Ψηφιακές υπηρεσίες για ιδεασμό, συνεργασία
& σύνθεση στη σχεδιαστική σκέψη

Deliverable 7

Feasibility study to promote results towards innovation and design of services and products

D7 Feasibility study to promote results towards innovation and design of services and products

Document Data	
Project	TAEDK 06166
Deliverable	D7 Feasibility study to promote project results towards innovation and design of services and products
Access	Public
Date	28/2/2025
Edition	0.1
Status	FINAL
Sharing	CC-BY-NC-ND
Rates	Vassia Christoulaki, Design4Future Hariklia Tsalapatas, University of Thessaly
Reviewers	Hariklia Tsalapatas, University of Thessaly

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Summary

In the rapidly changing reality, companies are increasingly looking for flexible, creative, and human-centered solutions to remain competitive and meet the ever-changing needs of consumers and the rapid evolution of technology. Design thinking has emerged, especially in the last 20 years, as one of the most effective modern methodologies for enhancing innovation, solving complex problems, and developing products, services, and strategies that meet the needs of users (customers - citizens) while at the same time taking into account the operational framework of each organisation as well as limitations but and opportunities – opportunities provided by modern technologies. Research conducted in 2010 by the Design Council (Design Council, 2010), the official state body for boosting innovation in organisations and businesses through design thinking, demonstrates the link between the use of design thinking and improved business performance in key indicators such as turnover, profit, and market share. Specifically, the report states that for every €100 a business spends on projects and actions that adopt design thinking, turnover increases by €225.

In this context, many large companies worldwide, especially in Europe, invest in developing in-house know-how in design thinking, reducing their dependence on external partners and consultants. This strategy allows them to limit the cost of developing new products and services and ensure that the ability to innovate remains internal, acting as a permanent competitive advantage. At the same time, integrating these skills enhances the sustainability of organisations as design thinking is no longer treated as a single, ad hoc process but as a fundamental and enduring element of organisational culture. In this way, innovation is not an occasional endeavor but a continuous process of evolution that penetrates the core of businesses and organisations, shaping strategies that dynamically adapt to new market challenges and opportunities.

Correspondingly, to meet the market's needs and the requirements of the modern professional reality, more and more Universities and Schools of various disciplines and sciences are incorporating design thinking into their curriculum. Thus, while design thinking was taught exclusively in design schools (design schools, art & design schools) until recently, it is currently also taught in schools in disciplines such as business administration, economics, social sciences, information technology, and others. Through a modern curriculum that aligns with and responds to the developments and needs of the modern market, these faculties aim to equip students with knowledge and tools that enable them to respond effectively to modern business and societal challenges. In this way, design thinking acquires interdisciplinary value by incorporating expertise and perspectives from many disciplines and promotes creativity, collaboration, and innovation at all levels of academia and professionalism.

In response to this contemporary reality, the eDea project focuses on developing an innovative digital learning platform and supports the distance learning process in design thinking. The solution equips users with the methodology and tools of design thinking while

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supporting real-time collaboration through a whiteboard. In particular, the eDea platform introduces an interactive and structured approach to teaching and applying design thinking, enhancing team collaboration with the aim of creative problem-solving. The platform supports students and professionals through structured learning and hands-on activities, preparing them to respond to modern business and social challenges. Therefore, the eDea platform is not limited to academia but aims to bridge the gap between education and professional practice by supporting continuous professional development and lifelong learning while helping professionals, teams, and companies to integrate the design thinking methodology into their work, thereby enhancing the impact of the method and the eDea platform itself. To achieve this, the project is a partnership between the University of Thessaly, the University of the Aegean and the design companies Design4Future and Butlair, combining academic knowledge, experience in product and service design, and modern digital technologies.

This report starts with a potential analysis, where the problem, i.e., customer's needs is first presented. Then, it presents the eDea solution and the competitive advantage it offers. After analysing the macroeconomic market of Xerox, the distance education software industry, and the software industry, support professionals in applying design thinking and competition analysis. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the eDea solution are then analysed.

Based on the above analysis, the marketing strategy of the eDea solution for the penetration of the Greek market and the business plan for the future exploitation of the results of the eDea project are then formed. Specifically, a staggered plan to enter the Greek market in two phases is proposed. The first phase focuses on attracting companies from specific market sectors that have significant growth and are related to industries in which the participating organisations of the consortium and university institutions that have already integrated design thinking into their curriculum or provide information to their students by organising seminars. The second phase aims to expand and attract more companies and university institutions. Accordingly, a business plan based on two stages of development is proposed, with a gradual introduction to the market of different revenue streams that the eDea solution can create and exploit.

The successful implementation of this project is based on a multidisciplinary implementation team, covering areas such as educational methodology, education and vocational training market, educational platform technology, and interconnection with industry and business. The collaborating bodies of the eDea project provide the knowledge and connections required for the successful development and adoption of the platform and design thinking primarily in Greece, with the possibility of expansion later, and abroad.

The report concludes that implementing the eDea solution is feasible, as it offers significant opportunities for creating a competitive business model. The focus should be on shaping revenue streams that leverage the company's competitive advantages over existing competition.

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1. Potential Analysis

Many international studies, such as that of McKinsey (2018), prove the connection of design thinking with improved results and performance for companies. According to an extensive survey conducted from 2013 to 2018 that included the analysis of over 100,000 projects implemented using the same method in companies operating in the banking, technology, healthcare, and consumer goods sectors, the results of which were published in 2018, show that companies that adopted design thinking increased their revenue by 32% faster and their overall performance 56% higher than their competitors. This proves that design thinking enhances innovation and improves efficiency by making companies more competitive and efficient in the market. At the same time, it demonstrates that design thinking has gone beyond the boundaries of the design sector and is now widely used by companies in other industries looking to transform their services and strategy.
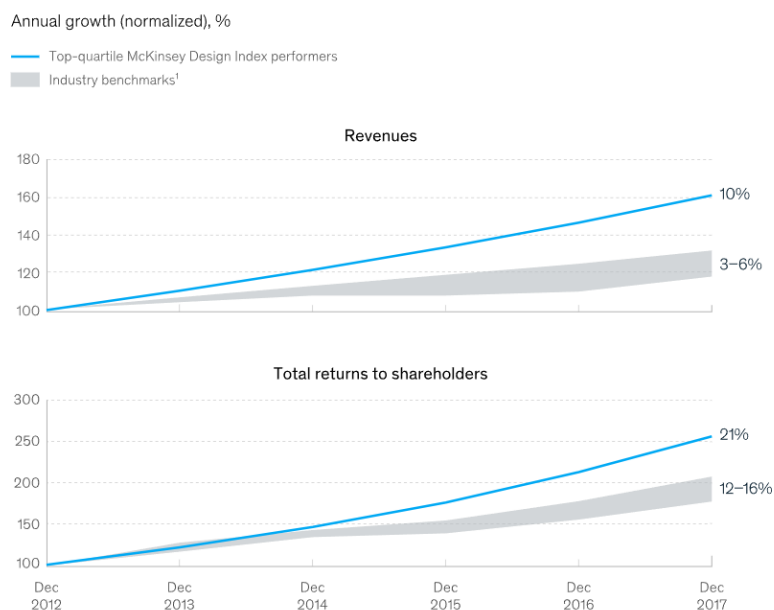
Figure 1: Chart from McKinsey research (2018) showing how companies that adopt design thinking outperform other companies in the industry in terms of competitiveness and performance.

Following labor market trends, design thinking is now taught in universities and schools in disciplines beyond design, such as business administration, economics, technology sciences, etc. In addition, as far as the field of education in general, and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a great demand for and development of programs that combine modern and asynchronous teaching methods. The need for flexible and accessible ways of learning that combine live lectures, webinars, and self-paced learning has become more pronounced

as teachers and students have recognised the advantages of combining these methods for better learning and more effective time management.

