

Establishing feasibility of Seafood Age prototype with UK stakeholders:

Developing use of Miro for mapping feasibility with stakeholders

8 Feb 2021

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A report for Seafood-AGE by

imagination
LANCASTER

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**Image on front cover: From Miro board data
(Seafood Age-Establishing feasibility with UK stakeholders)**

Introduction

One of the central tasks for Lancaster University in the Seafood Age project is to develop and test prototype research methods for establishing feasibility of the Seafood Age Ready to cook (RTC) fish product across RTC value chains in Atlantic Area regions. One method currently being developed is a map that visually documents and links perspectives on feasibility that we can continue build remotely through conversations with RTC industry stakeholders in the UK. This research method prototype is being developed with a view to being translated for use in all relevant Atlantic Area regions and their respective markets. This document reports on our rationale for developing this mapping method, progress being made with it, emerging insights into feasibility of the Seafood Age RTC product in industry, and our next steps.

Method development

Rationale

Part of the task of facilitating co-design is to make use of different mediums to share, generate and exchange information often through a workshop format. [Stephen Bennett at Policy Lab \(2020\)¹](#), explains that this is intended to support and prompt collaborators to document the broadest possible diversity of ideas, perspectives and other contributions in ‘their own voices’. In other words, contributions are unfiltered and unaggregated by the facilitators alone, and unimpeded by barriers. Similarly, co-designing at ImaginationLancaster is based on a principle of [exchange²](#). As [Cruickshank, Perez and Galabo \(2020\)³](#) describe the purpose of generating a high volume of contribution is thought to be conducive to democratic, jointly owned, and ultimately, better synthesised design responses. Workshops facilitation can therefore provide a ‘crucible’ ([Heron and Reason, 2008⁴](#)) in which new, jointly owned knowledge is co-constructed.

¹ <https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/author/stephen-bennett/>

² <https://imagination.lancaster.ac.uk/project/the-knowledge-exchange-an-interactive-conference/>

³ <http://imagination.lancaster.ac.uk/update/disco-a-distributed-co-design-approach/>

⁴ Heron, J. and Reason, P., 2008. Extending epistemology within a co-operative inquiry. *The Sage handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*, pp.366-380.

We bring this approach to Seafood-AGE, where we are exploring issues of practical feasibility, receptivity and cultural acceptance of a novel product and circular economy (CE) methods through the fish and seafood Ready to Eat value chain. One aim of this will be to generate interest in industry to adopt new CE methods developed by the Seafood-AGE project partners in return for on-going support and training. Our approach is therefore to ask:

1. What stakeholders see as the opportunities and risks associated with new processes and CE methods, product innovation and development for an older market, fish RTC manufacture and distribution, health, safety and nutrition,
2. What would they design in and out of them and why?
3. How do they see new CE methods, processes and so on applied to existing practices and what would be the barriers to application and what would support adoption?

Taking time from stakeholders as busy as those relevant to this work would be challenging at the best of times. Lockdown and social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic further complicates matters. Therefore, our goal has been to develop a remote method that affords as many strengths of a workshop as possible whilst enabling us to work one-to-one with stakeholders to co-construct a picture of Seafood Age fish RTC product feasibility across the value chain.

Co-design researchers and practitioners like [Stephen Bennett \(ibid\)](#), [Cruickshank, Perez and Galabo \(ibid\)](#) and [Laura Wareing \(2020\)⁵](#) have reviewed remote and digital alternatives to workshop facilitation in physical environments. Each have described using one or a combination of sophisticated online platforms for video conferencing and remote collaboration that are free or cheap to access and bring a wealth of opportunities for remote co-design. Platforms like Zoom, MS PowerPoint, Google Docs, Miro, Padlet, Kumu, Mural.ly and Mentimeter can all support a range of activity like reading, sorting, listing, highlighting, mapping, networking and annotating. However, they also bring challenges. [Cruickshank, Perez and Galabo \(ibid\)](#), and [Laura Wareing \(ibid\)](#) describe how access and inclusivity—fundamental qualities of co-design— are problematised if computers and devices are unavailable, if internet connections are weak or fail, and if stakeholders need to take time in addition to their participation to learn new software . While this has been a long-standing challenge in co-design (for example [Le Dantec and DiSalvo, 2013](#))⁶, it may now be likely to gain prevalence in the absence of alternatives. Also the prospect of contributing to live group exercises in front of computer cameras can be inhibiting and overly formal. Similar anxieties around use of cameras for video conferencing has been well attested in other [contexts](#)⁷. That said, a shared activity that takes focus away from our own faces and onto collaborative work could assist the collaboration, whilst also distract and diffuse anxiety related to being filmed. Regardless, these reviews demonstrate that the technology and interactions all need to be planned, prepared and tested beforehand. Stakeholders may need training and support to use the software before and during engagement. This has potential to detract from attention needed for the co-design task at hand.

