
- ∩ you have to work with both the magnifying glass and the telescope
- § you can tell a good worker by their tools

TOTAL :

...× ...∩  
...≠ ...§

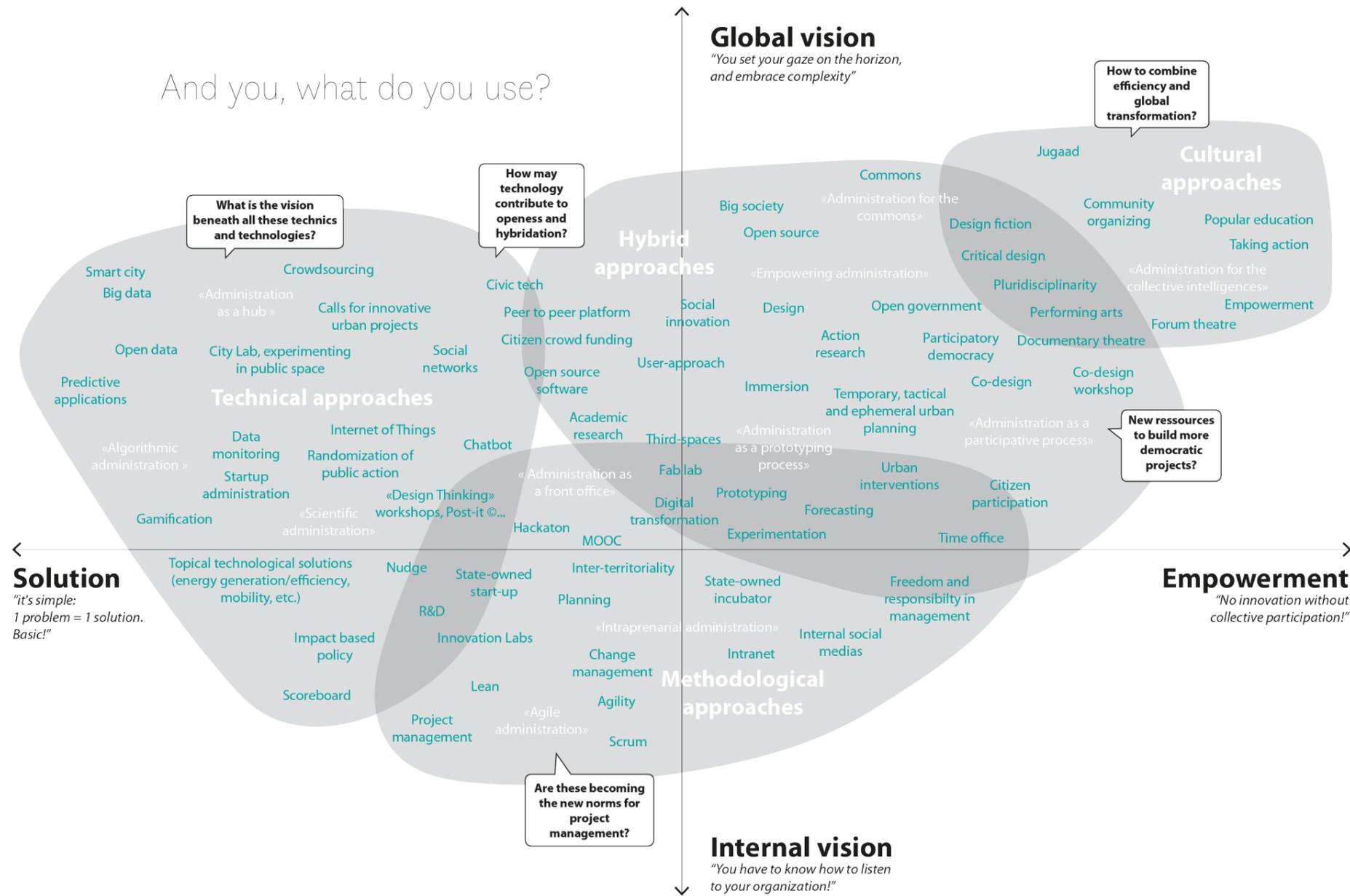
>> Answers on last page

# Little map of available resources

So many tools, so many trends... And so much jargon! How do I find my way?

So many tools, so many trends... And so much jargon! How do I find my way? First of all, there is a huge diversity of forms of innovation. We often forget just how many - dozens, maybe even hundreds - methods, concepts and approaches related to innovation there are. Some are primarily focused on finding the solution to how to innovate, others on the cultural conditions of change. Some are rooted in practices that have been around for a long time (without necessarily being questioned), others are in their infancy, and not all of these will withstand the test of time. Many people are searching for THE right method. Suffice it to say that such a quest would appear predestined to failure. On the contrary, a mixed approach looks like a more sustainable strategy. Behind every form of innovation, there is also a huge diversity of visions. Not everything is compatible: there are numerous schools of thought and each has its own outlook on society, with different value (business, technology, democracy, science, art and creation...), and between them tensions arise. All may be questioned and subject to controversies.

