

CONTEXT

The Services Team of the Digital Government Development Department at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (in short and Estonian: MKM) systematically supports public sector institutions in creating and delivering good digital services.

Creating a good (digital) service requires knowledge and skills in service design and development.

Working in the public sector also requires **consideration of various requirements** and **guidelines**, understanding bureaucracy and procurement processes, and being able to collaborate effectively with private sector development partners, as well as your own team.

The task is further complicated by the fragmentation, and poor readability, comprehensibility, and applicability of the requirements. The challenge is not easy. You need to keep an overview of the big picture while managing numerous details.

PRACTICAL NEED

To ensure better (digital) services and to simplify the work of service managers, development project managers, and development teams, MKM has developed a services standard.

This standard consists of 10 principles for service development, a process description for service development, and a <u>digital services toolbox</u>, that includes guidelines, methods, and other applicable tools.

How can we support and simplify the adoption of the standard among service managers and development teams?

The solution was the idea of **service design cards**, which provide a practical and playful way to think through and plan the service development process.

DESIGN JOURNEY: FROM SERVICE DESIGN TO DESIGN CARDS

Although there was a clear understanding of what the card game needed to achieve, the format and content of the game were open-ended, as there are many different paths to reach the goal. Together with the design team from the Velvet agency, the MKM team began developing the pilot version of the game.

The ideation phase was followed by a **prototype-test-adjust cycle**. A total of three iterations were conducted, with new users participating in the prototype playthrough each time. With each playthrough, **the the cards were simplified** to highlight the most important value.

Ideas and needs that the card game should cover emerged during co-creation workshops and playthroughs:

- Playthrough of development project planning, supported by process activities and method cards
- Playthrough of team composition, supported by role cards
- Playthrough of overcoming obstacles, which evolved into a risk mitigation playthrough, supported by risk cards

RESULT

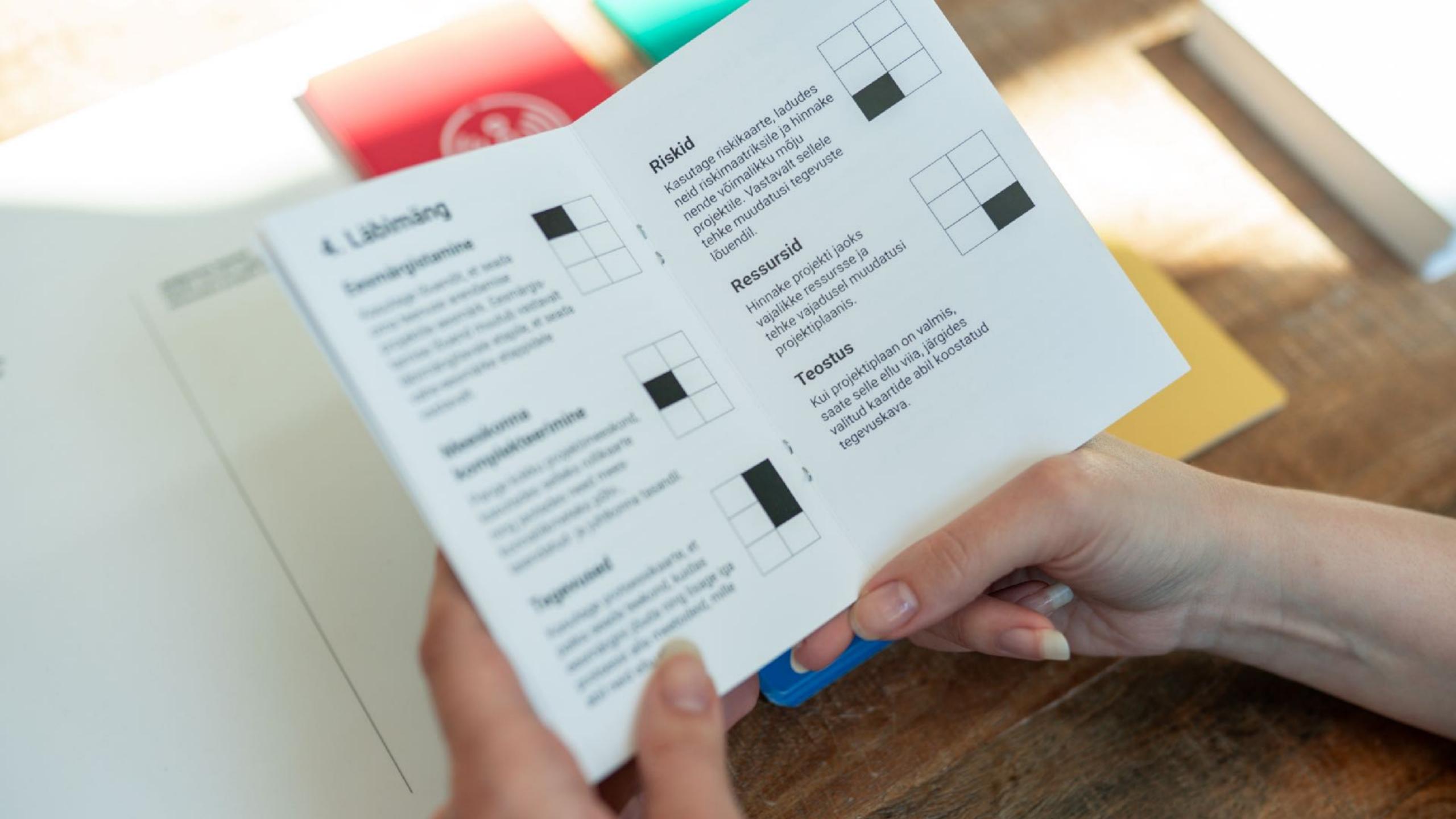
As a result of the development project, an MVP (minimal viable product) solution of the service design card game was created.