⁵ <https://transformationnorthwest.org/taking-workshops-for-design-research-online/>

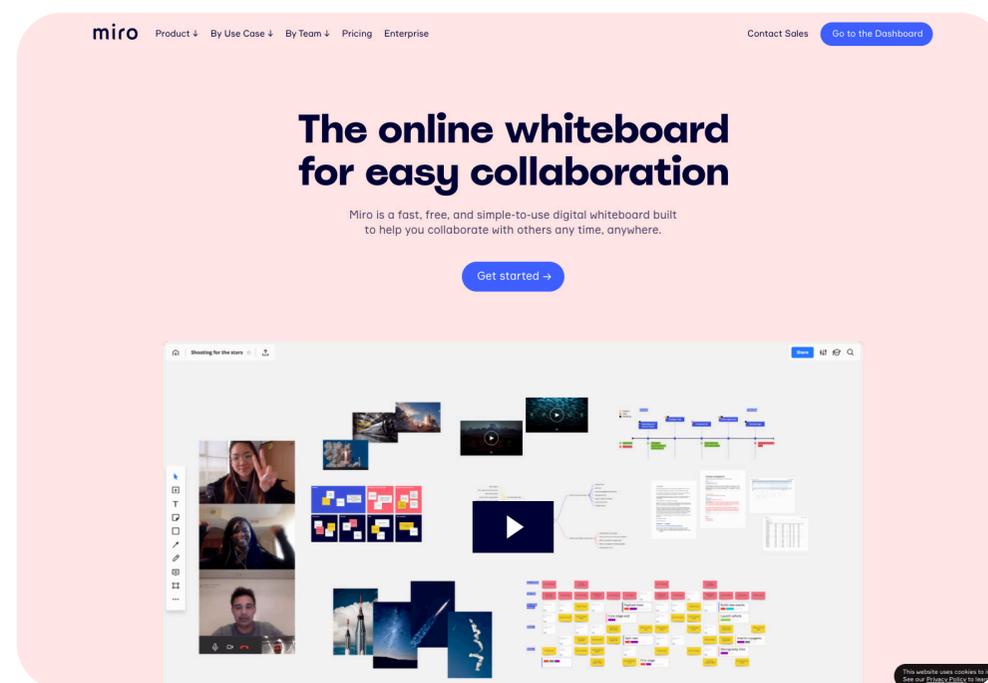
⁶ Dantec CAL, DiSalvo C. Infrastructuring and the formation of publics in participatory design. *Social Studies of Science*. 2013;43(2):241-264. doi:10.1177/0306312712471581

⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/03/30/video-chat-zoom-skype-hangouts-hate-bad/>

Aims of adopting Miro

Learning from the lessons of digital tool use in co-design described in this report, we have chosen to use [Miro](https://miro.com/)⁸, in combination with recordable conversation over Microsoft Teams. Miro is an online private, password-protected a whiteboard platform that can be used to map and save ideas with groups of collaborators. It is a space where collaborators can move around, find each other and interact in real time. They can set up and label boards of any size and number. Each board acts as a location that can be searched though a map of the space, board thumbnails and through automatically locating collaborators in the space. A range of objects can be added to the boards, including text, shapes, sketches, links, imported images as well as supporting a range of other plug-ins. We will aim to use it in conversation with one stakeholder at a time, using the resulting map as a starting point for conversation with subsequent stakeholders to build a growing picture of feasibility and barriers in the Ready to Eat fish and seafood product industry.

