



OPEN
EUROPEAN
DIALOGUE

AI, TECH & THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN WORKFORCE

*How can we future-proof Europe's workforce
in light of rapid technological disruption?*

OED Policy Design Sprint 2024 – Final Report

APR@POS

Advancing Process in Politics

Disclaimer: The content does not represent the views of the Open European Dialogue or its partners, nor those of APROPOS. It is based on the contributions of the policymakers and experts who participated in the OED Policy Design Sprint.

Given that the final result is a product of collective input, it is important to note that no single policymaker or expert can claim individual ownership or responsibility, nor can the organization they represent be directly associated with the outcome.

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About Us

Open European Dialogue

The Open European Dialogue is a politically neutral platform that aims to improve European politics by supporting policymakers in better understanding challenges and perspectives from across Europe. We do that by connecting European politicians across parties and countries, providing space for dialogue and promoting innovative political conversations in ways that no one else does.

For more information, please visit: www.openeuropeandialogue.org

APROPOS – Advancing Process in Politics

APROPOS combines research with experimentation and decades' worth of practical experience in designing deliberative decision-making processes and unique political dialogues. The APROPOS team designs meetings with policymakers, facilitates conversations, offers trainings to practitioners, and publishes research on political process to advance the dialogue and collaborative capacities vital for the decades of comprehensive societal changes ahead of us.

For more information, please visit: www.aproposgroup.org

About the Format: Policy Design Sprint

Following the steps of the Design Sprint methodology, a group of policymakers tackles one topic, and is guided in a seven-week process that takes participants from exploring the problem area to co-designing a prototype of a solution. The format consists of three to four 120-minute sessions and intermediate tasks with extensive support by the OED team.

This approach is perfectly suited for groups that have a rough idea of a specific problem area they are invested in addressing and need a guided process through which to formulate a common and impactful response. The process is light on expert input and relies on policymakers and participants' initiative, pre-existing expertise, and ongoing contribution to pull through from start to finish.

Want to run your own Policy Design Sprint? Contact the APROPOS team at team@aproposgroup.org



Context Rapid Technological Advancements such as Generative AI Challenge the Way We Work

In the light of rapidly evolving technological developments such as the application of Generative Artificial Intelligence, the 2024 OED Policy Design Sprint aimed at **ideating solutions** that would help to future-proof the European workforce which is being confronted with a changing job market, new skills requirements but also questions around rights and ethics related to the application of new technical solutions, especially AI-driven ones.

While technological advancements come with a **lot of promises** such as enhanced productivity, increased workplace safety or the ability to focus on more creative and strategic tasks, **possible negative outcomes** such as unlawful workplace surveillance, a rise in unemployment due to worker's substitution or mental health concerns need to be considered when assessing the potentials and risks of these solutions.

Policymakers are closely monitoring these new developments and seek to draft policy solutions that address the related risks as well as the opportunities. The 2024 OED Policy Design Sprint **offered a tailored process** and a space to do exactly that.

80% of workers report that AI had enhanced their job performance.

57% of workers support banning AI from making dismissal decisions, 40% support banning AI from making hiring decisions.

58% of employees working in finance worry about excessive data collection (54% in manufacturing).

- OECD, 2023



Why the OED Policy Design Sprint? Apply New Ways to Work Together

In 2021, we launched the OED Policy Design Sprint as an innovative policy development initiative. We adapted the renowned method of the Design Sprint to our main audience: policymakers. The format **turned out to be successful** in promoting a new way of collaboration for ideating solutions to a single policy issue.

Based on the experience gained, we decided to facilitate another OED Policy Design Sprint: Seven weeks of **intense, immersive work on one policy challenge**.

We invited a cross-functional Sprint team consisting of parliamentarians from seven European countries and different political parties, to be joined by a group of experts, and guided them through the intense Sprinting process of developing an answer to our shared challenge: **how can we future-proof Europe's workforce in the light of rapid technological disruption?**

What followed was an impressive story of commitment and trust. Despite never having worked together before, the team went from analysing the main challenge to sketching a solution prototype in no time!

