CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research and Technology Program

Despite the rising prominence of the creative economy, many creative ecosystems are facing challenges in adapting and developing innovations to support the future of the creative ecosystem. Innovation was considered as the most important element for growth and progress in a certain field (Kohn & Wewel, 2018), especially for the creative ecosystem. In many of Indonesia's creative ecosystems, innovation often depends on collaboration between multiple stakeholders, such as creators, publishers, communities, institutions, and governments. Innovation within ecosystems often emerges from complex interactions among multiple actors, institutions, and technologies. However, this complexity can make coordination difficult and create resistance within existing socio-technical systems, thereby limiting the development and diffusion of new innovations (Granstrand & Holgersson, 2020; Walrave et al., 2018). The core challenge is not about the missing actors or elements in the creative ecosystem, but rather from the weak interaction, limited coordination, and the lack of innovative ideas within the creative ecosystem stakeholder. These factors essentially showed the lack of significant growth from the previous innovation in the creative industry.

In this research, one of the study cases of the creative sector that experienced these challenges was Indonesia’s comic ecosystem. Indonesia’s comic sector has experienced the absence of such structured ecosystem analysis that can contribute to sectoral invisibility, as illustrated by Hutapea (2025) that Indonesia's comic sector was seen as an almost “non-existent” ecosystem. Developing the Indonesian comic ecosystem is essential for preserving cultural expression, sustaining creators' livelihoods, enhancing economic contributions, and fostering innovation and global competitiveness within the creative industries. Although Indonesia’s Comic sector has most elements of the ecosystem model, the ecosystem

growth has not significantly shown changes among the creative sectors. This could result in an unclear positioning of the comic ecosystem in Indonesia.

In this case, participatory co-design might function as a mechanism to enhance collective capability, generate innovation, and reframe its ecosystem positioning. Participatory Design is a design approach aimed at technology development with active participation from stakeholders, especially those with the most affected by the result, often impacting the end users (Wacnik et al., 2025). The roots of the co-design method lie in the ideals of a participatory democracy, where collective decision-making is highly decentralized throughout all sectors of society. As a part of participatory design, co-design involves designing with stakeholders, who are not professional designers, encouraging discussion, and generating joint ideas. The key elements are not only to gather information about the issue or users, but to gain insight from their different experiences, values, ways to collaborate and visions to propose innovative ideas (Hyysalo & Dorta, 2025).

Currently, participatory co-design processes are being applied to many urban planning, geography, architectures, as well as to the fields of industrial and information technology in Australia, Sweden, Denmark, and United Kingdom. But not many co-design practices were implemented in Indonesia, especially in the creative ecosystem and industry. Moreover, the existing participatory design methods, mainly co-design methods for ecosystem building in academic literature, currently provides limited definitions of the key concepts within the co-paradigm, leading to misinterpretations or inconsistent usage (O'Donnell et al., 2025). The literature was mostly found in the social-ecological and urban planning segment, such as environmental science and policy-making. Nevertheless, there has been limited research about the participatory co-design implementation within Indonesia's creative industry ecosystem. And yet, much literature has paid less attention to how the co-design tools help to support in shaping innovative insight in the field of creative ecosystem industry.

Regardless of the fact that Indonesian people are becoming more increasingly familiar with and involved in participatory design, particularly in the contexts of urban planning, community development, and digital technology, the

implementation still face several challenges, such as the low-level participation, inequity among the stakeholders, and cultural barrier (Aulia et al., 2025). Furthermore, the co-design approach in Indonesia's comic ecosystem aims to identify problems among stakeholders, analyse issues between conditions, and propose innovative ideas. In this project, the writer's roles are as junior researcher and facilitator, in the active role of expanding knowledge with participatory co-design and discovering and measuring how transformative ideas that were produced in the study case of Indonesia Comic Ecosystem.

1.2 Scope and Limitations in Research and Technology Program

Based on the research background and the problem formulation explained above, the scope of the problem as defined by the writer is as follows.

1. **Research Object Scope**

   The object of this research is Indonesia's Comic Ecosystem Co-design session study case, which includes the process of identifying problems in the ecosystem and discussion sessions among stakeholders to produce new innovative insight, concept, and solutions. This co-design session will utilize some of the UK design council and Systemic-Design Association tools in localization for the participating stakeholders, to prevent misunderstanding and misperception of the topic in discussion.