It covers the first two stages of the development process –preparation and understanding and focus selection– and includes:

- 60 playing cards in four suits activity cards, method cards, role cards, and risk cards
- Blank cards for each suit to create and add new cards
- Five game boards to support playthroughs of goal setting, activity sequencing, team composition, and risk assessment
- Card **game guide** and explanations of terms
- Five posters to communicate the ten principles of service development







EASILY ACCESSIBLE

Special attention was given to making the card game accessible and easy to implement.

The printable version of the service design card game is **available to everyone** in the <u>digital government toolbox</u>.

To adopt the card game, the materials need to be printed and cut out, or printed in a print shop according to the instructions. The digital version of the cards can be found on the Miro platform.

PILOTING

The game pilot took place from May to November 2023, with the aim of **introducing** the service design card game and **supporting its adoption** in institutions.

Equally important was to gather **feedback** from practical gameplay experiences to collect relevant input for the development of the full version of the game.

PLAYTROUGH STATISTICS

- 15 events (seminars, team-based games, individual borrowings)
- Approximately 42 teams played the card game
- Approximately 300 players/users
- User satisfaction index (NPS) 51.9
- User satisfaction on a 5-point scale: 4.49
- Number of respondents providing satisfaction ratings: 81
- 15 institutions or teams have received or requested a card deck for independent use











FEEDBACK

Feedback from players helped validate the game's value proposition. Testers highlighted about the game:

Educates, opens new perspectives, and provides new knowledge – Team members gain new insights into service design and the development process, including methods, roles, and risks. Members obtain a comprehensive overview of service development activities and key connections.

A tool for conceptualisation – A tool to support the conceptualisation process. The game forces players to work through, understand, and articulate the process, problems, and topics. It helps identify and prioritise important aspects while avoiding the omission of crucial steps.

Structured, systematic, and coherent – Creates clarity from confusion and integrates individual parts into a whole. The game provides a systematic overview and a holistic view of different process stages and topics. The structure of the card game helps maintain focus on broad and otherwise scattered topics.

FEEDBACK

Engages the team, stimulates discussion, and aligns understanding – The playful approach and physical cards engage team members in joint activities, stimulate discussion, and help reach a common understanding on important topics.

Simple and quick – The provided cards and structured approach simplify the consideration of the development project plan and help achieve results faster.

Practical outcome – As a result of the game, a visual overview of the project plan is created from the laid-out cards, including the next practical steps.

PLAYERS SAID

"Setting up the task in such a playful way that also ensures actually moving towards the goal is superb – it brings together interested parties, creates contacts, demolishes communication barriers, adds unexpected (in the best way) ideas and overall, provides a new perspective to problem solving."

"The playthrough brought together different people with their different perspectives to the service, that I'm so used to working with. It offered an opportunity to look at the service in a whole new way. Enriching!"

FROM PILOTING TO FULL SOLUTION. NEXT STEPS

Feedback led to several improvement suggestions. The goal for 2024 is to develop the next version of the service standard, which will support the **complete version of the card deck**.

The full version of the card deck will include **all stages of the service development process**, with additional stages for a) visioning and strategic planning, b) delivery, and c) completion.

Furthermore, **evaluation gates** between stages will be introduced to help service/product teams assess whether all activities have been completed and prerequisites met before moving to the next stage.

To facilitate the creation of methods, a **toolkit repository** has been developed, which allows for easier sharing of materials between organisations and managing the development of new methods and tools.

The development of the full version of the service design card deck will **incorporate feedback** from users. In addition to further developing the cards and canvases, more emphasis will be placed on **gamification** elements and the **implementation of game results** in daily work.

SUMMARY

The MKM service design card game helps public sector employees and developers **structure projects playfully**, applying **service design** and **design thinking principles**. The game includes cards and a game board to understand the design process, methods, and roles.

The cards support discussions and innovation, highlighting project stages, resources, and risks. The goal is to improve teamwork and knowledge sharing while mitigating risks and planning the project more efficiently, creating better e-services for a digital nation.