

UNTANGLING BLOCKCHAIN CONSULTING

This thesis explores the topic of 'embedding strategic value in blockchain development' within the context of blockchain consultancy startup GoBlock. The result of this research was a process framework together with a workshop for validating a blockchain use case's strength and potential.

Currently, a lot of blockchain based companies fail to reach their set goals and deliver on their initial promise. With the vast amounts of capital raised for blockchain based companies, a lot of eyes are aimed at these projects to see what they will lead to. Given blockchain technology's young stage of maturity, many blockchain startups do not have the required capacity or knowledge to realize the initially set goals, deliver on their promises or to even build a working product at all. Thus, there is a need for blockchain expertise and manpower among many blockchain projects to enable them to realize their goals. Besides the technological challenge, the industry is dominated by technology specialists, leading to blockchain being offered as a solution for problems to which it not always is a valuable solution. This results in blockchain projects being canceled or failing to deliver and giving the technology itself a bad reputation. Research showed there were three main challenges that blockchain projects and blockchain consultants are faced with:



This thesis aims to provide GoBlock with a way to structure their blockchain consulting process. The goal was to do this in a way that would result in the creation of successful products (i.e. products providing value), as this is lacking in the industry.

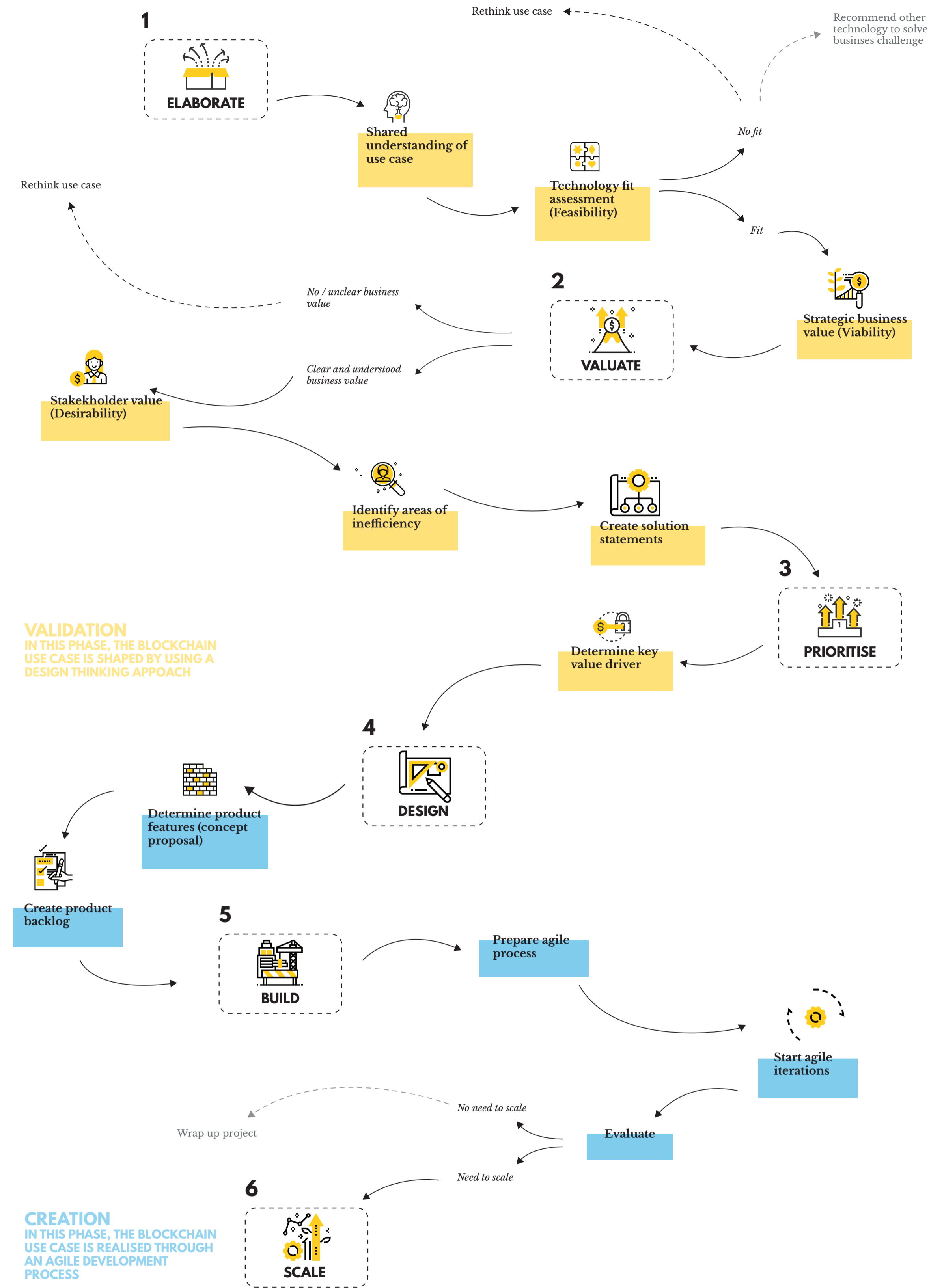


Figure 1. Process framework designed for GoBlock's consultants.

PROCESS FRAMEWORK

The process framework on the left was designed for GoBlock. The framework came forward from analysis insights and ideation sessions. It consists of two overarching phases, Validation (yellow) and Creation (blue).