In this context, in the market of digital platforms that support distance education, many technologically advanced solutions have been developed that meet the needs of teachers and students by offering tools for course management, progress tracking, and interaction with students. Most of these platforms essentially provide a digital environment that transfers to a digital space actions and activities that would take place in a physical space, a digital communication space, such as video calls, and chat, a space for the posting of educational material and slides by teachers, as well as the ability to use a digital whiteboard for notes and enhance the interaction of teachers with learners. The above functionalities are now the basic infrastructure required at least to support distance learning and are now provided by most platforms. However, for a subject such as design thinking, which has now spread beyond the design industry, and is widely used in fields such as business administration, marketing, business management, technology and computer sciences, and others, there is no structured way to support teachers of these disciplines in teaching design thinking or students in putting theories into practice. Principles of the method are directly applied to exercises, tools, and projects.

Correspondingly, many platforms offer tools for teamwork and communication to support the remote collaboration of professional teams. However, these platforms do not provide a comprehensive infrastructure that fully supports collaboration on projects based on the methodology of design thinking, which requires access to specialised tools in the field for structured and effective team collaboration at all process stages. Typically, teams use different tools, such as project management software, digital whiteboards, and file storage tools, to meet their needs. This fragmented approach can be confusing, cumbersome, and reduce team efficiency. Solutions developed over the last decade that offer access to design thinking tools are mainly aimed at design professionals with excellent digital skills and highly familiar with the methodology. This leaves out a wide range of professionals from other disciplines, such as business administration, product promotion, business management, and technology, who wish to leverage design thinking to remain competitive and incorporate modern innovation methodologies into their work.

Teaching design thinking remains a significant challenge as existing platforms do not offer comprehensive tools to apply the methodology in practice. Teachers need a single, easy-to-use environment that allows them to focus on the teaching process instead of investing valuable time in researching tools and shaping educational materials from scratch. Therefore, there is room in the online education market for the eDea solution.

1.1 Customer needs

The eDea solution is aimed at a wide range of users with different needs, who face other challenges, and are familiar with various levels of design thinking methodology. The primary user groups are then described and their needs are analysed. These groups represent the 2

main areas in which the eDea solution offers added value and provides solutions. On the one hand, it supports the educational process in academic studies by helping teachers and students integrate the methodology into their learning. On the other hand, it is addressed to companies and professionals supporting the use of design thinking for the organisation and implementation of projects, enhancing creativity, collaboration, and innovation in the professional field.

The primary customer groups in education are described below:

- **Higher education teachers:** This user group includes higher education professors who teach design thinking and may come from different scientific fields, such as business administration, product promotion, and IT, and not exclusively from the design field. Many of them are required to teach methodology without having specialised knowledge in the subject, which makes it challenging to prepare the training material. To effectively integrate the methods into their courses, teachers must search external platforms for tools, study the literature, and choose appropriate tools to present to students. Considering that university professors manage multiple activities, such as teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses, conducting research, supervising dissertations, supporting doctoral candidates, and participating in international cooperation programs with other universities and, and market companies, they need guidance and support so that they can effectively transmit the principles of design thinking without investing excessive time in preparing a course that is often not their main subject. At the same time, they need a user-friendly and straightforward interaction interface that does not require a lot of familiarisation time. Finally, they need the flexible adaptation of the content of their courses, the creation of training modules and the ability to integrate multimedia elements, such as videos and images, to enhance the teaching process.

- **Students:** This user group includes students who come from different academic fields, such as business administration, product promotion, IT, and not exclusively from the field of design. Although the methodology has been recognised as a powerful tool for solving problems and developing innovative solutions, students often find it challenging to understand and apply its principles in practice. Mainly due to the lack of proper guidance and tools. A key problem they face is the theoretical teaching of design thinking without sufficient practice opportunities. The absence of interactive and hands-on exercises prevents them from profoundly understanding the methodology. Also, as remote collaboration is complex, individual tasks are often preferred.

  Another basic need of students is the connection of courses with the labor market. As competition for jobs increases, students seek opportunities to work in teams and on realistic projects that will allow them to create a competitive resume. However, academic programs often do not offer opportunities to develop such projects due to

time and resource constraints or a lack of partnerships with companies and organisations.

Finally, students from non-design disciplines must understand how design thinking relates to and adds value to their discipline. For example, a business administration student wants to know how design thinking can be applied to solve business challenges. In contrast, an IT student is interested in leveraging it in the design and development of digital products. The methodology can seem abstract and difficult to implement without a clear connection to practical implementation.

- **Academic institutions:** Academic institutions are constantly challenged to keep their curricula attractive, competitive, and aligned with the latest market developments to provide students with knowledge and skills that meet the latest market trends to make them more appealing to future employers. In this context, another major challenge universities face is achieving high absorption of graduates, demonstrating the connection of their curricula with the actual market demands. Employers are no longer looking for theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and the ability to apply tools and methodologies that can lead to innovative solutions.

  At the same time, the need for universities to attract students is increasing as the educational market becomes increasingly competitive. In this context, a modern challenge for universities is attracting professionals seeking continuous professional development. Integrating flexible, contemporary, digital, and asynchronous programs that meet the needs of professionals and provide them with supplies and tools that can be used directly in their work is a critical success factor. Many professionals seek specialised knowledge and practical skills to apply directly to their work without geographical restrictions. Universities that do not offer such programs miss significant opportunities to attract a wider audience seeking continued professional development.

The primary customer groups in project implementation in the context of the labour market are described below:

- **Professionals:** Design thinking is increasingly applied to different disciplines, beyond the design industry, such as business administration, IT, product promotion, finance, etc. Coming from various disciplines, professionals have different levels of familiarity and therefore face different challenges and needs in learning and applying design in their work.

  Professionals unfamiliar with design thinking must first understand the methodology and the most basic and widely used tools. They face the challenge of choosing between many different design thinking tools available, which causes them information overload and confusion. The variety of these tools often makes it difficult to choose the right one, resulting in frustration and uncertainty. They therefore need guidance and step-by-step instructions on how to use specific tools or follow the

methodology from start to finish, so that they can apply it, initially to smaller-scale and complex projects, without having previous experience or training in design.

On the other hand, there are professionals from the field of design and other scientific disciplines who have used design thinking in their work for years in large-scale and often complex projects. These users want instant and easy access to various tools to choose the best suits their needs. They also need more specialised guidelines that often arise from experience and the practical application of design thinking in actual conditions and projects, and are not provided in the literature.

No matter the level of familiarity, professionals need tools that are easily integrated into their workflow without requiring excessive time or technical knowledge. They also want flexible and personalised training solutions that suit the demands of their time and needs. Finally, all professionals need to connect with the labor market and modern trends to increase their value in the professional field and remain competitive.

- **Companies and organisations:** Companies need to initially create and continuously support a culture of innovation and collaboration to enhance their staff's ability to provide creative solutions to complex business and societal challenges. Due to the adoption of remote work, they also need to support the remote collaboration of project teams.

  Regarding the development of human resources, companies recognise the need for continuous professional development of their staff with the aim of both upskilling in new areas and enhancing existing skills to meet the ever-evolving needs of the market. However, many companies face the problem of limited time and limited financial resources available to train and develop their staff. Increasing workloads, tight deadlines, and the need to adapt immediately to new market conditions make financing or implementing training programs difficult. In addition, organisations must ensure that training activities are practical and flexible to meet employees' needs without requiring a lot of time commitment and provide knowledge, skills, and tools that directly apply to their work to enhance impact.

  Finally, when hiring new staff, companies look for candidates who are technically qualified in their field and possess soft skills, such as creative thinking, team collaboration, team spirit, and empathy. A recent EY study reported that nearly 40% of HR managers report finding it difficult to identify candidates with these skills while looking for creativity and innovative thinking.

Then, subgroups of users and their needs are described. These are groups that can leverage the eDea solution, but they are not the primary target audience.

- **Secondary school teachers:** Teachers in this category need a tool that allows them to teach design thinking to students by incorporating practical activities that are

            understandable and engaging. Teachers will need support in preparing their lessons and guidance on managing classroom activities.

- **High school and high school students:** Students need creative and interactive activities that allow them to develop multifaceted skills through an experiential approach without feeling like they are following a formal educational process. They are looking for an engaging and practical way of learning that will inspire them and make them want to participate actively. At the same time, they need opportunities to explore different scientific and professional fields to get a clearer picture of their interests and then make more informed decisions about their future studies or career.

