

# ReModelling Futures



# Guidebook

**This guidebook supports the use of the ReModelling Futures Method by providing context and suggesting a step by step approach to using the method.**

**The ReModelling Futures Method is a framework that enables transformation design for sustainability at the very core of the creative process. Using speculative scenario building, it supports co-design of products, services, and systems that demonstrate value using more than economic or short term parameters for decision-making.**

The Remodelling Futures Method was created as part of the Remodelling Fashion project, one of the workstreams of the Business of Fashion Textiles and Technology Creative Clusters project.

The team comprises Prof. Steve Evans and Prof. Doroteya Vladimirova of the Institute for Manufacturing, University of Cambridge, Prof. Dilys Williams, Dr Laetitia Forst and Naomi Bulliard from Centre for Sustainable Fashion, UAL.

Cover image:  
'A new beginning'  
illustration by  
Nandakumar N



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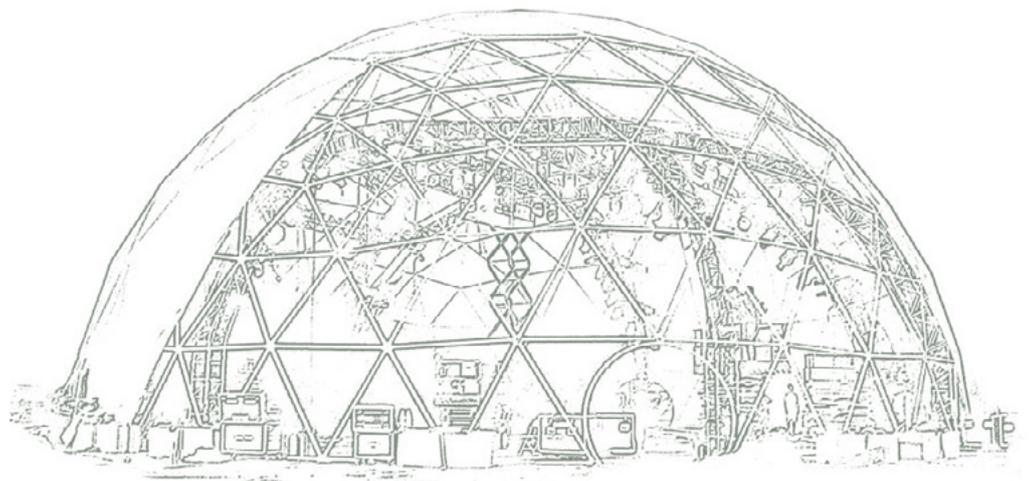
# Provocation

Are you a designer or a team leader who wants to create the space to explore the long-term vision of your business alongside and beyond current business?

Would you like to see your sustainability actions focused less on symptoms and more on responses to causes relating to the fragility of earth systems?

Could you benefit from visualising how your products and services interact with the world now and in an uncertain future?

**The ReModelling Futures Method can support you in moving beyond designing inside a set context towards designing of contexts as a dynamic framework to build resilience in the face of uncertainty. Users are guided through the creation of future worlds, exploring the potential for regeneration in response to world-challenges, and to initiate product service system concepts that illustrate a transformation of design and business model practices.**



'Parched' illustration  
by Himanshu  
Chandrikapure

# Audience

Whether you are designing and developing products as a designer entrepreneur in a micro business, or leading a team in a global design business, having a framework that can foster imaginative, relevant, and pragmatic concept development, is vital to prosperity.

This method can be used in teams of any size and including suppliers, customers, investors, as well as communities in the larger context of the business. The personal perspective of individuals is key to building comprehensive visions and concepts that can co-inform successful product development.



3D digital model of the We Care / Repair community space by Giulia Maria Baretta, Lee Oi Yin Nina, Teena Antony, and Tess Atkins

**“The value [of the ReModelling Futures Method] is immeasurable in our own education as a team in terms of a deeper and practical understanding of how to make our practice linked and in support of our natural systems and local communities.”**

*Phoebe English, Fashion Designer and Founder, Phoebe English*

# Aim

The aim of the method is to support designers to consider a radical sustainability agenda in their creative process, and to develop products, services, and systems that demonstrate extended value and worth to include broad parameters of prosperity.

The method draws attention to the critical interdependencies between cultural, societal, environmental and economic sustainability in line with Centre for Sustainable Fashion's principles. It advocates for a holistic view on current and future business challenges from a multi-stakeholder perspective.