SPRINT PRINCIPLES

- The Policy Design Sprint is a **Method** for quick **Brainstorming** and **Product Creation**
- The Sprint focuses on **Active and Rapid Decision-Making**
- **Working Together Alone:** participants all have equal chance to contribute to the solution by removing personal biases and levelling the playing field
- **Tangible** ideas are preferred **over back-and-forth Discussions**
- **Getting Started over Being Right** means we advance quickly towards the creation of a prototype to test with users – without the presumption of a final polished product



Content

Part 1- Sprint Recap

Our problem area

Sprint summary & process

Our 'Sprinters' & their expectations

Meeting 1: Problem Framing

Opportunity areas, long-term goal, sprint questions & field mapping

Meeting 2: Idea Elaboration

Solution flows, from idea to prototype, user testing

Meeting 3: Feedback & Fine-Tuning

Review of user feedback, tweaking the prototype

Part 2 – Processing the Sprint Results

Meeting 4: Political Dialogue Space

Presentation and discussion of the policy prototype with a wider network of MPs and experts

Meeting 5: Closing of sprint & next steps

Review of sprint and thinking about next steps

Sprint results

>>> Access the [final prototype product](#)



Part 1 - Sprint Recap

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Our Problem Area: AI's Effects on the European Workforce

Policymakers across Europe are confronted with a critical challenge: ideating regulatory frameworks capable of **meeting the needs of a dynamic and evolving job market**, accelerated in profound ways by rapid technological advancements and systemic integration of AI solutions.

This demands innovative labour policies that can help our society navigate the uncertainties of the future and support the resilience and adaptability of Europe's workforce.

AI is poised to transform the future of work in Europe. The integration of AI into various sectors **promises increased workplace safety, new job creation, and enhanced productivity**. However, it also brings challenges such as **job displacement, the need for new skills, and ethical considerations**.

Policymakers must balance these opportunities and challenges **to ensure that AI benefits society as a whole**. Additionally, they must ensure that AI systems are developed and deployed in ways that are **fair, transparent, and respect individual rights**.

“The pace of developments in the area of AI is rapid – How can we, as policymakers, as well as the public keep up?”

“With this technological revolution, white collar jobs from the creative industries are at risk – and the field needs guidelines.”

“How do we make sure that AI is creating better jobs and work environments and not only contributing to job loss?”

“Could we make AI contribute to our social security systems?”

“Digital tools can improve working conditions, esp. with regards to repetitive and dangerous tasks – but a good framework is needed.”

“Can AI contribute to counteracting the lack of skilled workers?”



Sprint Summary



A Sprint team forms to work on challenges related to **AI, tech and the European workforce.**



The problem is narrowed down to a **long-term goal** – reaching agreement on core guiding principles which respect fundamental rights for deployment of AI in the economy and society – and our **main sprint question** is defined: *How can we raise awareness across stakeholders about the potentials and risks of the deployment of AI in the workplace and consequent regulatory needs?*



Best practices are solution ideas are explored – **one idea is prioritized:** A pan-European AI Regulatory Sandbox Initiative.



The team works collaboratively to **refine the pan-European AI Regulatory Sandbox idea** which aims to establish a controlled environment, allowing businesses across Europe to test AI applications under oversight to determine which regulation approaches are needed to safeguard workers' well-being while leaving room for the utilization of AI for enhanced productivity, safety and other potential benefits.



The idea is tested through **11 in-depth user interviews** with parliamentarians, citizens and experts, feedback is collected.



The feedback informs the last tweaks and recommendations for the further development of the policy idea and **a final prototype is born.**



Communication material promoting “AI FutureForce – The pan-European AI Sandbox Initiative” prototype is provided to the Sprint team for them to take this idea forward!



Process Overview

Active participants - or 'Sprinters' - are integral for any Design Sprint.

The **OED Policy Design Sprint is an online and offline effort – with online group work and individual and offline work in between.**

The first phase began with a series of **briefing calls** with our participants where, together, we aimed to better understand the problem at hand and identify opportunity areas and start mapping the field – its actors and relationships. Once the **first meeting** began, the participants settled on a long-term goal and identified the hurdles that could stop us from achieving it.

Offline, participants worked individually to identify best practices that could be used to inspire our solutions, they then created their own solution sketches - initial ideas as to how to solve our challenge.

In the **second meeting**, best-practices and solution sketches were reviewed and the group agreed to test one idea – and began outlining the basic elements of the policy prototype.

After the second meeting, a select 'prototype team' composed of sprint participants and the OED team, refined the prototype material and collected first feedback on the idea through a round of user interviews. In the **third meeting**, armed with user feedback, acquired knowledge of the challenge and the team's sprint priorities in mind, the prototype was fine-tuned, and next steps were identified that would allow participants to test and take the prototype from ideation to implementation!

Finally, a political dialogue space for the **fourth meeting** allowed the cohort to present and discuss their idea with a wider circle of participants from the OED network.