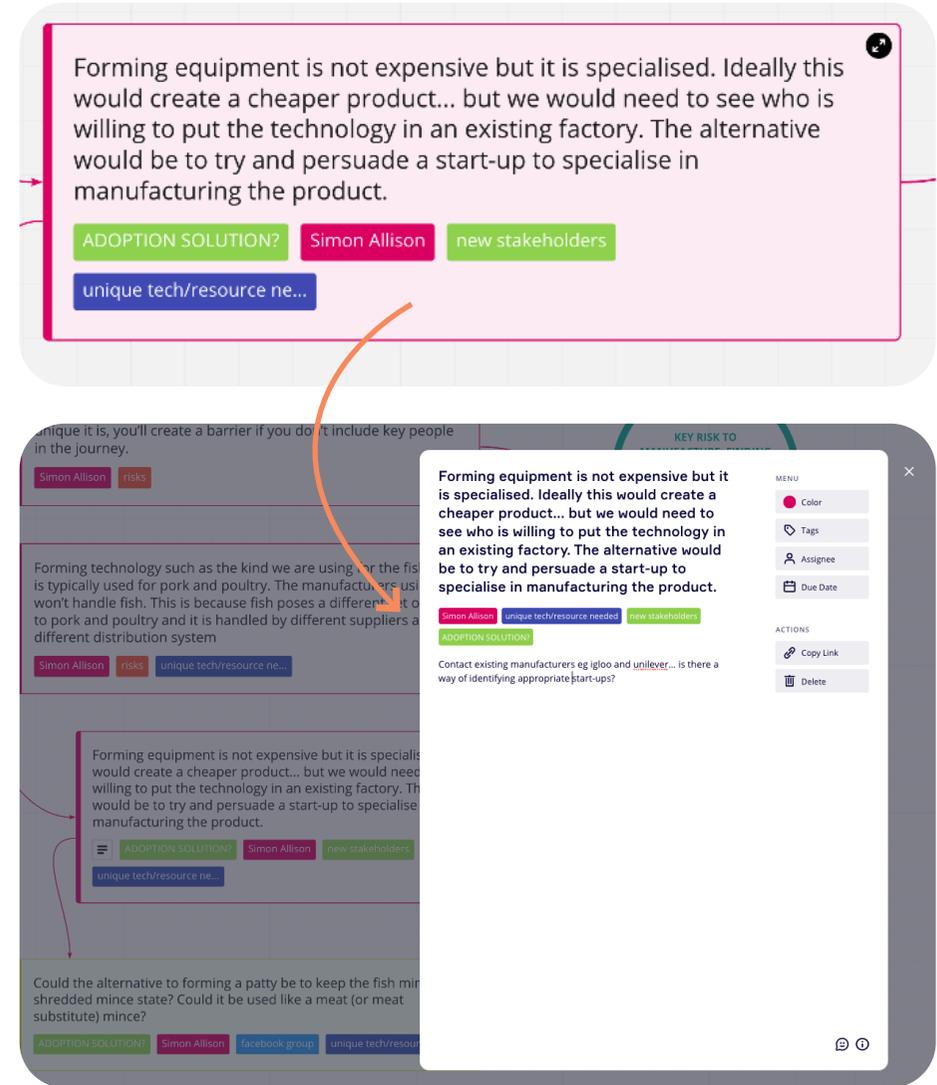
⁸ <https://miro.com/>



Description of method using Miro

We are using the card tools in Miro to visualise and analyse notes made in conversation with stakeholders. The cards are colour coded according to which part of the value chain the stakeholder represents. At a more granular level, each card can be labelled with new and existing tags and description can be added to the card, affording the interviewer and the research participant to code their own data contribution in real time (see images). There may be key points or themes that emerge from reviewing the cards or significant points that the participating stakeholder wants to highlight. The former is highlighted with green text in a white circle with a green outline; the latter is highlighted with white text in a green circle. The researcher facilitating the conversation can hide and show boards to enable the participating stakeholder to respond first without the influence of responses from other participants and then compare, contrast and help to keep adding to the map with their own responses.

Example of Miro card colour coded, tagged and expanded.



FACILITATION

STEP 1

Email note: Many thanks for our chat on [redacted]. I look forward to talking to you on [redacted]. I will contact you by phone first and if you are able to use Teams, it would be great to talk on this platform. In conversation with you, I'd like to map your thoughts and experiences related to the following using an online visualisation tool called Miro. I would like to discuss the following in relation to the possible adoption of a fish ready to cook patty such as the prototype

What would they design and out of them and why? How would this be adapted to existing practices and what would be the barriers to adoption? What could support adoption and make it worthwhile for them?

The ideal would be to use the same method with Gaelle at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, and stakeholders from SeaFish, CEFAC, and GFA.

2. prospective stakeholders

PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS

ANALYSIS

3. KEY

One of the research leads for Lancaster University in the Seafood Age project to develop and test prototype research methods for establishing feasibility of the Seafood Age brand to cook RTE (ready to eat) fish ready to cook patties in defined time regions. This method recently being developed in a new fish ready to cook patty and fish ready to cook patty. The research will involve a number of conversations with RTE industry stakeholders in the UK.

The research method principles being developed will include being designed for use in all stakeholder roles (fish ready to cook) and respective markets. On being fully developed, the research will be presented to the Seafood Age team at Lancaster University under the supervision of Dr. [redacted] and Dr. [redacted] for establishing RTE (ready to eat) fish ready to cook patties in defined time regions. The research will involve a number of conversations with RTE industry stakeholders in the UK.

4. Introduction: Establishing feasibility with UK

5. Product innovation and development for an

[Navigation Icons: Arrow, Grid, Text, Copy, Paste, Erase, Lasso, Comment, Link, Share, Refresh, More]

