

Design Economy Invitation to Tender The Social and Environmental Value of Design

The Design Council wishes to invite proposals from a UK-based, academic or non-academic research partner to conduct research on the socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic value of design. The envisioned project runs from **15 May 2023 – 13 May 2024** and is part of the Design Council's flagship **Design Economy** research project.

Through this invitation to tender, we seek to commission the delivery of a 4-part study:

1. Survey with design professionals (**Work Package 1**)
2. Case studies of design organisations (**Work Package 2**)
3. Deliberative Workshop (**Work Package 3**)
4. Synthesising analysis (**Work Package 4**)

The research is to be based on a detailed scope of work and methodology produced in earlier phases of Design Economy. Outcomes will be used to provide evidence and case studies of best practice for industry and government. They will inform the Design Council's policy development and recommendations to support the design sector.

Design Economy

Every 3 years, the Design Council publishes Design Economy – the only publication that provides data on the state of design and design skills in the UK, and their value to the whole UK economy.

The term 'design economy' identifies four categories of workers that together contribute to design's impact: (1) Designers in design industries; (2) Other roles in design industries; (3) Designers in other sectors across the economy; (4) Design skilled workers in design and non-design industries: those who are not professional designers, but use design skills as a significant aspect of their work.

Design Economy 2021–2024

Our current iteration of Design Economy (referred to as **DE21**) builds on previous research in **2015** and **2018** into the economic value of design. The scope for DE21, however, is wider. For the first time, we seek to assess also the social and environmental value of design to the UK. DE21 emphasises issues of equality, diversity, and inclusivity in design across the UK's nations and regions. It is not only a snapshot of today but sets out a positive vision of where design might be in the future, and what it will take to get there.

DE21 is split into 4 Phases. Phases 1 and 2 saw the detailed development of a project methodology, including a draft tool for holistically assessing the impacts and value of design – the **Design Value Framework**. Moreover, the economic contribution of the **Invitation to Tender**

design economy was evaluated, resulting in our 2022 **Design Economy: People, Places and Economic Value** report.

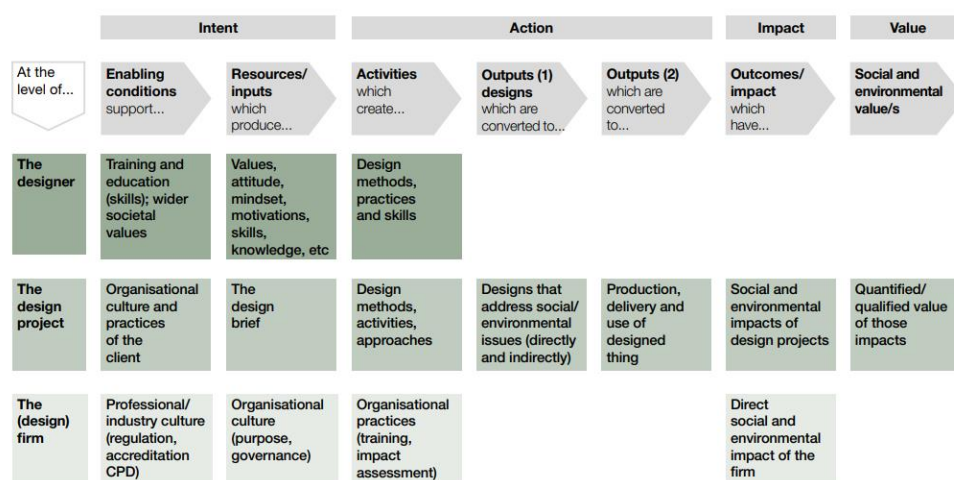
This invitation to tender is for Phase 3 of DE21 which encompasses 4 distinct, yet interrelated Work Packages.

