

Refining X!Delft's services

responding to partner needs

X!Delft is an organisation within Delft University of Technology, aiming to create an 'innovation ecosystem' in which the university, companies, and startups work together on "new inventions" (van Wijnen, 2019). However, stimulating collaboration between multiple companies in such an ecosystem proves to be challenging. Hence the ecosystem is still predominantly used for company-specific challenges.

To encourage collaboration in the innovation ecosystem, a closer look is taken at the needs of partners and the benefits they seek, in order to adapt X!Delft's services accordingly. Through interviews with industry partners, innovation challenges were identified.

These challenges revealed an underlying feeling of uncertainty as a result of rapid (technological) developments. However, an element of excitement in this uncertainty was uncovered, summarised in the term 'suspense'. This is the underlying driver for the X!Delft partnership.

Suspense can be defined as "a state or feeling of excited or anxious uncertainty about what may happen" (Oxford University Press, 2019). It arises when uncertainty is perceived, triggering the imagination of divergent future scenarios based on pre-existing knowledge.

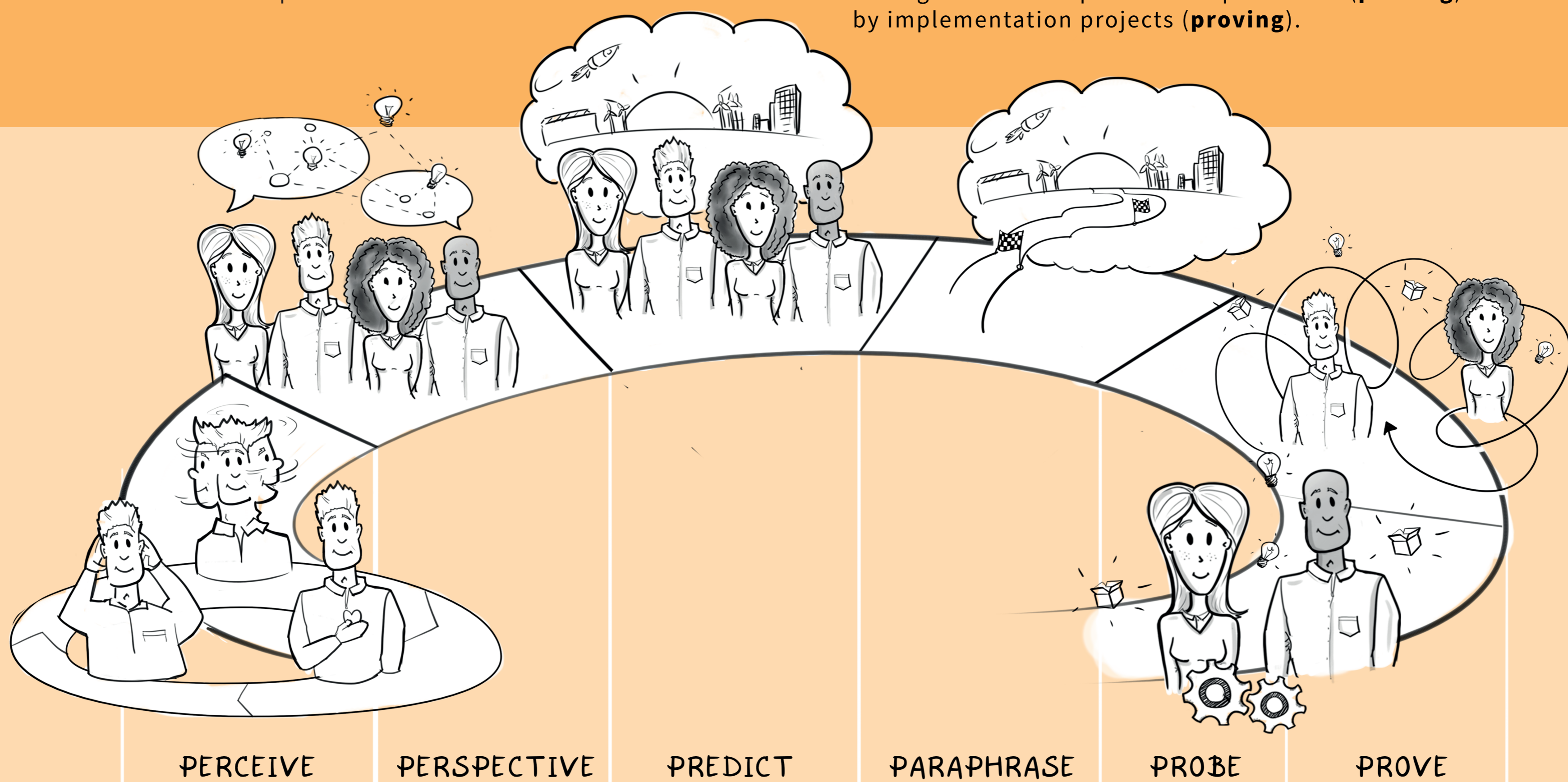


Preserving And Cultivating Effective Suspense

When the perceived uncertainty triggers an impulse to act, it engages partners in an exciting learning process aimed at minimising the divergence between scenarios until innovation opportunities surface and the suspense is resolved.

Suspense that triggers this kind of engagement - leading to resolution - is defined as effective suspense. The aim is then to structure and expand X!Delft's services so that they cultivate this effective suspense.

The proposed process to Preserve And Cultivate Effective Suspense (PACES), consists of six overlapping phases in which X!Delft's services are structured and expanded. PACES stimulates collecting (**perceiving**) and sharing insights to increase the collective knowledge base (**perspective**) needed to generate plausible predictions. These **predictions** are then made actionable (**paraphrasing**) based on the strategic intent of individual actors, ensuring company-specific impact through the development of experiments (**probing**) followed by implementation projects (**proving**).



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How design helps to cultivate effective suspense
Refining X!Delft's value proposition

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Company
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