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6

Amidst this complex panorama appears a set of resources marked by a search for multidisciplinary: indeed experience shows that to go beyond isolated experiments, to transition from innovation to a more global transformation involves overcoming cleavages and fostering dialogue between disciplines. This form of hybridization of approaches relies to a large extent on openness to users (external with the beneficiaries of public policies, but also internal with the public agents) and more widely to the citizens, as well as the transversality to link up the issues and to avoid producing isolated solutions with collateral effects that are sometimes devastating.

An exclusive focus on a single approach in effect risks reading the problems only in terms of a single end. Combining approaches is the best way to deal with problems in a more systemic way. It may also be a good way to avoid becoming trapped in one or another of these practices in the future. Remaining curious, proactive, responsive and critical is, on the other hand, probably the best path to learning how to get the most out of all the tools at your disposal!

A few definitions to help you find your way

**Empowerment:** In social sciences, empowerment means bolstering capacities by means of granting more power to individuals or groups to act on the social, economic, political or ecological conditions they face.

**Commons:** A commons is an open system centered on one or more shared resources, collectively managed by a community (eg Wikipedia).

**Crowdsourcing:** Use of the creativity, intelligence and know-how of a large number of external people to do certain tasks usually done by one person.

**Design:** Creative conception method at the crossroads of art, techniques, human and social sciences.

**Algorithmic government:** Some suggest that a country or city could be governed with digital data and artificial intelligence.

**Hackathon:** Type of event, initially related to IT development, where

a group of volunteers come together with the common goal of conceiving, testing and producing a prototype in a few hours.

**Impact-based policy:** This notion implies developing public policies based on evidence of what works, rather than on what politicians believe is the best solution.

**Jugaad:** A popular Hindi word

that can be roughly translated as «the art of coming up with ingenious solutions.» It's literally the art of «doing more with less» in difficult conditions.

**Use-focused approach:** Alongside traditional technical expertise, this means to give the future users of a facility, a neighborhood or a public policy a voice. One means of doing this would be to observe

users behavior and test potential uses with them.

**MOOC (Massive Open Online Course):** also called «open online course,» this is a tool for distance learning via the Internet.

**Nudge:** an indirect suggestion that can affect a person or a group's behavior. For example, some train stations emit classical music

outside the entrance to discourage loiterers...

**Open data:** Free access and use of digital data in readable and usable formats.

**Peer-to-peer platform (often abbreviated as «P2P»):** A computer network model where each client (user) is also a server (provider), which can be used for peer-to-peer

file sharing, distributed computing or communication.

**Temporary urban planning:** Includes temporary, creative and participatory occupations of vacant land and buildings while the use of such sites is still in preparation.

# Taking action without *taking a dive*

A gradual rise in innovation...

