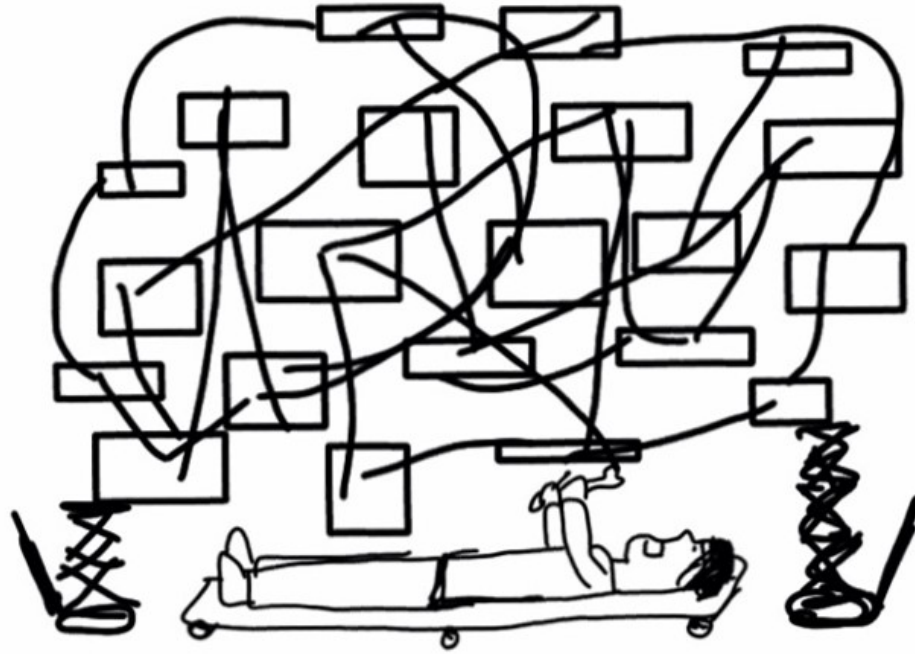


Systems Mapping

Back to basics

Houda Boulahbel



The process of creating a visual representation of a system

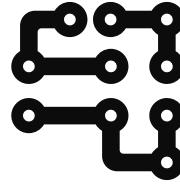
The process of creating a visual representation of a system...

**...in order to serve a particular
goal or objective.**

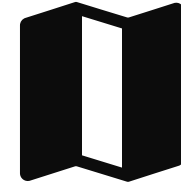
Why systems mapping?



Think/structure thoughts



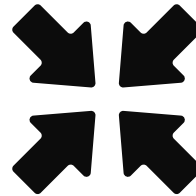
Synthesise/connect
information



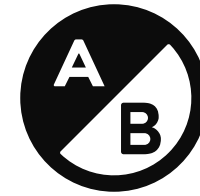
Document system



Communicate/Generate
shared understanding



Align towards a shared goal

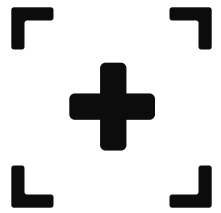


Test/challenge assumptions

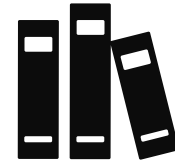
**What are you hoping to achieve
through systems mapping?**