Brief for this contract

We are looking for a research partner with experience of conducting similar and relevant research, particularly in the Creative Industries, to conduct primary research on the socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic impact and value of design. Given the explicit focus on economic contributions in earlier project phases, social and environmental aspects are of particular interest and relevance. We expect our research partner to deliver outputs in the form of brief reports, headline summaries of findings, and thought pieces as well as a practice-oriented updated version of the Design Value Framework (details below). To do so, they must be able to implement, refine, and further iterate already detailed methodological approaches and analytical frameworks. Concretely, we would like the proposed work to build on the following material:

- **Scoping Paper 0:** This paper offers in-depth background information and a rationale for the methodology developed for DE21. It defines key concepts and introduces the DE21 logical model – a representation of how enabling conditions lead to outcomes across the design economy and how the methodology’s different phases fit into this shared narrative. This must be considered during the next phase of research to warrant consistency and alignment with ‘the bigger picture’.
- **Scoping Paper 1:** Key elements to be used from this paper include:

(1) **A Theory of Change**, developed for DE21, to account for social and environmental impacts of design across three levels: The designer (or person using design skills), the design project, and the design organisation. The Theory of Change emphasises temporality, accounting for the activities through which designing leads to different types of impact over time (Figure 1).



Source: UAL Social Design Institute (2021)

Figure 1: Diagram summarising the draft Theory of Change to account for social and environmental impacts of design for DE21.

(2) **Proposed research questions**, based on the Theory of Change's four sequential components: Intent, action, impact, and value.

(3) An overview of the proposed **methods** to carry out the research and analyses within Work Packages 1-4; how these methods interlink; and how they fit into the overarching frameworks for DE21.

- **Design Value Framework:** We wish to empirically 'test' and improve this analytical tool throughout Work Packages 1-4, arriving at an enhanced version at the end of the project (see section on Deliverables). Complementing existing frameworks and DE21's Theory of Change, the Design Value Framework spans across four domains to assess the holistic value of design (socio-cultural; democratic; environmental; and financial-economic). It also considers indirect and 'ripple-effects' of design, and measures impact at different stages of the design process.

Ultimately, we hope to promote the Design Value Framework as a tool for anyone involved in design to plan, assess, and communicate their work and practice.

Aims and Objectives

Our **collective aims** for Work Packages 1-4 are:

- To provide evidence and insight, both at scale and in-depth, on design professionals' and organisations' **capacities and actions to assess** the socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic impact and value of design.
- To articulate the **distinctive contributions** of design professionals and design skills to socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic impact and value, both now and in the future, and to provide an evidence base to inform action.
- To develop **tangible recommendations** for both industry and government to increase and improve the use of design, especially with regards to the policy areas outlined below.

Our **collective objectives** for Work Packages 1-4 are:

- To **combine methods** to gather and analyse quantitative and qualitative data and engage the specificities of design:
 - To conduct a sector-wide survey of designers, to establish a picture 'at scale', and to provide sufficient data for estimating gross impact and making projections about future potential value. (Work Package 1)
 - To conduct case studies of design organisations to develop understanding of practices and expertise around measuring and assessing impacts, relevant to data-gathering across the wider design economy and including contributions also beyond pre-determined indicators. (Work Package 2)
 - To hold a deliberative workshop with diverse stakeholders from across the design economy to enable democratic, inclusive, and equitable participation in articulating the value of design and evidencing impact. (Work Package 3)
- To underpin analyses with the DE 21's Theory of Change and **Design Value Framework** to articulate and specify socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic impacts and value of design, and to test and further develop the Design Value Framework.

- To conduct anticipatory analyses of the **future potential** of design to generate socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic value, and of how this potential can be unlocked.

Advocacy and Policy

We use our research findings to advocate for policies which maximise the positive impact of design. DE21 identifies the following policy priority areas for insight and recommendations:

- Harnessing design to achieve net zero
- Embedding design within innovation and industrial policy, including green R&D
- Increasing and improving business use of design
- Ensuring that everyone has access to high quality design education, and adults can access design CPD
- Aligning the economic value of design to environmental targets
- Supporting thriving local design cultures
- Strengthening Britain’s leading global role in design

Research Questions

The guiding research questions for this project are:

<p>1. Intent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key enabling conditions that support the generation of social and environmental value through design? • What are the attitudes, motivations, and intentions of designers, design organisations, and their clients, in relation to social and environmental issues? 	<p>2. Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What design mindsets, practices, and skills are used to address social and environmental issues? • What other organisational practices do organisations use to address social and environmental issues? • What proportion of designers directly address, or indirectly consider, social and environmental challenges?
<p>3. Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of positive social and environmental impacts are designers / design organisations responsible for? • What are the significant barriers to achieving positive social and environmental impact through design? 	<p>4. Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What social and environmental value is produced through design work? • How do design practices create social and environmental value?
<p>5. The future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the potential of design to generate social and environmental value? • How can we unlock this potential? 	