prospective stakeholder facilitation



KEY



Introduction: Establishing feasibility with UK stakeholders



Product innovation and development for an older market



Manufacture and distribution of an RTE food product



Circular economy method adoption



Health, safety and nutrition



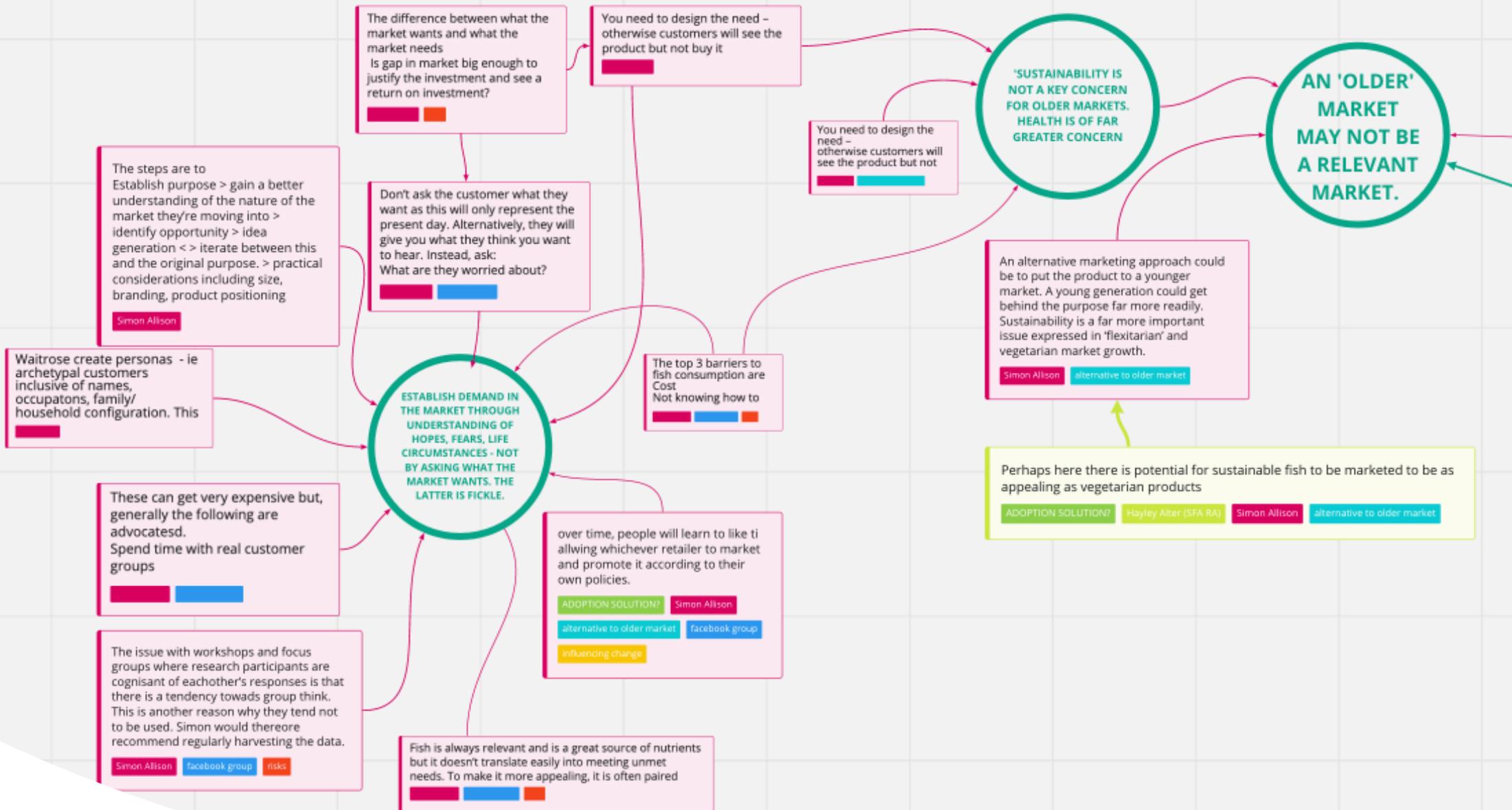
Convenience and relevance of the product in the market



KEY TAKEAWAYS



Overview of prototype Miro board structure. The finished structure will be handed over to future facilitators with guidelines for use.



Overview of board 1: notes from conversation on product innovation and development for an older market. Arrows are dynamic, allowing the objects to be moved without getting disconnected.

Initial conversation with Simon Allison, Technical Innovation Manager, Waitrose

On Friday 6th November 2020, Hayley Alter, the Research Associate on the Seafood Age team at Lancaster University spoke to Simon Allison, the Manager of Technical Innovation at Waitrose, UK. Waitrose is a leading supermarket retailer with a strong reputation for producing high-quality own brand products through adopting and pioneering environmentally and socially sustainable practices through their supply chains. This was an exploratory, minimally structured interview with Simon, designed to map his views relating to process feasibility, challenges, opportunities and risks in manufacture, retail and marketing of a Ready to Cook (RTC) fish product—inclusive of algae-based packaging and smart labelling—linked in particular to the following areas

- Product innovation and development for an older market
- manufacture and distribution of an RTE food product
- circular economy method adoption
- health, safety and nutrition
- convenience and relevance of the product in the market

We used the conversation with Simon Allison to build a map in Miro that we will take to work with other participating stakeholders.