1.2 The business solution/proposal: eDea

The eDea solution provides an innovative platform that supports and guides both secondary and higher education teachers to get to know and teach students design thinking, as well as students to understand and apply the method in practice theoretically. The eDea solution supports and enhances distance learning and hands-on design thinking. This is done in the following ways:

- The platform provides access to an exhaustive list of structured templates of design thinking tools, accompanied by theoretical backgrounds, and step-by-step instructions for use.
- The platform includes structured activities. Each activity is essentially a project on which the students, after forming teams, are invited to work collaboratively to provide solutions following the design thinking method. Each activity includes step-by-step instructions and combines in many different ways some of the many tools from the list of templates to provide a structured educational structure that teachers will follow to teach design thinking to students. The activities have been developed in collaboration with the companies of the consortium, with many of them drawing inspiration from real projects in which the companies have participated.
- The platform allows students to collaborate with their team members both synchronously and asynchronously through an online whiteboard. They apply the exercises and tools assigned by the professor to solve the specific activity/project creatively.

In addition, the eDea solution supports professionals from various industries with varying degrees of familiarity with the design thinking method, from novice users to advanced users, such as design teams. Users can learn about the methods and tools through the platform, utilise them, and apply them to their projects. The eDea solution supports professionals in the following ways:

- The platform provides access to an exhaustive list of structured templates of design thinking tools, accompanied by theoretical background and step-by-step instructions for use.

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- It categorises tools by phase, helping novice users follow the step-by-step method by using specific tools.
- Through an online whiteboard, professionals can practice or use the tools directly in their work, facilitating their application in real projects while supporting synchronous and asynchronous collaboration with team members.
- Through project management features, the platform supports professionals in executing their projects by helping them organise the project, divide it into phases, and determine which actions and activities will be carried out in each phase and which tools will be used. In addition, it allows them to link specific boards to project phases and assign specific responsibilities to their team members.

The eDea solution is designed to support a wide range of users, from educators and students to professionals and organisations, by providing the tools and support they need to learn, practice, and effectively apply design thinking.
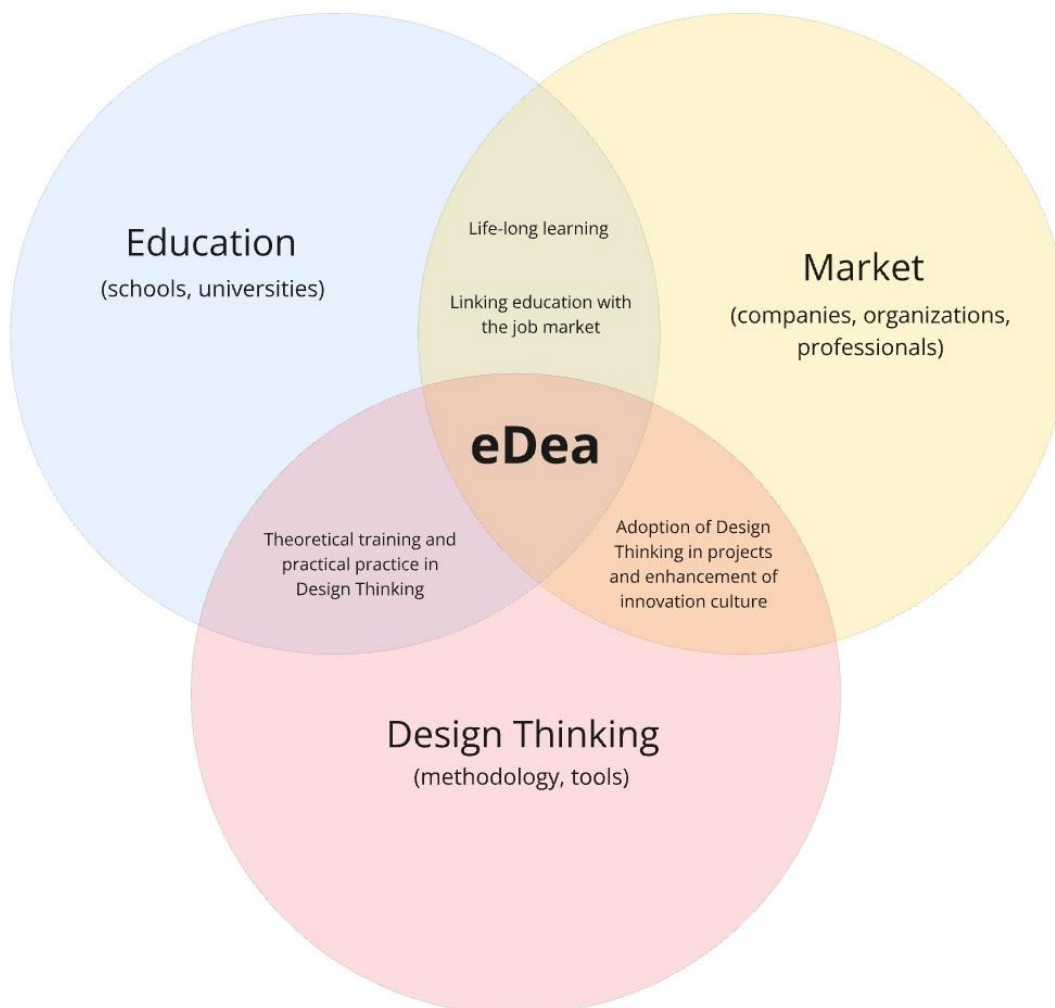

Figure 2: The triptych of education, labor market, methodology, design thinking, and the eDea solution.

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1.3 The competitive advantage

The competitive advantage of a product or service is the feature or set of characteristics that differentiates it from the competition, and gives unique value to customers.

The unique value proposition of the eDea solution focuses on combining education and practical application of design thinking by covering two main user groups, namely students and professors involved in the educational process, and professionals and companies from various disciplines, not only from the field of design, who carry out projects.

Specifically, when it comes to supporting the educational process in educational institutions, the eDea solution bridges theoretical education and training in design thinking with practical practice in activities inspired by real projects of professionals and companies. At the same time, it offers educational institutions and teachers a unique opportunity to enter into partnerships with local businesses and organisations, adapting, if necessary, activities. In this way, the impact of the eDea solution extends beyond the classroom and reaches the local community. Students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge in real projects and actively contribute to the innovation of local businesses and organisations. At the same time, companies and organisations themselves come into contact with design thinking in this way, discovering new ways of solving problems, and developing creative solutions. In addition, the eDea solution provides a structured guide for teachers, facilitating the effective teaching of design thinking even by teachers who do not come from the design discipline. This way, it reduces the preparation time for shaping the curriculum and courses by allowing teachers to spend more time researching.

As far as professionals and companies are concerned, the eDea platform offers a complete solution for implementing and managing projects using design thinking. In this context, it supports professionals with different levels of familiarity with design thinking by helping them to know, learn, and practice tools as well as to collaborate efficiently and effectively with other members of their team to apply the design thinking method and tools to the projects in which they participate. At the same time, through the integrated scheduling function, users can manage the entire project from start to finish through a single platform. They can organize each project phase based on design thinking, choose the appropriate tools, assign responsibilities to team members, and manage the workflow without additional tools. In this way, eDea contributes to strengthening the culture of innovation in companies and organisations, facilitating the structured and effective adoption of design thinking in their processes.

1.4 Macroeconomic analysis of the distance education market in design thinking

Distance learning in design thinking is part of a rapidly growing market influenced by technological developments, economic factors, and changes in skills requirements in both academic and vocational education. Design thinking has gone beyond the boundaries of the

design industry. It is now applied in business administration, product promotion, technology, and innovation.

The macroeconomic analysis of this market focuses on studying global trends in distance education, particularly education in design thinking. Considering that education can be carried out either through academic institutions within the framework of undergraduate or postgraduate programs or corporate professional development programs, corporate training programs are also examined. This module focuses on macroeconomic trends, key market forces, and the growth prospects of the distance learning market in design thinking.

