The Innovation Lab

REFLECTION CANVAS TEMPLATE

WHAT IS A REFLECTION CANVAS?

A reflection canvas is a series of questions designed to help you better understand how to create an iterative innovative solution. Collectively, the questions generate a visual reminder of the key ingredients you need to take a cohesive, sustained approach to achieving your desired goal and addressing your identified system challenge.

The reflection canvas activity is not intended to replace or replicate any of the tools or resources accessible via The Innovation Lab's Resources webpage, but rather to draw this work together, and collate the conclusions into one place to be shared with various stakeholders across the Early Years landscape.

The reflection canvas activity can be used as a personal aide, or with other stakeholders within the early years context in which you are operating.

It is a useful exercise as it not only helps all involved to create a shared understanding of what is going on and various factors and actors involved in your identified challenge and responsive innovative solution, but also helps you to communicate a shared sense of where you are collectively heading.

A reflection canvas enables you to:
- Map the current, imagine the future, and ideate bridging actions;
- Think about different flows of activity and demand around the challenge and responsive innovative solution;
- Consider the more "invisible" dynamics that are holding the challenge in place and how you can shift these values, mindsets, behaviours, etc using your proposed innovative solution;
- Explore different perspectives through which you can understand and experience the challenge and the responsive innovative solution;
- Identify your own strengths, those of other stakeholders, where the gaps are and intentionally responding to fill these gaps with your iterative innovative solution.

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WHY YOU SHOULD BUILD A REFLECTION CANVAS

EXAMPLES

In the following pages, you will find some reflection canvas templates. Although they are designed with the same purpose in mind, some are visually engaging and high-level conversation starters whereas others are for personal reflection. Depending on your ideal way of working and situation, please feel free to choose whichever template(s) suit your style the best! Alternatively, if you can't decide then you don't have to limit yourself - you can use them all in a complementary manner!
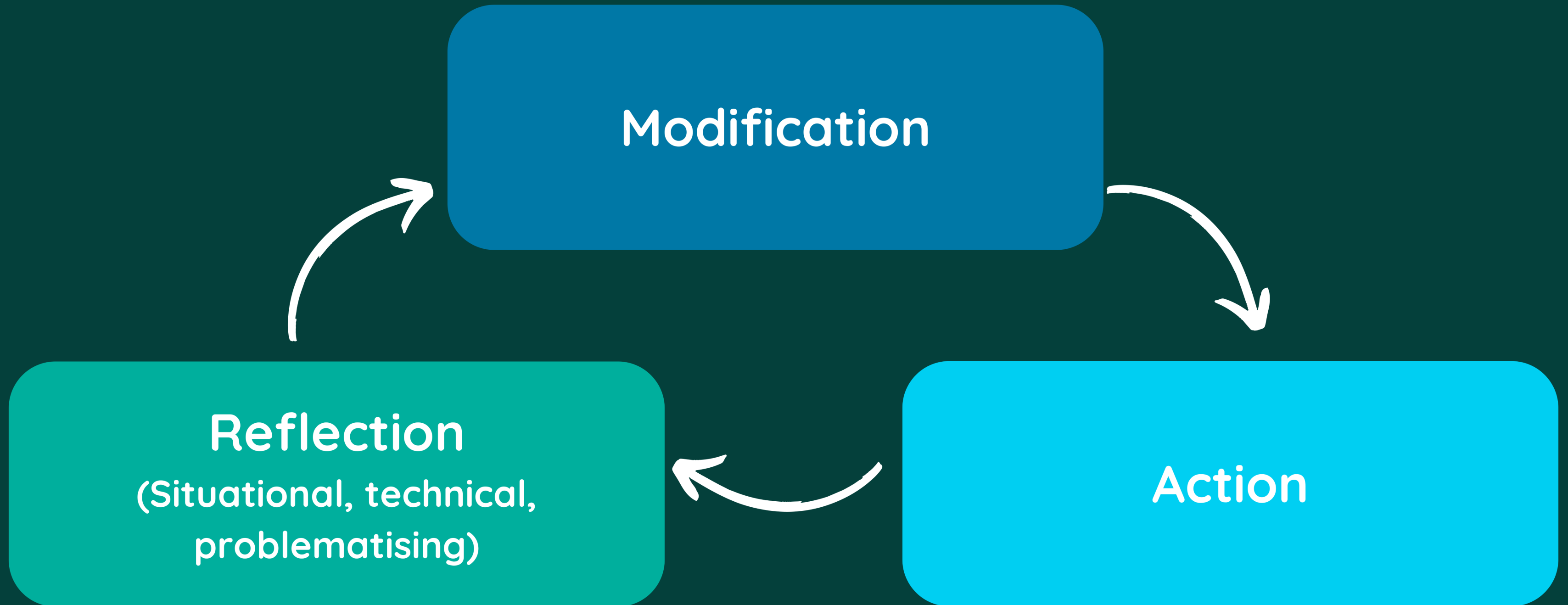
TEMPLATE 1