Before you start

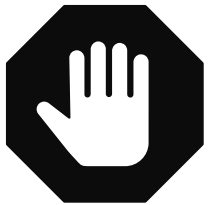
Four things to consider



Goal



**Sources of
information**



Scope/Boundaries

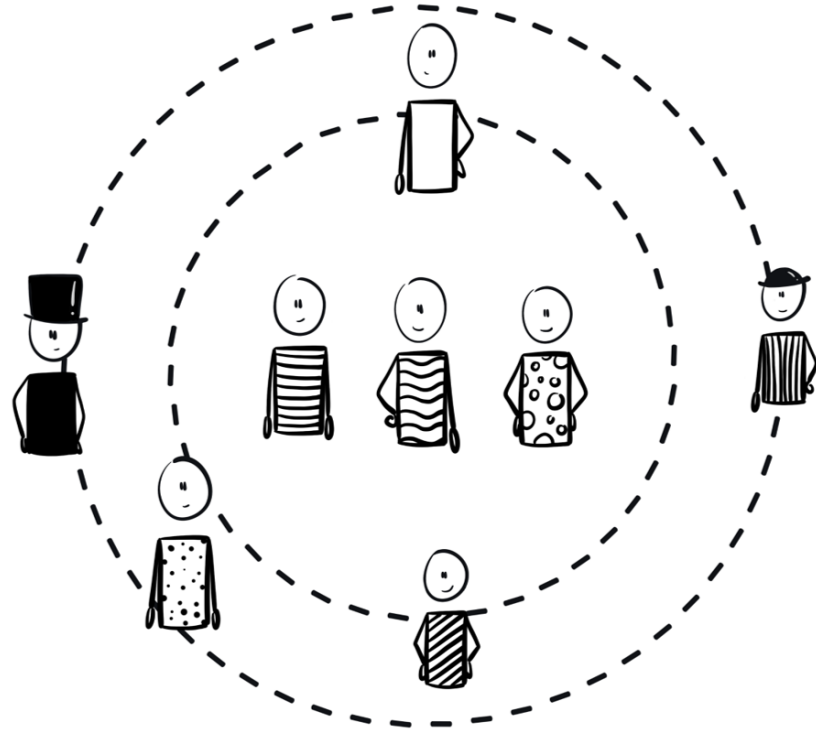


Participants

There are so many ways to map a system

New ones are continually emerging

Easy maps to start with



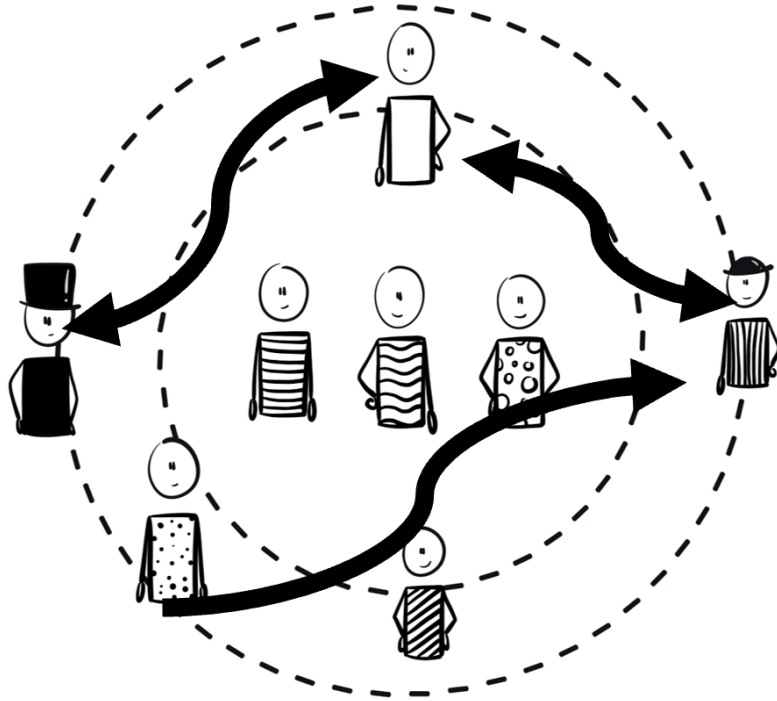
Components and boundaries of system

Can also be entities, organisations, technology, etc.

1. System map

- Components, players, owners, customers
- Scope, Boundaries - your focus/what is included
- Perspective - whose perspective?
- Other considerations e.g.
 - Purpose (s)
 - Inputs/outputs