Our 'Sprinters': Meet the Policymakers & their Teams



Malcolm Byrne
Member of Parliament
Ireland



Andrei Korobeinik
Member of Parliament
Estonia



Miguel Costa Matos
Member of Parliament
Portugal



Armand Zorn
Member of Parliament
Germany



Wiebke Dorfs
Parliamentary
Assistant



Sven Clement
Member of Parliament
Luxembourg



Federica Onori
Member of Parliament
Italy



Emanuele Loperfido
Member of Parliament
Italy



Riccardo Pilat
Parliamentary
Assistant



Lucija Tacer
Member of Parliament
Slovenia



Anastasija Vranishkoska
Parliamentary
Assistant



Our 'Sprinters': Meet the Experts



Andrea Renda

Senior Research Fellow and Head of the CEPS Unit on Global Governance, Regulation, Innovation and the Digital Economy (GRID)



Laura Nurski

Associate Research Fellow and Head of Programme on Future of Work at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)



Giacomo Domini

Assistant Professor in Law, Economics and Governance, Utrecht University School of Economics



Joe Atkinson

Lecturer in Employment Law and Co-Director of the Stefan Cross Centre for Women, Equality and Law, Coordinator of the Law and Psychology Programme, Southampton University



John Schwartz

Founder and CEO of Soapbox, a creative studio catered to policy, research and advocacy organizations



Anja Pölk

Creative Lead at Soapbox



Expectations

What did our participants expect as they set out on this journey?

"Learn from other policy environments."

"Getting a more holistic view of the issues and potential cross-border solutions."

"Get up to date with the EU AI Act and discuss its implications for national state policy."

"Make a new experience with colleagues from all over Europe."

„[Explore] non-traditional policy tools as not everything needs to be new legislation, increase of budget etc."

"Learn about what colleagues have tried in the past: what worked, what didn't work."

"Learn and discuss the risks and potential regulations in relation to AI."

"Get more expertise on AI regulation framework and workforce taxation."

"Tangible goals by the end of the process, applicable in national parliaments."





Meeting ONE in a Nutshell: Problem Framing

During our first meeting we sought to **narrow down** our challenge **to a set of guiding questions that focus on a specific aspect** of challenges revolving around AI, tech and the European workforce.

It was not done easily to distill the many facets of the challenge at hand, but throughout the meeting we gradually narrowed down the problem area by using probing questions such as, "*where do we want to be in two-years' time?*"; "*what hurdles might get in our way?*"; and "*can we map the field, i.e. the actors involved in the solution of our problem and how they interact?*".

These made it possible to select **three main questions** that guided us until the end of the sprint.

A Sprint generally starts off with a broad challenge. Based on this, three questions, which need to be answered at the end of the sprint, are defined.





Meeting One, Step 1: Identifying Opportunity Areas

The opportunity areas identified during the briefing calls and prioritized in the first meeting told us that **the problem area we are looking at is vast and subject to many different interpretations**. Some of the most pressing aspects of the challenge that were identified by the Sprint team were:

- How do we **protect workers' rights** in the AI value chain, especially in terms of surveillance, discrimination and other negative sides of AI introduction?
- How can we **foster collective bargaining** over AI, involving and working with tech companies, legislators, regulators and wider public?
- How can we ensure that AI increases the **quality of human work**, instead of degrading the working conditions and/or increasing unemployment?
- Might it make sense to develop specific **education programs** for legislators?
- How can we foster an ecosystem for **responsible and ethical AI innovation** in the European Union, strengthening its competitiveness?

>>> **RESOURCE**

[Click here](#) for an overview over all Opportunity Areas identified.





Meeting One, Step 2: Setting A Two-Year Goal

The team set itself a **Long-Term Goal** which was meant to set an **aspirational and optimistic outlook** for the Sprint.

The Sprint team decided to pick this statement as their guiding horizon:

In two years, we will have reached an agreement on core guiding principles which respect fundamental rights for deployment of AI in the economy and society.

Other components of the selected Two-Year Goal:

In two years, there will be a broad public understanding of the implications and effects of AI.

In two years, companies will be aware of their obligations.

We will know which tasks can be ethically assigned to AI – in the workplace, education but also in decision-making.

In two years, we will see massive cross-border cooperation on this issue.

In two years, we will have a clear picture on where responsibilities of AI should lie.





Meeting One – Step 3: Identifying Hurdles

Once a long-term goal was set, we moved on to **identifying the obstacles, or 'hurdles', that could stop us from achieving our agreed-upon goal.**

We identified our **primary hurdles** to be...

“Drawing out best practices from existing principles without reinventing the wheel”

“A lack of understanding which AI applications are compatible with fundamental rights and which ones are not”

“Ensuring that we don't stifle innovation through excessive regulation”

“Don't forget to include all relevant stakeholders and raise awareness about the potentials and risks of AI”

“The conciliation of innovation and commercial secrecy with the need to regulate and the right to know how different AI systems work”

“Engaging all European countries and creating policies that are applicable cross-border”

“Being in competition with authoritarian regimes that might use AI differently and to our disadvantage”





Meeting One – Step 4: Our Sprint Questions

Thanks to the process of setting a **long-term goal** and **exploring obstacles** to its fulfillment, the following questions were selected as the guiding **sprint questions** - i.e., the questions participants were to tackle with their proposed policy solution.