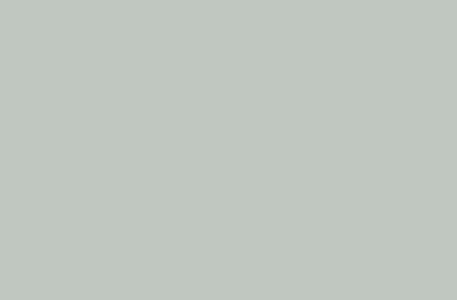
**“By transforming our approach and changing not just how we design, but what we’re designing, we can innovate products, services and systems to add value and create new opportunities.”**

*Simon Platts, Responsible Sourcing Director, ASOS*

‘Concept Aerial’  
illustration by Bhujang  
Vishwas Sakore

**“Thinking about the thing we are launching as something that could have an impact on the government, on local communities, was changing the way we looked at our product. For a tech company that is trying to get their first contract, it really helped us take a step back.[...] The key words we use in our pitches come from those sessions”**

*Mehdi Doghri, Co-Founder and CTO, Save Your Wardrobe*



**FashionImpactProtocol**

**GOV.UK**

Department of Fashion Impact

Fashion Impact Index Rating: **87%**

FI Tax Band: B 10%

**Fashion Impact Index**

- Materials** 94
  - Fabric 1: 100% cotton, organic
  - Raw material source: Hydrocotton Ltd., Essex, UK
  - Spinning: English Fine Cottons Ltd., Manchester, UK
  - Weaving: Blackburn Weaving Ltd., Blackburn, UK
  - ...See more
- Manufacturing** 75
  - Supplier: Leicester Elite Fashions Ltd., Leicester, UK
  - Certifications: None ...See more
- Repairability** 82
  - Free replacement components within 2 years.
  - Register for repairs: repairs@acme.com
  - ...See more

**FashionImpactTax (FIT) bands**

Fashion Impact Index Rating 0 - 100	% Tax charged
90-100	A 0%
85-84	B 5%
75-84	C 10%
65-74	D 15%
55-64	E 20%
45-54	F 25%
35-44	G 30%
25-34	H 35%
15-24	I 40%
<15	J 50%

local/control | group 3

'Fashion protocol' concept by Keirti Bindal, Ran Xu, Rachel Rymar, and Eika Sada

# Key concepts

**The development and application of the Remodelling Futures Method is underpinned by the key concepts and agendas listed below. The definitions are put forward here to support discussion and can be interpreted and adapted to fit a team's need.**

## **Transformation design**

Transformation design responds to the complexity and ambiguity of contemporary challenges with participative design methods that change systems and cultures. Transformation design is characterised by its aim to build capacity, not dependency, and implement lasting and meaningful change.

## **Product Service System**

Current social and environmental issues are interdependent. Products must therefore be designed in relation to the complex webs of human and material interactions and services which are key to their adequate production and use. Product service systems are the unit considered in this design innovation method to encompass the full scope of a concept's effects and implications.

## **Extended value**

The ReModelling Futures work aims to produce extended value for products. This means considering how the outcomes of the design process affect social, cultural, economic, and environmental agendas before and beyond the point of sale of the item. Products and services are considered holistically in terms of their effects on human and material interactions to achieve a better planetary balance.

## **Future scenarios**

The future cannot be predicted, the best we can achieve is to imagine different plausible directions and be prepared for them. Future scenarios are stories that help designers and decision makers visualise their role in an uncertain world.

# Four agendas of sustainability

Centre for Sustainable Fashion acknowledges the complexity of sustainability in a heuristic framework. All our work is set in the limits of nature's systems and in recognition of human equity. Ecological, Social, Economic and Cultural agendas can support considerations about sustainability in the development of contexts and concepts in the ReModelling Futures Method.

**Cultural sustainability** refers to tolerant systems that recognise and cultivate diversity. This includes diversity in the fashion and sustainability discourse to reflect a range of communities, locations and belief systems. It includes the use of various strategies to preserve First Nations cultural heritage, beliefs, practices and histories. It seeks to safeguard the existence of these communities in ways that honour their integrity.

**Social sustainability** refers to the ability of a community to interact and collaborate in ways that create and exemplify social cohesion. It considers places, communities and organisations, formal and informal, and their resources, opportunities and challenges. It involves the agency of diverse participants in voicing and acting with autonomy and in harmony with others.