1.4.1 Market trends

1.4.1.1 Design thinking as a horizontal skill in higher education

Design thinking is an innovative approach that focuses on solving complex problems by putting users' needs at the center of the process. Key features of the methodology are interdisciplinary collaboration, developing empathy for an in-depth understanding of user needs, creativity, and experimentation through prototyping for quick feedback. Although it is related to the field of design and by extension traditionally only taught in design schools in the last 20 years, as the value of design thinking as a powerful business innovation tool was proven in practice, it began to be taught in university faculties that do not belong to the field of design. These are mainly faculties belonging to business, economics, engineering (polytechnic faculties), computer science, and social sciences. Design thinking is now taught in internationally renowned university faculties, such as the Faculty of Engineering, the School of Business Administration, and the Medical School of Stanford University, USA, the School of Business Administration and the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program of Harvard University, USA, the Department of Business Administration, and the Department of Social Policy of the London School of Economics (LSE). United Kingdom, and the Department of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology of the Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden.

Accordingly, the design faculties of large university institutions select students from various fields, without being limited exclusively to the field of design. Now, most programs select students with a ratio of nearly 50 – 50 by combining individuals with undergraduate studies in areas of design with students in areas such as business administration, product promotion, psychology, anthropology, computer science, and others. This interdisciplinary approach highlights a basic principle of design thinking: that it is not a method exclusively for designers but a way of thinking and working that can be adopted by anyone who wishes to create innovative solutions centered on people (user/customer).

Design thinking offers students of the above disciplines a unique tool that encourages creativity, empathy development, and interaction between different disciplines. In business administration, for example, by incorporating the principles of design thinking, students learn to approach problems with a multidimensional thinking that allows them to adapt products and services to the ever-changing needs of consumers. Similarly, in the fields of social

sciences, students acquire the ability to apply design thinking to solve systemic challenges to complex social issues, such as education, healthcare, and others, by applying collaborative design methods that allow the active participation of beneficiaries in shaping the final solution that enhances the impact of the projects. Similarly, learning design thinking helps IT students see beyond the needs and limitations of technology and users' needs and design easy-to-use information systems.

Integrating design thinking into learning in all areas of higher education offers significant benefits in practical skills development and enhancing soft skills that are now needed in the labour market. Soft skills, such as creativity, teamwork, empathy, and collaboration, have become key qualifications for employers in many areas. According to a recent EY study, nearly 40% of HR managers reported that, while creativity and innovative thinking are key elements they look for in candidates, they find it difficult to identify candidates with these traits. Design thinking education significantly enhances employment prospects for new graduates in a labor market facing high unemployment and other challenges, making design thinking a competitive approach for integrating into curricula.

In addition, empathy, i.e. the ability to understand the needs, feelings, and perspectives of others, acquires special importance in the modern labor market. Organisations now strongly emphasise a culture of collaboration and empathy as a key skill for better managing situations, resolving conflicts, and improving team communication. In the context of design thinking, empathy is cultivated through understanding the user or the customer to develop solutions that truly meet their needs, strengthening collaboration and the relationship of trust in professional teams.

So it becomes apparent that training in design thinking for students from various disciplines, such as business administration, product promotion, social sciences, technology and computing, provides them with the necessary skills to be competitive in the job market. This approach helps students develop multidimensional practices, techniques, and social ones, such as creative problem-solving, collaboration, empathy, and innovation that are extremely valuable to employers in an ever-evolving professional environment.

1.4.1.2 Modern methods of education, and lifelong learning

Businesses need new skills and methods to gain and maintain a competitive advantage in their modern challenges. Continuing vocational training in the context of lifelong learning is now a strategic priority for enterprises as it directly contributes to their innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable development (Lomineishvili, 2021). The main trends in education and lifelong learning are presented below.

- **Digitalization of the educational process through online tools:** One of the most important trends is the shift towards digital learning (e-learning). Organisations are increasingly investing in corresponding platforms to offer learners flexible training programs, enabling them to access materials and activities regardless of time and location.   Working professionals or people in different cities or countries can

participate in educational programs without being limited by their geographic area or work schedule. This flexibility makes education more accessible to many people by enhancing opportunities for continuous learning and professional development.

- **Micro-learning:** Micro-learning is one of the most popular approaches, especially in the training of professionals. The main feature is the fragmentation of the training content into small, targeted modules that can be completed quickly. This method helps learners to focus on specific topics that are directly useful in their work. At the same time, it offers flexibility by allowing users to choose the time when they will attend the training material. In this way, the overload of the already burdened daily schedule of professionals who often face family obligations is avoided, and a better understanding and absorption of new knowledge is achieved. Combined with digital technologies, micro-learning offers a highly flexible and effective training method that allows employees to learn without interrupting their workflow. This enhances their ongoing professional development by facilitating the integration of new skills into their work (Bruck, Hoffman & Rojewski, 2012).

- **Learning in real-life scenarios:** One of the most up-to-date trends in lifelong learning is the approach to learning by directly applying new methods and tools to real-world projects. The method combines theory with practice, enabling participants to experience the challenges and impact of new methods and tools, such as design thinking, when applied to real-world conditions. At the same time, it allows professionals to reflect on how they can apply similar methods and tools in their daily work. It also allows companies to consider how they can, in practice, and not as a theoretical exercise, integrate new methods and tools into working and implementing projects (Kolb, 1984; Rae, 2021).

- **Personalised learning paths:** This is one of the most recent and innovative developments in lifelong learning for professionals. Individualisation of learning responds to each learner's needs, preferences, and professional aspirations by adapting the educational process according to their level of knowledge, interests, learning paces, and goals. Developing a unique learning program for each professional combines personal and professional needs (Harris & McDonald, 2021).

The eDea solution integrates the latest market trends by providing an advanced digital platform for training in design thinking. Through an extensive list of tool templates, the eDea solution offers micro-learning capabilities by dividing the methodology into smaller, more manageable modules. In addition, the list of suggested activities inspired by real projects of professionals in the field enhances learning through application in real scenarios, making it more practical and experiential.

1.4.2 Estimation of market size and growth rate

According to research by HolonIQ conducted in 2020, the global **educational technology (EdTech) industry market** is expected to reach $404 billion by 2025 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.3%. There is a growing preference for both directions. On the one

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hand, there is a growing interest in solutions such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). digital platforms that provide open access to educational programs in many scientific fields. On the other hand, there is also a growing interest in digital educational platforms that specialize in the development of specific skills, such as the Codecademy® digital platform, which provides interactive courses for learning to code, or the Skillshare platform, which provides short courses for developing creative skills such as drawing and photography.

More specifically, the global **design thinking education market** is expected to grow at a high rate as more businesses and organisations realize the value of this methodology. According to Business Research Insights, the market was valued at approximately $8.52 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach $15.98 billion by 2033, with a compound annual growth rate of 7.25% over the period 2025-2033.

Correspondingly, the global corporate education market **has also seen significant growth in recent years,** reflecting the growing emphasis on reskilling and upskilling employees. According to a recent survey conducted by Allied Market Research in 2024, the global corporate education market was estimated at $361.5 billion in 2023, and is expected to reach $805.6 billion by 2035 with a compound annual growth rate of 7% from 2024 to 2035. It is worth noting that investments in corporate programs to restrain and upgrade existing human resources skills not only strengthen the workforce's skills but also contribute to economic growth. According to a report by the World Economic Forum in partnership with PwC, such investments could boost global GDP by $6.5 trillion and create 5.3 million new jobs by 2030.

Figure 3: Estimate of the growth rate of the corporate education market.

1.4.3 Evaluating the competitive strength of the distance learning software industry in design thinking

The assessment uses the Five Forces Analysis, a strategic tool developed by Michael Porter in 1979. The analysis focuses on five key forces determining a sector's competition and

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profitability. These forces include the threat from new products and services, the threat of substitute products or services, suppliers' bargaining power, customers' bargaining power, and competition between existing businesses in the sector. Using this analysis, companies can better understand their competitive environment and develop strategies to strengthen their position in the market.