MAIN SPRINT QUESTION

How can we raise awareness across stakeholders about the potentials and risks of the deployment of AI in the workplace and consequent regulatory needs?

SUPPORTING SPRINT QUESTIONS

How can we conciliate innovation and commercial secrecy with the need to regulate and the right to know how different AI systems work?

How do we draw out best practice from existing principles without reinventing the wheel?

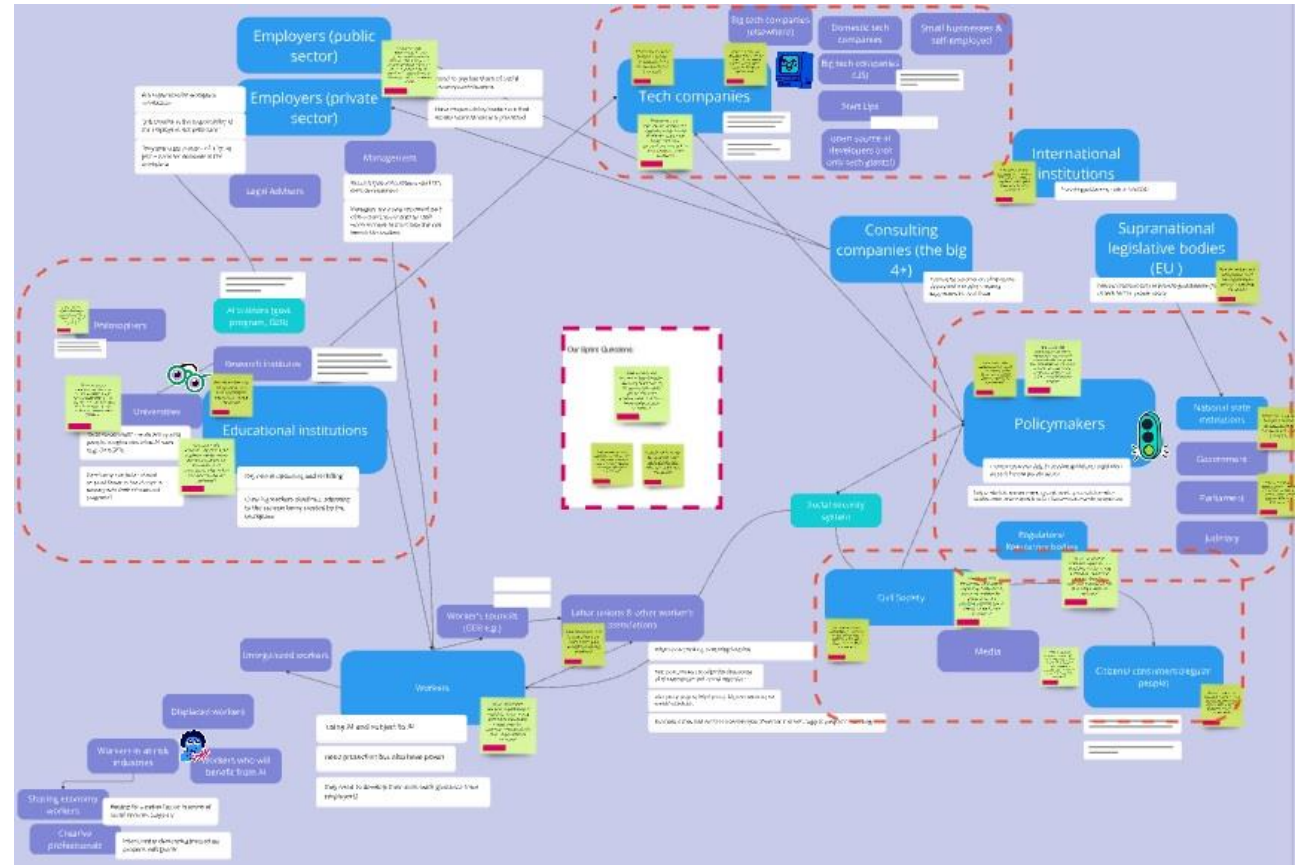




Meeting One – Step 5: Mapping The Field

After selecting our main Sprint questions, we moved on to **mapping the field of actors and their constituent relationships**. This map presents a rough outline of the stakeholder relationships around the topic of AI, tech and the future of the European workforce.

We asked: which actors are the most important ones and on which relationships should our policy prototype focus? Our Sprint team selected **policymakers and regulatory bodies, educational institutions, civil society, citizens and tech companies** as most relevant actors.