**Economic sustainability** refers to the ability of citizens to enjoy living conditions that are within agreed boundaries in terms of wage levels relative to costs of living and the gap between lowest and highest wages. It refers to regional and inter-regional access to investment and to a healthy relationship between productivity, employment and economic status.

**Environmental sustainability** refers to our ability to live within biosphere limits, recognising planetary boundaries. It draws on ecological principles and various practices that recognise people as part of nature and looks for ways to preserve the quality of the natural world on a long-term basis.



# Approach

Concept development is the crucial stage from which all other product and service development decisions are made. The method uses creative processes in the very early phases of contextualisation and inspiration research that nourish concept development. This early phase often uses visualisations, statistics, reports, and insights to create themes, products, materials, colours and silhouettes. These methods, familiar to designers, are mirrored to integrate future visions for sustainability at the core of the creative process.

The ReModelling Futures concept development method, created and refined with designers across scales and locations, places concept development in futures that can be applied today. Drawing on participants' own understandings of their businesses and the world around them, it enables them to gain an applied understanding of the world into which their products and services will be seen, enjoyed and create impacts.

The method involves 7 steps which guide participants from setting their intention, imagining plausible contexts for their work, to developing product service system concepts that adequately respond to future challenges and uncertainties.



**“It has certainly added more structure to my ideation and brainstorming phase of the design process. One other aspect it has influenced is how to always keep sustainability and context at the core while designing something.”**

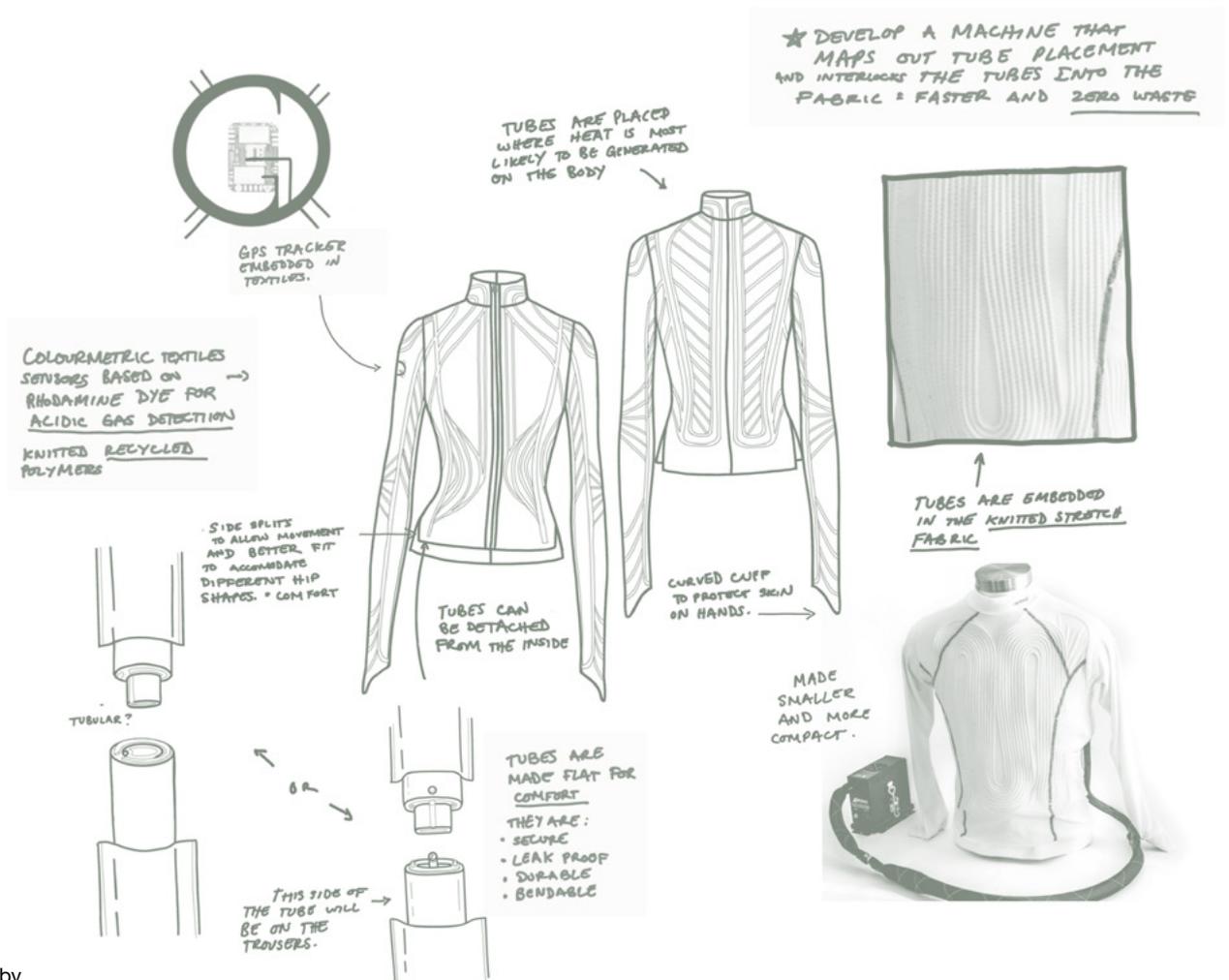
'Plastic Paradise' concept  
by Sachin Arya

