

Registers of Scotland

RoS Board

14 December 2021

BACK-BRIEF: Board 2024+ Ideation Workshop

Purpose

1. To provide a back-brief to the Board on the development of the Future-Focused 2024+ work.

Background

2. In June, the Board was updated on work now underway to plan for 2024+, once the Corporate Plan has been delivered and RoS starts to move into a new phase. Foundation-building for future activities needs to be factored in as part of business development activity over the next couple of years.

3. The Board has seen a paper from the Keeper on a proposed filtering process to assess future ideas for their appropriateness and viability. Linked to this work is the requirement for a set of possibilities to feed into the 'hopper'. A future business-opportunity ideation workshop was piloted with the Board on 15 September, and run again with the ARC. These workshops asked participants to think wide about possible future business opportunities for RoS, and aimed to generate a volume of ideas that could then be refined down to a set for further assessment.

4. The ideas generated from the initial ideation workshops have been used to test and further refine the down-selection process. This process will then be used more extensively to filter the much larger number of ideas that it is anticipated will be generated from repeating the ideas generation workshop with a wider number of stakeholder groups.

Learning so far From Initial Work around Generating and Filtering Ideas

5. The two workshops so far have generated very useful learning for the onwards development of this work.

6. The workshops generated quite different types of ideas, suggesting the process works to generate a range of ideas. A theme emerged in the Board session around the needs of the ageing population, whereas more of an environmental sustainability theme emerged in the ARC session. There were also clusters of ideas around planning, and the virtual economy.

7. The virtual sessions achieved their aim, in terms of being structured and focused to generate efficiently a high volume of ideas. There were nearly a hundred in each session, though to varying degrees of articulation). However, there are challenges to running such workshops online, given not just practicalities around technological support, but losing the sparking-off each other from conversational flow. Observations were also made about the impact on ideation of working more individually (e.g., on posting up Miro tickets) rather than using Teams to stimulate thinking more interactively, building on ideas from other people's contributions and sparking off conversation (viz the iced-up powerlines example). Conditions allowing, a mix of both online and face-to-face workshoping might be better.

8. Session length is definitely an issue: an hour is very short, and it wasn't possible to do much review of ideas generated in each round, let alone any interactive iteration. The mechanism used for review might also have an impact, e.g., if there is something about hearing things spoken out loud, rather than just reading words (similarly, visual representations might be interesting lenses to get refraction too).

9. The ideas captured in each session were articulated to varying degrees. Ideally they would all be in the form of coherent sentences summarising the problem statement or product/service idea. A trial filtering was carried out on the Board outputs, and this generated useful learning, for example around clustering ideas before starting filtering - e.g., by sectoral or functional themes – environment / advisory etc – and grouping very similar things. Further thinking will be done around these. At this stage the aim is to stay in the initial divergent phase of the service-design ‘double diamond’ but potentially future workshops could be run thematically to build on earlier rounds of ideation. Another option is to run the ideation workshops as two halves; one with the blank canvas, then one as a ‘closed card’ sort (sorting ideas within themes and coming up with further ideas)

10. The intention is to run this process something along ‘talent show’ lines, with ‘rough diamonds’ coming through the process and getting refined as they go. However, a high bar should be set to giving something a Yes when tested against the principles. There may be ‘show-stoppers’ too (e.g., around data ethics, or where close collaboration with other organisation would be required).

Next Steps

11. In light of the experience of the pilot workshops, further similar ideation workshops will be developed and run with other groups, particularly to include wider RoS colleagues (with PCS made fully aware of the opportunities being developed). The opportunities to be involved in post 2024+ thinking will be trailed with colleagues through the upcoming Corporate plan review webinar and the forthcoming Big Picture webinars.

12. The RoS Innovation team will be approached to take forward the development of the next rounds and develop a timetable (anticipating that work will continue over the remainder of this financial year). As well as internal colleagues, it may also be appropriate to look at running the ideation workshop with Geovation alumni and current participants, as a group of stakeholders with a degree of ‘internal-ness’ as well as by their nature an entrepreneurial outlook.

13. The filters covered in the Keeper’s paper will be developed further in light of feedback to then use on the workshop-generated ideas.

14. Any ideas which have successfully passed all stages of the down-selection process will be discussed as part of the Corporate Planning workshop in January 2022, and reflected in the Corporate Plan 2022-2027 as appropriate.

15. The Board will then receive a fuller update next summer when we would expect to be able to start to bring proposals for any ideas that could be genuine candidates for 2024 and will therefore need to be reflected in the 2023-2028 CP.

Conclusion

16. The Board is invited to note this update and continue to provide additional observations and suggestions relating to our 2024+ work through the various ongoing monthly NXD/EMT discussions or by correspondence.

Internal consultant | Data & Finance
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