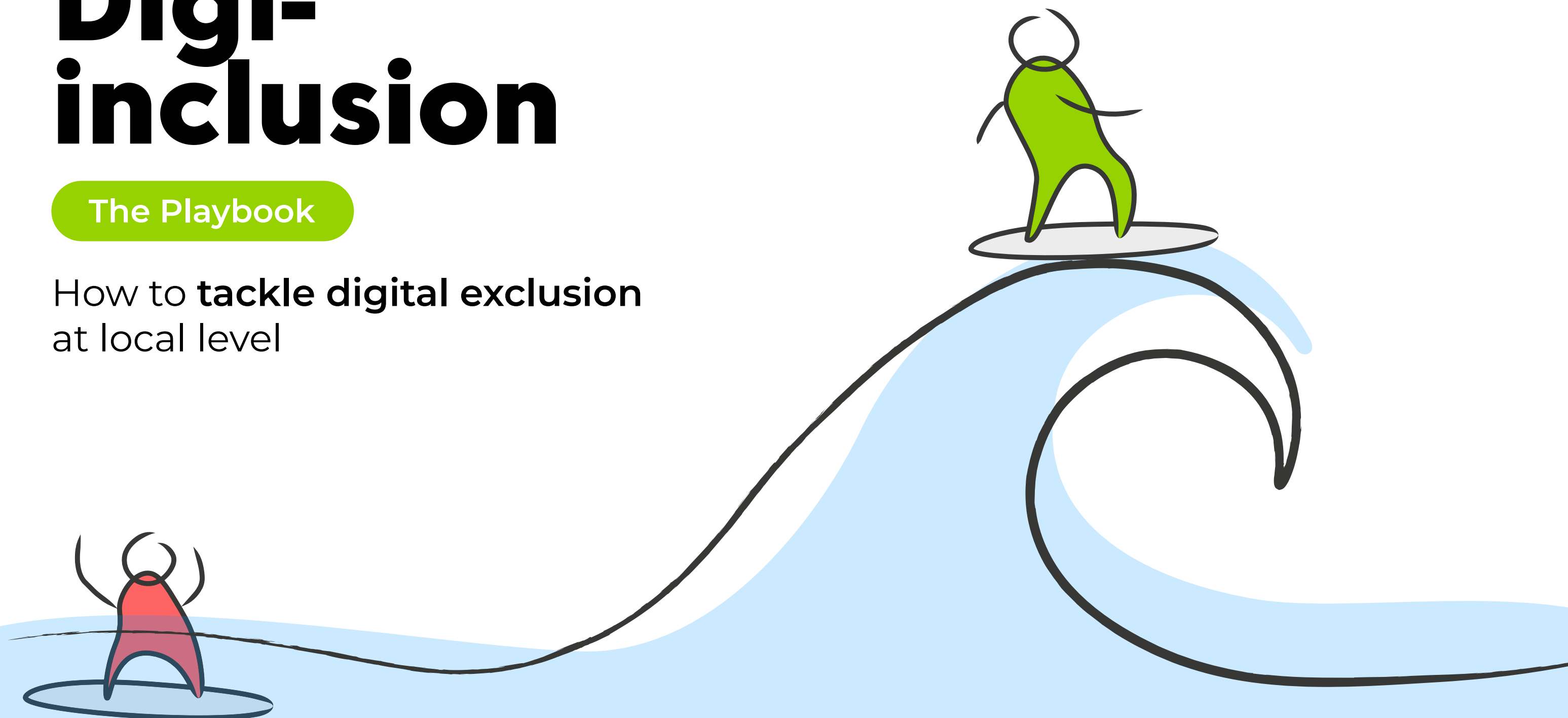


# Digi- inclusion

## The Playbook

How to **tackle** digital exclusion  
at local level



URBACT



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg

# What is the “Digi-inclusion Playbook” and how to use it

The Digi-inclusion Playbook is designed to support cities and other local and regional authorities to tackle digital exclusion in their communities. It is a key output of the URBACT-supported ‘Digi-inclusion’ network of cities that worked 2023-2025 to exchange and learn on how cities can help their residents to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital world.

Regardless of your experience on the topic, there should be useful content that can help you, organised into four main areas:

## Part 1. What is digital exclusion

Knowing what digital exclusion means, how it manifests at local level, and what causes it, including new models for how to think about and approach it.

**A ‘theoretical’ explanation** of digital exclusion and the digital divide, to help you to understand and think about the topic in a more nuanced way.

## Part 2. A new Framework for tackling digital exclusion

Linking our new models with key Dimensions of practice that help build an integrated approach to tackling digital exclusion.

Our new **Digi-inclusion Framework** – a new way to think about digital exclusion strategically and holistically, and take an integrated approach to tackling it at local level.

## Part 3. The Plays: refine your approach to local Digital exclusion

Refining your understanding of who is excluded and how, what is already happening locally and who the main stakeholders are to engage with.

*Our Digi-inclusion “Plays” – a menu of practical steps, methods and tools that can help develop your approach to understanding and tackling digital exclusion in your territory.*

## Part 4. Tackling Digital exclusion in practice

Real life stories from the Digi-inclusion network and beyond, to provide some examples of how this approach can be used in practice and what that could look like.

*These real case examples illustrate the activity and link the theory and practice from cities and authorities across Europe.*

You can dip into any part of the Playbook - each of the sections can stand alone. However, they work best when considered together, particularly if you are new to the topic.

You can benefit from working through it in sequence, first building understanding of the topic, then seeing how to approach it, then seeing how that can work in practice via examples. If you are more familiar, you can pick and choose which parts are most useful for you.

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## Part 1:

# What is digital exclusion?

### An introduction to digital exclusion

Digital exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are unable to take advantage of the digital tools and services being used by others.

Whilst the 'digital divide' describes the gap between those with and without access to digital technologies, 'digital exclusion' focuses on the lived consequences of being on the wrong side of that gap.

Digital exclusion can limit a person's ability to: work or apply for jobs; access education, healthcare and financial services; stay connected socially; and participate in civic life. Digital exclusion is directly linked with broader social and economic inequalities.

The ongoing digital transition is not a solution to digital exclusion. Rather, digital exclusion is shaped by the rapid emergence of digital technologies. The more tools and services become **digitalised**, the more people risk being left behind by the pace of change (see the "Wave of Digitalisation" below).

This first Part of the Playbook combines established digital exclusion principles with new knowledge, models and insights developed during the Digi-inclusion project.

## Established risks factors for digital exclusion

A literature review conducted as part of the URBACT Digi-inclusion network found that the research is quite clear that certain groups are consistently at higher risk of digital exclusion. The most commonly identified at-risk groups are:

- Low-income groups (including the unemployed)
- People with low educational attainment
- Older people
- Residents of isolated (rural) communities
- People with disabilities
- Migrants

Being in one of these groups does not guarantee digital exclusion, but it does increase the likelihood - especially when factors overlap (e.g. older people in rural areas, or unemployed people with disabilities).

However, understanding these risk factors does not help us to understand the reality of digital exclusion (how it manifests) or the causes of digital exclusion.

From the work of the Digi-inclusion network, we found that a helpful way to understand how people experience digital exclusion is to think of different profiles along a metaphorical 'Wave of Digitalisation' sweeping through society.



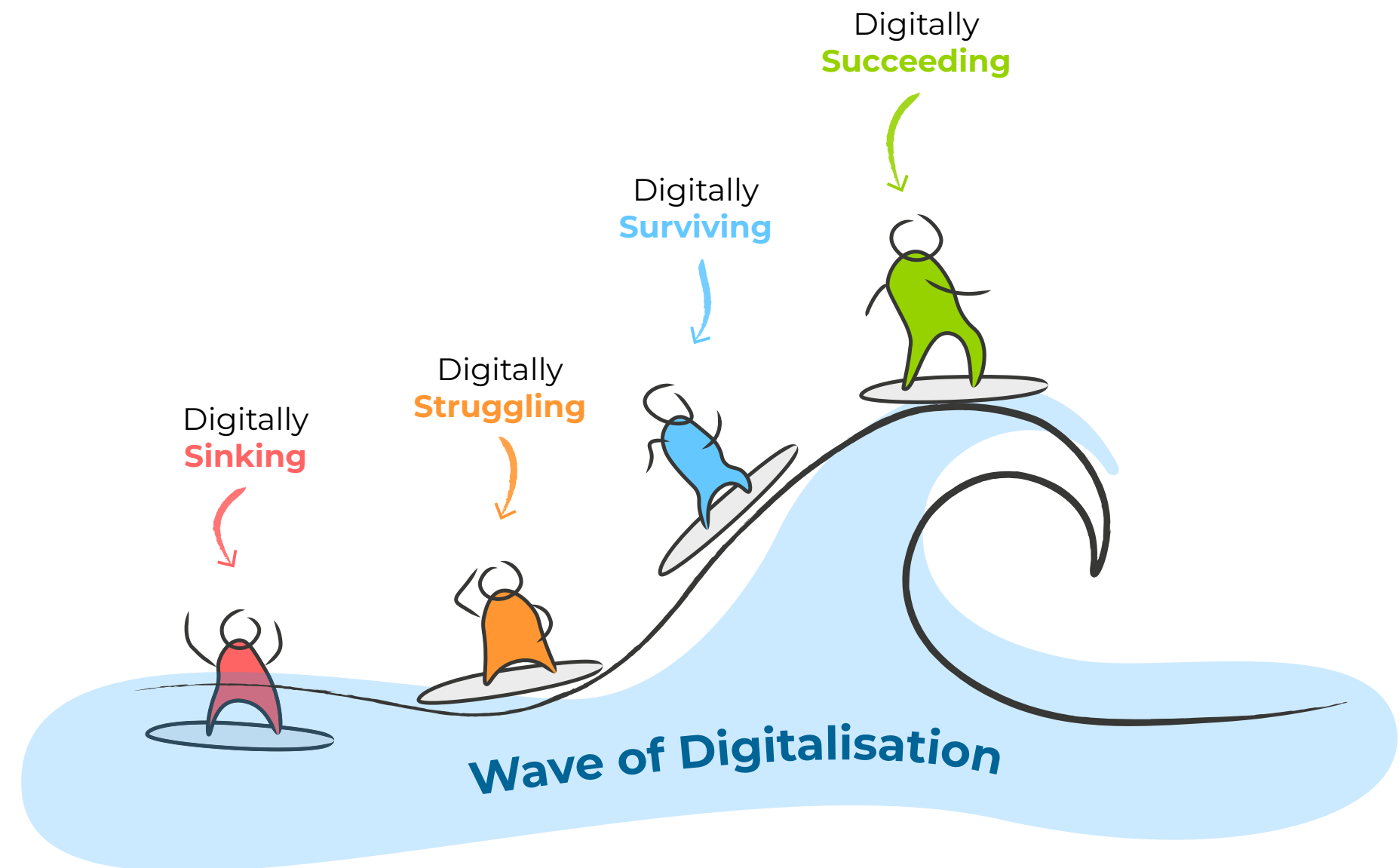
## The 'Wave of Digitalisation' and our four user profiles

If we imagine the digital transition as a 'Wave of Digitalisation' sweeping through society, we can understand that individuals cannot stop the Wave. What will determine their outcomes in relation to the digital transition is their ability to 'surf' the Wave - making use of it to support them and add value to their lives.

The reality for many is that they are struggling to keep up as the Wave sweeps along. People can even end up being left behind entirely.

In our visual, we show four broad 'profiles' of people on the Wave, as generalisations to illustrate the way different people experience digital inclusion/exclusion.