1.4.3.1 Supplier bargaining power - Low to moderate

Key suppliers include universities, educational organisations, independent trainers, and technology providers of digital infrastructure, operating systems, and databases. The strength of the suppliers is low to moderate for the following reasons:

- **The quality of the content and the instructor's experience directly affect the program's value**: Many platforms have a vast network of partners from recognised university institutions to create content, ensuring enough supply.
- **The number of design thinking courses is smaller than in other professional disciplines: Most courses offer** a general, introductory approach without requiring more specialized or in-depth training.
- **Technology is mature and easily accessible:** As far as digital infrastructure and digital software suppliers are concerned, the technology is mature and provided by a wide range of suppliers at affordable prices, which helps to reduce their bargaining power.

1.4.3.2 Buyer bargaining power - High

Buyers include individual professionals, students, and companies. Buyer power is high for the following reasons:

- **There is a wide availability of alternatives:** Free or affordable courses increase buyers' bargaining power even more. At the same time, the ease of comparing prices and content, combined with reviews of other users, allows buyers to make informed choices and demand high quality at affordable prices.
- **Most courses are introductory to design thinking:** For more specialized and certified programs, the bargaining power of buyers is reduced, as the options are more limited and the value of these programs and their recognition by the labor market is higher.

1.4.3.3 New Product Threat – Moderate to High

The threat from new products is moderate to high for the following reasons:

- **Competitive services:** Although entering the said market is relatively easy due to the growing demand for online education, already established providers such as Coursera®, Udemy®, edX®, IDEO U®, and others boast significant competitive advantages such as prestige and recognition. They have formed a large partner network with leading and prestigious universities and businesses, and offer extensive content libraries.
- **Niche products:** Products that focus solely on design thinking can engage users by offering more targeted programs, an in-depth understanding of the subject, and a

better connection between training and practical application, which is very important, especially for professionals.

- **Technological innovation in learning:** New learning methods, such as incorporating AI for personalized training or using AR/VR for interactive learning, can also boost the competitiveness of new players.
- **Partnerships:** Strong partnerships with recognised educational institutions, the need to invest resources in content production, and the ability to provide certification officially recognised by the labor market reduce the viability of many new products by limiting the real threat to large platforms.

The eDea solution has been developed by prestigious Greek universities, in collaboration with companies that have expertise in design thinking, thus ensuring high quality and academic credibility. The possibility of providing formal certification is an important advantage that will be further explored by enhancing the platform's value for professionals and businesses. At the same time, its unique approach that links education with its application in real projects creates substantial added value, especially for professionals unfamiliar with the subject. These features give eDea significant competitive advantages, making it a strong proposition in the market, and a platform with the prerequisites to diversify and dynamically compete with already established solutions.

1.4.3.4 Threat of substitute products - Medium to high

The threat of substitute products is moderate to high for the following reasons:

- **Alternative solutions for free training: There are, for example, free video tutorials on YouTube®, participation in open events focused on** technology, and other similar ways and means that provide free access to information materials that allow stakeholders to learn the fundamentals of design thinking at no cost.
- **Face-to-face seminars and workshops:** Universities, consulting firms, and organisations specializing in innovation offer intensive workshops that are more interactive and hands-on than online platforms.
- **In-house company training programs:** Large companies develop design thinking training programs tailored to their needs, reducing the need for external online platforms.

1.4.3.5 Competition between existing products - High

Competition between existing products in the market is intense:

- **Similar courses:** Many platforms offer similar courses and training programs to meet the growing needs of professionals for innovation skills.
- **Targeted learning platforms:** Educational platforms specialising in design thinking have begun to enter the market.
- **Competition:** Competition manifests at various levels, such as pricing strategy and cooperation with companies and educational institutions. These partnerships aim to

enhance the prestige of platforms and provide recognised certifications that have value and recognition in the labor market.

In summary, the distance learning software market in design thinking is characterised by intense competition and high bargaining power of buyers. Although new players can enter the market, established platforms have significant strength due to their programs' strong recognition and certified quality. Platforms with certifications from universities and branded partnerships have a competitive advantage. However, the threat of substitutes and the constant pressure for innovation from competitors make the market dynamic and demanding. For a new product to enter the market and compete effectively with existing distance learning platforms in design thinking, it should focus on a niche market that competitors do not adequately meet. Similarly, working with recognised educational institutions or professional organisations to provide certificates of recognition from the labour market can enhance the reputation of the new product. Especially in the initial market entry phase, the new product can attract users with an attractive pricing strategy by offering competitive prices and free access to content to manage and grow a user base.

1.5 Macroeconomic analysis of the market support professionals in the remote implementation of design thinking projects

The market for supporting professionals using design thinking to implement projects through digital tools has shown significant growth in recent years, with the demand for collaboration and project management solutions constantly increasing. This section provides information on market analysis regarding the adoption of design thinking by companies and organisations operating in industries beyond design. Specifically, it focuses on the market analysis of digital tools that support remote collaboration of teams using design thinking tools.

1.5.1 Market trends

1.5.1.1 Utilizing design thinking as a strategic innovation tool by companies

In the early 2000s, many design companies focused on applying design thinking as a methodology for solving complex business and societal challenges. This approach was utilised in a wide range of fields, from the design of services provided and the improvement of the user/customer experience, the formulation of business strategies, and the development of new products and services launched on the market to the co-design of solutions to complex societal challenges in the fields of health, education, social welfare, and others. Among them are design companies such as LiveWork, Snook, which merged a few years ago with another company; however, information about its projects is online, FutureGov, Hellon, Frog, Fjord, IDEO®, DesignThinkers, SPARCK, Innovation Unit, and others.

In 2005 - 2018/19, these companies emerged as pioneers in the field while highlighting the value of design thinking as a powerful business tool to foster innovation in companies and organisations. Their impact was so significant that it affected many European countries, even the public sector. As independent legal entities, under the auspices of the respective state

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mechanism, whose vision was to utilise design thinking as a key project implementation methodology to improve public services and enhance innovation in the public sector. Among these bodies are GDS UK (Government Digital Services) in the United Kingdom that started and contributed catalytically to the digital transformation of the state, Mindlab in Denmark, The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra in Finland, La 27e Région in France, AgID (Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale) in Italy, Laboratório de Estado (LabX) in Portugal, and others.

While until 2018 - 2019 design companies operated autonomously, from 2015 onwards, and even more intensely from 2018 - 2019, there was a significant turnaround where many large design companies merged with consulting or software development companies. For example, Snook was acquired and merged with software development company NEC Digital, FutureGov merged with TPX Holdings, a company specializing in data management and software development, under the new name TPX Impact, Hellon merged with Graend, SPARCK with information systems developer BJSS becoming part of the global IT and technology group CGI. Accordingly, global consulting firm Accenture® has acquired Fjord and Capgemini has acquired Frog. A trend is now emerging where design thinking is integrated into in-house design processes in large private sector companies.

Correspondingly, in the last decade, there has been an ever-increasing trend of investment in design thinking at an internal level by public bodies in Europe, America, Asia, and Australia. In this context, many public organisations proceed with recruiting permanent employees with expertise in design thinking to utilize the methodology for the design of human-centered public services. At the same time, special emphasis is given to training and developing existing staff's skills in innovation methodologies such as design thinking, to gradually form a culture of innovation in both the private and public sectors.

It is thus becoming clear that design thinking is no longer a complementary skill that organisations buy from design companies, but a fundamental success factor and a key skill for organisations that want to remain competitive in a digitalised world. For this reason, many companies and organisations invest in developing in-house expertise in design thinking by reducing their dependence on external partners and consultants. This strategy allows them to limit the cost of developing new products and services and ensure that the ability to innovate remains internally, acting as a permanent competitive advantage. At the same time, integrating these skills enhances the sustainability of organisations, as design thinking is no longer treated as a single, ad hoc process but as a fundamental and enduring element of organisational culture. In this way, innovation is not an occasional venture, but a continuous process of evolution that penetrates the core of businesses and organisations by formulating strategies that dynamically adapt to new market challenges and opportunities.