Emerging insights

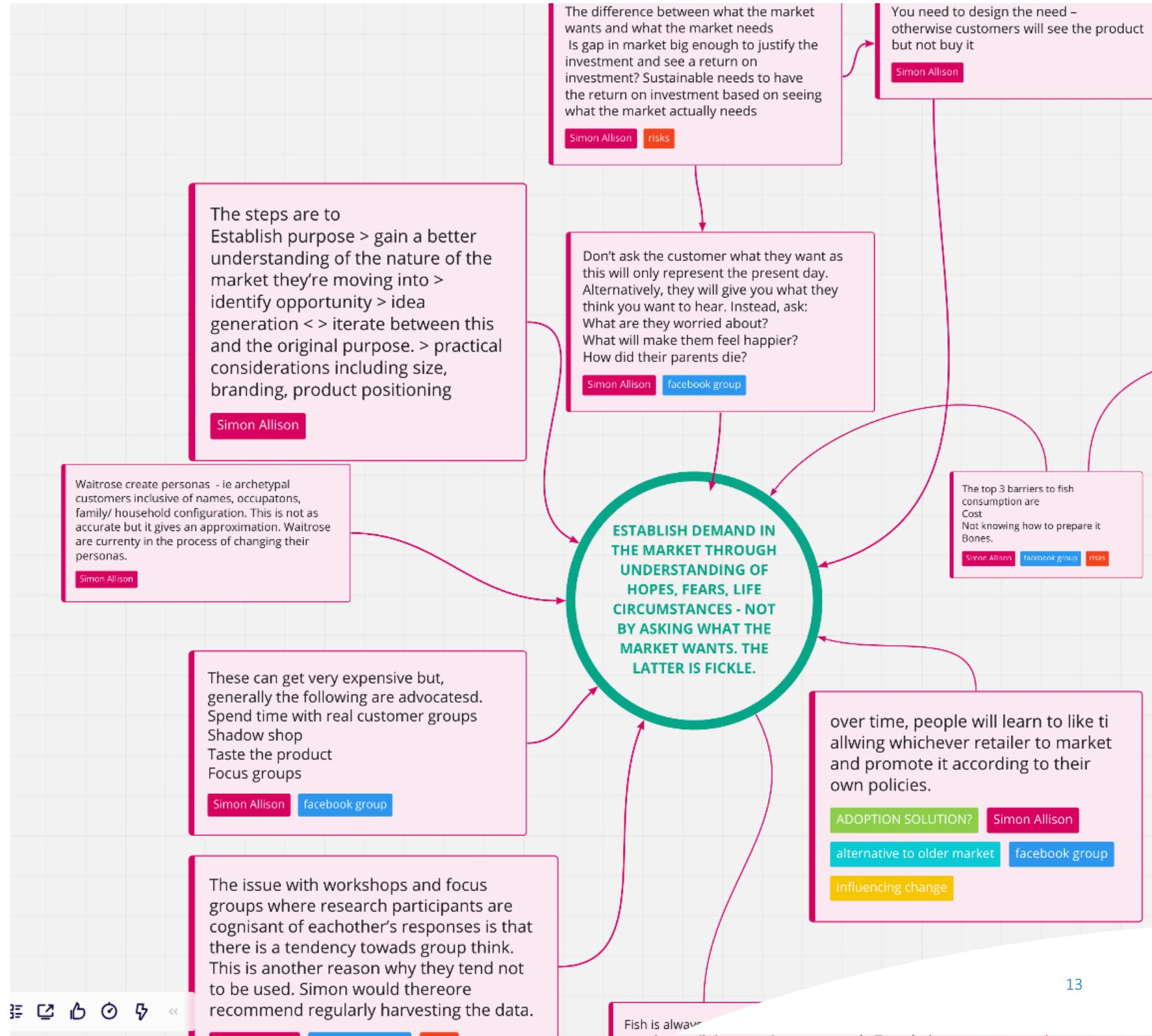
1. Establish demand in the market by gaining insight into wider hopes, fears and life circumstances.

The following are insights emerging from mapping notes from the conversation with Simon Allison.

The strongest insight emerging from this first conversation was the need to establish the purpose and demand for the Seafood Age Ready to Cook fish product in the market. Though the technical methods and means for creating this kind of product will have been established through the project, without clarity over who will buy it and why, it will not be clear whether there is sufficient gap in the market to justify investment and ensure a return. In particular, while fish is always relevant and is a great source of nutrients, it does not translate easily into meeting unmet needs. A variety of methods can be adopted to establish demand which vary considerably in cost and accuracy. These include creating personas, shadowing customers, carrying out product tastings and holding focus groups.

In Seafood Age we are prototyping a facebook social learning group as a means for establishing demand amongst potential customers. Advice given here by Simon here has provided insight into shaping it. First can be discussion around a minced fish product with ease of preparation and eating, given that the top 3 barriers to fish consumption known to retailers are, cost, not knowing how to prepare it and bones, could be a useful focus for questioning in the group. The second point is not to ask research participants what they want as they will only be able to represent the present day in their answer or give you what they believe you want to hear. Instead, questions about their hopes, fears and life circumstances are far less mercurial in establishing demand. Simon listed questions like: what are you worried about; what will make them feel happier; and how did your parents die?

Talking about how to establish demand in the market was the central learning taken from the conversation. Much of what was covered here, offered insight into how to design the facebook group, what to focus on and how to collect data from it.