*NID Student*

# Outcomes

The intended outcome from using this method is for designers and practitioners to create their own frameworks or concept boards that represent a more expansive set of scenarios into which they can design, source, develop and produce prototypes and products.

The method offers practitioners an opportunity to look beyond the short-term symptoms of environmental and social impacts of current practices, to ideate from a deeper understanding of the world into which their products play a part. This can help them to create new economic, social, cultural and environmental prosperity.



'Garb X' concept by Rhiannon Bydawell, Tasia Hancock, Rose Lagrosas, Poppy Lam



# Contributors

The framework has been developed in collaboration with, and used in, large and small business settings, in academia and in innovation workshops, face to face and using online spaces.

## **Multinational retailer participant**

- ASOS

## **Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) participants**

- Petit Pli
- Phoebe English
- Save Your Wardrobe

## **Student participants**

- MA Fashion Futures and MA Fashion Design Technology (Womenswear), London College of Fashion, UAL – December 2020
- BA(Hons) Sportswear Design, Falmouth, UK
- BA Interaction Design Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland
- Open Elective, National Institute of Design, India
- MBA London College of Fashion, UAL

**“Remodelling Futures gave us the opportunity to approach design in a completely different way. It enabled us to take designers out of their comfort zones and through a process that encourages their creativity and systems thinking. This type of tactic is crucial to finding new system-level solutions to the changing sustainability landscape in which we and all fashion businesses operate.”**

*Rebecca Garner, Established Circularity Partner, ASOS*

# Step by step

**This step-by-step guide will support you in using the ReModelling Futures concept development method.**





## Length of the activity:

A short version of the workshop can be completed in 3 hours (excluding feedback time) with groups choosing one brief to address in steps 5 and 6 to provoke new ideation processes. The activity can also be explored over a series of meetings, spanning a set time period, e.g. a month, or an deep dive over two days to explore worlds, define concepts and plan implementation.

See examples of the activity timings as inspiration. The iterations of this activity showed that having a tight time constraint resulted in answers being intuitive and wild, whilst longer timeframes provided more considered answers.

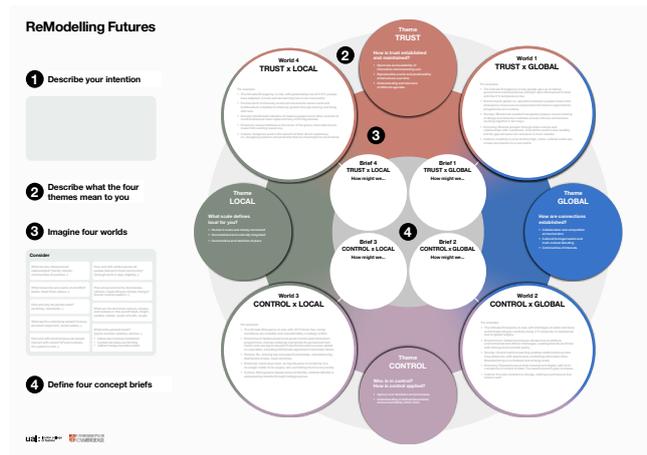
Examples of timings for a short and a full activity:

Short version (single 3-hour workshop)	
Step 1	15 mins
Step 2	30 mins
Step 3	45 mins
Step 4	30 mins
Step 5	20 mins (per brief)
Step 6	20 mins (per brief)
Step 7	20 mins
Feedback	Depending on size of team