1.5.1.2 Digitalisation and remote work

Digitalisation and remote work have emerged as a central pillar of the modern business world, radically transforming organisations' operations. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this transition by pushing companies to adopt new technologies and practices to maintain

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productivity and collaboration. According to research by McKinsey & Company (2023), 70% of businesses worldwide have implemented hybrid or fully remote work models, while many continue to invest in advanced technology solutions to improve employee connectivity. Similar findings are presented by Deloitte (2023), which points out that organisations that strategically invest in the digitalisation of their processes by supporting remote work record higher levels of productivity and employee satisfaction.

Remote work and increased reliance on technology have created new business challenges and opportunities. Employees are no longer limited by geographic boundaries, which allows companies to acquire talent from different countries and markets. However, this change requires adopting tools and platforms to ensure efficient collaboration, company culture, and work-life balance. For example, video conferencing platforms such as Zoom®, Microsoft Teams®, and Google Meet® have become integral to everyday work by enabling real-time communication. In addition, using project management software, such as Trello®, Asana®, and Jira®, helps to organise tasks and track the progress of teams remotely. Finally, applications such as Miro®, MURAL,® FigJam®, and others that provide a digital whiteboard environment, enhance interactive, synchronous and asynchronous remote collaboration, and creative thinking.

Remote work is no longer a temporary solution but a new reality redefining employment's future. Organisations that embrace this change by investing in their digital infrastructure and cultivating a culture of flexibility and continuous learning are more likely to remain competitive and attract talent in a globalised environment.

1.5.2 Estimation of market size and growth rate

Design thinking is constantly gaining ground in entrepreneurship, marketing, IT, and others. Although different studies present different market sizes, all studies agree that the market sector will grow. Below are data from two different recent studies. Specifically, according to a report by Grand View Research, the global market was valued at $1.45 billion in 2022 with a forecast annual growth rate from 2023 to 2030 of 22.1%. However, according to a study conducted by the company Verified Market Reports published in 2025, the market size was estimated at $7.99 billion in 2023, with projections that it will reach $15.03 billion by 2032, reflecting an annual growth rate of 7.26%.

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Global Design Thinking Market Size 2033 (USD Billion)
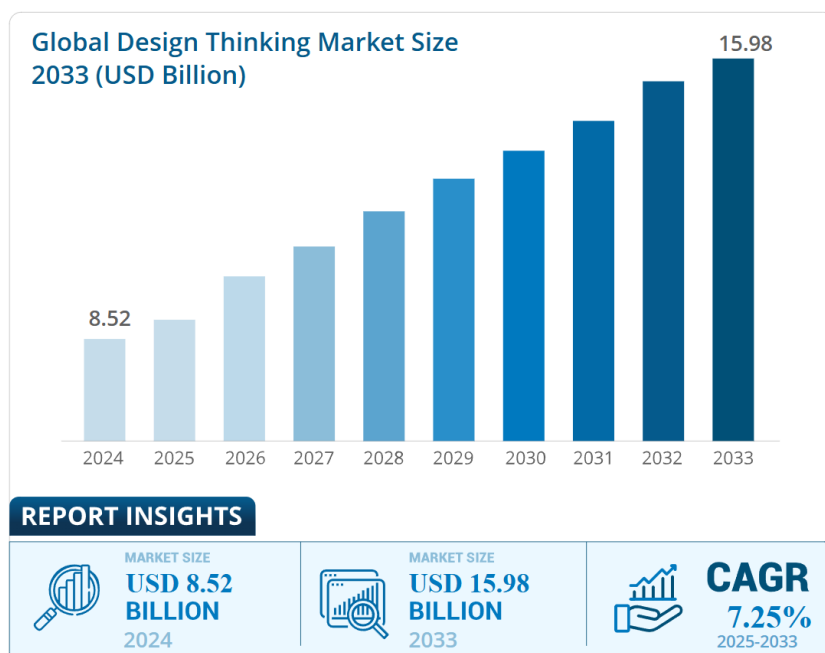
Figure 4: Estimating the size and growth rate of the global design market in design thinking (Business Research Insights, 2024).

More specifically, and to support the use of design thinking by companies and organisations from 2021 onwards, there is a significant increase in the market for digital collaboration platforms and access to design thinking tools. Therefore, platforms such as Miro® and Mural® have seen significant growth in recent years due to the adoption of remote and hybrid work models. According to a study by Market Research Intellect published in 2025, the market in question was valued at around $2.64 billion in 2023, while it is expected to reach around $8.26 billion by 2031, exhibiting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.88% from 2024 to 2031. Miro®, one of the industry leaders, reported 50 million users worldwide by 2021, while in 2025, according to the company's website, users will exceed 90 million worldwide, which reflects the ever-growing demand for digital platforms for collaboration and access to tools of innovative methods, such as design thinking.

1.5.3 Assessing the competitive strength of the software industry to support professionals in implementing design thinking projects

The assessment uses the Five Forces Analysis, a strategic tool developed by Michael Porter in 1979. Porter's analysis of the five forces offers an estimate of the competitive dynamics of this market to formulate the market entry strategy for the eDea solution appropriately.

1.5.3.1 Supplier bargaining power - Moderate

The strength of the suppliers is moderate for the following reasons:

- **Cloud-based solutions:** Similar solutions are mainly based on web infrastructure, such as AWS, Google® Cloud, and Microsoft® Azure, development software, and third-party

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services for their data management and technological operations. Although Internet service providers have a strong position, competition allows software companies to negotiate favorable terms.

- **Fixed prices:** Competition between suppliers has stabilised prices in recent years.
- **In-house infrastructure development in companies:** Innovative features are mainly based on internal development teams, reducing dependence on external suppliers.

1.5.3.2 Buyer Bargaining Power – Medium to High

The strength of suppliers is moderate to high for the following reasons:

- **Alternatives:** Customers have significant bargaining power as there are many alternatives on the market, such as Miro®, Mural®, FigJam®, Jamboard®, and others.
- **Need for competitive pricing:** Most platforms operate on a subscription model, so companies must offer competitive pricing and constantly improve their services to retain users.
- **Common features:** Most platforms share very common features, functions, and features.
- **Business customer bargaining power (B2B):** Due to longer contracts, business customers have more bargaining power than individual users.
- **Low availability of tools for inexperienced users:** As mentioned above, there is not a wide variety of tools for users unfamiliar with design thinking.

1.5.3.3 Threat from new products - Moderate

The threat of new competitive products entering the market is moderate for the following reasons:

- **Competitive platforms:** Although market entry is possible due to increasing demand, creating a competitive platform requires significant resources and investment in software development, customer service, and marketing.
- **Gaining market share from other services:** Companies in the field are well established and have already gained strong user bases and network advantages, making it difficult for new products to gain market share.
- **Innovative technologies:** Artificial intelligence (AI) leaves room for entry for new competing products as existing solutions are either currently developing or have not yet integrated corresponding functions.
- **Comparable functionality to other tools:** Large tech companies like Microsoft® and Google® can add similar functionality to their existing platforms by reducing the need for standalone tools like Miro® and Mural®.

1.5.3.4 Threat of Substitute Products – Low

The threat of entry from substitute products, i.e. products that satisfy the exact need of users but in a different way, is moderate for the following reasons:

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- **Alternatives to collaboration:** Although there are many alternatives to collaborating and visualising ideas, such as Trello®, Asana®, Microsoft Teams®, and Google Docs®, these platforms do not provide access to design thinking tools.

1.5.3.5 Competition between existing products - High

Competition between existing solutions is high for the following reasons:

- Strong competition: The market is highly competitive, and large companies such as Miro® and Mural® have conquered a significant market share.
- **Continuous refresh of functionality in existing solutions:** Platforms are constantly trying to differentiate themselves by adding new features or integrating with other platforms to give more added value to the user as an incentive to choose the specific solution.
- **Introduction of hybrid tools:** The continuous development of hybrid and remote working models increases demand and the intensity of competition.

To sum up, the market is highly competitive. The low bargaining power of suppliers and the barriers to entry for new products give established tools, such as Miro® and MURAL®, an advantage in the market. To enter the market, a new product should provide a unique value proposition that significantly differentiates it from the competition or focus on a target audience not currently covered by existing solutions. On the one hand, the eDea solution also focuses on the audience of professionals who are not very familiar with design thinking, an audience for which the existing digital platforms do not provide specialised solutions, and the needs of the public remain unmet.