2. The Seafood Age product may have more provable value to people younger than those aged 65 and over.

i. MARKETING USING VALUES LINKED TO SUSTAINABILITY

There is significant risk in marketing the Seafood Age product on the basis of its sustainability credentials to those aged 65 and over. The generation born before World War Two and brought up with values that resonate with sustainable practices like “waste not want not” is now dwindling. The ‘Baby Boomer’ generation born shortly after World War Two does not commonly view waste in the same way and is not as connected to values like preventing species extinction as younger generations who would be more willing to see those values reflected in what they consume. That said, the return on investment for sustainable food products remains notoriously low in general. The Seafood Age product would therefore need to respond to another needs state concerning the older demographic like brain health and bone density. However, responding to a health-based needs state brings its own risk.

the need -
ers will see the product

You need to design the need -
otherwise customers will see the
product but not buy it. Waste not
want not generation is getting old

'SUSTAINABILITY IS
NOT A KEY CONCERN
FOR OLDER MARKETS.
HEALTH IS OF FAR
GREATER CONCERN

AN 'OLDER'
MARKET
MAY NOT BE
A RELEVANT
MARKET.

An alternative marketing approach could
be to put the product to a younger
market. A young generation could get
behind the purpose far more readily.
Sustainability is a far more important
issue expressed in 'flexitarian' and
vegetarian market growth.

barriers to fish
ion are
ing how to prepare it
facebook group risks

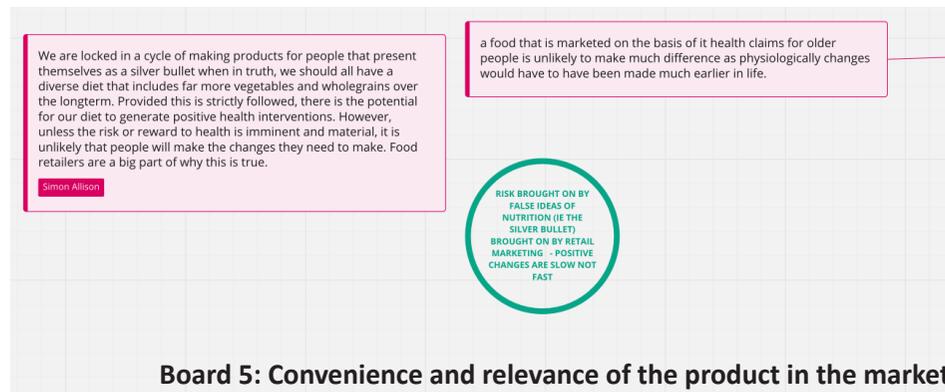
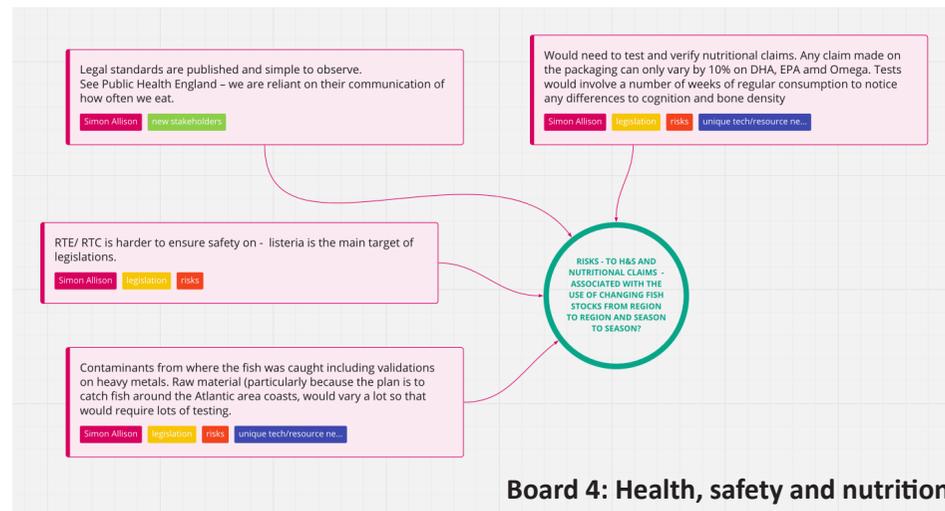
Perhaps here there is potential for sustainable fish to be marketed to be as
appealing as vegetarian products

Conversation notes establishing the link between
sustainability and a younger market. The key points in
circles can emerge either from apparent links between
notes, or from the emphasis the point is given during
the conversation by the research participant. Here,
Simon Allison had emphasised the point about a lack of
relevance of sustainability to an older market. The card
in lime green is the researcher's note made in response
during the conversation. This is included to evidence
exchange, demonstrate the nature of the dialogue and to
support the development of insights.