Full version (2 x 1-hour sessions as teams using the method + independent work after each session)	
Step 1	10 mins
Step 2	20 mins
Step 3	30 mins
Participants have x time outside of the collaborative session to complete a visual representation of their worlds (this can be in the form of mood boards, videos, or other narratives)	
Step 4	15 mins
Step 5	20 mins
Step 6	15 mins
Step 7	10 mins
Participants have x time outside of the collaborative session to complete a visual representation or prototype of their product service system concept	

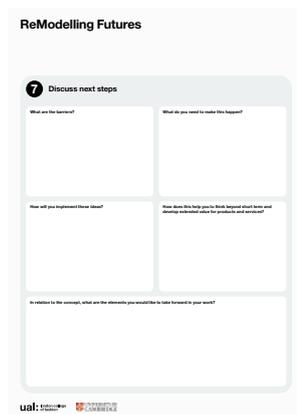
## Overview of the ReModelling Futures worksheets

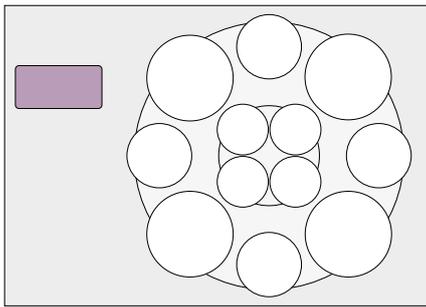
For steps 1 to 4, you will be using the A0 worksheet which presents the ReModelling Futures scenario building framework and fulfil the tasks writing and adding post-it notes to each section.



In Step 1 you will note your intentions. You will then be using circles of the scenario building framework which guide you through defining themes, worlds, and briefs. In step 2, you will describe your understanding of each of the four themes in the coloured circles. In step 3, you will build a vision for a world by combining two themes. You will then write a brief in the inner circles.

For steps 5 to 7, you will use the smaller A3 worksheets and respond to each step in the frames by writing directly on the sheet. This phase focusses on the concept development. You will be considering opportunities and challenges for stakeholders in step 5, developing and refining the concept in step 6, and reflecting on next steps to enact the changes you imagined in step 7.

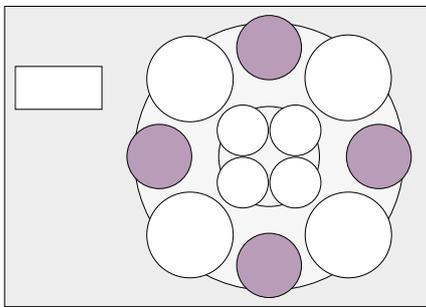




## Step 1: Describe the intention

Set your intention: Discuss what really matters to you as a team. Define what you would like to explore in this process, it could be an issue, or sector you would like to consider. Think of this a possibility-creating opportunity, rather than only as problem-solving. This could be broad, and relate to ideas at the scale of business mission or specific, or relate to change at the scale of product or technique development.

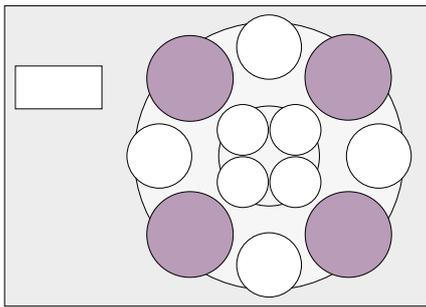
Once you have discussed and agreed on the intention, write down a short sentence or some key words in the grey rectangle in the top left corner of the sheet. You can come back to this when you need to recentre the discussion in later stages.



## Step 2: Describe the themes

Brainstorm ideas of what each of the four themes – Trust, Control, Global, and Local - mean to you as a group. Discuss openly and broadly what each theme means for a business, a team, in society, and as individuals. You can use synonyms that offer a specific angle that is relevant to your work, or examples that demonstrate these directions in real life. It is important to consider a broader spectrum of descriptions: consider both the positives and negatives of each themes, the dystopian as well as the utopian.

Do not limit the ideas to a direct connection to your named intention, but think of the directions as the conditions within which your intention will play out. Think of the four themes as navigational directions, rather than as end points. Each relates to concepts developed out of horizon scanning undertaken by the original project team. The words should not be taken literally, but interpreted through discussion. The interpretation of the directions will differ according to the group, there might be any different responses, according to the ideas of those involved. This brainstorming aims to offer a rich and collective interpretation of each theme to use as a framework in the next phases of the session. You can use the questions and prompts provided for each theme to guide discussion. Write down all ideas that come up in the discussion for each theme. You will be able to draw on these in the next phases.