1.7 Competition analysis

1.7.1 Competition analysis in the distance learning market in design thinking

1.7.1.1 Coursera®

Coursera® is one of the leading MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) platforms, i.e. large-scale open-access online courses. MOOC platforms allow millions of users to attend courses from universities and organisations worldwide, often with the possibility of free access to educational materials. It was founded in 2012 by professors from Stanford University. The platform now works with more than 275 universities and major companies, including Stanford, Yale, Google®, IBM®, and Meta®, offering over 7,000 courses and covering a wide range of disciplines such as entrepreneurship, business administration, project management, IT and programming, psychology, product promotion, health, social sciences, mathematics, and more. The number of registered users exceeds 130 million worldwide, which makes Coursera® one of the most popular options for online learning.

Coursera®'s business model is based on offering free courses through the freemium model, providing users with access to knowledge and training materials at no cost. However, obtaining a certificate of completion that bears the seal of the university or company

providing the course requires payment. The cost varies. For example, short, practical courses focusing on acquiring specific skills within a few hours start at 9.99$. Specialisations and professional certificates, which consist of courses and offer in-depth knowledge in a field in high demand in the job market, start at $49 USD per month. For complete online degree programs provided by top universities, the cost can reach or exceed $9,000.

In addition, through a subscription model adopted by the platform, Coursera® provides the Coursera® Plus subscription, which for $59 per month or $399 per year allows users unlimited access to thousands of courses, specialisations, and certifications without having to pay separately for each program. Full bachelor's and master's programs are excluded from the subscription model.

The key advantage of Coursera® is its partnership with leading universities and companies, offering certifications that have recognised value in the job market. Currently, 9 courses in design thinking are provided through Coursera®. However, one of the main drawbacks of the platform is the relatively high price of some courses and limited interaction with professors, making it less interactive.

1.7.1.2 edX®

edX® is one of the leading massive open online course platforms founded in 2012 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University. edX®'s purpose is to provide quality, accessible, and free education while allowing users to take courses from leading universities and organisations worldwide. It has over 20 million registered users and partners with over 160 leading universities and organisations to provide courses and certifications. The platform is particularly popular among professionals and companies who wish to offer continuing education to their employees as the certificates and titles provided by edX® are widely recognised in the job market.

edX®'s business model is based on offering free courses through its free delivery model. Specifically, the platform provides courses and programs in many subject areas, such as business administration, engineering, computer science and programming, social sciences, medicine, and others. However, as with the Coursera® platform, payment is required to obtain certificates. A short certificate program costs range from $50 to $1,000. In contrast, online bachelor's or master's degree programs offered by partner universities and organisations such as MIT, Harvard, the University of California, Berkeley, and others can reach or even exceed $25,000.

The most significant difference between edX® and other equivalent platforms, such as Coursera, is that edX® focuses more on providing specialised degrees and master's programs. At edX®, certification and degree programs are more academically oriented and are typically provided by major universities and recognised educational organisations. In contrast, Coursera® offers more opportunities for specialised professional certificates in partnership with companies such as Google® and IBM®.

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edX® offers over 50 courses in design thinking. Interestingly, the courses are divided into general and specialised. The general courses present the methodology as a whole, while the more specialized courses focus on specific tools or applications of design thinking in specific business areas, such as improving the employee experience, strategising organisations, designing new digital products, and others.

1.7.1.3 Schoology®

Schoology® is an education platform that provides solutions for course management and enhances communication between teachers and students. It was founded in 2009, and has since grown into one of the most widely used learning management platforms worldwide. Schoology® caters to educational institutions of all levels by offering tools for course creation, student assessment, and distance communication and teaching. The platform supports over 20 million users worldwide, including schools, universities, and organisations.

Schoology®'s business model is based on the subscription model, offering different services for educational institutions. Educational organisations can choose between free and paid platform versions depending on their needs and the required features. The free version provides basic features like course creation, while the paid version offers advanced features such as comprehensive assessment tools, collaboration, and integration features with other apps. Specifically, the Schoology® Enterprise service costs $10 to $50 per user per year for larger organisations and universities, depending on the features included. Schoology® Business caters to private and corporate clients with prices starting at $10,000 to $20,000 per year for larger organisations. Finally, Schoology® Plus is a subscription service for educational institutions that provides unlimited access to tools and support with prices ranging from $200 to $500 per month. Interestingly, prices may vary depending on the type of organisation, the duration of the contract, and the number of users and are determined through negotiations with Schoology®.

The key advantage of Schoology® is its ease of use and the ability to integrate multiple tools and functions into a single platform. Another significant advantage is the ability to integrate with other platforms and tools such as Google® Drive, Microsoft Office 365®, and others, making it a desirable solution for educational institutions.

However, one of the drawbacks of Schoology® is that it can be overly complicated for smaller schools and teachers who may not need all the features on offer. Additionally, compared to other educational platforms, such as Coursera® and edX®, the course content on Schoology® must be created and imported by each instructor, which requires additional time and effort from the daily tasks of teachers. Unlike platforms like Coursera®, IDEO U®, and edX®, which provide ready-made educational content, Schoology® only offers its platform and features, without providing the course materials, which is its main drawback.

Overall, Schoology® offers a powerful combination of learning management and collaboration capabilities, without providing access to educational content that the educator must configure and import into the platform.

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1.7.1.4 IDEO® U

IDEO® U is a leading education platform that provides online courses and certifications in design thinking and innovation. It was founded in 2014 by the world-renowned design company IDEO®, which catalysed the creation of the term design thinking. The platform offers training programs focusing on design thinking, leadership, creativity, and innovation strategy, allowing users to develop and apply innovation skills in business environments. IDEO® U's clients are mainly individual professionals and companies, as it provides specially designed corporate training programs on specific topics related to design thinking. According to the IDEO® U website, over 80,000 professionals have attended and graduated from its courses.

IDEO U® works with the pay-per-course model, where users pay for access to complete training programs and certifications. Courses range from $600 to $1,200 per program, depending on the duration and content. The platform also offers supportive tools, user communities, and the opportunity to interact with professionals and teachers, providing a more interactive and experiential approach to education than other platforms.

Some of the courses at IDEO® U are delivered by instructors in live sessions, which means they have a specific start date and time. Although this offers the possibility of direct interaction with the instructor, it limits flexibility, as the user has to attend the course at a specific time and cannot attend it whenever they wish. However, the platform also offers courses one can attend at their own pace, depending on availability.

As for the business model, IDEO® U adopts the pay-as-you-go model. Therefore, a separate payment is required for each course the user wants. IDEO® U allows users to purchase individual, more miniature courses with an estimated completion time of 4 – 5 weeks and a cost of around $700. Individual courses alone do not lead to certification. However, the company provides the possibility of combining 4 - 5 short courses to obtain certification. Although no cost is reported for the more extensive training programs leading to certification, it is estimated that the cost will be at least $2,000 - $3,000, considering that a single course costs around 700 USD on average and at least 3 - 4 courses are required to obtain certification. Although it offers a high-level program and recognised certification from the labor market, the main disadvantage of IDEO® U is the high cost compared to other competing platforms.

Interestingly, although IDEO® U did not initially provide open access to content, it has started offering design thinking tools and methods in an open form following the model of platforms such as Coursera®. However, the list of tools available remains quite limited. At the same time, it leverages IDEO's project presentation library by presenting real projects to give users a more empirical and practical insight into the methodology.

1.7.2 Analysis of competition in the market of support professionals in remote support

1.7.2.1 Miro®

Miro® was founded in 2011 to create a collaboration platform to help teams work more efficiently. Since then, the platform has gained significant popularity and is now used by 90

million users worldwide. Several of the largest companies and organisations, such as Microsoft®, Spotify®, Airbnb®, Accenture®, Deloitte®, and others, choose it to support remote work teams and implement projects.

