

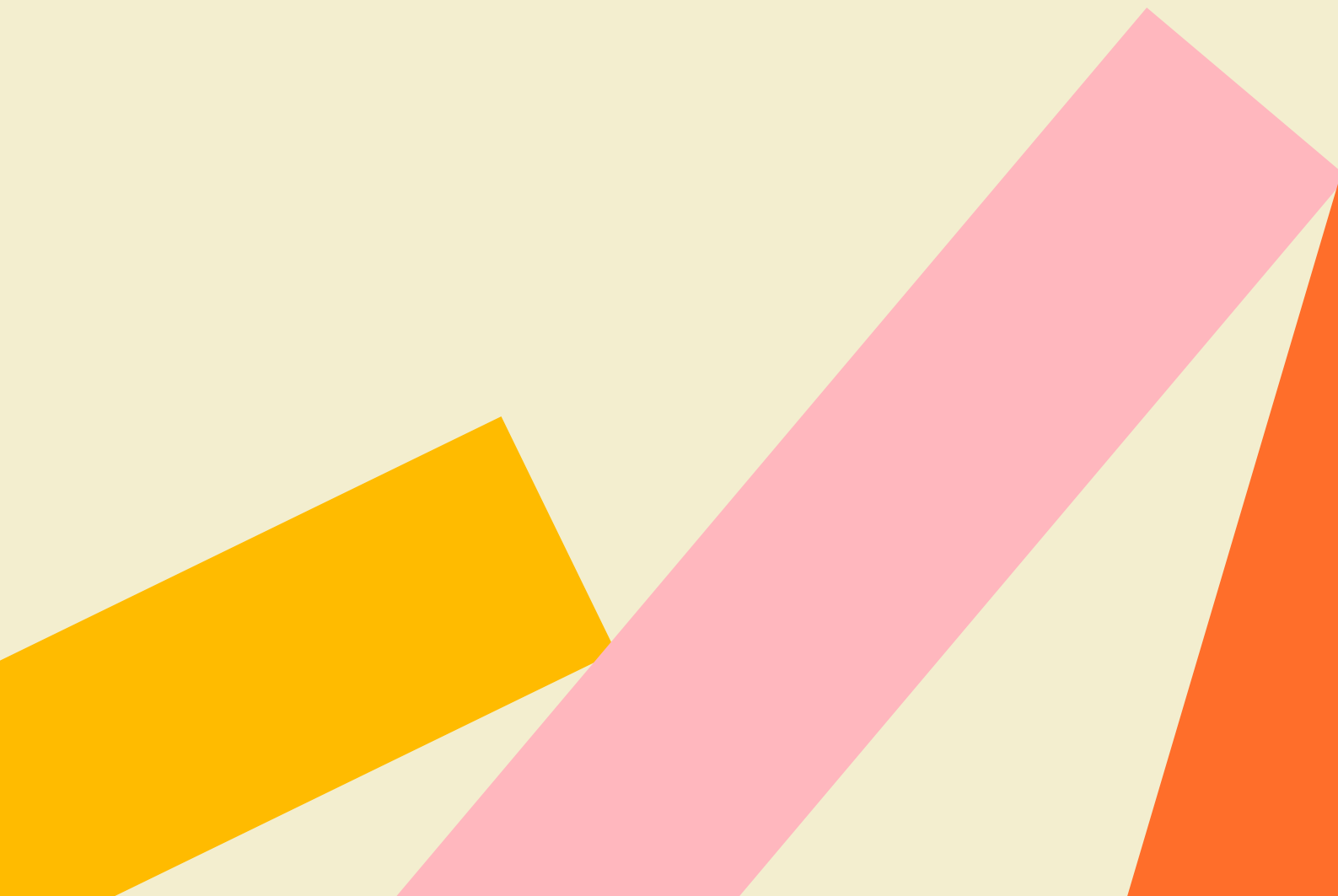
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**fronteer**

# COALITIONS FOR CHANGE

HOW TO BUILD TRUST AND CREATE IMPACT  
IN COMPLEX TIMES.



# COLOFON

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## ABOUT FRONTEER

We are a diverse team of connectors, strategists, designers and support staff, excited to contribute to progress. Our approach combines the structured creativity of Design Thinking, the holistic approach of Systems Thinking, with the bottom-line impact focus of Entrepreneurial thinking.