Self Reflection:
Situational

Self Reflection:
Technical

Self Reflection:
Problematising

What is your role in the early years system?
What is your authority?
Describe the environment in which you work. This can include working conditions, physical landscape, situational details and more. (Description)

How do you perform your role?
What is your daily routine and best practices / actions that enable you to do your job effectively? (Description)

What is the core challenge you think needs urgently addressing in the early years system?
Who is involved? (Description)

Why are you doing this?
What is motivating you to do your role effectively and make positive change? (Description and rationale)

Why do you perform your role and actions in this particular way? Consider the social, moral, ethical, or political values and guidelines that underpin your actions. (Description and rationale)

Why does this challenge occur?
What are the root causes?
Are you observing or participating in this challenge? Are you part of the status quo? (Description and rationale)

What change do you wish to see in the early years system?
What actions can you take to effect this change on an individual level? (Reflection and evaluation)

Do you think you are creating positive change through your current actions?
What can you do to alter / improve your actions to reflect the change you wish to see in the early years system? (Reflection and evaluation)
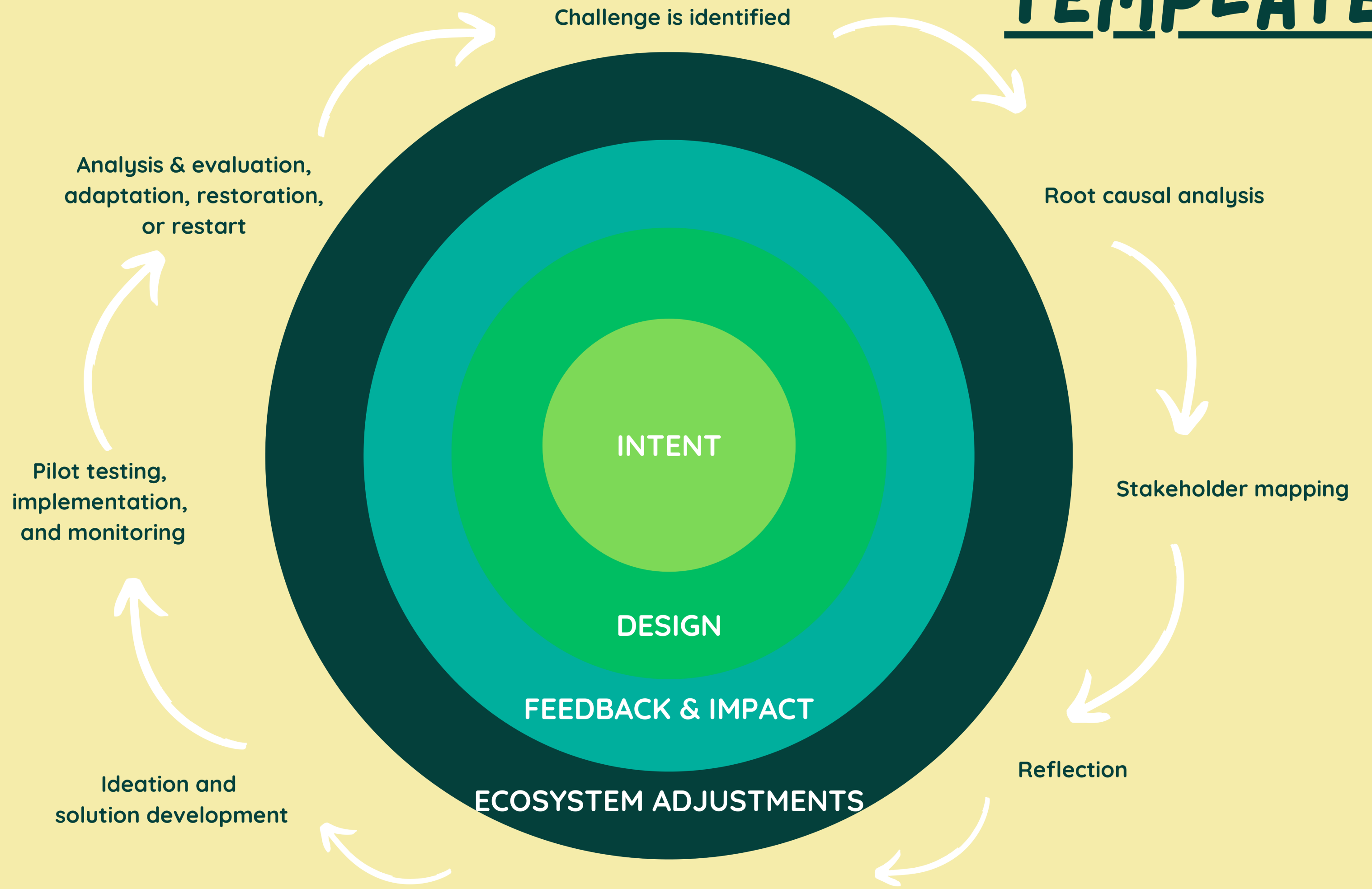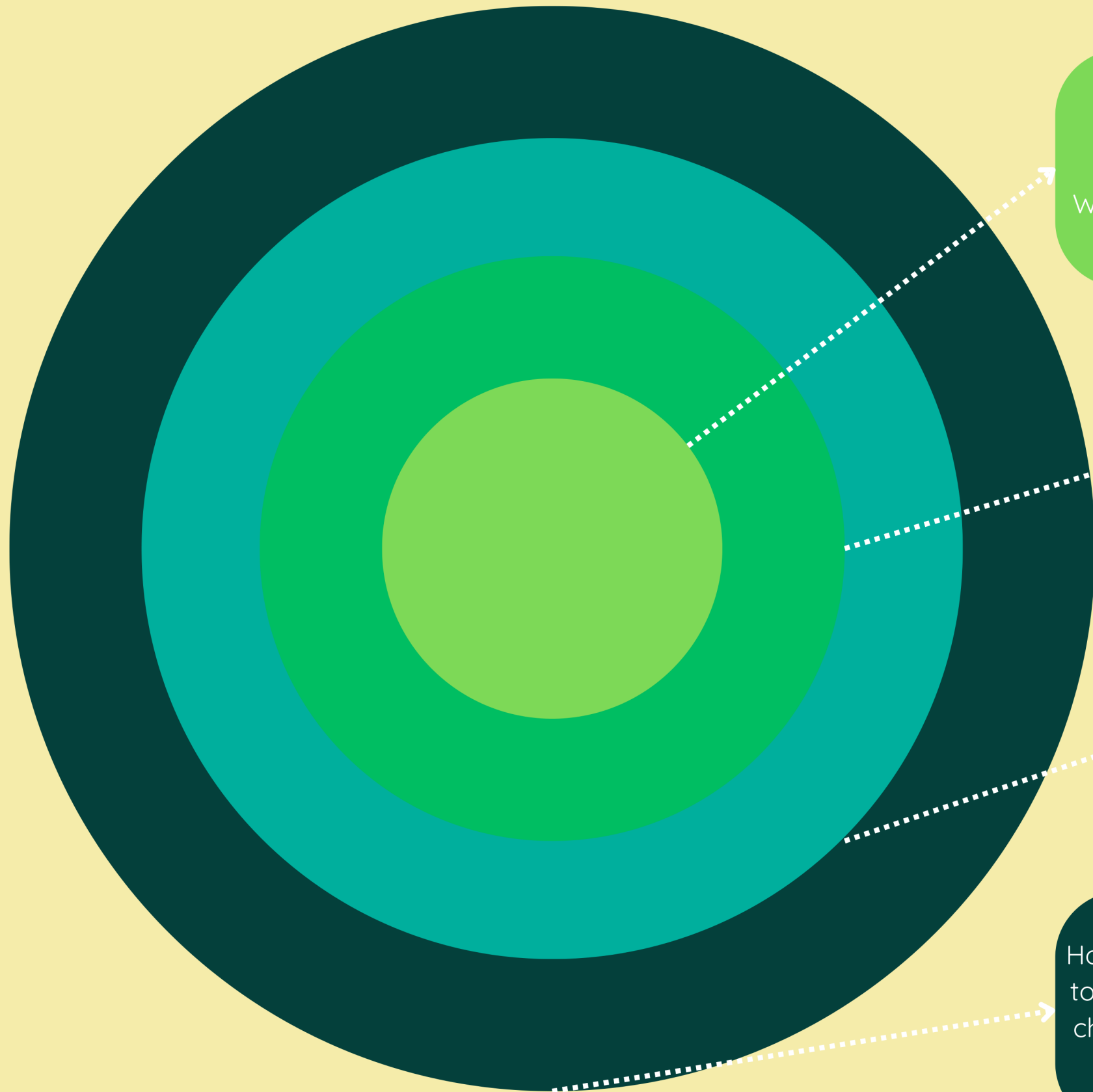
What is currently being done to address the challenge?