CHECK POINT 1: PROBLEM DEFINITION & PRIORITIZATION

By the end of our first meeting:

We agreed upon a joint goal: to achieve an **agreement on a set of AI core guiding principles which respect fundamental rights for deployment in the economy and society.**

Settled on a primary sprint question to guide idea-formation through the Sprint: **How can we raise awareness across stakeholders about the potentials and risks of the deployment of AI** in the workplace and consequent regulatory needs?

We decided to attempt to intervene with a solution that focuses on the **primary actors of policymakers and regulatory bodies, educational institutions, individual citizens, civil society as well as tech companies** and their relations towards each other.





Meeting TWO in a Nutshell: Idea Elaboration

In our second meeting, we **reviewed existing best practices** which could help solve our challenge and **voted on the solutions sketches that individual participants had created.**

One idea stood out: the **"AI Regulatory Sandbox Initiative"**, as it represented the elements the group found essential to tackling the sprint questions.

The idea is to establish a **controlled environment**, allowing businesses to **test newly developed AI applications** for a limited amount of time under oversight to determine which **regulation approaches** are needed to safeguard worker's well-being while, at the same time, leaving room for the utilization of AI for enhanced productivity, safety and other potential benefits.

Once the idea was prioritized, the team went through a **process of storyboarding** where they added detail and refined the policy idea.

In between meeting two and three, a **volunteer 'prototype team'** consisting of participants, assisted by the OED team, solidified the AI Regulatory Sandbox idea, tweaking its formulation and elaborating on the ideas proposed in the meeting until the prototype was ready for review: **"AI FutureForce - A Pan-European Regulatory Sandbox Initiative"**!

In a sprint, you move quickly from defining a challenge to generating solutions!





Meeting Two – Step 1: Best Practices

In between Meeting #1 and #2, the Sprinters collected a variety of best practices that propose solution approaches to the main or the supporting sprint questions.

These best practices served as orientation to better understand what already exists and therefore, to pave the way for their own ideation process.

>>> RESOURCE

[Click here](#) to access all best practices.

Best practices can inspire novel solutions!

Meeting Two – Step 2: Solutions Pitch Gallery

Inspired by research into existing best-practices, **eight solutions pitches** were produced by individual participants in preparation for the meeting.

The solutions pitches presented shared themes of creating learning opportunities about AI and its impacts, strengthen the perception of citizens in the process and cross-border collaboration on AI regulation.

Our ‘winning’ solution, *the AI Regulatory Sandbox Initiative*, combines the freedom to test AI technologies with oversight and resulting in tailored regulatory approaches.