This visual metaphor can help us to understand that digital exclusion is experienced on a spectrum and not only by those who have been totally left behind by the Wave of Digitalisation. We will use this metaphor throughout the Playbook to help explain aspects of digital exclusion and how this exclusion can be thought about and addressed.



## The 3 manifestations of digital exclusion

Digital exclusion is complex, nuanced, relative and evolving. It cannot be reduced to one simple test or indicator and can be hard to identify precisely. However, digital exclusion reveals itself in three main ways:

### 1. INFREQUENT ACCESS

Someone using the internet once a week is experiencing a form of digital exclusion compared to someone who is online every day. The same for someone online for half an hour a day compared to someone online for 8 hours a day.

### 2. NARROW USE

A more subtle form of exclusion is seen in terms of what people do online. Someone who only accesses the internet to scroll social media or stream videos is more digitally excluded than someone who uses their online time also to work, shop and book appointments – even if the more excluded person is online for more time.

### 3. LIMITED OUTCOMES

Finally, people can experience digital exclusion in terms of limitations in the outcomes they are able to achieve from their digital use. This can be the hardest to identify or measure, but can even affect people who are frequently online and demonstrating a variety of uses. That use may simply not translate into successful outcomes in the way it might for others.

## The 4 barriers of digital exclusion

We have seen that digital exclusion reveals itself as infrequent access, narrow use and/or limited outcomes. However, these manifestations of digital exclusion tell us nothing about their underlying causes.

The work of the Digi-inclusion network – building on existing research – has identified four main barriers that drive exclusion:

**1. ACCESS barriers** - difficulties getting connected to digital tools and services

**2. USABILITY barriers** – difficulties using digital tools and services effectively

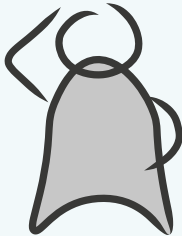
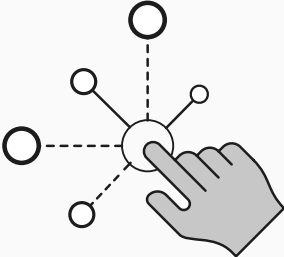
**3. USEFULNESS barriers** – difficulties deriving value from digital tools and services

**4. TRUST barriers** – difficulties relying on digital tools and services to be safe

Each barrier has both an individual side (what people lack) and a system side (what the digital environment fails to provide). This results in an understanding of the causes of digital exclusion in terms of 8 aspects. We can combine these aspects into one causality matrix of the 8 aspects – ‘The 8 Causes Matrix’.

The 8 Causes Matrix

The 8 Causes Matrix shows the relationship between the causes of digital exclusion and what they mean for people. Each of the 8 casual aspects is something that is lacking, and represents the intersection of the individual or the systemic Dimension with one of the four types of barrier to digital inclusion.

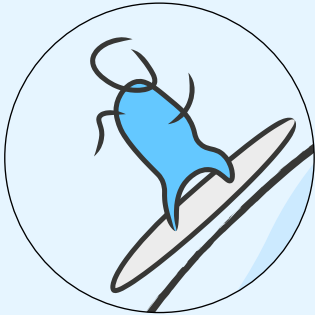
| <br>Individuals lack | Barriers in terms of | <br>The digital world is not |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| #1 Resources to access the system<br><i>"I can't afford to buy that..."</i>                             | Access               | #5 Available or affordable<br><i>Lack of broadband access or high costs of equipment</i>                        |
| #2 Skills to use digital systems<br><i>"I don't know how to do that..."</i>                             | Usability            | #6 Easy to use<br><i>Lack of good design or accessible interfaces</i>                                           |
| #3 Motivation to use what the system offers<br><i>"I see nothing useful for me..."</i>                  | Usefulness           | #7 Offering added value to people<br><i>Apps and systems don't match wants or needs</i>                         |
| #4 Confidence in the system being safe<br><i>"What if it goes wrong...?"</i>                            | Trustworthiness      | #8 Secure or safe<br><i>Cyber security risks, data breaches, scams, fake news, trolling</i>                     |

Understanding the reality of digital exclusion through our four user profiles

We can use the previous section to consider how digital exclusion manifests for each of the four different user profiles, and consider the typical sorts of causes of digital exclusion for each profile in practice.

| User profile                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Manifestations                                                                                                                                                             | Causes                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div></div> <div><b>Digitally sinking</b></div> <div><b>Barrier pattern</b><br/>All four barriers may be strong and compounding</div> | <b>Frequency of access</b><br>Potentially never use the internet, or infrequently                                                                                          | <b>Access barriers</b><br>Little or no connection. Possibly cannot afford or obtain devices or broadband                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Breadth of use</b><br>If has access, may be limited to very basic forms of usage, such reading a website, or watching videos, but may be still have trouble using these | <b>Usability barriers</b><br>Minimal skills; struggles even with basic tasks                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Extent of outcomes</b><br>Likely has limited or no useful outcomes, beyond maybe some limited transaction. May also need support to achieve this                        | <b>Usefulness barriers</b><br>Motivation could vary, with some wishing to be more connected, whilst others see little attraction in the digital world |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Trust barriers</b><br>Perception and lack of understanding of system risks discourage use                                                          |

| User profile                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Manifestations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Causes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div></div> <div><b>Digitally struggling</b></div> <div><b>Barrier pattern</b><br/>Access + usability dominate, but usefulness and trust can also hold them back</div> | <div><b>Frequency of access</b><br/>Goes online occasionally but not consistently</div> <div><b>Breadth of use</b><br/>Uses a narrow range of tools and services they have learnt (e.g. a few websites, messaging tools, simple browsing) but not able to freely create new accounts or use new tools/services without support</div> <div><b>Extent of outcomes</b><br/>Benefits are modest, such as basic communication or entertainment, with limited ability to improve opportunities</div> | <div><b>Access barriers</b><br/>Potentially limited/unreliable connection (e.g. shared and/or old devices, poor broadband, limited data plans etc.)</div> <div><b>Usability barriers</b><br/>Basic skills only. Not able to use new tools/services and may struggle with new updates to apps they use</div> <div><b>Usefulness barriers</b><br/>Could vary, with some wishing to have greater access, whilst others are unsure how digital tools could benefit them more</div> <div><b>Trust barriers</b><br/>Wary of scams or errors which deters deeper engagement; avoids sensitive activities (e.g. online banking)</div> |

| User profile                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Manifestations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Causes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div></div> <div><b>Digitally surviving</b></div> <div><b>Barrier pattern</b><br/>Access mostly overcome, but usability + usefulness gaps limit outcomes; trust issues remain situational</div> | <div><b>Frequency of access</b><br/>Has regular (daily) internet access</div> <div><b>Breadth of use</b><br/>Engages with a broad mix of activities (e.g. shopping, banking, accessing services) and probably uses some digital tools at work. But take up of new tools and services can be slow</div> <div><b>Extent of outcomes</b><br/>Gains practical benefits personally and professionally but can also see that others are able to do and achieve more and more easily</div> | <div><b>Access barriers</b><br/>Stable access, often via multiple devices and connections</div> <div><b>Usability barriers</b><br/>Can use a range of tools, but skills and confidence are uneven, particularly with new apps or services</div> <div><b>Usefulness barriers</b><br/>Sees quality of life increases from use of digital services (information, shopping, banking, work) but often within a set range of mainstream tools that they have (slowly) become used to</div> <div><b>Trust barriers</b><br/>Some concerns about privacy and safety; cautious with new tools</div> |

| User profile                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Manifestations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Causes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div></div> <div><b>Digitally succeeding</b></div> <div><b>Barrier pattern</b><br/>Individual barriers largely overcome, but system-side failures (security, misinformation, exclusionary design) can still affect them</div> | <div><b>Frequency of access</b><br/>Regular use: hourly, rather than daily</div> <div><b>Breadth of use</b><br/>Comfortable using a wide range of digital tools for work, learning, services, communication, and leisure, including advanced tools. At ease using new tools and services without instruction</div> <div><b>Extent of outcomes</b><br/>Achieves strong benefits: career opportunities, efficient service access, rich social connections, and active civic participation</div> | <div><b>Access barriers</b><br/>Reliable access via multiple devices and connections</div> <div><b>Usability barriers</b><br/>Confident with a wide range of tools, learns new ones easily</div> <div><b>Usefulness barriers</b><br/>Consistently finds value and interested in new services and opportunities in work, services, civic life</div> <div><b>Trust barriers</b><br/>High confidence; but still potentially exposed to systemic risks (cybersecurity, misinformation)</div> |

### Starting to think about solutions to digital exclusion

The Wave of Digitalisation and our four user profiles are helpful for understanding and thinking about digital exclusion and its complexity. We can hopefully see that exclusion is experienced on a spectrum and that it is not a static experience. A person's experience of digital exclusion can evolve and be situational.

We can also see from our user profiles that there is no simple correlation between the causes of digital exclusion and its manifestations. Two people may access digital tools in similarly limited ways, but for very different reasons.

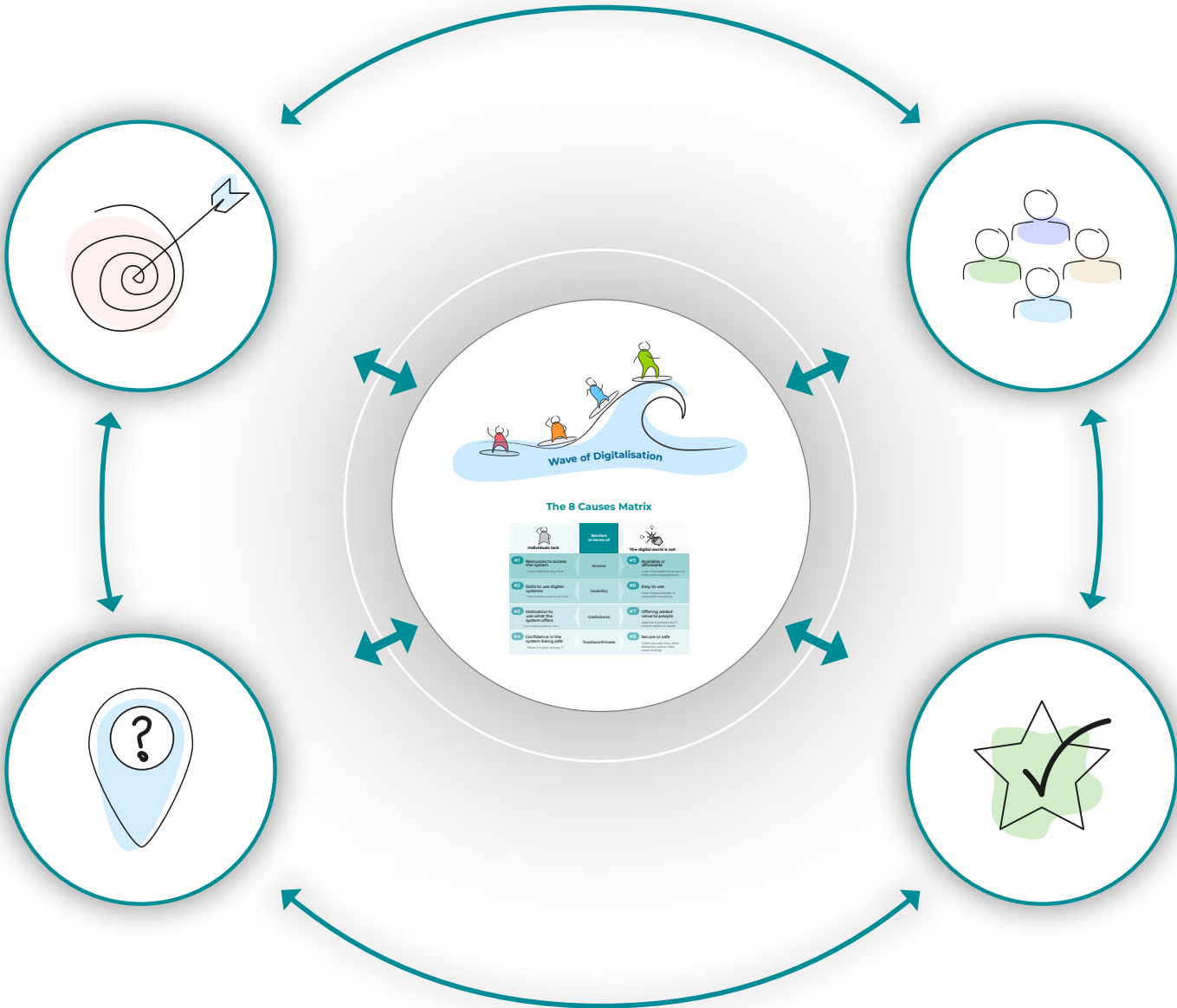
However, this understanding is only the starting point for thinking about how to tackle digital exclusion in practice.

