Framing Problem
| System Map Tool

This tool captures the key roles, relationships, and dynamics of a system to enhance understanding of the big picture and potential disruptions to the system.

WHEN

Use a System Map in the early phase of a project, when the system may not be fully understood or defined.

WHY

This approach helps a team understand the problem space, players, possible disruptions, and opportunities. The process can also aid in problem framing

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

STEP 1: Fill out the top boxes (i.e., white boxes) by answering the questions, individually or as a group. If done individually, be sure to come together to generate a map that captures the group's inputs, which will likely be richer and more accurate.

STEP 2: Other questions and considerations to keep in mind while filling out the top boxes include:

- Who maintains/sustains the current system? How?
- Does policy play a role?
- How do the organizations relate to one another? If it helps, draw lines to show connections and relationships.
- What are the most critical relationships?
- Is there any competition?

STEP 3: Pay attention to who is at a disadvantage in the current system, as this may yield some opportunities to further explore.

STEP 4: Move to filling out the bottom row (i.e., blue boxes). Again, if working individually first, be sure to reconvene and share inputs for the group map.

STEP 5: Other questions and considerations to keep in mind while filling out the bottom boxes include:

- Who are the disrupters? What are the disrupters? Cultural/Political/Social? Technology/ Hardware/Software? Process?
- Any trends outside the system that could have an effect? What type of effect would it have? How could we avoid it?

STEP 6: Once the System Map is complete, there should be a few ideas to explore regarding possible opportunities to bring positive change or disruption to the system.

INNOVATION TOOLKIT

System Map Tool | Worksheet

Who
is losing under the current system?

Who wants/needs to disrupt the current system?

What Supports?
Who or what substantially supports the system but is not directly involved in it? How?

Where is there disruption/vulnerability in the supporting systems?

Current System
Who and what maintains or advances the status quo? What are the key relationships? Who has power in this scenario?

Disruptions
Who and what is/can disrupt the current system?

INNOVATION **TOOLKIT**