Easy maps to start with



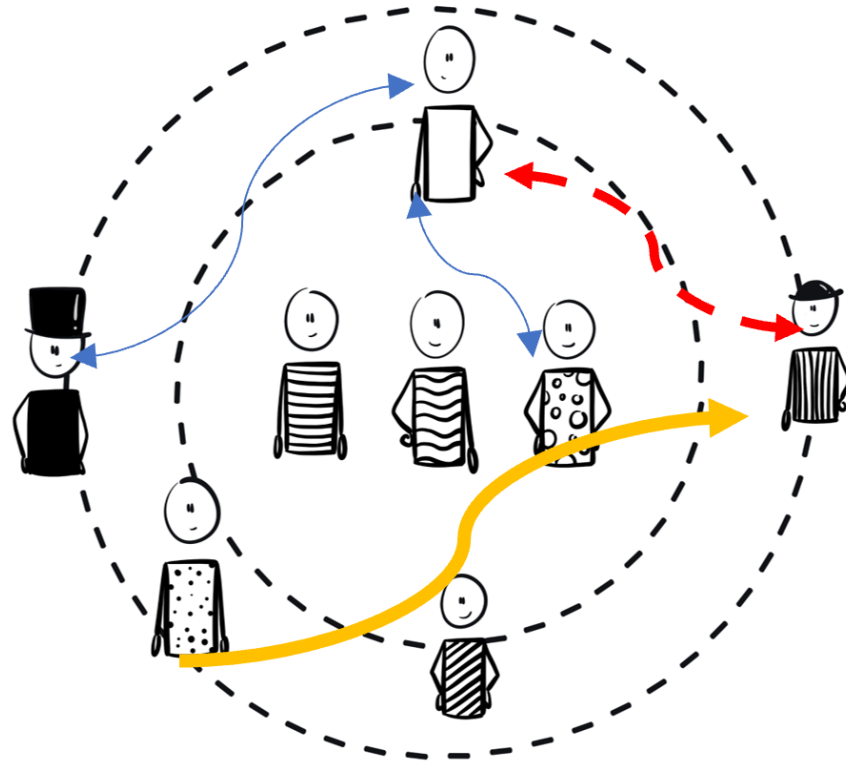
Relationships between components

2. How do systems components interact with/influence each other?

Example considerations

- Causal relationships
- Flow of information
- Decision making
- Budget distribution

Easy maps to start with



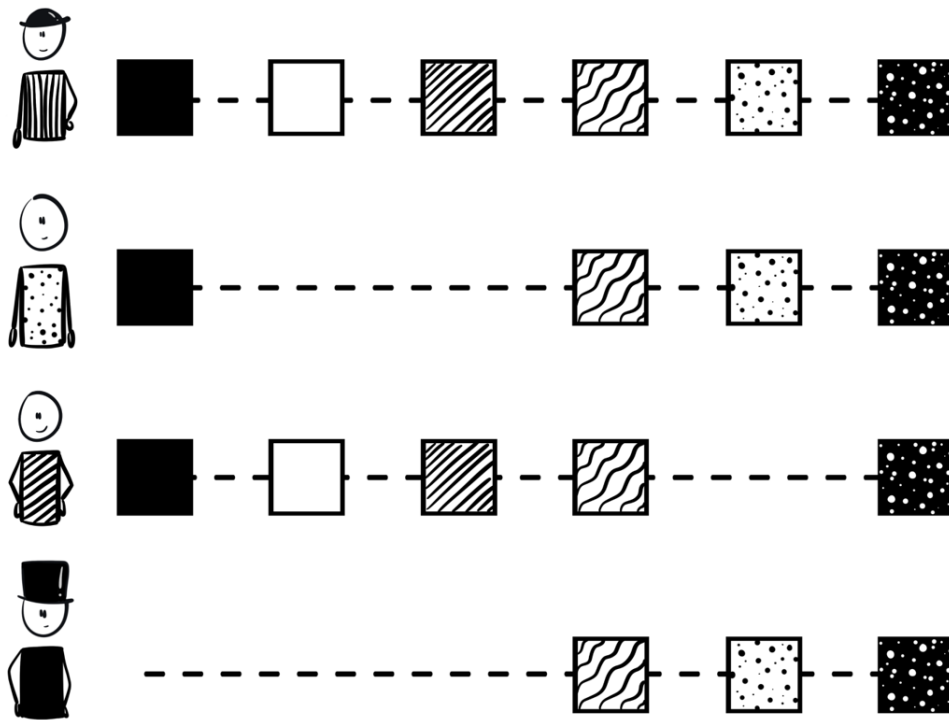
Relationships between components

3. What is important/What can change?

Annotate system map with information from participants, e.g.