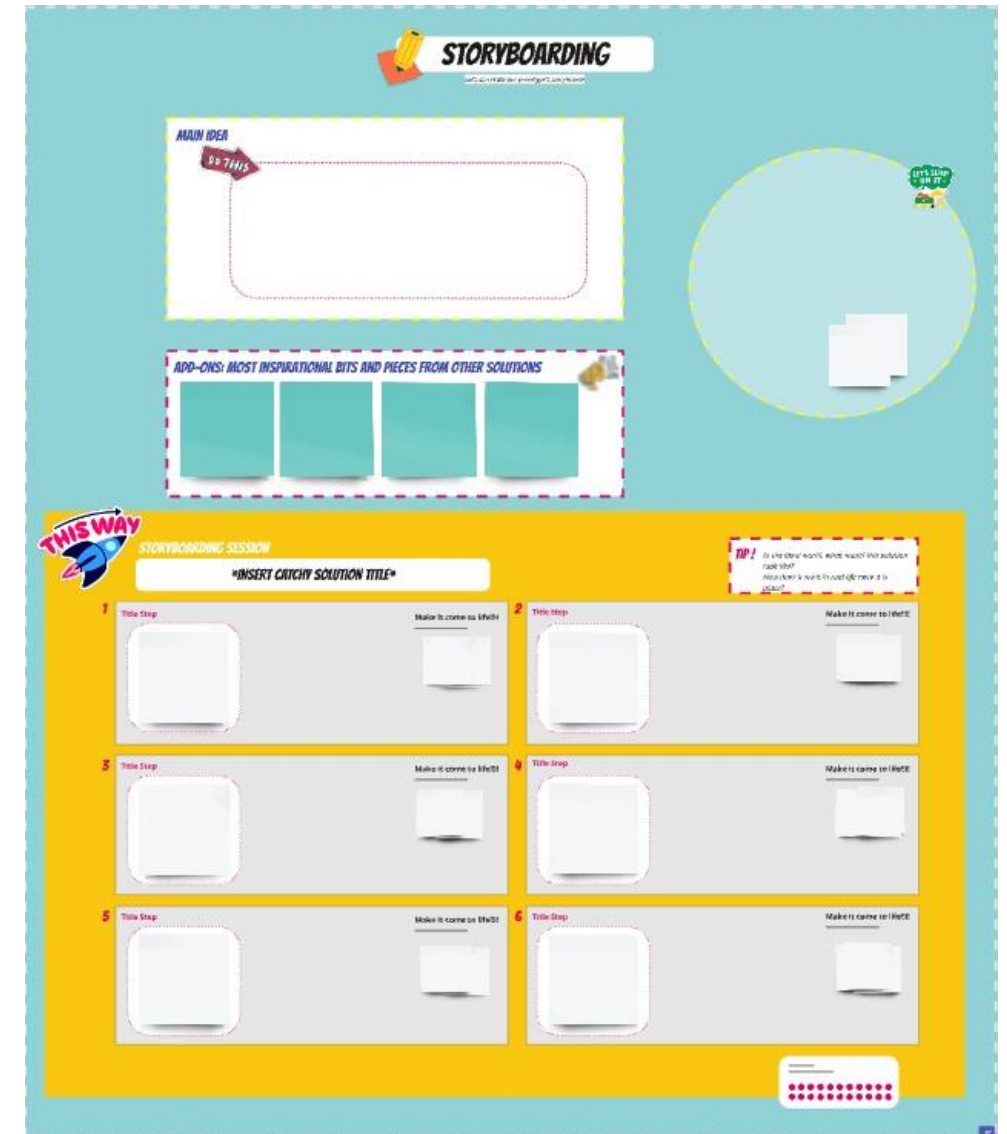




Meeting Two – Step 3: From Idea to Prototype

The sprint team worked to refine this idea through a **storyboarding exercise, leading to a six-step solution**, which then provided a designated prototype team with a mandate and guidelines to further add details to the original idea, which was strengthened by research and wordsmithing.

The purpose of this critical step? To **make it possible to imagine how our shared policy initiative could look like once implemented** and create – thanks to the expertise of a communications agency – a high-fidelity prototype and communications product that could be submitted to users for the upcoming user-testing phase.



CHECK POINT 2: A SOLUTION IDEA IS CHOSEN

The "*AI Regulatory Sandbox Initiative*" is a Go!

By the end of our second meeting, we settled on the AI Regulatory Sandbox proposal as the solution pitch that would help us achieve the shared goal. The idea is to create a controlled environment that allows companies across Europe to test newly developed AI technologies for a limited time under supervision to determine what regulatory approaches are needed.

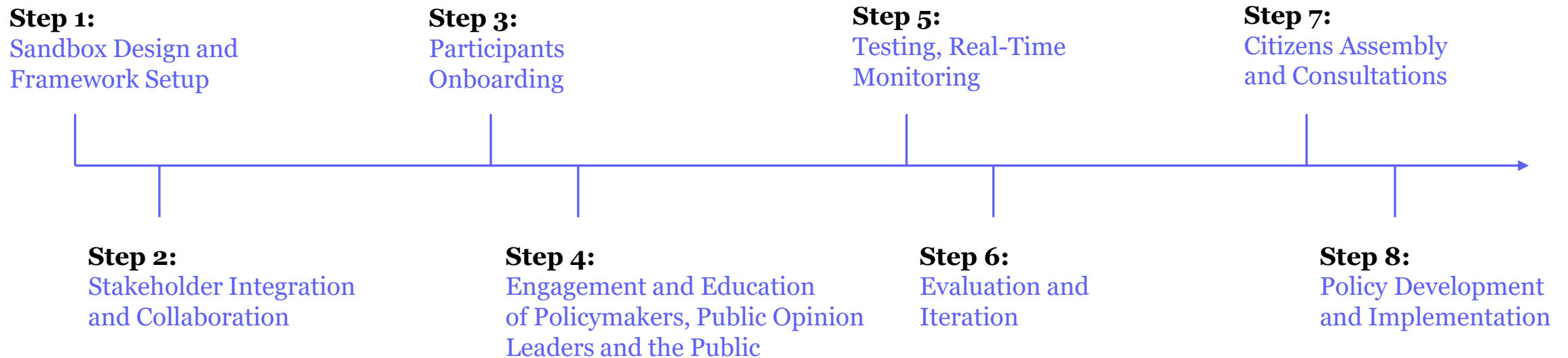
The idea was chosen because it is timely – having art. 57 of the EU AI Act that calls for the establishment of Sandboxes in mind – and aims to raise awareness on the potentials and risks of AI for the workforce through actual testing, therefore helping to assess regulatory needs. By doing so, it also helps to bridge the gap between the freedom of innovation and the restricting element of regulations. Thereby, it proposes a clear solution to answering our main Sprint questions.