2. **Research Subject**

   The subject of this research is focused on the subject that will actively participate in Indonesia Comic Ecosystem co-design process. As the object of this research is the co-design process in Indonesia Comic Ecosystem, its target will consist of many people from different stakeholders, such as practitioner (such as comic artist, illustrators, writer, storyteller, publisher, editor), academic sector (involved with educator, academician), business sector (involved with investor, business stakeholder), community sector (involved with community organizer, event organizer, readers), and government sector (such as institutional representative from the government). With the geographic range of the Jabodetabek area, major urban creative hubs are more actively developing.

However, this research also focuses on specific participant criteria that support the objectives of the study. The criteria of the participant are as follows:

- Participants who has highly active and moderately involved in the level of engagement in the ecosystem initiative.
- Participants who has attitude towards collaborations, such as the attitude of open to collective experimentation, independent-oriented, open-minded for discussion.
- Participants who are risk-takers or experimental, market-driven / pragmatic, and community-oriented in their innovation orientation
- Participants who are strongly engaged in digital platforms, hybrid engagement (offline and online platform), and primarily focused on offline platform, in terms of platform adaptability
- Participants who are eager in expanding networks, solving comic ecosystem problems, developing business, and exploring creativity.

1.3 Problem Formulation of the Research and Technology Program

According to the research background, the problem formulations can be seen in the following list below.

1. Weak interaction and limited coordination within existing comic ecosystem initiatives have not demonstrated significant growth or impact within Indonesia's broader creative industry sector.
2. Limited existing research on participatory co-design within Indonesia's creative industries, particularly in the comic ecosystem, especially regarding how co-design processes and tools can generate transformative ideas and strengthen ecosystem innovation.

Based on the identified problems above, this research aims to analyze the question of: how participatory co-design approaches can generate innovative ideas and support the transformation of Indonesia's comic ecosystem?

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1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Research and Technology Program

The objective of this PRO-STEP (Professional Skill Enhancement Program) research is to aims to analyze the process of co-design from the Indonesia Comic Ecosystem study case, by using the UK Design Council as the main framework, and supported by Systemic Design Association framework as the complementary tools, that consist of 5 steps of co-design process, to discover the types and quality of insight, concept, and solutions through co-design sessions, and to measure the effectiveness, depth, and transformation of the co-design ideas by using the system intervention depth concept.

1.5 Urgency of the Research and Technology Program

The urgency of this research is rooted while Indonesia's creative economy is expanding rapidly, but the creative ecosystem remains structurally fragmented and lacks coordinated innovation mechanisms. Few initiatives have discovered the positive influence of participatory co-design process in urban planning design, policy-making, public spaces design, etc. affects how their ecosystem works in the future. But not many initiatives adapt this process in Indonesia's creative industry. Without the empirical evaluation of participatory co-design process as an ecosystem intervention, this sector will continue to be invisible, has weak stakeholder alignment, along with the limited global competitiveness. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the effectiveness of the co-design process in producing transformative ideas, concepts, and solutions among different stakeholders. To accomplish this objective, this co-design process will be assessed through the co-design tools by the UK Design Council and Systemic Design Association, in generating innovative and transformative ideas among stakeholders. These findings are intended to contribute to Indonesia's comic ecosystem growth and transformation through the participatory co-design methods.

1.6 Expected Outputs of the Research and Technology Program

The output of this research will be in a form of paper analysis report titled "How Effective is Co-Design Approach in Shaping Transformative Ideas in Indonesia Comic Ecosystem" to discover the types and quality of insight, concept,

and solutions through co-design sessions, and to measure the transformative impact and depth of the co-design ideas by using the system intervention depth concept.

1.7 Benefits of Implementing Research and Technology Program

This PRO-STEP research paper is intended to provide benefits to the following stakeholders through these intended outcomes.

1. For the Author

   With the result of this PRO-STEP research process, the writer was provided with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding about the current creative industry situation in Indonesia, especially in the comic sector. Not only understand how participatory design works in co-design participants, adapting and re-designing co-design tools according to the needs and behavior of the participants, and taking roles in the event, as well as observing the process. The writer has observed and experienced how the collaboration plays an important role in co-design and affects how each participant of the stakeholders interacts and created dynamic bonds within the discussion.

2. For the Public

   Through the result of PRO-STEP research, the writer hopes that this approach offers an alternative viewpoint on participatory design methods in the context of the creative ecosystem, while also fostering the connection between different stakeholders. Additionally, this research result could also be a reference in expanding the knowledge and understanding about the participatory design methods approach that might be an option to solve similar ecosystem problems.