Work Package 1: Survey

Aim

The aim of this large-scale survey of design professionals in design and other commercial and public sector organisations, is to generate unique data about how their skills are used to shape social and environmental impacts. It contributes to a baseline understanding of the design economy (including skills gaps). It also forms the

foundation for evaluating impacts and value, and for building future strategies for better design outcomes.

Focus

Understanding at scale the linkages between (1) individual and organisational prerequisites (e.g., skills, mindsets) and practice, and (2) social and environmental impacts and value from design.

Sampling and Suggested Approach

We envision an online questionnaire to be sent out to an extensive list of professional designers in design industries and other sectors across the economy. A sampling framework shall be developed to set minimum quotas on industry sectors, size of organisations, and UK nations, and if possible, the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity characteristics of firms, in a way that is reflective of the UK's design economy. Our **Design Economy: People, Places and Economic Value** report is a useful reference point here. A separate and more detailed sampling framework for design firms might ensure any design sector specific analysis is supported by a sufficient sample size. We envision a minimum of 1,000 responses.

Detailed survey questions should be aligned with the DE21's Theory of Change (intent, action, impact, and value) as well as the Design Value Framework (i.e., the impacts of design that it distinguishes and proposes to measure). A draft questionnaire exists as part of our methodological scoping papers and will form a useful starting point (Appendix 1). Current and future skills needs and gaps are of particular interest to us.

We advise that this study is conducted in collaboration with an organisation who has relevant sampling contacts in place and is able to run a survey of this scale. **We would like to see in applications initial suggestions for suitable organisations.**

Work Package 2: Case studies

Aim

Work Package 2 is a complementary approach to the survey in Work Package 1, aiming for a deeper exploration of the issues at hand. Via a set of case studies, data shall be gathered from and with design teams/organisations. The aim is to enhance our understanding of organisational practices and expertise required to measure and assess, in particular, social and environmental impacts. Moreover, the case studies shall draw out contributions of design beyond pre-determined indicators, including its intangible value (e.g., in terms of knowledge, ideas, connections, or goodwill).

Focus

Understanding in detail the social and environmental impacts and value associated with design as well as the enabling conditions and practices for their realisation within and beyond organisations.

Sampling

We anticipate case studies in three domains with distinct differences between them and a significant potential to generate social and environmental impacts and value: (1) the built environment, (2) service design / public services / social innovation, and (3) product/industrial design.

We suggest sampling at least two organisations in each domain, hence a minimum of six, located in different regions and nations of the UK. In terms of scale, we envision one SME and one big design-led organisation per domain. The focus should be on

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organisations who are already implementing relevant measurements and analyses (e.g., Social Return on Investment or Life Cycle Analysis), so to explore existing practices and organisational data and to maximise peer-to-peer learning in subsequent workshops and synthesising analyses. Further benefits for organisations to participate are free marketing and promotion of their exemplary work and brand alignment via this project.

Whilst the Design Council will develop collateral lists to drive the sampling of organisations, **we would like to see in applications an outline of how this would be supported.**

Suggested Approach

The case study research shall include (1) desk research (including existing organisational reports and strategies); (2) interviews with individuals from inside the organisations; (3) quantitative analyses (where possible, for establishing impacts and value in numerical terms); and (4) at least one deliberative workshop per organisation with a small number of team members to explore intentions and actions that shape organisational impact more openly and thoroughly.

Work Package 3: Workshop

Aim

The aim of Work Package 3 is a deliberative, anticipatory workshop with stakeholders from across the design economy. It shall provide further insights on what socio-cultural, democratic, environmental, and financial-economic value is produced through design and what the future design economy might look like; enable peer-to-peer learning; and generate a co-created, purpose-driven future agenda for Design Economy practice and research.

Focus

Enabling democratic, inclusive, and equitable participation in the design economy and the assessment of its social and environmental impacts and value.