During the storyboarding exercise, the Sprint team made an effort to include valuable parts of other solution pitches into the main idea such as a citizens' assembly and tailored trainings on AI for several stakeholder groups that are relevant for the Sandbox.



Introducing: The AI Regulatory Sandbox Prototype Draft

The first draft of the prototype was specifically created to serve the next phase of the sprint: User Testing. The prototype team, consisting of Members of Parliament, the sprint facilitation team and the communications agency Soapbox therefore designed a website that contained the **eight steps** that are needed to set up and implement the specific AI Regulatory Sandbox the sprinters were thinking of to collect feedback.





User Testing: Between Meeting 2 & 3

The user testing phase is **a crucial part of any sprint**, offering a first chance to share the newly developed ideas beyond the group and **gain quick feedback from the real world** to confirm or challenge the core concept of the developing policy prototype.

We showcased the materials produced during the prototyping phase to **11 participants from various backgrounds** – including parliamentarians, tech product managers, employment researchers, think tank experts, and technology strategists.

The feedback was **processed and clustered** by the sprint facilitators, and presented to the group during the next sprint meeting, allowing for further **unpacking and reflecting**.

>>> RESOURCE

Access the "Wall of Justice" with all feedback collected [here](#).

11 USER TESTERS

- Employment Researcher at the European Commission**
Employment and Skills Team at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre
- Researcher & Human-Centered AI Curator**
Lecturer at Università di Bergamo, Artificial Intelligence for Digital Humanities & Machine-based reading
- Tech Industry Representative**
Senior Product Manager at DeepL, former Product Manager at Google
- Tech and Society Think Tanker**
Tech and Society Program, German Marshall Fund of the United States
- Associate Director of University Think Tank**
Center for the Governance of Change
- Former Dutch MP and Technology Advisor**
Currently a founder & independent technology advisor
- Tech Industry Representative**
AI Principal Engineer at Jina AI
- Digital Affairs Think Tank Co-Founder**
Joint Managing Director at the Feminist Digital Affairs Think Tank
- Tech and Policy Strategist**
Product Manager at Xebia
- Tech Policy Analyst, Former Union Representative**
Independent Tech Policy Analyst & Research Fellow at Interledger Foundation, Former Worker's Union Representative
- Academic Researcher on Algorithms**
University of Utrecht, RNDHR Project (algorithmic hiring procedures)





Meeting THREE in a Nutshell: User Feedback and Fine-Tuning

In our last intensive meeting of the Sprint, **participants gathered to review the AI Regulatory Sandbox Proposal as it stood, digested the various points of feedback from our 11 user testers, and reflected on how to improve it further.**

On the basis of this feedback, **final tweaks to the proposal** were implemented and integrated into the final communication material.

The **'AI FutureForce - AI Regulatory Sandbox Initiative to Future-Proof Europe's Workforce'** **prototype is now presented in one key communication product** that can be disseminated for further discussion with fellow Members of Parliament, other experts and the public.

In a sprint, the objective is never to create a fully-fledged product, but rather a prototype that appears realistic enough to allow the basic premises supporting the policy idea to be tested and further developed.