What can you do to disrupt the status quo and therefore combat the challenge?
(Reflection and evaluation)

TEMPLATE 2

INTENT:
What is the intent of the collaborative innovation project?
What are the values, goals, and mindsets of you and other innovators who are shaping the innovation?

DESIGN:
What are the 'rules of this project' and who decided them (e.g., who is included / excluded and why, what is considered "normal", what is / is not allowed, what is the language used, what are the prevalent beliefs about what types of knowledge and information are valid, etc)?
Where is the information flowing from? Who has the power to evolve and adapt these flows?
What are the lines of accountability and feedback loops?

FEEDBACK & IMPACT:
How do the 'rules of this project' impact behaviour and participation of a) those involved, and b) intended recipients and beneficiaries?
How might the rules shape the sense of safety, transparency, and connection you wish to create and sustain through your innovation'?

ECOSYSTEM ADJUSTMENTS:
How have different stakeholders been invited to participate and how could these invitations be adjusted to be more inclusive and mitigate the negative impacts noted above (e.g., change spending, make staff changes, increase incentives, increase resource capacity, conduct renewed stakeholder mapping, etc)?
How can you include and assign roles to make those not previously represented to make them feel 'seen', understood, and empowered through participating in your innovation?

CONGRATS!

You have finished your reflection canvas.