Suggested Approach

We propose conducting at least one workshop, focused on answering specific research questions. Whilst the specific content will be determined by findings generated in the previous work packages, the focus could be on:

- **Articulating value through design:** The aim could be to develop and revise the Design Value Framework. Participants can share examples of practice to highlight the possibilities and limitations of articulating the impacts of design. They could organise proposed indicators for the Framework while discussing their considerations. This could uncover different understandings and priorities and allow a co-creation and iteration of the Framework close to participants' worldviews.
- **Evidencing impacts in the design economy:** The workshop could see three expert testimonials from design, academia, and policy, prompting discussions on the currently existing body of evidence and scoping future opportunities. Design experts have unique understanding of the types of effects and nature of change embodied in their practices; academics can speak to the methodologies used in 'producing' evidence; and policy makers have specific requirements for formats and types of evidence compatible with policy making.

The workshop shall ideally include a diverse range of 10-12 participants, representative of different design disciplines, kinds of practice, and nations of the UK. In principle, the workshop could take the format of online video conferencing using collaborative platforms.

Work Package 4: Synthesising Analysis

Aim

The aim of Work Package 4 is a synthesising analysis of findings from the previous three Work Packages.

The survey (Work Package 1) will provide a picture at scale. It should be a large enough dataset to reveal patterns in relation to the Theory of Change for the design economy. The case studies (Work Package 2), analysed through the Design Value Framework, will provide insights into the social and environmental impacts of design in more depth, and take a closer look at the relationship between intent, actions, outcomes, and value for different disciplines/domains. The workshop (Work Package 3) will enable exploration of current and future value through design, grounded in the expertise of leading practitioners.

These approaches to data-gathering can then be combined, into an analysis that articulates the actual and potential contributions of design, which can be valued in different ways, by posing questions and hypotheses that the data can answer. These could include, for example:

- Which organisation types, in which sectors, or which disciplines of design, are more oriented towards achieving social and environmental impacts?
- What enabling conditions and what barriers exist in which kinds of organisation for addressing social and environmental issues?
- How are different social and environmental impacts valued, across different kinds of design contexts?

Figure 2 provides an overview of the Work Packages and how they interlink.

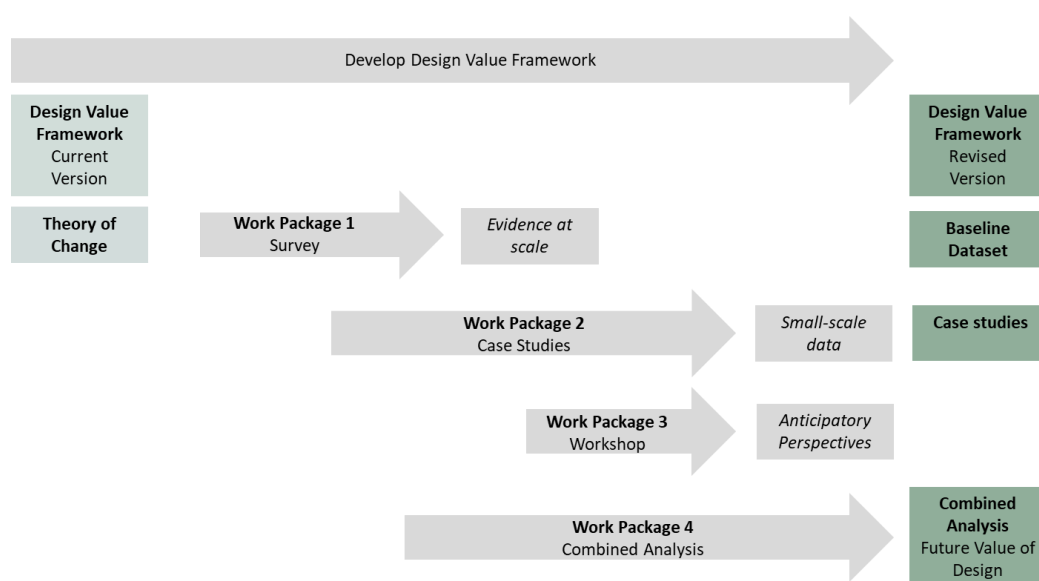


Figure 2: Overview of Work Packages 1-4 and respective methods.