CHECK POINT 3: USER FEEDBACK & FINAL TWEAKS TO PROTOTYPE

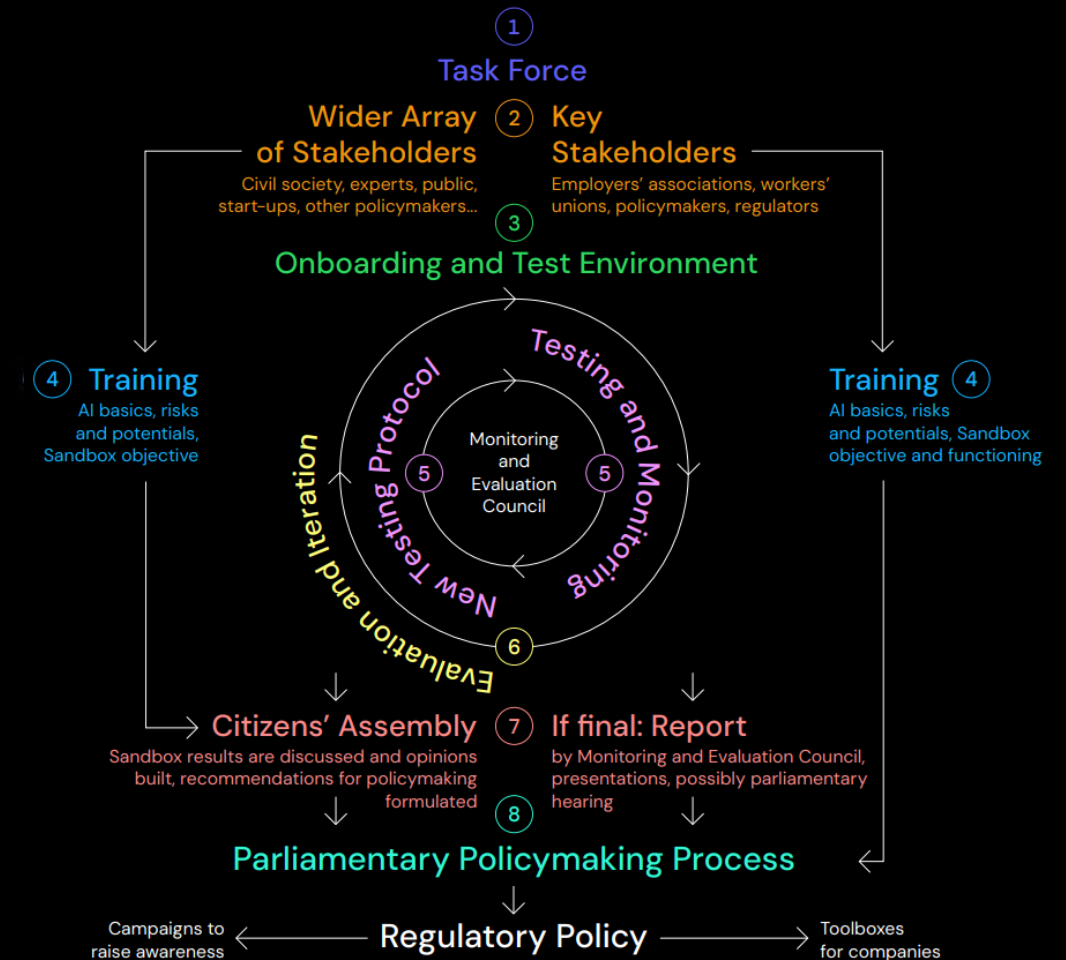
By the end of our third meeting, we had received and reviewed feedback from 11 different users on the policy prototype:

“AI FutureForce - AI Regulatory Sandbox Initiative to Future-Proof Europe’s Workforce”

The structure of the steps was reviewed, processes clarified and a few other final tweaks implemented. Our communications agency finalized the sprint product for further dissemination.

>>> RESOURCE

The final version of the prototyp can be [accessed here](#).



Part 2 – Processing the Sprint Results

Meeting 4: Political Dialogue Space

An opportunity to discuss the sprint results with a wider audience of fellow parliamentarians from the Open European Dialogue network.

Meeting 5: Closing the sprint & next steps

A final review and celebration of the OED Policy Design Sprint & the development of ideas for next steps.





Meeting FOUR in a Nutshell: Political Dialogue Space

The inclusion of a Political Dialogue Space meeting in the OED Policy Design Sprint aims to **harness the collective intelligence of the Open European Dialogue network**, comprised of a diverse group of politicians.

By engaging this broader audience—bringing not only topical expertise but also an understanding of the political realities involved in proposing and deciding on innovative policy solutions—we can **critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses** of a policy prototype.

To achieve this, we created a **dynamic and interactive dialogue space** specifically designed to facilitate fruitful discussions around the policy prototype.



OED Annual Policymakers Dialogue 2023, Helsinki





Meeting FIVE in a Nutshell: Closing of Sprint

The end of a sprint is **the time where a team takes stock of its progress**, and therefore a very important moment, because it can help to identify areas of improvement and ideas or experiments to test the final prototype, and ultimately validate how well the idea can address the challenge. In our case: The challenge of developing fit-for-purpose regulatory frameworks while at the same time preserving the innovative character of AI products that can potentially have a disruptive effect on the nature and working conditions of Europe's workforce.

In our final meeting, we demonstrated the work completed during the sprint and engaged in a series of short brainstorming sessions on next steps, inspired by the question how the developed idea can be **communicated, disseminated, and further tested** for real-world viability. A few ideas that emerged are the following:

"Make AI an election issue! And draw attention to the idea of a Regulatory Sandbox in this way."

"A press release and a roundtable to discuss the idea further with relevant stakeholders."

"Create an infographic and a virtual brochure for dissemination."

"Further test if the idea fits with all existing local regulations in nation states and how it could be easily integrated."

"Overcome the lack of understanding regarding AI, its risks and potentials among policymakers and the public through awareness campaigns and make the Sandbox idea part of the offered solutions."



Thank you for sprinting with us!

If you have further questions about this sprint, would like to follow up on the initiative, or would like to conduct your own Policy Design Sprint, do not hesitate to contact us at team@aproposgroup.org. We would be happy to help.