In Part 2 of the Playbook, we present our recommended approach for turning this understanding into tailor-made approaches to tackling digital exclusion at local level.

Specifically, we present a Framework that takes account of the complementary need to make progress in terms of:

- Strategy and objective setting
- Building an ecosystem approach
- Better understanding local needs
- Designing and improving interventions

We invite you to dig into the Playbook to help you think about where and how to make progress, and which 'Plays' might be best adapted to helping you make progress and take your next crucial steps in tackling digital exclusion at local level!



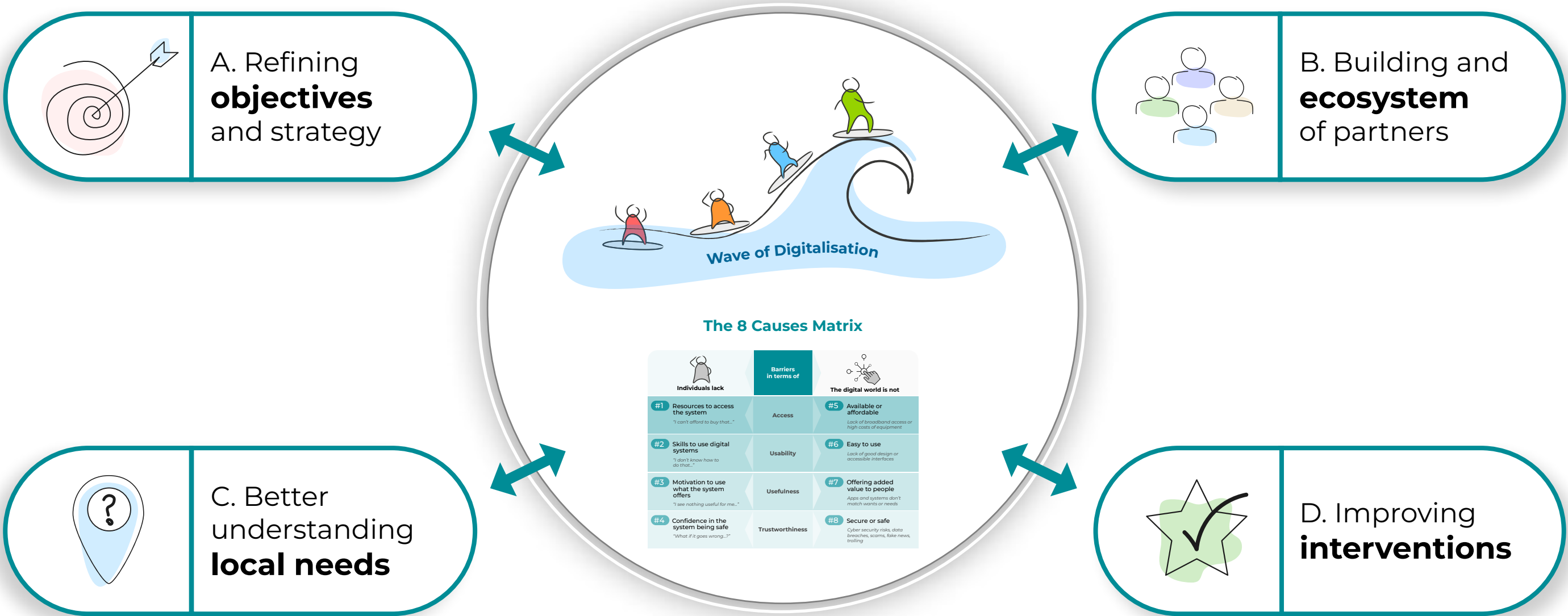
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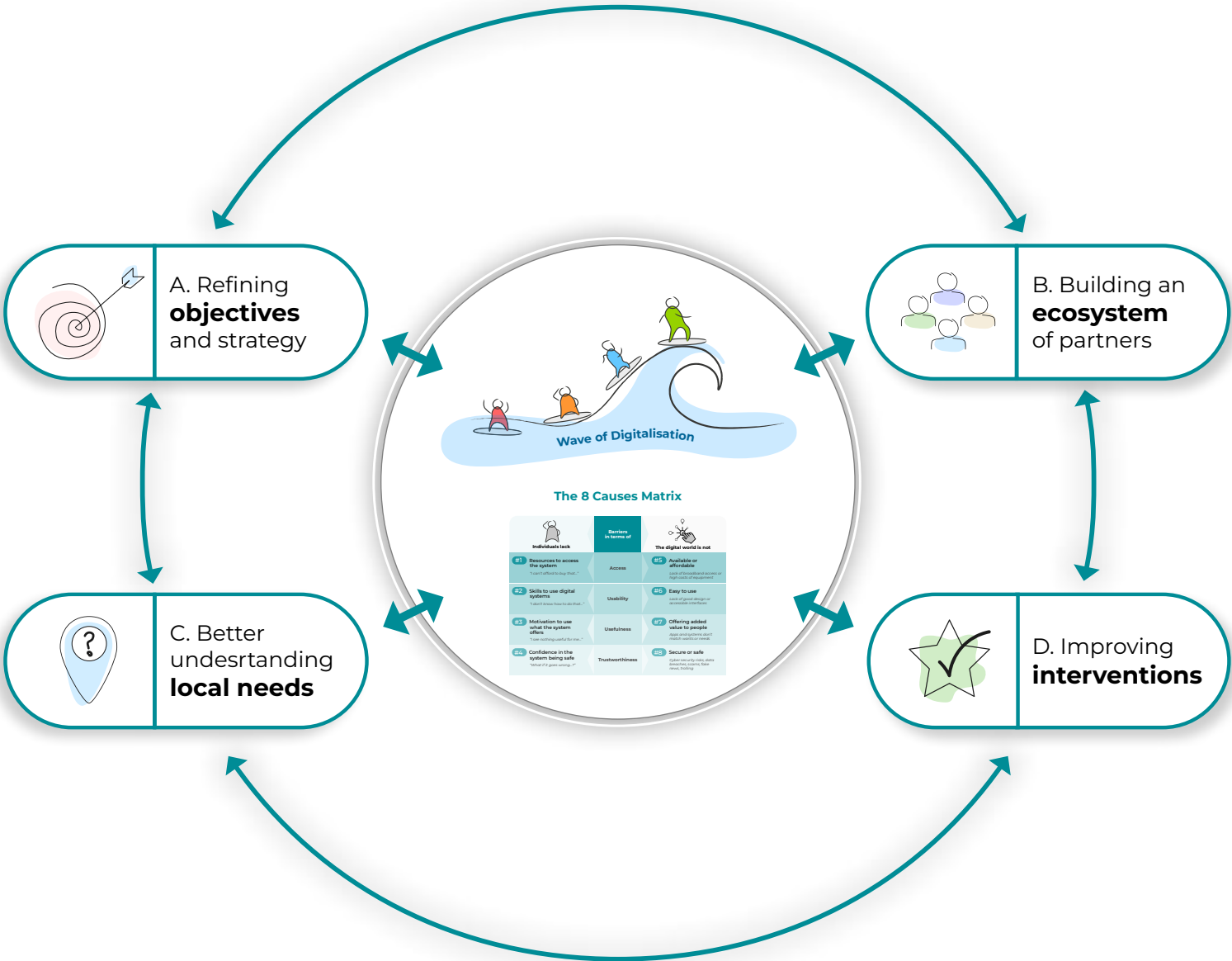
A new Framework  
for tackling digital  
exclusion

The Digi-inclusion Framework

The Digi-inclusion Framework is comprised of:

- 1. **Two complementary models for understanding digital exclusion:** the ‘Wave of Digitalisation’ (Wave) and the ‘8 Causes Matrix’ which together support the development of your understanding and overall approach to digital exclusion.
- 2. **Four inter-related ‘Dimensions’ of addressing digital exclusion in a strategic and holistic way:** A: Objectives, B: Ecosystem; C: Local needs; D: Interventions.

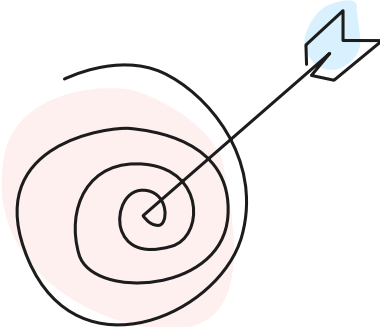




The Wave and the 8 Causes Matrix support the four Dimensions in a reciprocal way – each Dimension can be strengthened by using the Wave and the Causes Matrix in a variety of ways; and each Dimension provides content and insights that can support the development of other Dimensions at the same time. The four Dimensions may be familiar concepts, however it is important to understand how they relate specifically to tackling digital exclusion at local level, and how they work together in this context.

A core principle of the Digi-inclusion Framework is that the process for analysing digital exclusion and tackling it at local level is not a linear process – there is not one simple, sequential set of steps to take. All four Dimensions of the Framework need to be developed in parallel and/or iteratively. We offer the Wave and 8 Causes Matrix as useful tools for strengthening these Dimensions in a holistic and integrated way.

A. Refining **objectives** and strategy



Principle

Having clearly defined objectives for your digital inclusion work, which inform a holistic and coherent strategy, is important for tackling the challenge systematically and not in silos. Equally, refining your objectives as a conscious act can be beneficial, enabling you to rethink where resources should be targeted and how to have the most positive impact.

Description

It is easy to assume that objectives should be just about targeting groups that are already digitally sinking, but there can be value in having a more nuanced approach. Thinking about needs of diverse user groups whose digital exclusion might not be so obvious can bring new insights and highlight gaps in the support offered.