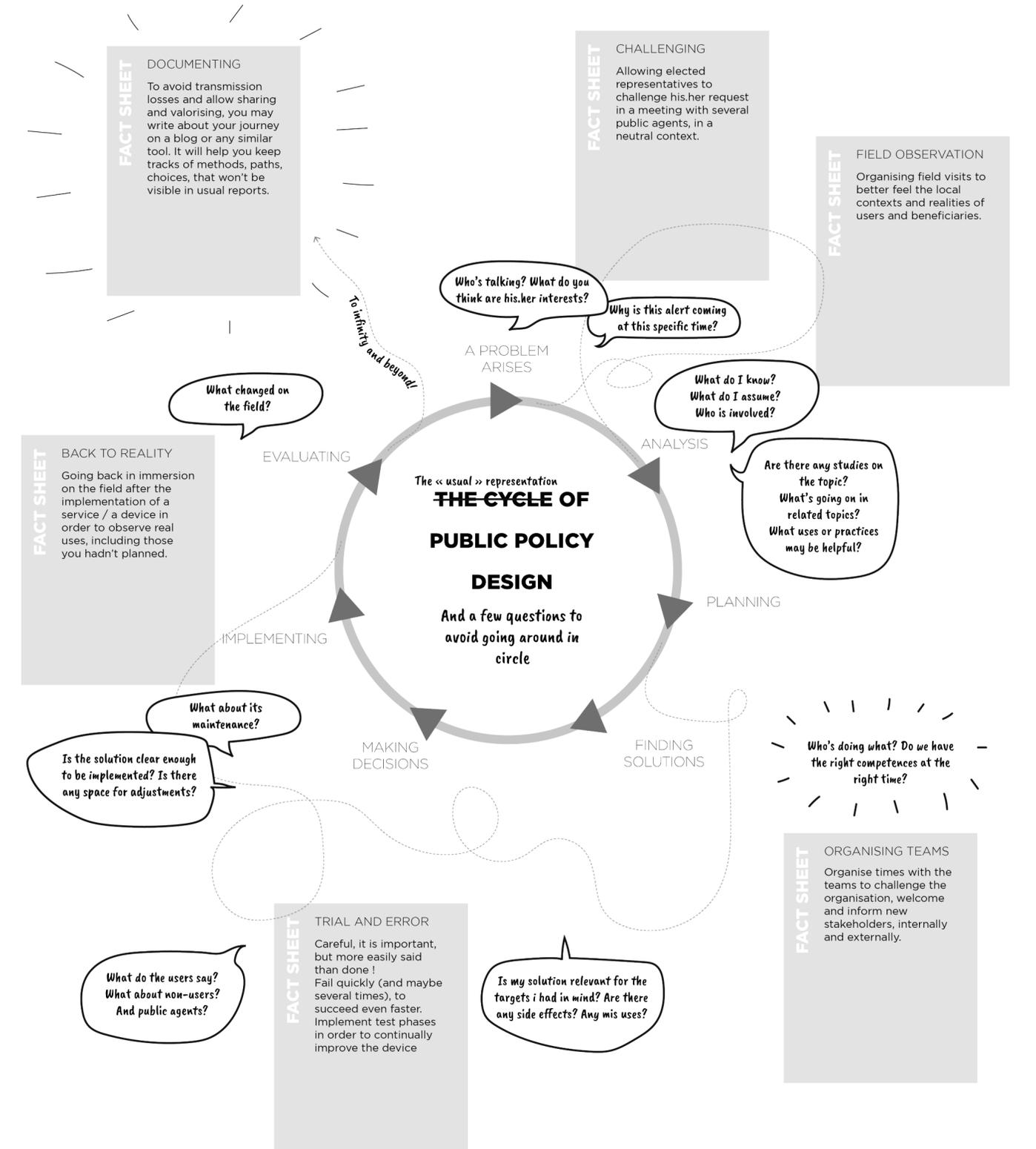
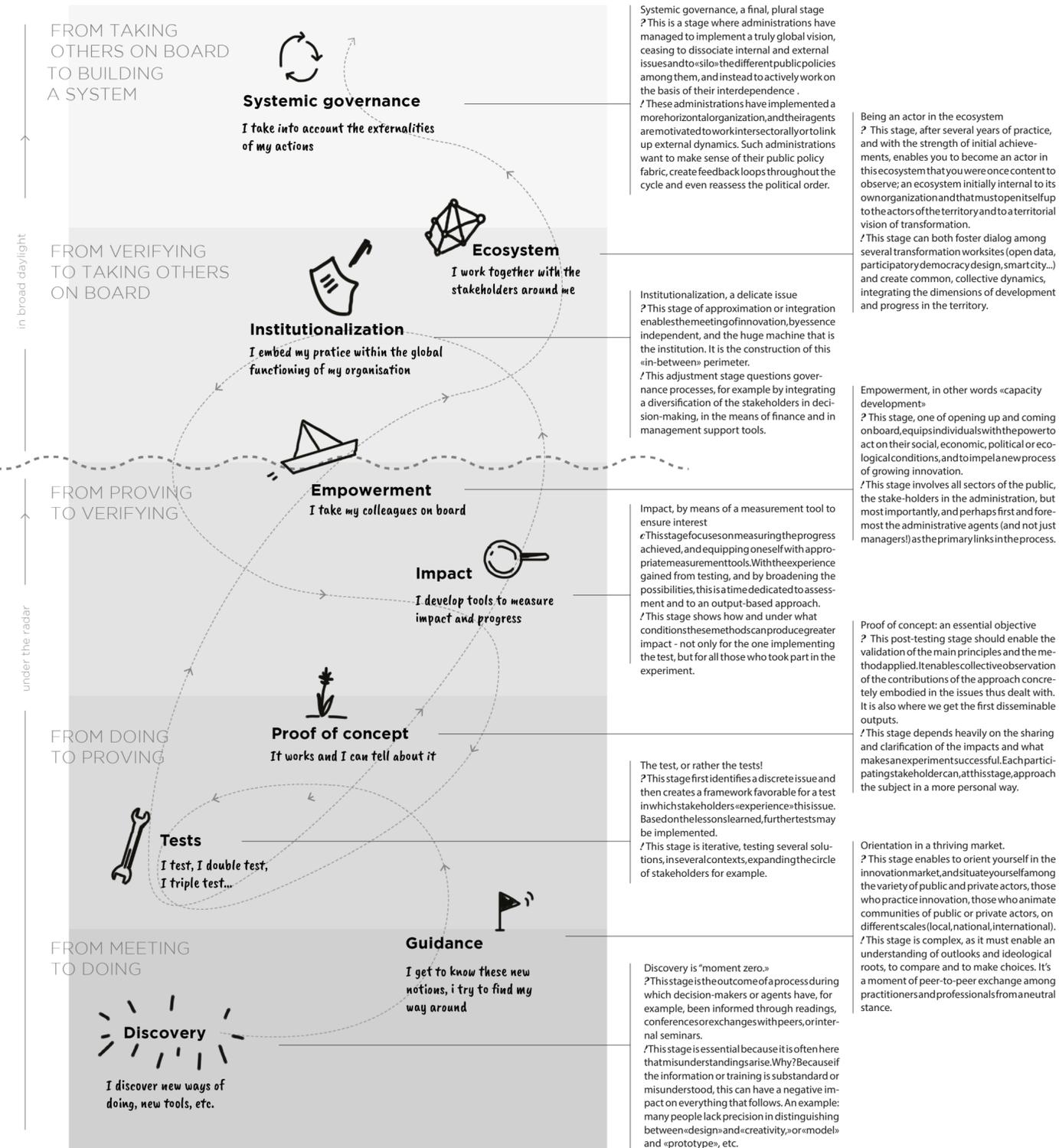
«Let's be innovative,» «let's transform ourselves,» «let's listen to the citizens»... Enticing magical formulas isn't enough to effect real change. Nor is applying concepts like social innovation, open data or blockchain just because they're trending. What if it's more about taking less obvious routes to assessing our administrations? Where there's the ambition for lasting change, the path to achieving it is marked with signposts and forks in the road. We don't make our way from one to the other without taking a wrong turn now and then.