Deliverables

We anticipate concise and engaging outputs for each Work Package, communicating clear headline findings. **Whilst we are open to and welcome suggestions for these in submitted applications, we propose the following outputs per Work Package:**

Work Package 1

- Concise research report (max. 15 pages, including graphs), making use of infographics and other data visualisations where possible, to be published on the Design Council's website
 - Executive summary of key insights (1 page)
 - Full dataset in Excel
 - Standalone methodology to enable the Design Council to re-run the survey in the future
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Work Package 2

- Engaging comparative or synthesising case study report (max. 10 pages) to be published on the Design Council's website
- Executive summary of key insights (1 page)
- Full transcripts of interviews

For Work Package 2, we aim to commission – separately from this Invitation to tender – a filmmaker to document this work via moving and static images. We anticipate the production of three 3-minute-long films about the case study organisations, their work and impact, and any learning and inspiration for other organisations.

Work Package 3

- 1 thought/opinion piece (max. 600 words) on workshop topic (e.g., 'Articulating value through design') to be published as blog post on the Design Council's website
 - Executive summary of key insights (1 page)
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Work Package 4

- Concise synthesising research report (max. 25 pages) to be published on the Design Council's website
- Executive summary of key insights (1 page)
- Revised version of the Design Value Framework in the format of a refined list of indicators, metrics, and data-collection methods. As such, we anticipate a more specific, concise, and user-friendly version of the Design Value Framework, relevant for measuring and assessing impact across the wider design economy.
- Presentations of findings at up to two DE21 Steering Group meetings which occur quarterly.

Budget

We expect applicants not to exceed **£90,000** (not inclusive of VAT) which should cover research, planning, facilitation, meetings, travel and any materials and resources as required.

Payment schedule: 50% on commencement; 30% after mid-project review; 20% 30 days upon successful completion.

Applications should provide an overview table for each Work Package itemising how many days each consultant/researcher/administrator will spend on the project, daily rates, and what each person's key responsibilities/tasks will be.

Timeline

We envision this next phase of Design Economy research to be completed by the end of May 2024. We outline an approximate timescale below, although details will be subject to discussion with the successful contractor.

Application timeline

31 March 2023	Deadline for submitting expression of interest
14 April 2023	Deadline for application
21 April 2023	Shortlisted applicants contacted
w/c 24 April 2023	Interviews with shortlisted applicants
2 May 2023	Outcome announced
15 May 2023	Work commences

Delivery timeline

w/c 15 May 2023	Project initiation meeting with Design Council
w/c 29 May 2023	Project meeting with Design Council to review and sign off final research design and approach. Thereafter, monthly project update meetings
Work Package 1:	
w/c 7 August 2023	Publishing of final outputs agreed
Work Package 2:	
w/c 4 December 2023	Publishing of final outputs agreed
Work Package 3:	
w/c 8 January 2023	Publishing of final outputs agreed
Work Package 4:	
w/c 13 May 2024	Publishing of final outputs agreed

Submission process

Submission requirements

Proposals should cover the following:

- A succinct summary of the proposal
- Details of the approach, methods and sampling strategy to be used, including any adjustments you would make to our proposed methodology and your rationale for doing so
- Issues and challenges faced in answering the research questions, and how you would expect to overcome these
- Clear outline of project management approach, including a risk register / mitigation plan to give confidence work will be delivered on time
- Your organisation's experience of undertaking similar research

- Details of the personnel to be involved including their role for this evaluation and their previous relevant experience (CV's to be included as an appendix)
- Arrangements for managing this work and quality assuring outputs, including how you would like to work with Design Council during the research
- A detailed budget, including quotes and a breakdown of time and costs per activity and per team member – the budget should also include any anticipated expenses and specify if it includes VAT
- Consideration of any ethical and other research governance issues

Criteria for selection

The criteria below will form the basis for shortlisting and interview for both Work Packages:

Criteria	Weighting (%)
Demonstrated ability to build upon and link to existing Design Economy findings, methodology, and frameworks	25
Experience of conducting similar and relevant research, particularly in the Creative Industries	20
Robust project management process and clear outline of risk register as well as mitigation plan to give confidence work will be delivered on time	20
Evidence of an understanding of design and its measurement and impact	15
Proposed budget and value for money of the proposal	10
Track record for presenting engaging evidence	10

Submission

Proposals should be sent to research@designcouncil.org.uk by COB on 14 April 2023.

If you would like to discuss this brief prior to submitting an application, please contact irene.hakansson@designcouncil.org.uk by 31 March 2023.