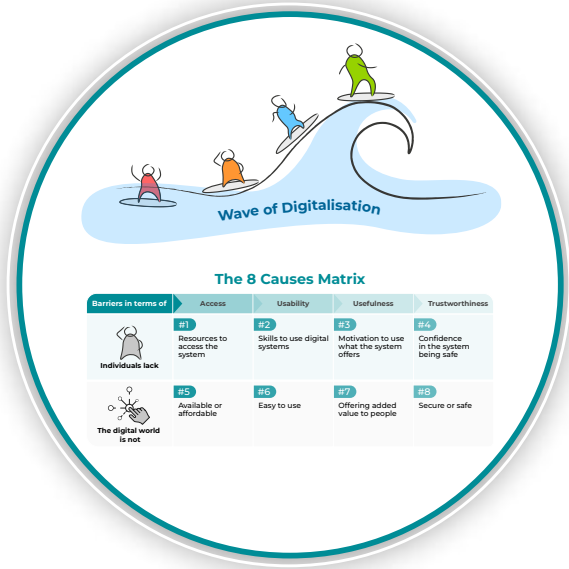
At the same time, many digital inclusion interventions end up being reactive, in response to observed or anecdotal needs. Whilst this can be of benefit to those individuals involved, it sometimes doesn't address the root causes of exclusion, and/or doesn't align with the overall strategy and priorities of the city. This leads to resource inefficiency and interventions that don't align with priorities or needs. Ensuring clear objectives, including knowing your target groups, areas of focus, and how these link to wider local strategy is key to success.

Strengthening this Dimension

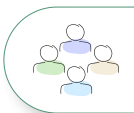
The Wave and Matrix offer a unique way to think in new ways about digital exclusion, refine your digital inclusion objectives, and to consider an integrated approach to your strategy in a more holistic way.

Plays that support this include:

- Use the wave model to reassess your strategic approaches (Play A.1)
- Use the 8 causes matrix to assess your strategic approach (Play A.2)



Drawing on the other Dimensions



Ecosystem

Involve local stakeholders in the development of strategy and objectives in a participatory way.



Local needs

Local needs and data relating to them can be important to inform your strategy development.

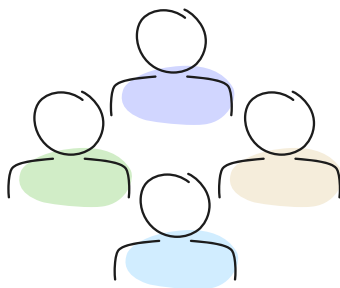


Interventions

Make sure you strategy takes into account what is already happening and where the gaps are in support.

The Four Dimensions of tackling digital inclusion

B. Building an **ecosystem** of partners



Principle

In practice, digital exclusion cannot be tackled by just one organisation or one department – you need to develop and maintain a networked ecosystem of partners and stakeholders to be able to deliver holistic digital inclusion support.

Description

In territories where we don't know the full range of people and organisations who are already working on digital inclusion, there is a high risk of piecemeal interventions, duplications of effort, and missing out on the capacity and expertise of those who may be able to help. This means it is both hard to build a full picture of the state of Play in the territory, and also to respond to the local challenges effectively. We need a good view of the whole ecosystem, and to have supporting local stakeholders and delivery partners that are working together to be more aware of each other. This means that needs can be identified better, resources can be deployed more effectively and efficiently, and the impact of the total set of interventions be increased.

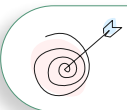
Strengthening this Dimension

Developing your digital inclusion ecosystem can start with the existing activities, or by understanding which target groups are already being supported.

Plays that can support this include

- Map the ecosystem of providers (Play B.1)
- Bring together the ecosystem of providers (Play B.2)
- Sign a local agreement (Play B.3)

Drawing on the other Dimensions



Objectives  
and strategy

Use your strategy and objectives to identify which (types of) organisations are working with your target groups or in the relevant areas etc.



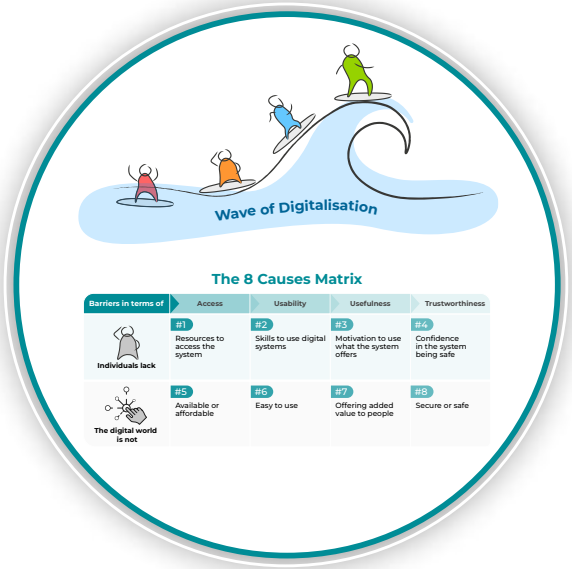
Local needs

Look at which groups need support in your territory and use that to search for organisations that are (maybe) already working with these groups.



Interventions

Look at which interventions are already happening and approach the stakeholders involved



C. Better understanding local needs



Principle

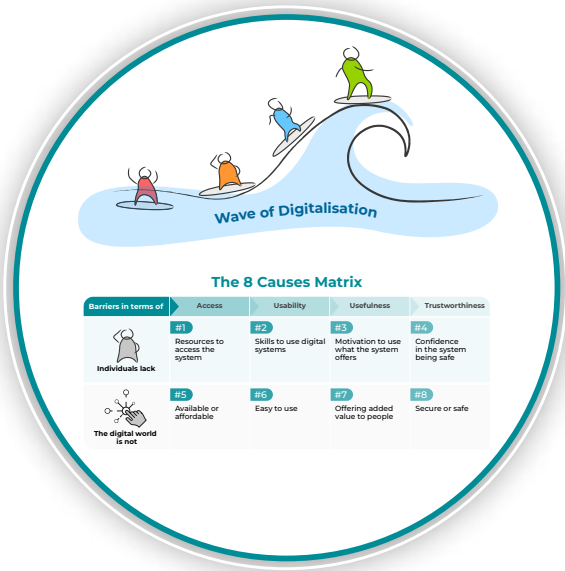
Better understanding local needs and the nature of local digital exclusions is valuable to be able to develop a more focused and impactful response, and is essential to be able to target interventions at the most relevant issues and groups.

Description

Tackling digital exclusion means addressing local needs, but it can be hard to get a clear picture of these; often the data doesn't exist and/or is difficult and expensive to obtain and keep up to date.

Strengthening this Dimension

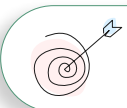
Gather data and insights to gain a better understanding of the local digital inclusion needs. Using the Wave can help to provide additional nuance and focus to the data collection, as can investigating causes of digital exclusion in terms of the 8 Causes Matrix.



Plays that can support this include:

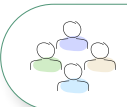
- Review and analyse existing data (Play C.1)
- Create spatial maps (Play C.2)
- Conduct a broad survey (Play C.3)
- Run targeted surveys (Play C.4)
- Facilitate targeted focus groups (Play C.5)
- Using personas for a better understanding of local at-risk profiles (Play C.6)

Drawing on the other Dimensions



Objectives and strategy

Consider your strategy / objectives to focus your research and data gathering activity on the priority areas



Ecosystem

Local stakeholders and delivery partners can also help provide better insights or share data



Interventions

Use data and insights gained from interventions that are happening already to add to your set of available information

D. Improving interventions



Principle

Understanding what activities are already happening, who they target and impact, and which of the 8 Causes they addresses are all key to aligning the response - having good understanding of the landscape of interventions, the added value of individual interventions, and the gaps in the offer.

Description

The interventions you and partners make in your city are the core way you support people suffering from digital exclusion and adapt the system to be more inclusive for them. However, interventions can often happen in isolation from one another, and are sometimes not contributing to the overall approach in the more suitable ways.

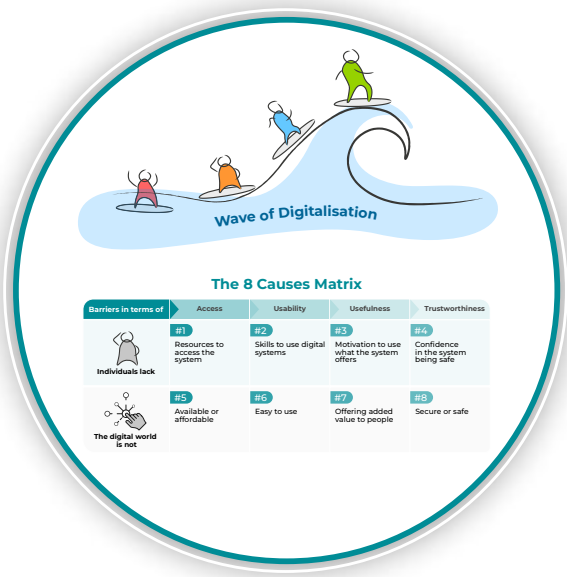
Aim to be clear which Dimensions an intervention is trying to address, understand which profiles are being targetted, how an intervention impacts them, and if/how it meets their needs. Ensure data and insights from interventions is gathered and fed into the system to drive future strategy. Consider how interventions combine and/or work together to support your aims.

Strengthening this Dimension

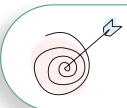
Improve your understanding of interventions that are already happening, and identify gaps to be filled by implementing new interventions.

Plays that can support this include:

- Just start taking action (Play D.1)
- Map the range of current interventions (Play D.2)
- Assess individual interventions (Play D.3)
- Use the 8 Causes Matrix to assess the current landscape of interventions (Play D.4)
- Use the wave to visualise the current landscape of interventions (Play D.5)

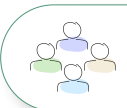


Drawing on the other Dimensions to help



Objectives and strategy

Assess the landscape of current interventions against your objectives and desired impact.



Ecosystem

Work with stakeholders to understand what interventions are currently happening and with whom; look at the capabilities of stakeholders and where that could help design and deliver new interventions.



Local needs

Use your understanding of the local needs to inform your assessments and compare the landscape of interventions against local needs and target groups.

### Purpose

This simple self-assessment will help you establish where to start when using the Framework and Plays, by identifying which Dimensions are most and least developed in your context.

The reality is that you can start at any point when strengthening your local approach. There are many different entry points into using the Framework to strengthen the four Dimensions. This depends on your circumstances – how developed your strategy is, what your ecosystem is like, how much you have data on local needs, what set of interventions you have etc.

All Dimensions are important. There is no “right” starting place. After the self-assessment you can look at the purpose of each Play to decide if it might be useful for you, and consider if it’s the right moment for it.

### Considerations

- You could collaborate with any existing teams and stakeholders when doing this, to get a shared picture.
- You could also start by asking stakeholders to do the self-assessment separately and then come together to compare results, and explore where the assessments are similar and where different. This could give interesting insights.
- Use the answers and scoring to decide which Dimensions you should look at strengthening first, using the Plays.

- This self-assessment is designed to give you a quick overview on where the biggest gains may be found. The least developed Dimension is the obvious place to start, but discuss this locally and consider any extra local factors that are not included in the self-assessment. It is intended as a quick way to get some structured insights, as inputs into the decision-making process.