- Qualify relationships semi-quantitatively e.g. using thicker/ dotted/ colour-coded arrows
- What could the future state of the system look like?
- Extract most important narratives/ submaps for further exploration

Easy maps to start with



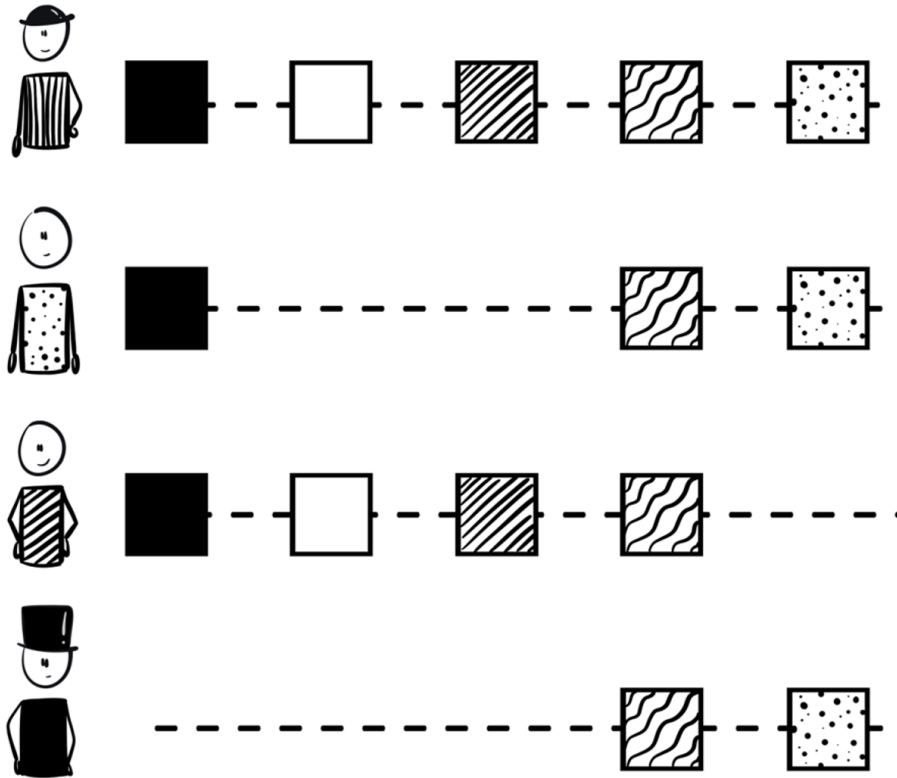
Processes for multiple stakeholders

4. Visualise interdependencies in a complex process

Example considerations:

- Who are the different actors/stakeholders?
- What are the steps & activities involved?
- Where are the decision-, interaction-, or handoff points?
- Are there any gaps, bottlenecks, emerging patterns?