The path we propose is based on a few simple principles. One of the most important is: let's stop talking, practice innovation! Let's be both ambitious and humble, without trying to revolutionize everything in a day. And if it doesn't work the first time, try and try again. And remember that what matters isn't so much getting there as the journey!

...and an open public policy fabric

Help, the public policy fabric is broken! The legitimacy of institutions has never been so contested, citizen expertise so active and public issues so complex. The classic cycle, represented as a perfect circle, has less and less validity in a reality that has become complex and multidimensional, and actually implies a mechanism incapable of capitalizing on its resources or moving forward. And indeed many public policies fail to provide concrete improvements in the lives of the people they target...

How can local authorities, at their level, transform the way they design and implement public policies? By allowing them more leeway. By preparing themselves to see «under the radar» and carry out tests with their citizens (and their agents) before, during and after. By losing their fear of reassessing the political order. In short, moving towards a fabric capable of adapting to the flow, according to changing contexts and new realities.



Have you answered the questions on page 3?

## Discover your innovation profile

**Mostly x :** For you, the first project is the internal culture. And to transform it, your administration focuses on management. The startup mode inspires you, agility means a lot to you, and if you had your way your administration and agents would be given free rein.

*Inspiring example >>* La bonne boîte: a service for job seekers that orients them towards companies likely to recruit them, created by a job center counsellor, through the French state incubation program.

*Caveats >>* Keep in mind that the transformation is only relevant if it improves the quality of the service for its final users.

**Mostly c :** For you, no need for hi-tech. Transformation begins with a harder look at uses. It's by starting from the reality of practices that concrete improvements can be made.

*Inspiring example >>* Use-focused approach: in urban, architectural or digital projects, working alongside technical experts, we now find use-focused professionals whose job is to ensure that the needs and practices of users are taken well into account.

*Caveats >>* You have to know how to use both the magnifying glass and the telescope, and integrate use-focus input into an overall transformation project.

**Mostly # :** Your administration drives a hybrid. No transformation in isolation; on the contrary, a quest for openness, permeability with the external ecosystem, and involvement of a greatest number of actors in the design and implementation of public policies.

*Inspiring example >>* The #Codeimpo hackathon: in 2017, the French state opened up the source code of its tax service, and invited groups of engineers, citizens and private actors to use it to create related services.

*Caveats >>* Be careful not to tear rip out all your gates at once. Opening yourself up to external actors and decision-makers only works if a great deal of care is taken to ensure a proper balance of participations.

**Mostly § :** You're driven primarily by technical innovations. Whether it's new public policy devices or technological innovation of undetermined application, you think that it's sometimes smarter to start with solutions rather than problems.

*Inspiring example >>* Vidéocagette: a tool designed to help assessors better communicate the output of their studies via a video capture device, which has since been adopted by many other services.

*Caveats >>* Beware of the all-tech approach: a solution that fails to consider the context can be counterproductive.

**Sonar version 1.0 is the result of an experiment conducted between January 2017 and February 2018 under the auspices of France Urbaine.** This experience brought together representatives from 11 big cities, urban areas and urban districts (in charge of issues related to public and social innovation, management, efficiency of public services) in 5 work sessions. The methods used to produce Sonar's content combined presentations, documentary research, writing workshops and «sprint-mode» writing.

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