### Self-Assessment Process

Each Dimension has six statements. Read and consider each statement and decide how much you would agree with it in your local context. Score each statement between 1 and 5 as follows:

**5 = strongly agree**

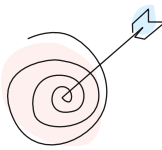
**4 = agree**

**3 = neither agree nor disagree**

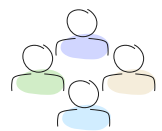
**2 = disagree**

**1 = strongly disagree**

Add up the scores from each set of statements a) to f) to give a score out of 30 for each Dimension. You could plot these on a star/spider diagram (or other chart) for a visual representation. Compare the Dimensions to provide an initial idea about where you may be strongest, and identify which particular Dimension(s) may need more work or may be a better starting point for using the Plays.



| Dimension A – Refining Objective and Strategy                                                                                                                   | Score |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. We have a defined Digital Inclusion <b>Strategy in place</b> already                                                                                         |       |
| b. We know and <b>use the various user profiles</b> in our city when defining our digital inclusion strategy and approach                                       |       |
| c. We have Digital inclusion as a <b>cross-cutting theme in other strategies</b> (e.g. in our smart city strategy or municipal digital transformation strategy) |       |
| d. Our strategy is <b>based on consultation</b> and review with relevant stakeholders                                                                           |       |
| e. Our strategy or approach targets a <b>wide range of profiles</b> (i.e. more than just the most vulnerable or obvious groups)                                 |       |
| f. Our strategy or approach take account of the various <b>causes</b> of digital exclusion locally and makes deliberate decisions about which causes to target  |       |



| Dimension B – Building a Stakeholder Ecosystem                                                                                  | Score |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. We have attempted to <b>map</b> all the service providers active in the field of digital inclusion                           |       |
| b. We are in regular contact with <b>other organisations or departments</b> who provide digital inclusion support or programmes |       |
| c. We deliver some interventions in <b>partnership with others</b> , or as part of a defined network or organisations           |       |
| d. We have <b>identified and addressed gaps</b> in the stakeholder ecosystem                                                    |       |
| e. There is a <b>formal structure agreed partnership for collaboration</b> or coordination of digital inclusion activities      |       |
| f. There is active <b>political support</b> for digital inclusion activities in the city                                        |       |



| Dimension C – Better understanding local needs                                                                        | Score |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. We have reviewed the <b>prevalence of known risk factors</b> in our community                                      |       |
| b. We have <b>sought specific additional data</b> to better understand the scale of local needs                       |       |
| c. We know the <b>specific profiles</b> of who is digitally excluded in the city                                      |       |
| d. We have <b>spoken with key target groups</b> to understand their needs and what barriers they are actually facing. |       |
| e. We regularly <b>share data with/from</b> partner organisations on digital exclusions and local digital needs       |       |
| f. We have <b>mapped spatially</b> the correlation of risk factors and cross referenced it with other data            |       |



| Dimension D – Strengthening Interventions                                                                                                                  | Score |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. We know all the digital inclusion support or <b>interventions</b> that are currently happening in our city                                              |       |
| b. We know <b>which user profiles are targeted</b> by the existing interventions                                                                           |       |
| c. We know <b>which causes of digital exclusion are targeted</b> by the existing interventions                                                             |       |
| d. We are clear about the causes and user profiles that are <b>currently not addressed</b> and/or supported                                                |       |
| e. We know the <b>impact and quality</b> of the existing interventions in the city e.g. through effective monitoring & assessment, or qualitative feedback |       |
| f. We have explored existing databases of <b>good practice</b> for digital inclusion interventions                                                         |       |



Part 3:

“The Plays” – Refine  
your local approach  
to tackling digital  
exclusion

## Introduction to the Plays

On their own, the individual Plays are short interventions that can help with a specific aspect of development. Some draw on common urban development principles, (such as stakeholder working) whereas others are more bespoke to the digital inclusion context, such as those that use the 8 Causes Matrix or the Wave as analysis tools.

Many of the Plays draw on the Wave and Matrix at the heart of our 'new framework for tackling digital exclusion' in subtly different ways to help you develop your approach and strengthen a particular Dimension of your digital inclusion practice. The Wave and Matrix in particular are flexible tools. They can be used and combined in a wide variety of ways, sometimes quite nuanced and complex. As a result, some Plays look quite similar, but have a different focus. For example the Wave is used in Plays in section A to help review a strategic approach, and also in Plays in section D to help review actions in a plan.

The Plays are presented in a common structured format for ease of use and comparison:

### What is the Play?

What is it simply

### Useful for...

Why are we proposing this play? (Purpose + what it gives you - outputs/outcomes)

### Practical tips:

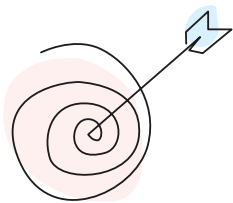
What are the things to do? (How to use it – practical things to do / ways you can use it)

### Take Into Account:

- What to think about? (Considerations)
- Potential pros and cons of using this particular Play

### Illustrative Examples:

- Case examples to help understand what the Play looks like in practice



A. Refining  
Objective and  
Strategy

Play A1

Use the wave model to reassess your strategic approach



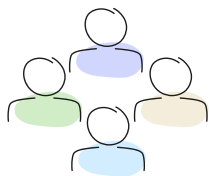
Play A2

Use the 8 causes matrix to assess your strategic approach



Play A3

Use the full Digi-inclusion Framework to assess and strengthen your approach



B. Building a  
Stakeholder  
Ecosystem

Play B1

Map the ecosystem of providers



Play B2

Bring together the ecosystem of providers



Play B3

Sign a local agreement



C. Better  
understanding  
local needs

Play C1

Review and analyse existing data



Play C2

Create spatial maps



Play C3

Conduct a broad survey



Play C4

Run targeted surveys



Play C5

Facilitate targeted focus groups



Play C6

Using personas for a better understanding of local at-risk profiles



D. Strengthening  
Interventions

Play D1

Just start taking action



Play D2

Map the range of current interventions



Play D3

Assess individual interventions



Play D4

Use the 8 Causes Matrix to assess the current landscape of interventions



Play D5

Use the wave to visualise the current landscape of interventions



### Play A1

## Use the wave model to reassess your strategic approach

### What is the Play?

Use the 8 Causes Matrix to assess which causes are targeted by your current strategy or approach and whether it gives the preferred balance for the local situation

### Useful for...

- **Challenging entrenched ways** of thinking about digital exclusion
- **Reframing discussions** with stakeholders and partners
- **Enabling a more nuanced view** of digital exclusion locally, including those groups only partly excluded but still with support needs
- **Starting to create a digital inclusion strategy for the first time**
- **Understanding better** who your local strategy is focussed on, or should focus on

### Practical tips

- Think about how current priorities apply to the model. Look at all four profiles, and identify which groups you are currently focussed on and why. Are any profiles missing from the current strategy?
- Think about what objectives could apply to the different user profiles on the wave. Are local objectives for the different profiles currently clear?
- Use the wave model to identify user profiles that you need to understand better or in more detail (feeding into ‘C. Better Understanding Local Needs’)
- Print the wave out on a large piece of paper to facilitate interactive exercises with stick notes, cards, labels/stickers etc.
- Different people will have different opinions or viewpoints on the different profiles - embrace this and explore the different views... it might lead to new insights!

### Take Into account

- This Play can be used at any point - it can be a useful place to start to start a new way of looking at digital exclusion locally, but also can be revisited at later points to check alignment or to reassess priorities.
- It can be helpful just to explore what insights the Wave gives you, and what questions it raises. Other Plays can then help you to take further action on this.
- You can start with internal team discussions and/or use it with a broader range of stakeholders, including local policy makers or delivery partners.
- Often the focus tends to be on the “digitally sinking” profile, but it is important to consider all the profiles, as others can be equally valid for focus, and sometimes are actually locally just as important.
- Consider also that impact and change can be easier to achieve when working with the digitally struggling and digitally surviving profiles.
- You can use this Play both to review a current approach, and/or to start building a new strategy.

### Illustrative Examples

Mollet del Vallès

TNM

**Play A2**

## Use the 8 causes matrix to assess your strategic approach

**What is the Play?**

Use the 8 Causes Matrix to assess which causes are targeted by your current strategy or approach and whether it gives the preferred balance for the local situation

**Useful for...**

To check if your current strategy is focussed on (all) the causes of digital exclusion in your city and (all) the groups affected, to inform your future strategy. It can give you:

- **A more detailed understanding** of which groups you are targeting already, and importantly, any groups that might have not been considered or have unmet needs.
- **A more nuanced understanding** of the different causes of digital exclusion and how your current approach does/doesn't target these, and whether there is an alternative focus to achieve greater impact.

**Practical tips**

- Work with your team and/or stakeholders to consider each of the 8 causes, and how they manifest digital exclusion in your city for different groups.
- Use the 8 Causes Matrix to think about which causes your strategy / approach focusses on (and why).
- Be clear about the difference between the causes on the ‘individual side’ of the Matrix and those on the ‘system side’ – but also remember that it is not a perfect categorisation and there will be some ‘grey areas’ with crossover.
- Think about which causes you can control, which you can maybe influence, and which you have limited or no control or influence over - design your strategic objectives around targeting the causes you wish to focus on.

**Take Into account**

- It can often be best to start this Play with a small team, before expanding it to include a wider group of stakeholders / partners.
- The Matrix is a thinking tool to help you consider the situation and how the causes manifest in your city, not a hard and fast set of categories with rigid boundaries.
- Think about whether you can achieve better impact for the available resources by focussing your strategy on the areas you can genuinely control of influence.
- It is often a question of political/local priorities about where the focus should sit – it can be valid to target just one of the profiles, or two, or all four. Local discussions and priorities need to determine that choice.
- If you do not have a strategy for digital inclusion yet, consider starting with some of the ‘D’ Plays to review the set of Interventions you currently have in place.

**Illustrative Examples**

Mollet del Vallès

TNM

### Play A3

## Use the full Digi-inclusion Framework to assess and strengthen your approach

### What is the Play?

Assess your priorities, strategic objectives, and broad areas of intervention against both the Wave profiles and the 8 Causes Matrix, to build a complete visual representation of your strategic approach

### Useful for...

- **Visualising** your strategy
- Building a common **strategic overview** with partners and stakeholders
- When you wish to create a **coherent strategy** for your digital inclusion work.
- Crafting a strategy with an **integrated approach** and objectives
- When you have a strategy already but want to **review who it supports** and consider other groups and causes

### Practical tips

- Work with your team and/or stakeholders to consider each wave user profile and the causes that affect them, if and where you have them in your city, and whether they should be (considered as) a focus for your digital inclusion work.
- Use a large printout of the wave to physically map out your objectives and broad areas of intervention.
- Plot the objectives and intervention areas that address the “system-side” causes underneath the wave surface; plot those that address the “individual-side” causes above the wave surface (water under the wave = the changing digital world; above the wave = the people interacting with that changing digital world).
- Draw links and identify gaps in the approach – decide if these need further attention or review.
- Design your strategic objectives around supporting the profiles / target groups and causes you wish to focus on – this provides a basis on which to design specific interventions and actions plans.

### Take Into account

- This Play is easier to use once people are familiar with using both the Wave and the Matrix concepts.
- By combining the wave and matrix and using them together, you can go deeper into the local context and approach and explore this with more nuance and detail.
- The matrix can be broadly overlayed onto the wave when considering everything together: top half of the matrix = above the wave, bottom half of the matrix = below the wave. This can sometimes be helpful to cluster objectives or areas of intervention and hence see the focus and gaps.

### Illustrative Examples

TCB

### Play B1

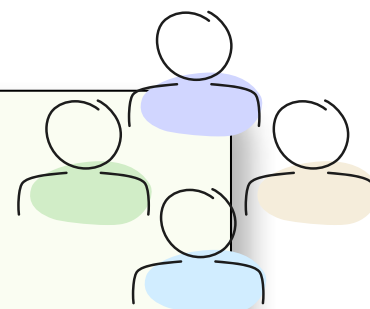
## Map the ecosystem of providers

### What is the Play?

Identify (potential) stakeholders and partners, and use tools to map and analyse all the providers currently working on digital inclusion in your city / territory

### Useful for...

- **Getting an overview** of who is already active on digital inclusion.
- **Visualising** the organisations working across your territory.
- **Identifying gaps** in the ecosystem of providers.
- **Identifying potential duplications** and overlaps in what is already being offered.
- **Preparing to improve collaboration** as part of an enhanced ecosystem approach.