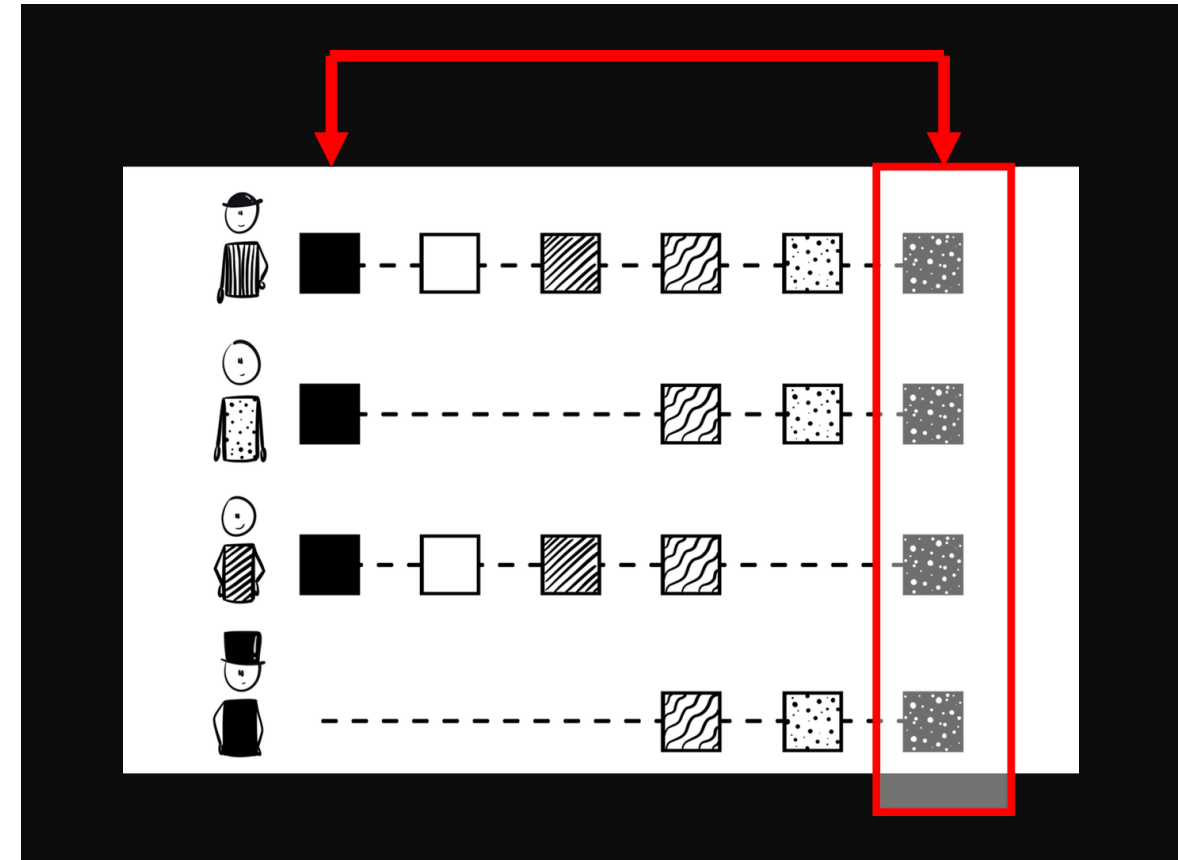
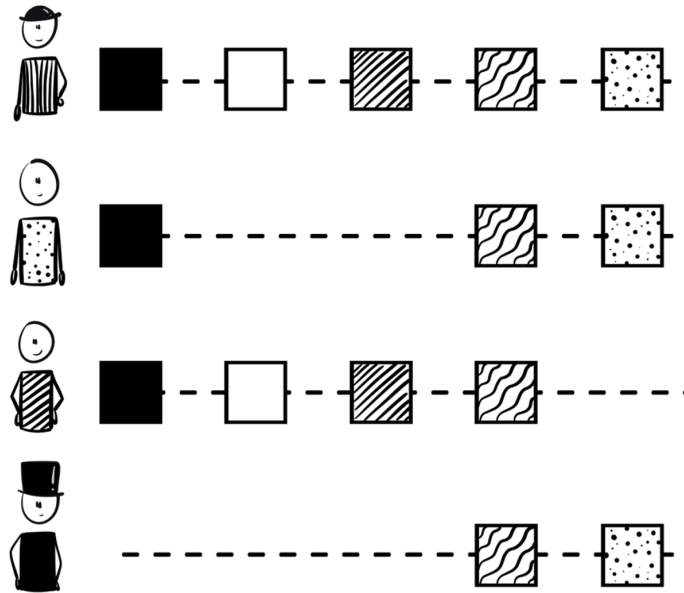
Case study. Optimising performance for a collaborative project.



Partnership of four different organisations

- 18 stakeholder interviews, ~30 hrs interview footage, company documentation
- Process visualisation from each organisation's perspective
- Testing maps, clarification with stakeholders, and iteration

Case study. Optimising performance for a collaborative project.



Identified key part of the process that was considered irrelevant but that had key influence on decision making, and perception of success.

What makes a good systems map?

What makes a good systems map?

- ★ It supports a particular objective/goal
- ★ It helps *you* make sense of a system/complex situation
- ★ It is iterative, it continues to evolve and improve

**The value of systems mapping is
in the sense-making and learning
process rather than the product**

Houda Boulahbel

Houda@ifsi.uk



www.ifsi.uk