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# CALL TO ACTION: THE NEED FOR DIVERSE COALITIONS

## THE ROLE OF DIVERSITY IN COALITIONS

The challenges of today are too complex for any one organisation to address alone. Coalitions present a powerful mechanism for leveraging the collective strengths, expertise, and resources of diverse partners to drive systemic change. However, building successful coalitions requires intention, discipline, and a commitment to shared purpose and trust.

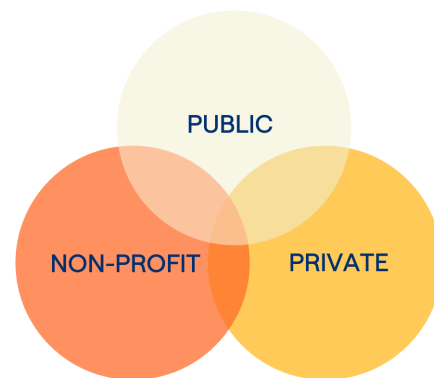
We invite you to explore the potential of coalition-building within your own organisation and network. By embracing collaboration, fostering trust, and applying the principles outlined in the Coalition by Design model, you can unlock the potential to create impactful and enduring partnerships.

Fronteer has witnessed this growing need first hand, having built numerous coalitions that span industries and sectors. Our experience shows that for coalitions to succeed, they need to be designed intentionally, based on a strong purpose, and executed with discipline and trust.

**“THE STRONGEST COALITIONS ARE THE ONES WHERE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES MEET.”**

Coalitions with the most impact are the ones that are diverse and with a common purpose.

We found finding a shared goal to be the most challenging task. However, once found, a strong shared purpose is a springboard for collaboration and trust amongst parties. Finding common ground between public, private and non-profit parties breaks ground for change. You can create systemic change on multiple levels.



*Finding common ground*

## BEYOND SUPERFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS: EMBRACING DEEP COLLABORATION

Collaboration is not just about bringing people to the table and aligning on an abstract goal. Deep and impactful collaboration goes far beyond that. Many partnerships begin with fanfare—public declarations of intent, the signing of agreements, and the establishment of lofty goals. However, what often follows is a lack of momentum or action. Ideas get discussed, but no one is responsible for their execution. This is superficial collaboration.



True coalition-building is different. It is about creating an ongoing commitment to work together toward a shared purpose. Deep collaboration demands honesty, transparency, and a willingness to engage with the difficult questions. It is about finding common ground while appreciating the diverse perspectives of each partner. It is the difference between merely sharing resources and genuinely integrating efforts, approaches, and solutions.

This kind of collaboration goes beyond formal agreements and public endorsements—it is about embedding trust and shared responsibility at every level. When a coalition is deep-rooted in shared values and aligned objectives, it can endure challenges, navigate complexity, and move towards meaningful, lasting solutions.

### TRUST AS THE CORNERSTONE: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR COLLABORATION

Trust is the foundation on which all successful coalitions are built. Without trust, progress will be limited, and the potential for real impact will be lost. Trust allows partners to open up, share vulnerabilities, and engage in authentic discussions about their motivations, strengths, and limitations. It enables coalition members to work through conflict, address challenges, and maintain focus on the shared mission. In essence, trust is what transforms a group of stakeholders into a cohesive team.

Building trust within a coalition is a continuous process, not a one-off exercise. It requires time and effort to establish transparency, demonstrate commitment, and create spaces for honest dialogue. Research supports the significance of trust in collaborative efforts: coalitions with higher levels of trust experience better

communication, more efficient decision-making, and stronger commitment to shared goals. Moreover, trust fosters a culture of mutual respect and ensures that all parties feel heard and valued, thus promoting alignment and joint ownership of the coalition's outcomes.

At Fronteer, we see trust-building as a journey that must be nurtured throughout the coalition's lifecycle. This journey begins with an intentional design that fosters opportunities for partners to get to know each other, sharpen the coalition's goals, and establish a safe space for collective growth.