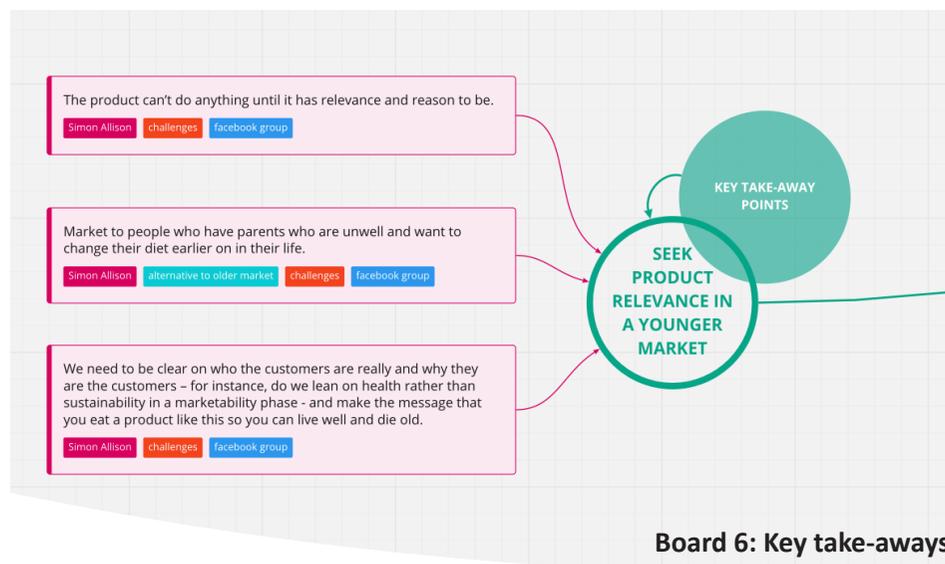
ii. MARKETING USING VALUES LINKED TO HEALTH

Public Health England sets strict standards for any food product making a health and nutrition claim on its packaging. For instance, claims can only vary by 10% with respect to Omega-3 fats like DHA (Docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA (Eicosapentaenoic acid) found in oily fish. Testing for claims involves a number of weeks of regular consumption to notice any differences to cognition and bone density. This would need to be done alongside testing for contaminants such as heavy metals in the fish. In a product in which the fish used will tend to change according to region and season, considerable time and expense will therefore need to be devoted to ongoing testing.

In addition, the existing conditions for how foods making health claims are marketed also poses a risk. We can generally make positive health interventions with our diet based on a diversity of protein, vegetables and wholegrains if we follow it strictly over the long term. However, the food retail market, according to Allison can tend to falsely present products as nutritional silver bullets. This helps to lock us into a cycle of failing to make significant changes to our diets unless the risk or reward to health is imminent and material. This further problematises marketing specifically to an older demographic. The nutritional impact of products making health claims are harder to observe in those whose physiologies are now in decline. Put simply, for a product like the Seafood Age prototype to make an impact, people would need to start eating it earlier in life. On that basis, it may be more relevant and valuable to market to those much younger than 65 who (perhaps have seen their parents become unwell and) are keen to maintain or improve their health through diet over the long term.