### Practical tips

- This mapping can be geographical (locations) or thematic (types of intervention) or others e.g. using spatial mapping to plot organisations by location, or an ecosystem map to plot the ecosystem, by sector or intervention theme etc.
- This Play is specifically about understanding who is out there – it’s the first step to building an ecosystem of partners.
- Connect with stakeholders to understand their organisation, their main areas of work, and where they are based.
- Use new and existing contacts to find out about others and get introduced.
- Use the opportunity to let them know what you are doing and start to warm them up to being more connected to other work.
- Combine or follow with Play B2, to start to bring stakeholders together.

### Take Into account

- This Play can be enhanced by physically mapping them using GIS or manually, to provide a clearer geographical view of the providers.
- Consider also overlaying different layers of information, e.g. thematic layered over a geographical e.g. their target groups, their types of intervention, their organisation type etc. shown on the map of the territory.
- If you are new to the topic but organisations in the territory are more experienced, consider carefully how you approach them – people can sometimes be suspicious of a municipality’s motivations for suddenly taking an interest!

### Illustrative Examples

Gdańsk, Boulogne-sur-mer

**Play B2**

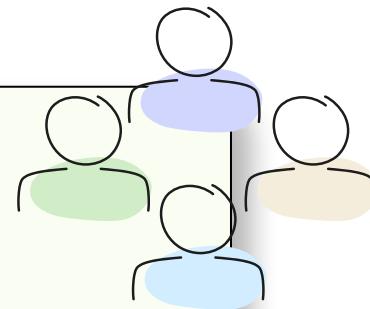
## Bring together the ecosystem of providers

**What is the Play?**

Engage with people to start to connect the network of stakeholders and build a coalition of partners from within your local digital inclusion ecosystem

**Useful for...**

- **Building the foundations** to ensure work in the territory is joined up and integrated
- **Breaking out of siloed working**
- **Sharing your knowledge** and experience with the wider ecosystem
- **Building relationships** with key partners and stakeholders
- **Involving new people**, skills and knowledge

**Practical tips**

- This Play is about deeper engagement with stakeholders once you already know who they are – make deeper contact with them, explore opportunities and potential conflicts, and build relationships.
- Talk to them to find out about their priorities, their challenges etc.
- Think about what you can offer them as well as what they offer you – look for the win-win collaborations!
- Approach them early to include them in the process.
- Where possible, share what data and insights you have and seek to pool knowledge for the benefit of the whole ecosystem.
- When onboarding new stakeholders into an existing local group, consider using bilateral meetings to bring them into the process and manage expectations.

**Take Into account**

- Lots of different stakeholders will each have a piece of the puzzle – connecting them helps to bring all those pieces together.
- There will likely be other people or organisations already working to tackle digital exclusion, but they may not all be connected or aware of the work of each other – use this play to address this.
- Remember other departments in your own organisation are important and you may need to spend time building connections and trust there too.
- Different stakeholders will have different aims, ways of working, and levels of interest – so remember to adjust your approach with each one and remember that a one size fits all approach is rarely the best.

**Illustrative Examples**

TBC

### Play B3

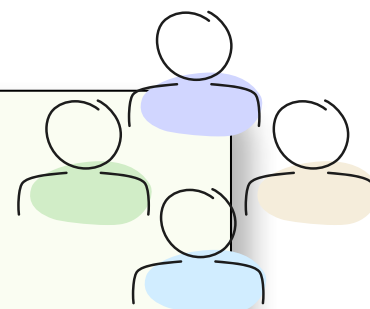
## Sign a local agreement

### What is the Play?

Using a memorandum of understanding (MoU), or a local charter or manifesto to help formalise collaboration for better joined-up working in the longer term

### Useful for...

- Building upon the foundations of existing working relationships to ensure ongoing collaboration and partnership.
- Creating visible commitments between partners, that can also be used as communications tools to encourage others.
- Building momentum around common goals or common values.
- Ensuring a shared vision is clearly agreed and articulated.
- Ensure commitment to working together on digital inclusion remains strong.



### Practical tips

- Short, simple agreements are best to start with.
- Chose a format that works for your context; adapt the exact agreements to suit.
- MoUs, Charters, Regional Manifestos can all be used either as commitments to act on certain themes, or to show commitment to a set of shared values or principles – start with common ground
- Try to create agreements that allow each organisation to easily align it with their (often different) missions – start with “open-ended, long-lasting cooperation”
- Set out broad goals, a shared vision that everyone can get behind
- Build on existing (successful) bilateral agreements when building a wider partnership agreement

### Take Into account

- The success of MoUs often lies in their simplicity – keep them easy to implement in the first instance; more complicated agreements require greater trust and alignment.
- Avoid forcing too many conditions on partners through formal agreements; making it too specific can add clarity, but can also make it harder to gain agreement.
- Be aware of political considerations and implications when developing agreements.

### Illustrative Examples

Lepida, Roeselare

Play C1

Review and analyse existing data

What is the Play?

Gather and analyse existing data sources (demographic, socio-economic, digital...) from local, regional and national levels to build a clearer picture of digital exclusion locally

Useful for...

- **Estimating the extent** of local digital exclusion.
- **Identifying the most prevalent local risk factors** (e.g. ageing, unemployment, lack of broadband coverage...)
- **Identifying priority target groups** (e.g. young unemployed, older people, migrants...)
- **Informing more targeted interventions** - responding to identified risk factors



Practical tips

- Start with available local authority data on e.g. housing, social care, education
- Seek out open data sources:
- Look for data on the established risk factors for digital exclusion (see Part 1).
- Try to obtain available internet connectivity data from national open sources or private companies - e.g. broadband access, 4G/5G coverage, connected households.
- Engage partners – ask voluntary groups, housing associations, libraries, schools etc what data they hold that can enrich your picture (see Play B2).
- Make sure you have the skills and resources available to do the data analysis and interpretation work – engage researchers or data analysts if needed.
- Follow up the identification of the prevalent at-risk groups with Plays C5 or C6 to seek more targeted understanding of the experienced reality of these groups.
- Be careful when using or combining personal or sensitive datasets to respect privacy and ethics responsibilities.

**Take Into account.** There are pros and cons to this Play:

| PROs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | CONs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Cost-effective – uses existing resources before commissioning new research.</li><li>■ Relatively quick and easy way to improve knowledge base and targeting.</li><li>■ The process of data sharing can already encourage collaboration between local partners.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Limited by the data available and knowledge gaps will remain.</li><li>■ Data may be outdated or too high-level to show local patterns.</li><li>■ The relevance of the data is largely based on assumptions about risk factors, rather than confirmed experience.</li><li>■ Requires some data literacy or analytical capacity to interpret effectively</li></ul> |

Illustrative Examples

TCB

Play C2

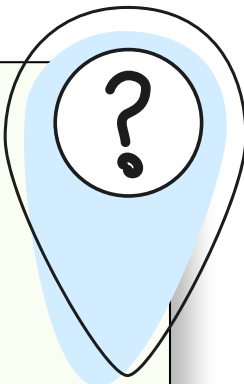
Create spatial maps

What is the Play?

Use mapping tools to generate a visual picture of digital exclusion risks across your area. Maps are built with multiple datasets and users should be able to freely select and view any specific combination

Useful for...

- **Visualising where groups most at risk** of digital exclusion are likely to be located.
- **Overlaying multiple data sets** to highlight areas where local residents are facing multiple risks
- **Identifying possible pockets** of exclusion located in areas that don't follow administrative boundaries.
- **Assessing whether the spatial distribution** of services matches the spatial presentation of needs.



Practical tips

- This is best done using GIS software, but can also be approximated with simple mapping tools
- Seek people with the relevant skills for building an effective and accurate spatial map.
- Best practice is to combine mapping of risk factors with mapping of local community assets, such as libraries and other services to identify mismatches.
- Keep adding datasets as additional layers. Start with the freely available data and use that to identify data gaps where more data and/or research might be needed.
- Follow up spatial mapping with more targeted approaches to better understand needs in locations that seem to be particularly at risk (e.g. Plays C5 & C6)

**Take Into account.** There are pros and cons to this Play:

| PROs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | CONs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Makes complex data easy to understand and communicate visually.</li><li>■ Allows to explore the combination of diverse risk factors.</li><li>■ Can show where at-risk groups fall across established geographical or administrative boundaries.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Requires specific skills and mapping tools - can be time consuming and expensive.</li><li>■ Risk of over-reliance on incomplete or outdated datasets.</li><li>■ May just confirm what is already known locally about areas of socio-economic disadvantage.</li></ul> |

Illustrative Examples

Mollet del Vallès

Boulogne-Sur Mer

Manchester

Play C3

Conduct a broad survey

What is the Play?

Design and run a general survey to generate a large data sample on local residents’ digital access, skills, confidence, and usage patterns

Useful for...

- **Going beyond standard assumptions** to build a picture of what digital exclusion really looks like locally.
- **Building an understanding** of how digital exclusion impacts a broad spectrum of the population and the extent of the challenges.
- **Identifying specific local trends**, risk factors, barriers and needs of local people.
- **Establishing baseline data** for local digital exclusion to be tracked over time.
- **Generating data on specific questions**/topics where data is missing



Practical tips

- Can be done by in-house teams or commissioned to external agencies.
- Make sure you use skilled survey designers to create good quality surveys that deliver meaningful responses. Consider exploiting existing survey templates.
- Ensure it is meaningful and asking questions to which you want to know the answer - including about the causes (not just the manifestations) of exclusion.
- Keep it short and accessible - consider offering online, paper, and assisted formats - and collection in multiple locations.
- Think about whether any selected data collection methods (e.g. face-to-face survey outside a supermarket, online survey...) automatically exclude certain groups and specific approaches to reaching under-represented groups.
- Make sure you have the resources not only to carry out large sample surveys, but to effectively process and analyse the results - and to repeat the process over time.

**Take Into account.** There are pros and cons to this Play:

| PROs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | CONs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Provides credible and detailed data for decision-makers and the public.</li><li>■ Provides an overall picture of the extent of local exclusion and key trends.</li><li>■ Local, evidence-based picture rather than generalised information.</li><li>■ Provides basis for tracking change/ progress over time.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Likely expensive and time consuming to get a truly representative sample.</li><li>■ Data may not add new insights - only confirm known risk factors.</li><li>■ Requires specific survey, research and analysis skills.</li><li>■ Unable to ask follow-up questions to understand people’s answers.</li><li>■ Limited value if it can’t be repeated over time.</li></ul> |

Illustrative Examples

Mollet del Vallès

Play C4

Run targeted surveys

What is the Play?

Run smaller, focused surveys with specific target groups in the community - identified by risk factor, profile or location - e.g. older adults, people with disabilities, residents in a disadvantaged community

Useful for...