*Lencioni's pyramid as a foundation for building trust in coalitions*

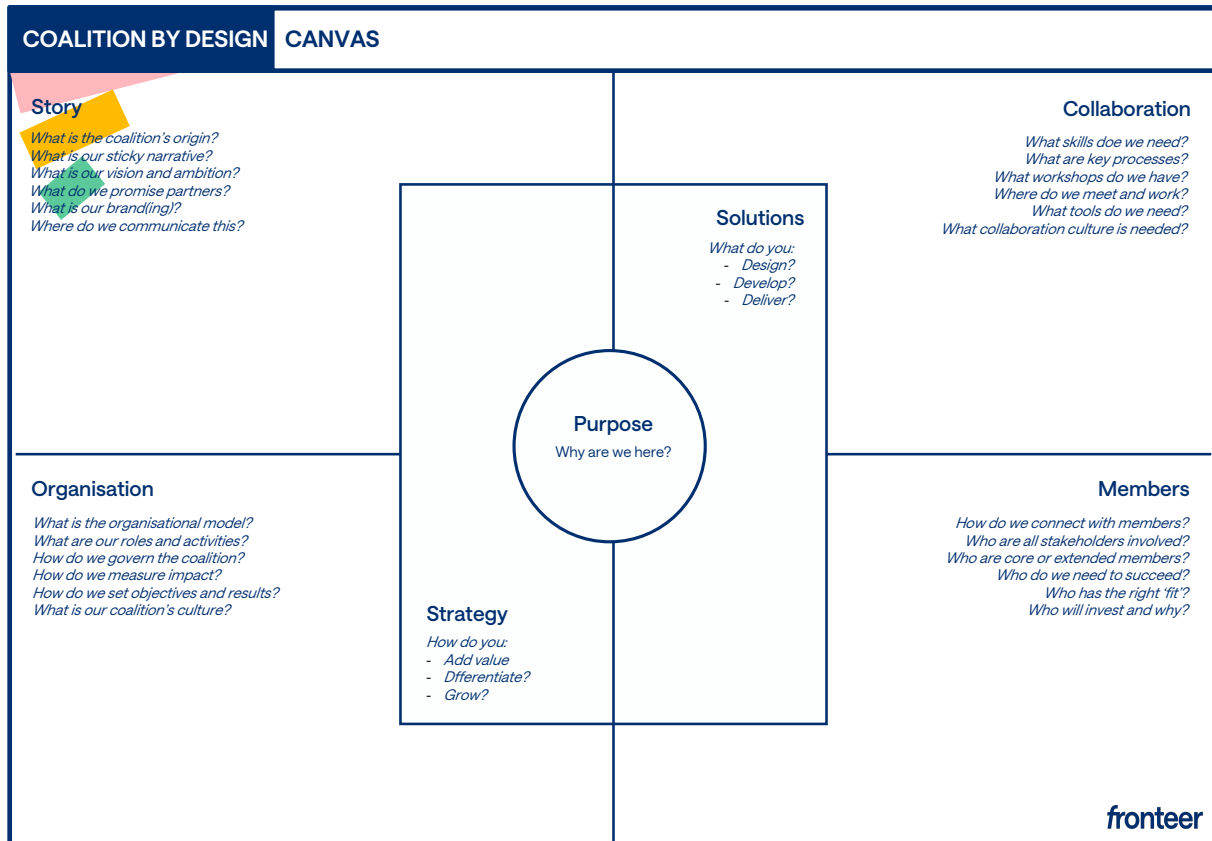
### FRONTEER'S APPROACH: COALITION BY DESIGN

Fronteer's coalition-building approach is built around the model of 'Coalition by Design', a strategic framework to guide the formation, development, and sustainability of successful coalitions. This framework outlines key elements that are fundamental to creating impactful and enduring partnerships. The model is structured around several core components, each accompanied by guiding questions that shape how coalitions are established and maintained.



By focusing on these elements, Fronteer's Coalition by Design model provides a holistic and dynamic framework for developing partnerships that are purposeful, collaborative, and effective in addressing

systemic challenges. Each component of the model is interconnected, ensuring that all aspects of coalition-building are aligned and mutually reinforcing.



Fronteer's approach to designing coalitions

## PURPOSE

(Why are we here?): The purpose serves as the central pillar of any coalition, the driving force behind every decision and action. It is crucial to collectively define and understand the purpose right from the outset, ensuring that all partners are aligned with the shared mission and vision of the coalition. A strong purpose answers the question of why the coalition exists and what it aims to achieve. It provides the rationale for collaboration and is a touchstone for all coalition activities.