3. For Future Researchers and University

   This research paper hopes to provide academic contribution, as well as expanding literature and archive for the research practice's reference in the visual communication design field of study, especially in the context of participatory co-design methods in Indonesia's comic ecosystem. This research also aims to increase the university's reputation, and become the

basis of collaborative research in the future between university and the comic ecosystem.

1.8 Timeline and Procedures in Research and Technology Program

The PRO-STEP Research & Technology program will carry 20 credits, with the equivalent to 640 work hours (18 - 20 weeks per semester). The following information is a detailed chart of the PRO-STEP Research & Technology program working timeline, along with the explanation of the research flow, that will be conducted by the author.

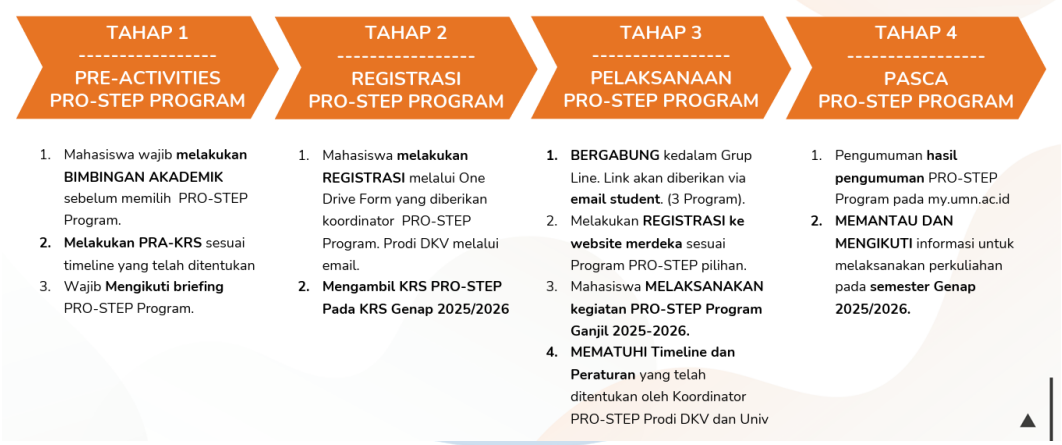

Figure 1.1 PRO-STEP Research & Technology Program Working Timeline Guide
Source: DKV UMN (2025)

The following table below will be the detailed timeline, regarding the meeting schedule with advisor, site visiting, data collection activities conducted in collaboration with the research team members, such as designing co-designs tools, organizing co-design session events, and writing summary report and documentation.

Table 1.1 Research Program Working Timeline

No.	Research Activities	Date
1	PRO-STEP Research & Technology Program Online Kick-Off Meeting	December 22, 2025
2	Crash Course 1: Participatory Design	January 5, 2026
3	Crash Course 2: UK Design Council & Systemic-Design Association Co-Design	January 8, 2026

4	Co-Design Recruitment Process	January 9 – 30, 2026
5	Co-Design Tools Design, Refinement, and Production Process	January 26 – February 5, 2026
6	Co-Design Event Preparation	February 2 – 9, 2026
7	Advisor Counseling Meeting 1	February 5, 2026
8	Co-Design Venue Visiting	February 10, 2026
9	Co-Design Event D-1 Briefing	February 11, 2026
10	Co-Design D-Day Event	February 12, 2026
11	Advisor Counseling Meeting 2	February 12, 2026
12	Evaluation and Report Summary Process	February 13 – 25, 2026
13	Advisor Counseling Meeting 3	February 19, 2026
14	Debriefing Co-Design Event	February 26, 2026
15	Advisor Counseling Meeting 4	March 5, 2026
16	PRO-STEP Research and Technology Program Evaluation 1	March 9 - 13, 2026
17.	Advisor Counseling Meeting 5	March 26, 2026
18.	Advisor Counseling Meeting 6	April 16, 2026
19.	Advisor Counseling Meeting 7	May 7, 2026
20.	Advisor Counseling Meeting 8	May 19, 2026
21.	PRO-STEP Research and Technology Program Evaluation 2	May 25 – 29, 2026
22.	Registration Final Terms Examination Deadline	June 3, 2026
23.	Final Examination	June 4 – 5, 2026

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