VALIDATION

The Validation phase uses several tools, some of which are Design Thinking tools, to establish a solid blockchain use case. This phase focuses on critically assessing the strength and potential of a blockchain use case. The Design Thinking tools are then used to apply a user-centered approach to the development of the use case so that value can be established for all key users. Prioritising of user values is then done in order to lower the threshold for the actual development of the blockchain use case.

CREATION

The Creation phase starts after the Validation phase is completed and prioritised user values are established. Using the concrete outcomes from the first phase as input, an MVP proposal with corresponding product backlog is created. This will then incrementally be built and elaborated through agile iterations. Eventually, the blockchain pilot project will be evaluated to discuss potential scaling possibilities.

VALIDATION WORKSHOP

A use case validation workshop was designed as a deep dive into the Validation phase, as research showed that was the key success factor. The goal of the workshop is two-fold. First, it establishes that a blockchain use case is valid and elaborated upon correctly, by testing it against Design Thinking's three main principles (Feasibility, Viability and Desirability). Second, by prioritising user values it lowers the threshold for further development of the actual product. A workbook was designed for the workshop, visuals of which are shown below.

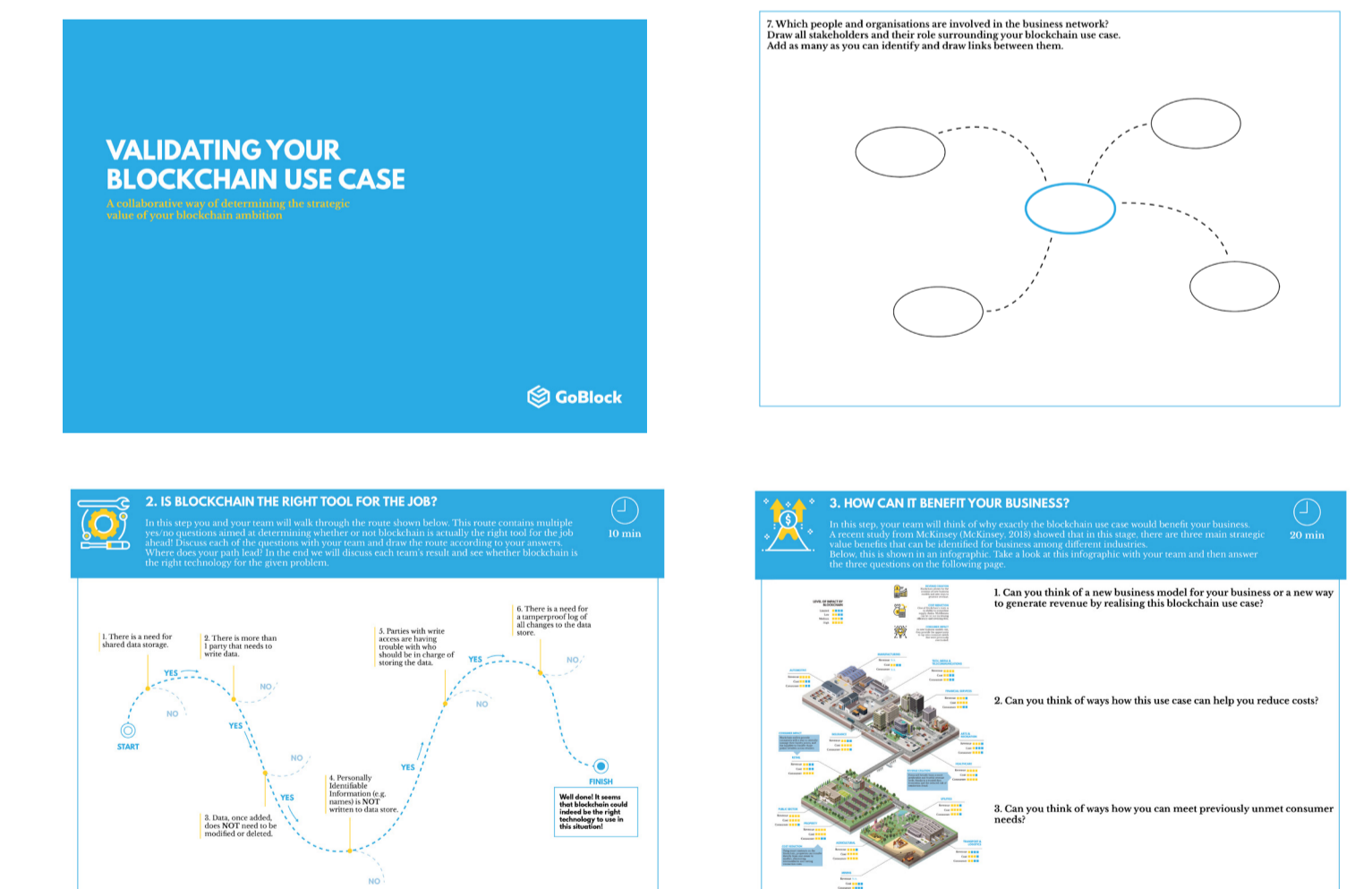


Figure 2. Overview of some of the workbook exercises.

Cyril Schouten
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Strategic Product Design

Committee
Company

Giulia Calabretta
Viki Pavlic
Pinar Cankurtaran
Hugo Hemmen