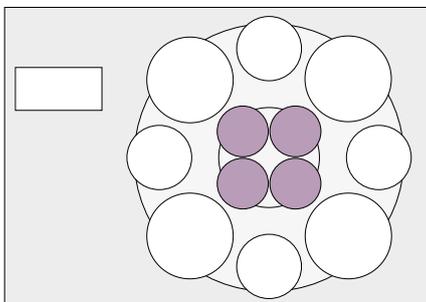
### Step 3: Imagine four worlds

Consider how the themes of Trust, Control, Local and Global as you have described them, can connect to give an outline for future worlds. You will be creating 4 world visions, one in each of the allocated circles in the worksheet. Notes should be taken in the white circles with the coloured rim. One in the context of Trust and Local, one in the context of Trust and Global, one for Control and Global, and one for Control and Local.

Now build a vision for each world which combines two themes to produce a new context. Use the statements in the background of the scenario space on the worksheet as prompts in describing some key characteristics for each world. Refer to examples of existing products, brands, people, services, organisations, and policy to illustrate your vision. You can use a range of visual, video, or text based material as key references.

Use the questions to the side of the worksheet to help consider diverse aspects of the world.

To finish this step, give a title to this world which summarises its defining characteristics.

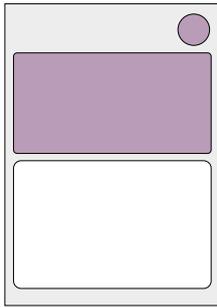


### Step 4: Define the brief for each world

The 4 worlds you have developed should each include challenges and opportunities. Returning to your intention, and based on the context of each world, define a design brief or outline to show how the context can be positively impacted through design. What are the design possibilities in this world? What are the imaginary ideas that could enhance the most positive elements of this world?

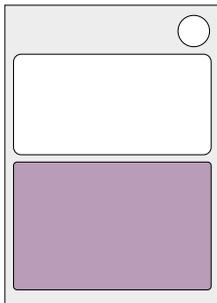
The aim of the brief is to set a question or provocation to respond to in the next step. You can use a “How might we...” formulation. Consider what challenges and opportunities were raised in each world to translate these into a brief for yourself or another to take on.

Consider how the design possibilities might contribute to prosperity in cultural, environmental, social and economic terms. This four-fold matrix of sustainability is based on Centre for Sustainable Fashion’s framework for design, which allows for holistic approach to good design ([see page 9](#)).



## Step 5: PSS concept development

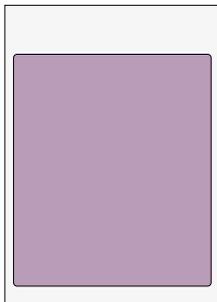
Now choose one or more of the briefs compiled in step 3. In response to the brief(s), start developing a concept for a product service system that responds to the possibilities and challenges set. Answer the questions laid out in the worksheet to support the development of your PSS idea from the perspective of the user, the maker or innovator, and of people and planet. The worksheet includes space for you to add other stakeholders important to your context.



## Step 6: Define your PSS

Summarise your product service system concept. Use the questions provided in the worksheet to nourish a discussion about the concept and how it is made, accessed, used, disposed of, etc. As you are refining your concept, bear in mind what services and systems are needed to support it. Represent your final concept in text, sketch, or other easy to grasp format.

Once the concept is laid out, reflect on its capacity to create and extend value in environmental, social, cultural and/or economic terms.



## Step 7: Discuss next steps

Finally discuss how and if the activity has supported you in developing a vision for your work that reaches beyond current thinking and offers the potential to extend the value of your work. Consider how imagining future worlds and concepts can influence your work today.

Reflect on the whole process and consider what you can change in your own work from now, as well as which elements of the concept you will take forward, what you need to make it happen, how, and with whom. Name the actions, responsibilities and a time frame, to help you to keep this ideation thinking front of mind.

Share this method with others, adapt it, de-construct it, or put it on the wall to remind you that we can replenish and regenerate the world, by design.



**“I now use the method to understand the positioning of products that I design in the future. It helps me think about the lifecycle, materials, users, interaction etc. I see the larger picture and I am glad I do.”**