Design Council

The Design Council is the UK's national strategic advisor for design, championing design and its ability to make life better for all. It is an independent and not for profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter. The Design Council uniquely works across all design sectors and delivers programmes with business, government, public bodies and the third sector. The work encompasses thought leadership, tools and resources, showcasing excellence, and research to evidence the value of design and influence policy.

Our **Design for Planet** mission was introduced in 2021 to galvanise and support the 1.97 million people who work in the UK's design economy to help achieve net zero and beyond.

Appendix 1

Sample Survey Questions for Work Package 1

1. Intent	
Training and education of designers; wider societal values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent did your training/ education teach you how to design for positive social and environmental outcomes? - Have you undertaken any CPD in relation to social/environmental issues in the past 1,3 and 5 years? - What influences how you think about your role as a designer in relation to social and environmental impact?
Organisational culture and practices of the client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do you think social and environmental impact matters to your clients? - What influences how clients think about the potential of design in relation to social and environmental impact?
Professional/ industry culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do you think social and environmental impact matters to your professional design community? - To what extent do designers in your sector/profession routinely demonstrate awareness and skills in social and environmental issues? - To what extent are government regulations or reporting requirements regarding social and environmental impacts central to how your sector/profession operates? - Are designers in your sector/profession required to demonstrate competence in social/ environmental issues as part of their professional accreditation?
Values, attitude, mindset, motivations, skills, knowledge etc of designers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important to you is creating positive social/ environmental outcomes through your design work? - What do you consider to be the most important social and environmental issues that your organisation should address? [list] - Do you feel you have the right skills and knowledge to deliver positive social/ environmental outcomes in your work?
The design brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do client briefs you receive and respond to prioritise social and environmental goals? - To what extent do client briefs require evidence about social or environmental to enable decision making about proposed designs?
Organisational culture of the design organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does your organisation have a stated commitment to addressing social or environmental issues? [list – to include mission statement, policies, certifications, accreditations] - To what extent is your leadership held accountable to investors/ owners/stakeholders regarding its social and environmental impacts? - To what extent do you feel you have agency in your workplace to draw attention to social and environmental issues?
2. Action	
Design methods, practices, and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What methods or approaches to designing are you aware of that explicitly address social or environmental issues/ challenges? - How confident/ competent do you feel in applying such methods? - Which design skills/ activities are most effective when designing for social/ environmental impact? - To what extent is a focus on social and environmental impacts built into your design projects/work? - What proportion of your projects are concerned directly with addressing social or environmental issues? - Which social and environmental issues has your work addressed in the past year? [list]
Organisational practices (e.g. training, evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does your organisation carry out training in relation to social or environmental issues (e.g. carbon literacy training, EDI training etc)? - Does your organisation have a senior leader and resources committed to achieving social and environmental impacts?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do you and your colleagues carry out social and environmental impact assessment or evaluation of projects and activities? - If so, what evaluation methods, tools or frameworks do you use?
Designs that address social/ environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What specific design actions has your organisation taken to address resilience, well-being, equality, diversity and inclusion? - To what extent has your organisation been successful in addressing resilience, well-being, equality, diversity and inclusion through design? - How often does your work result in novel ideas to address social or environmental issues?
Production, delivery and use of designed thing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How often do your proposals to address social/environmental issues get implemented?

3. Impact

Agency of the designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In your view, what are the biggest barriers to achieving positive social and environmental impact through your design work? - What supports you in achieving positive social and environmental impact through your design work?
Social and environmental impacts of design projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What proportion of your projects create a positive social and environmental impact? - Thinking about a project that has achieved a positive social or environmental impact, what was the nature of that impact? (drop down list of impact indicators? Plus open text) - What method, framework or tool did you use to assess impact?
Direct social and environmental impact of the firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does your organisation assess its social and environmental impact? - What does it measure (e.g. carbon footprint)? - What is the direct social/environmental impact of your organisation in the most recent year?

4. Value

Quantified/ qualified value of impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thinking about a project you believe generated social or environmental value, have you assessed or measured value of this project? - If yes, what method or tool did you use to assess value? - What were the results? - Who was this information aimed at? - Has anything changed as a result of sharing or discussing this information? - What do you see as the potential future impact of design in your profession or sector? - What are the barriers to achieving that?
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