**CASE RABOBANK:** We found for a coalition of universities, schools, government, companies and energy cooperatives that connecting young people to the energy transition became the beating heart of the collaboration. Link: [Coop Centraal](#)



## STRATEGY

(What do we add to what is already there?): A well-thought-out strategy provides a roadmap for how the coalition will achieve its goals. This strategy is built on understanding the context in which the coalition operates, assessing existing efforts and resources, and identifying opportunities for innovation. The strategy ensures that the coalition is not duplicating efforts but rather adding value to the work that is already being done by its members and within its wider ecosystem.

**CASE INVESTNL:** We facilitated a strategy making process for 7 European NPBs/NPIs in to support them in defining a crisp strategy with clear initiatives and actions in foster better cross-country collaboration on the topic of circular economy. Link: [JICE](#)



## SOLUTIONS

(What are we going to do in concrete?): To achieve systemic impact, a coalition must develop concrete interventions and solutions. It's not enough to have a vision; there must be a tangible plan for action that outlines how the coalition will work towards its goals. Solutions are derived through a careful analysis of the system, identifying key leverage points where interventions will have the greatest effect. These solutions are then translated into practical pilots and initiatives, which are tested, refined, and scaled for larger impact.

**CASE ZOHRA:** A coalition with partners like Transvorm, Surplus, Thebe, Mijzo, Avans Hogeschool, and Curio. We created practical education programs which teach elderly, professionals, students and residents to act together as a caring community. Link: [Zohra](#).



## STORY

(How do we explain why we are here in a simple and convincing way?): A coalition's story is more than just a narrative—it is the essence that unites partners under a shared understanding. The story explains why the coalition exists, what it stands for, and how it aims to make an impact. A compelling story captures attention, inspires action, and builds momentum around the coalition's mission. Additionally, developing a common language and vocabulary ensures that all members can articulate this story consistently, promoting a sense of shared identity and belonging.

**CASE ZUID-HOLLAND:** A coalition for better collaboration on B2B reusable packaging in the province of South-Holland. The importance of a compelling story that offers perspectives has been crucial to bind partners and build a strong community. Link: [HerPakt](#).



## COLLABORATION

(How do we work well together on the basis of trust?): True collaboration is based on trust, openness, and a commitment to shared objectives. Coalitions need to build strong relationships among members, ensuring that everyone feels valued and heard. This means providing space for regular dialogue, creating opportunities for co-creation, and fostering an environment where members can express ideas and challenges freely. The goal is to work cohesively as a single entity, moving forward with mutual respect and shared accountability.

**CASE HOUSE OF DENIM:** We realised a global coalition of denim brands ( Levi's, G-Star, Denham, mills, laundries and other players) in order to advocate change and collaborate around innovations and educate a new generation of talent. Link: [Jeanschool](#)



## MEMBERS

(Who are part of the coalition and are co-investors?): The coalition's strength is found in its members, who bring unique perspectives, resources, and expertise to the table. It is essential to ensure the right mix of partners who are motivated, engaged, and aligned with the coalition's purpose. These partners are not passive participants; they are co-investors, each with a role to play in driving the coalition's success. Identifying and nurturing the right mix of stakeholders—whether from the public, private, or nonprofit sectors—is critical to the coalition's longevity and impact.

**CASE GASUNIE:** Establishing a coalition to create a jump in the use of circular green gas in The Netherlands required a value chain approach. We connected parties from the state forestry department to the national gas grid operator to utilities companies. Link: [Platformgroengas](#)

## ORGANISATION

(How does governance work, and how do we take decisions?): A coalition needs a clear governance structure to facilitate smooth decision-making, accountability, and coordination. Roles, responsibilities, and processes must be well-defined to ensure that the coalition can operate effectively and make timely decisions. This includes setting up processes for conflict resolution, resource allocation, and leadership involvement, all of which are necessary to maintain the coalition's integrity and drive progress.

**CASE MINISTERIE JENV:** Making the Netherlands the least attractive country for cyber-attacks, by fostering better collaboration and data sharing between public and private partners. This requires a solid structure and governance. Link: [Cyclotron](#)



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# SET GREAT THINGS IN MOTION

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