- **Understanding better the specific barriers and needs** of local groups at risk of digital exclusion - beyond broad assumptions.
- **Increased tailoring of support** for specific groups, including those already targeted by policy or interventions.
- **Understanding better the lived experience** of digitally excluded people locally

Practical tips

- Methodology is similar to broad surveys but the targeting is very different - still need to ensure a representative sample size.
- Go to where your target groups are in order to reach them.
- Make use of intermediaries (service providers, associations, NGOs...) who can help you reach the specific groups in question.
- Take account of the accessibility needs of your target groups (e.g. language & literacy, format, cultural sensitivity, time & comfort, privacy & trust...). Consider using multiple formats.
- Design questions to explore the causes of exclusion (barriers, preferences, wants and needs) - and not just the manifestations of exclusion (e.g. frequency of access).
- Consider whether a focus group discussion (Play C6) would give more meaningful inputs.

**Take Into account.** There are pros and cons to this Play:

| PROs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | CONs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Easier to target questions to identify more specific needs and barriers.</li><li>■ More likely to yield new insights and understanding of specific groups than broad surveys.</li><li>■ More resource efficient than broad surveys.</li><li>■ Helpful for designing interventions that meet specific target group needs.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Can still be time consuming and costly.</li><li>■ Requires survey and analysis skills.</li><li>■ Risks of survey fatigue or misunderstanding of questions.</li><li>■ Unable to ask follow-up questions to understand people’s answers or dig more deeply into emerging topics.</li></ul> |

Illustrative Examples

Alexandroupolis, Gdańsk

Play C5

Facilitate targeted focus groups

What is the Play?

Hold small group discussions with specific communities to explore digital inclusion experiences in depth, including the lived experience, preferences, wants, barriers, motivations and ideas

Useful for...

- **Getting detailed, qualitative insights** about a specific pre-identified target group
- **Building on existing data and knowledge** about local exclusions to understand better underlying causes and needs.
- **Helps co-design and focus interventions** by exploring needs and preference in detail.
- **Diving deeper into issues** of concern to target groups.

Practical tips

- Keep sessions informal and welcoming - offer incentives and refreshments.
- Set boundaries, clarify expectations, and reassure participants about confidentiality.
- Skilled facilitation is key to inclusive discussions.
- Consider working with local partners who are already used to engaging with (and trusted by) your selected target group to facilitate discussions.
- Groups need to be small enough to enable all participating voices to be heard.
- Make sure you know and understand how representative your group is and avoid drawing conclusions that are too broad.
- The more focus group discussions you can hold, the better picture you will be able to develop.

**Take Into account.** There are pros and cons to this Play:

| PROs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | CONs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Enables to explore initial responses in more detail than a survey allows.</li><li>■ Discussions can better reflect to and build upon target group concerns.</li><li>■ Provides rich detail to better understand underlying causes, barriers and needs.</li><li>■ Tailored responses and services can start to be co-designed with participants.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Requires good facilitation skills, especially with vulnerable and at-risk groups</li><li>■ Risks being unrepresentative with small groups or dominated by a few strong voices.</li><li>■ Requires time and resources</li></ul> |

Illustrative Examples

Alexandroupolis, Gdańsk

Mollet del Vallès

Play C6

Using personas for a better understanding of local at-risk profiles

What is the Play?

Create realistic profiles of ‘typical’ residents with different digital inclusion challenges in the community

Useful for...

- **Supporting discussions and reflections** on user needs and tailored responses.
- **Helping staff and partners to empathise** with and explore the needs of diverse user needs.
- **Challenging pre-conceptions** and narrow understandings of what digital exclusion is, who it affects and how.
- **Highlighting the needs of ‘forgotten’ groups** not currently targeted by existing support provision.

Practical tips

- You can start with ‘generic’ or ‘pre-defined’ digital personas, but these should be adapted to local realities as much as possible.
- Include stories, motivations, barriers about the experience of digital exclusion, not just demographic data and profiling.
- Build tailored community personas on both data and community insight - and test them with frontline workers or residents for realism.
- Tools like Empathy Mapping can support creation and validation with stakeholders.
- Think about profiles all along the wave of digitalisation - including not only digitally sinking, but also digitally struggling and surviving.
- Include personas that can challenge pre-conceptions e.g. someone who is regularly connected to the internet, but lacks high-level professional digital skills.
- Where possible, validate your personas against real data or insights from actual people who can offered with lived experience of the issues.

**Take Into account.** There are pros and cons to this Play:

| PROs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | CONs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Can make it easier for policymakers and practitioners to think about and empathise with diverse user needs.</li><li>■ Encourages human-centred design of services</li><li>■ Can help raise different perspectives and challenges assumptions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Can make things too generic, losing minority lived experience</li><li>■ Risks of personas becoming stereotypes or oversimplifying the complex reality of individuals’ lived experience.</li><li>■ Takes time to co-design and validate properly</li><li>■ Risk of personas being mistaken for reality</li></ul> |

Illustrative Examples

Digi-inclusion

GLA

### Play D1

## Just start taking action

### What is the Play?

Deliver interventions to tackle digital exclusion based on assumptions about local needs e.g. known at-risk groups, common causes of exclusion

### Useful for...

- **Starting to make progress without delay** in situations where you lack the time or resources for more detailed assessments of local needs.
- **Gaining momentum and impact**, which can then be refined in the future through data and learning from the experience on the ground.
- **Supporting groups you know have unmet needs**, even if this is not based on solid data.
- **Making use of established knowledge** and practice when resources for local research are limited.



### Practical tips

- If you have no specific data, you can take action based on the typical needs of groups who are likely to be more at risk – based on research and knowledge from elsewhere.
- Certain interventions will likely have positive effects in most situations e.g. support for older people to gain better digital skills is an almost universal intervention.
- Explore databases of good practice for interventions which have been shown to be effective in other local contexts.
- The most commonly identified at-risk groups are:
  - People with low educational attainment
  - Older people, especially where they didn't learn digital skills for work
  - Low-income groups (including the unemployed)
  - Residents of isolated (rural) communities
  - People with disabilities
  - People who are recent refugees
  - Migrants from less developed contexts

### Take Into account

- The phenomenon of digital exclusion is such that there are some common unmet needs and common at-risk groups, which feature in the vast majority of territories, in some form or another.
- Being in one of these groups does not guarantee digital exclusion, but it does increase the statistical likelihood - especially when factors overlap (e.g. older people in rural areas, or unemployed people with disabilities).
- There are many examples of interventions that can be selected and applied without much specific tailoring to local context.

### Illustrative Examples

TBC

## Play D2

# Map the range of current interventions

### What is the Play?

Carry out research to identify what interventions and support are being offered already within your territory

### Useful for...

- **Building the picture** of what practices are already happening
- **Identifying the topics** / areas that are covered e.g. by target groups, by causes, by type
- **Identifying areas of concentration and duplication** within the current offer of support.
- **Identifying gaps and omissions** within the current offer of support

### Practical tips

- This could be carried out through a specific and time controlled piece of research, whether commissioned to someone external or carried out in-house.
- Another simpler option is to build up the mapping gradually over time - recording interventions and services as you become aware of them.
- Link to Plays B1 and B2 both to help identify existing interventions and to understand which organisations are working in the area and to build the ecosystem approach
- Consider mapping the offered services spatially and correlating it with any mapping of needs and risk factors that you already have (Play C2)

### Take Into account

- If needed, this can be a quick first step just to build a picture, without getting into the details of all the interventions and stakeholders.
- Building the initial picture is the first step, however established relationships may be needed with the relevant providers before carrying out more detailed analysis.
- Think about how services are offered over time as well as by location e.g. are all services offered during working hours or during holiday periods.
- Some service providers may be reluctant to share commercially sensitive information on the details of what they offer.
- It can be interesting to see whether similar services have different levels of take-up and to investigate the reasons behind it e.g. different levels of awareness, or location.

### Illustrative Examples

[Zenica](#)[Gdańsk](#)

### Play D3

## Assess individual interventions

### What is the Play?

Use the 8 Causes Matrix and the Wave User Profiles to evaluate a specific intervention in terms of who and which causes of digital exclusion it addresses

### Useful for...

- **Evaluating the focus of an intervention** or projects
- **Understanding if an intervention targets** who and what you expect it to
- **Informing refinement or adjustment** of existing interventions to better meet real needs
- **Starting to build an overall picture** of interventions in your area (see also Play D4)



### Practical tips

- To assess an intervention using the 8 causes matrix simply consider each cause, and mark whether the intervention addresses the cause directly or not.
- Then consider each of the wave profiles and assess which one(s) the intervention is targeting.
- Use the combination of the two and build a picture of the intervention that can help to understand and/or communicate its purpose and impact to others.
- For causes, make the distinction between ‘directly addressing’ a cause and ‘indirectly impacting’ a cause - the latter is where the intervention may affect a cause but it isn’t the main aim and focus e.g. some efforts to target skills may also impact motivation.
- Print or prepare Intervention Cards with the 8 Causes Matrix on one side. Using one card per action, discuss and identify the causes of exclusion targeted by the action and add sticky dots to visually highlight your conclusions (e.g. green = directly addressed; amber = indirectly impacted). Eventually you will be able to combine cards to build an overall picture (see Play D4).

### Take Into account

- Most interventions tend to only directly address one or two causes
- The temptation is to diagnose that an intervention touches all causes because it can be argued that it has some effect on them all. Try to think about the purpose of the intervention and what the content/activities actually do directly.
- The reality of causes and interventions are complex and interlinked - this is not a perfect categorisation – sometimes it is unclear if or how much an intervention addresses a cause.
- The aim is not to have a perfect analysis, but to look at the actions through different windows and to discuss the observations –the debate and discussion helps everyone to understand the intervention better

### Illustrative Examples

TNM

## Play D4

# Use the 8 Causes Matrix to assess the current landscape of interventions

## What is the Play?

Aggregate the assessment of individual intervention assessments onto the 8 Causes Matrix

## Useful for...

- **Visualising the overall focus of actions** in your territory on the 8 causes.
- **Understanding if there is an imbalance** in the focus of interventions (vs needs) e.g. there may be some causes with many actions to address them, and/or some causes with few or none.
- **Working through with local stakeholders** to build up a shared understanding of the current landscape of interventions.



## Practical tips

- Carry out Plays D2 (mapping) and D3 (assessment of individual actions) before aggregating the results in this Play.
- Use a large format printout of the matrix and sticky dots as for Play D3 – go through each individual action card and transfer or copy your stickers from each action to the large format matrix –, to build up a “total” weighting of which causes are targeted by the range of interventions in your territory.
- Review whether any gaps or concentrations of focus are okay for your strategy, or if more / different interventions are needed.
- Discuss whether the balance of focus okay given the local priorities / strategy / objectives, then think about if you need to consider a different mix of interventions.

## Take Into account

- This gives a good overview of the number of actions tackling each cause, but not the impact of those actions or the number of people they affect.
- It is good for highlighting where your resources may be focused, and where there may be gaps.
- On its own, this analysis is interesting, but of lower value than if combined with other Plays - it works best as part of a wider process to analyse all your actions in different ways using the Wave and Matrix.

## Illustrative Examples

TNM

## Play D5

# Use the wave to visualise the current landscape of interventions



## What is the Play?

Plot all the interventions identified in your territory onto the Wave of Digitalisation, to consider the overall focus of actions by profile / target groups.

## Useful for...

- **Visualising a complete picture** of the actions already happening
- **Working through with local stakeholders** to build up a shared understanding of the current landscape of interventions.
- **Visualising the expected focus** of a new or existing action plan.

## Practical tips

- Do this after you have analysed individual actions against the 8 Causes Matrix and Wave Profiles (Plays D2 and D3), ideally using Action cards
- Use a large form printout of the Wave and profiles – put each action on the chart according to its focus on a) individuals vs system (above the wave vs below it); and b) on sinking vs succeeding (on the left or right end of the wave). See the case example for more details.
- Think about where interventions might provide insights into the different profiles or personas in your territory.