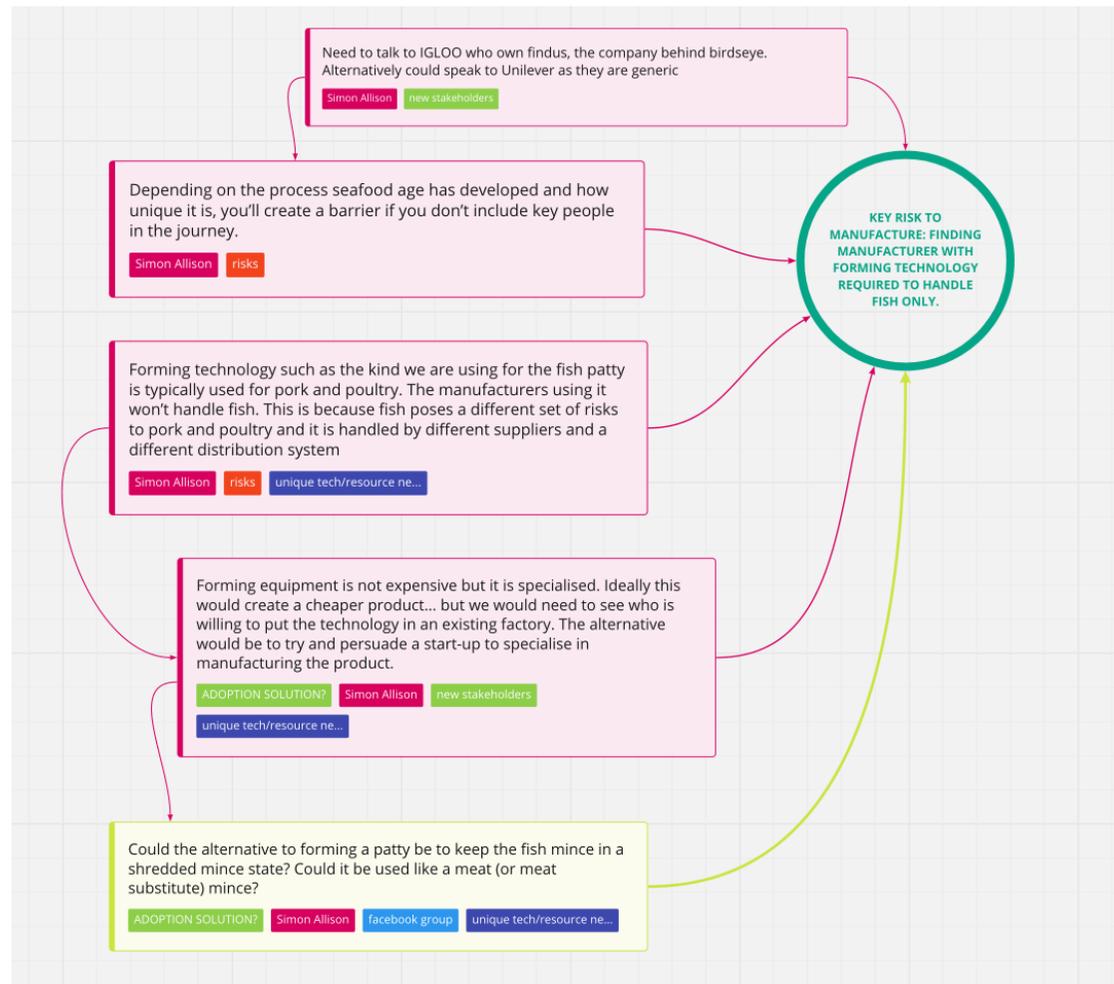


Points regarding the risks around creating a “health” product for an older market came up during conversation covering health, safety and nutrition and again when talking about convenience and relevance in the market. Throughout the conversation around these points, these risks were compared to the relative opportunities that could lay in marketing the same health product to a younger demographic and re-emphasised again as a key point at the end of the conversation.

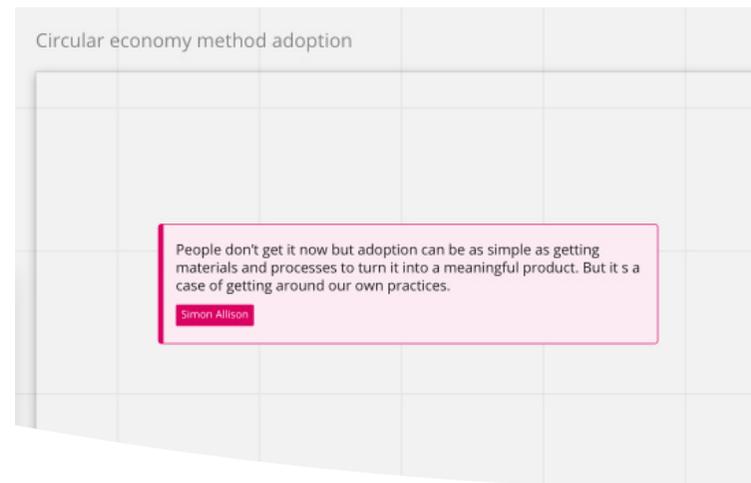


3. Identify manufacturers able to use forming technology on fish only.

In RTC food manufacture, the forming technology that would be used to create the Seafood Age fish patty is typically only used for meat, pork and poultry. Food health and safety standards prevents manufacturers from handling fish with the same equipment. Over time this has meant that fish is handled by different manufacture suppliers and a different distribution system to those handling meat, pork and poultry. Forming equipment is not expensive, but it is specialised so the challenge in further determining feasibility of manufacture will be to either identify partners willing to put the equipment in an existing factory, or to persuade a start-up to specialise in manufacturing the Seafood Age patty product. A question for the Seafood Age project is whether a viable product could be made from the minced fish without needing to use forming technology? For example, could it work instead as a meat substitute style mince? With respect to how manufacturers and other parts of the value chain will be willing to adopt circular economy methods into existing practices would need further discussion with those stakeholders.



Notes regarding forming technology dominated conversation around manufacture and distribution. There are also an absence of notes regarding (relevant) circular economy practices in retail at the moment. There was no discussion regarding existing uses of smart labelling or packaging using sea-by products or the potential for adopting them. The likelihood of needing to establish new practices was highlighted as a general point.



Summary and next steps

This report has described the method currently in development to collaboratively map perspectives, values, opportunities and risks to feasibility for adopting the seafood Age RTC fish product and practices with RTC industry stakeholders, starting with the UK. Work on the mapping method has started with an initial conversation with retail stakeholder, Simon Allison at Waitrose UK and has produced the following insights into potential feasibility:

1. Establish demand in the market by gaining insight into wider hopes, fears and life circumstances.
2. The Seafood Age product may have more provable value to people younger than those aged 65 and over.
3. Identify manufacturers able to use forming technology on fish only.

Next steps are to continue to build the map with stakeholders from across the value chain – with particular focus on fish RTC manufacturers, those that inform policy, practices and circular economy method adoption in relation to Fish RTC products in the UK.

Acknowledgements

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