

Transferpartner Proto-Persona

Guidance on implementation

Material:

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The Proto-Persona helps to structure assumptions about potential transfer partners in SMEs. Researchers develop a systematic understanding of the perspectives, needs and challenges of potential SME partners. Teams establish a workable basis for targeted outreach, interviews, workshops and testable hypotheses regarding collaboration and benefits.

Time required

The exercise can be performed at different depths:

- **Face-to-face exercise (condensed): approx. 30 minutes**
Focus on initial assumptions, group discussion and raising awareness of the target group
- **In-depth individual work (preparation and follow-up): approx. 120–180 minutes**
including systematic online research, use of personal networks and comparison with real-life examples

The decision on which option to choose depends on the stage of the project, the target audience and the planned delivery format.

Example:

1. Define the target group (in-person: 5 mins [at home: 15–20 mins])

Identify a specific sector and type of SME as a potential transfer partner.

2. Clarifying assumptions (in-person: 10 mins [at home: 45–60 mins])

Completing the persona template based on existing assumptions regarding the target person's characteristics (e.g. role), activities, pain points and frustrations, as well as their needs and goals.

3. Initial plausibility check (in-person: 5 mins [at home: 30–45 mins])

Cross-check selected assumptions against freely accessible sources (e.g. websites, LinkedIn, networks). Highlight confirmations and contradictions.

4. Formulating hypotheses (in-person: 5 mins [at home: 20–30 mins])

Deriving initial hypotheses regarding potential for collaboration and benefits between research and SMEs.

5. Preparing for iteration (in-person: 5 mins [at home: 15–25 mins])

Compiling open-ended questions as a basis for interviews, feedback sessions or workshops.

Total duration: In-person approx. 30 minutes [At home / in-depth study: 120–180 minutes]

Implementation

> The exercise begins with the deliberate selection of a realistic sector and a type of SME.

> On this basis, assumptions regarding roles, activities, pain points, needs and objectives are systematically formulated and explicitly labelled as hypotheses.

> In the in-depth version, a structured comparison is carried out with publicly available sources and existing networks to highlight plausibility, contradictions and open questions.

> Specific hypotheses regarding collaboration and benefits are then derived and prepared for potential discussions.

> The proto-persona is regarded as a dynamic working tool and is refined and further developed iteratively throughout the course of the project on the basis of real-world contacts.