## Take Into account

- Positioning actions on the Wave is not normally a perfect categorisation – be prepared for actions in two places, or some that don't fit perfectly.
- Discussions (or arguments!) can happen when deciding where to put different interventions on the wave – this is helpful to understand the different viewpoints – treat the debate as an important part of the process!

## Illustrative Examples

TNM



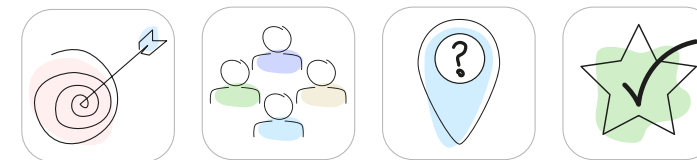
## THE CASE EXAMPLES

## The case examples

# Explaining the Digi-inclusion Case Examples

The set of case examples is drawn from learning from all the Digi-inclusion network activities and research. They are drawn from Project Partners and network activities, plus a few wider examples from across Europe.

Each Case Example is based on a story from a particular city, project partner, or situation. Case examples are tagged with icons when the story provides an example of work to strengthen a particular Dimension, and also tagged with specific Plays where these were part of that strengthening process.



Where these tags appear it indicates an example of strengthening the particular Dimension of the Digi-inclusion Framework.

Where these tags appear it indicates an examples of a particular PLAY being used in practice.

Play X1

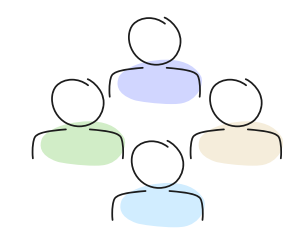
Case Examples illustrate the content of a particular Play, although in some cases the Digi-inclusion Play card itself may have been developed afterwards (because the Plays were developed as a result of learning and practices observed or developed within the network).

Examples are designed to illustrate the Plays and be considered alongside them; but also are stand-alone stories for inspiration. They are one way to apply the Play in practice - an illustration of how one authority approached things. They are not intended as a model to copy paste without thought – they are intended to help understanding and to give ideas for adapting to your local context.

Case example

Boulougne-Sur-Mer -  
Mapping the ecosystem

Getting to know which organisations are  
active in your territory



Illustrates Digi-inclusion Plays B1, B2

Building an ecosystem of partners

Improving interventions

Context

**City:** Boulogne-sur-Mer arrondissement (France), which includes the Communauté d’agglomération du Boulonnais, the Communauté de communes de Desvres Samer, and Communauté de communes de la Terre des 2 Caps.

**Population:** 157 976

**Delivered by:** Boulogne-sur-mer Développement Côte d’Opale (BDKO) urban planning and economic development agency.

Background

Together with local partners, Boulogne-sur-Mer’s urban planning agency has been analysing initiatives supporting digital inclusion across its whole territory – using an interactive map produced by *Les assembleurs* – revealing a need to inform residents better about locally available digital services.

 [Dimension B – Ecosystem](#)

[Play B1](#)

[The Map](#)

“The idea is not to reinvent the wheel, but to provide information on existing digital support available across the territory to people who need it, via local public information desks in town halls,” says Isabelle Watier, the agency’s European project manager.

First insights

When the BDCO team started working with digital supporters in a new URBACT Local Group, they became increasingly aware of an active ecosystem of organisations tackling digital exclusion across the territory’s towns, villages and rural communities.

Play B2

Play B1

“When we started to work with our stakeholders, we discovered they were also working with many relevant organisations, so we invited them as well. From a small web, we developed a bigger one,” says Isabelle. “We very quickly noticed that there were many different initiatives on digital inclusion.”

Analysing these digital support initiatives showed they ranged widely across the territory, from: stage one, assisted access – or ‘do it for them’ – for example Les maisons France Service; to stage two, guided use – ‘do it with them’ – with social centres’ digital kiosks and facilitators; and stage three, training and empowerment – or ‘teach them to do it’ – provided by social centres, the IT resource centre CRIAC, and several other stakeholders.



Dimension D – Improving interventions

However, this diverse offer is largely unknown to residents, and even to certain fellow providers of related digital services.

“HOW TO INFORM PEOPLE ABOUT NEARBY DIGITAL SERVICES THAT CAN ANSWER THEIR NEEDS?”

Boulogne-sur-Mer’s urban and economic development agency realised they needed to find better ways to ensure people know about the digital services they can benefit from.

“Some citizens know what exists in their own municipality, but they don’t know that they could go just a couple of kilometres to the next town to access other services,” says Isabelle. “There’s no point replicating services, but we can communicate more clearly about what is already available.”

Next steps

With this clearer picture, local partners are now identifying and planning awareness-raising solutions, such as:

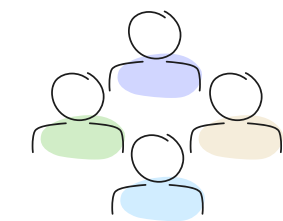
- Create clear, informative leaflets for distribution in all town halls;
- Train front-desk staff to give residents the leaflet and other information about local digital services;
- Display posters linking to the digital support services map.

The next step, currently under discussion, will be to identify which team will be responsible for putting the new communication plan into action across the territory so that residents can benefit fully from the range of services already available.

Case example

Gdańsk – understanding the provider ecosystem

Exploring who is already providing digital support (and building on what works)



**Illustrates Digi-inclusion Plays B1, B2, B3, B4**

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Building an ecosystem of partners

Improving interventions

Context

**City:** Gdańsk (Poland)

**Population:** 486 345

**Delivered by:** Gdańsk Entrepreneurship Foundation, an NGO founded by the City of Gdańsk

Background

Gdańsk has plans for all its citizens to have full, equal access to well-designed, public digital services. In fact, by 2030 the aim is for 85% of public services to be online. However, although certain policies support citizen equality and inclusion, the city has no overarching digital inclusion strategy. Of the multiple digital support initiatives set up by diverse NGOs and other structures over the years, many have received little or no funding, guidance – or even recognition – from city authorities.

Approach to mapping gdansk’s digital support ecosystem

Gdańsk Entrepreneurship Foundation decided to research and map Gdańsk’s existing digital support providers and infrastructure. Revealing gaps, overlaps and potential synergies would be a valuable step towards making the city’s digital service offer more inclusive.

The mapping would help identify good practices and ways for the city to strengthen this ecosystem, such as expanding digital support in local places already used by citizens.

“It’s all about building on our strengths, and finding solutions that work already,” says Aleksandra Abakanowicz, Entrepreneurship Education Department Specialist.

The team started by talking to existing contacts, particularly members of the Digi-inclusion URBACT Local Group (ULG). This gave a first list of key people and organisations helping residents keep up with digital transition. From this, Gdańsk identified three key groups to survey – libraries, neighbourhood houses and clubs, and NGOs supporting people with special needs

A survey for each target

“The survey was a starting point towards mapping the organisations that are actively supporting local communities, discovering their attitudes, struggles – and reflections on the digital needs of the residents they work with,” says Aleksandra. “And it was very, very important for us to understand their connections, who they cooperate with.”

Gdasnk’s 15-minute survey was slightly adapted to each of the three target groups. Questions explored services, staff, events and equipment, as well as the needs of digital support providers and their beneficiaries, from elderly people to job seekers to migrants.

| Structure targeted                                                                                                     | How they were reached                               | Numbers                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Network of local libraries, co-funded by the city and region                                                           | Centralised public library mailing list             | 25 libraries           |
| ‘Neighbourhood houses’ – community centres run by NGOs and %100 funded by the city’s social support development budget | City hall email list                                | 8 neighbourhood houses |
| Independent NGOs working with people with special needs                                                                | Mainly through personal connections and ULG members | 13 NGOs                |

Results and further in-depth research

The ecosystem mapping revealed an array of existing support for residents, but also gaps in the city’s knowledge. This sparked further data-gathering.

Iterative use of Play B1

## The case examples

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## Gdańsk – understanding the provider ecosystem

“We already know that there are quite a lot good examples of digital inclusion, but they are not part of a city system. We wanted to get more information on how we can build a city-wide system to support more people, and support existing services better,” says Aleksandra.

Some key findings:

**Ten informal digital support points** were identified, managed by various neighbourhood houses, NGOs and city services. Gdańsk hired a researcher to carry out individual in-depth interviews with people providing digital assistance, exploring aspects such as how they operate, financing, motivation, needs and challenges. This led to 50 pages of recommendations for the city – including good practices that can be shared and scaled up.

*[using the principles of Plays under sections C & D – understanding local needs, and mapping the landscape of current interventions]*

**Neighbourhood houses** were found to have great potential to Play an even more active role in the digital inclusion ecosystem, particularly as they run on city funding. As a result, with advice from Barcelona University, Gdańsk held a focus group with six people working in neighbourhood houses – each with its own agenda and service offer. This also led to recommendations for further city action.

**Seniors** were identified by libraries and neighbourhood houses as the group needing most support in accessing digital services. As a result, Gdańsk prepared a further survey, this time for leaders of clubs working with seniors, receiving about 50 answers. They followed this with a special survey of seniors at a popular annual picnic gathering about 1500 seniors.

**Information was lacking on the resources and needs of NGOs** working with people from groups at risk of digital exclusion – recommended as a future city action.

### Mind the gaps: individual needs beyond local groups

One valuable revelation was the need for extra efforts to reach isolated people. Gdańsk’s approach so far only focused on providers of support to people already active in local clubs and charities. The city was already planning to carry out research into the digital divide in preparation for its new seniors policy. This will now include a focus on reaching people who are not active in local groups, for example elderly men who may be less sociable.

## Resulting recommendations

An array of recommendations resulted from the mapping and associated in-depth research. Here are some examples of actions recommended to reinforce the city's local network of digital support:

- Stable funding for digital support points
- City-wide standards on how to operate a digital support point, as well as key services to provide
- Possibly branding, with a trusted graphic identity for all digital support points
- A city-wide programme providing training for digital support staff and volunteers – and enabling them to meet and learn from each other
- Advice and support on tailoring services for seniors. Trust is a big challenge
- Equipment such as computers

## New knowledge sparked user-testing with seniors

Having gained a better understanding of seniors' needs, as well as connections with specialists in IT and digital training, Gdańsk was now able to take a further step towards improving digital inclusion. They invited 17 seniors to test the usability of Gdańsk Contact Centre, the city's online service for citizens to report instances such as potholes, graffiti or illegally parked cars.

Seven user experience (UX) experts from local IT companies volunteered their time, together with three representatives from Gdańsk Contact Centre, and one from the city's senior citizen department.

Facilitated by an expert in running digital projects with seniors the 3.5 hour event led to three key outputs:

- Seniors' recommendations for improving the online service. For example larger font size, clearer access to additional options, or extra time to input personal data.
- Evaluation of the event itself, to feed into future user testing of the city's public digital services.
- Recommendations for other organisations running digital events or courses for seniors.

"It was super great for everyone involved!" says Aleksandra, "The seniors said we should do it more often – they liked being part of the team! The UX experts learned a lot as most of them hadn't worked with seniors before. And Gdańsk Contact Centre gained valuable information to improve their digital services, and were inspired to rethink their approach."

**"We have a philosophy in Gdańsk that we give people the choice to gain the digital skills that they need. It's like a buffet with a lot of possibilities – you can choose what you want to take!"**



Dimension C – Better understanding local needs

Play C6