Miro® is based on a digital whiteboard and provides tools for teamwork, supporting the application of methods such as design thinking. Although not educational, it offers tools that enhance learning through team collaboration and applying design thinking tools to real team projects by promoting learning by doing. In addition, through the Miroverse user community, users contribute to developing and sharing templates and tools by allowing users to have direct access to a wide variety of tools to start their work without the need to create everything from scratch. Finally, although it does not provide specialised functions for project management, the Miro® platform provides some templates that, if configured, can also serve management purposes.

Miro®'s business model is subscription-based. Although the platform is provided for free to use, users have access to limited features. With the subscription purchase, Miro® offers additional features like unlimited users and boards and integration features with tools like Slack® and Google® Drive. Prices for subscriptions range from $8 per user per month for the Starter plan and $16 per month for the Business plan. In addition, Miro® offers special rates for companies that want to register and purchase a subscription for more than 30 employees.

Although Miro® can be used by people with no prior experience in design thinking, users should know the methodology and essential tools to take full advantage of it, as no instructions for use are provided.

1.7.2.2 Mural®

Mural® was founded in 2011 and has become one of the most popular digital whiteboard collaboration platforms. Professionals and teams in various fields widely use the platform, which has gained tremendous popularity for supporting professionals in innovation, entrepreneurship, and design thinking. It has over 35,000 corporate customers, and its software is used by many large companies and organisations worldwide, such as IBM®, Capgemini®, P&G®, LG Electronics®, and others.

Although it is not purely educational, it indirectly supports learning through collaboration, in the context of project teams, and the application of design thinking methods and tools on the project in question (learn by doing). The platform provides tools that allow users to work on collaborative projects by applying techniques that enhance creativity and strategic thinking. It also provides a special section with templates and design thinking tools. However, most of these tools have a high degree of complexity. As such, they are aimed at advanced users with experience or training in design thinking. This makes using the platform more difficult for users unfamiliar with the methodology, who may need additional support to take full advantage of these tools. Recently, the platform has integrated artificial intelligence (AI) functions, providing the ability to analyse and synthesise ideas, automated inference through

data analysis, and suggestions for improvement, making the collaboration process faster and more efficient.

Mural®'s business model is subscription-based, with prices starting at $10 per user per month for the Team+ plan and $18 for the Business plan. Although the costing is displayed monthly, Mural® requires an annual subscription, significantly increasing the cost by making Mural® less affordable for small groups and individual professionals. As Mural®'s prices are higher than Miro®'s, to become more competitive while enhancing its educational character, the company has strategically partnered with the LUMA Institute, an educational organisation specializing in developing skills in design thinking. Through this partnership, Mural® users who have purchased the Business plan gain access to specialised training programs on design thinking.

1.8 SWOT Analysis for eDea Solution

SWOT analysis is a strategic tool used to assess a project or organisation's strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats from the external environment. The word SWOT comes from the initials: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. SWOT analysis helps businesses, organisations, or project teams understand their current position in the market and develop a strategic plan to leverage their strengths, reduce their weaknesses, capitalise on market opportunities, and strategise to counter external threats.

Here is the SWOT analysis for the eDea solution, considering the market analysis and the target audience's needs.

2.3.1 Strengths

Strengths describe what a project or organisation excels at, and what differentiates it from the competition. The strengths of the eDea solution are:

- **Development of technical and social soft skills:** Through design thinking training, students and professionals not only acquire and develop their technical skills in the field but also practice and significantly enhance social soft skills, such as creative thinking, collaboration, and empathy. These skills make them more competitive in the job market. Companies look for candidates who can innovate, work effectively in teams, and understand the needs and perspectives of users, customers, and colleagues.
- **Combination of training and practical application:** The eDea solution offers users the opportunity to learn and understand the basic principles of design thinking and, at the same time, apply them directly to real-world projects and challenges. This approach differentiates the platform from other MOOC platforms that focus primarily on theoretical teaching without providing opportunities for practical application. The eDea solution differs from solutions such as Miro® and Mural® that offer team collaboration tools, such as whiteboards and templates, without providing support for user training or guidance on how to implement these tools, making these solutions

less accessible to users with no prior experience in design thinking. Therefore, the eDea solution bridges the gap between theoretical training and practical application by enabling users to learn and create within a single digital environment.

- **The eDea solution is open and available under open content licenses:** The activities are freely available to teachers, professionals, pupils, students, and other interested parties after registering on the digital platform. They can be used directly in the context of an educational process and in projects of companies, professionals, or as a source of inspiration for formulating new standards of tools and activities to enrich the eDea catalogue by the user community.

- **Provides a rich repository of reusable design thinking tool templates and user manuals:** The eDea solution makes it easy for teachers, students, and professionals to meet, practice, and start applying design thinking to their educational process and work by providing free access to an extensive list of tool templates.

- **Activities inspired by real projects, and collaborations with companies:** The activities have been developed in collaboration with the consortium companies, drawing inspiration from real projects in which the companies have participated. In this way, the eDea solution bridges the gap between theory and practice by allowing pupils and students to work on real operational and societal challenges by making education directly linked to labour market requirements. At the same time, the activities allow teachers and educational institutions to collaborate with local companies and organisations by introducing an actual "client" to the projects of students. This approach makes learning more realistic and attractive for young people, while enhancing the impact on the local community as valuable solutions developed by students can be adopted, upon consultation, by companies and organisations offering tangible benefits both in the educational process and in the business and social ecosystem.

- **Wide variety of activities across different topics and disciplines:** The activities offer a rich range of projects on which students can work to put design thinking theory and tools into practice. The activities cover a wide range of business and societal challenges, allowing teachers and students to tailor the solution to specific areas so that the topic is interesting and related to different scientific disciplines. This allows design thinking to be taught in a way that directly highlights the value and impact that this methodology can have on any industry, such as business administration, IT, and others. For example, the activity "Design of smart systems and smart devices for energy management in homes" can be chosen by IT schools. In contrast, the activity "Reuse of fashion waste" is broader and can lead to different solutions, such as establishing a new business or creating a digital platform, and can be used by professors of various fields and faculties. Thus, each activity is adapted to the needs of each sector, broadening the teaching approach and the impact of education.

- **Supporting teachers in teaching design thinking in schools of other disciplines, in addition to design:** The eDea platform is a powerful tool for teachers who are called

upon to teach design thinking while coming from different scientific fields without having a degree in design. By offering structured activities, the platform reduces the time required to prepare lessons by allowing teachers to focus more on research, participation in programmes, and strengthening cooperation with the labour market. In addition, by integrating real-world projects and partnerships with local companies and organisations, teachers can create more realistic and timely projects for students by enhancing the impact of education in the local market, and preparing students for modern professional requirements.

- **Expanded target audience in the category of professionals and provision of specialised features for professionals who are not very familiar with design thinking:** The eDea solution is aimed at both design teams and professionals from other industries with much familiarity with design thinking, and professionals with less familiarity, but also users with limited digital skills. Platforms like Miro® and Mural® are more complex and require users' increased technological skills. At the same time, their tools are pretty complex, making them difficult for professionals unfamiliar with design thinking to use. Instead, the eDea solution adopts a more streamlined and straightforward interface design, making the platform more user-friendly and easy to use for people with limited digital skills. At the same time, many small templates and tools are offered that are easier to use even for beginner users. This broadens the platform's target audience, which is positive for the business model of the eDea solution.

- **Enhancing internal training and knowledge transfer to colleagues through advanced user support:** Advanced users who wish to apply design thinking to projects involving colleagues with no previous experience in the methodology. They can take advantage of the theory and instructions provided for each tool. In this way, experienced users can explain the concept of design thinking to beginners and guide them in using specific tools through collaborative workshops with both team members and external stakeholders in the project. This process, by allowing advanced professionals to take on the role of trainer, reduces the cost of training staff, while at the same time offering the opportunity for staff of organisations to share their knowledge, thereby enhancing their communication, training, and knowledge transfer skills to their colleagues.

- **Strengthening the culture of innovation in companies and organisations:** The eDea solution promotes the dissemination of design thinking by facilitating its adoption by more companies and organisations in Greece. Focusing on modern working methods, such as design thinking, enhances innovation, promotes collaboration, and supports continuing education and professional training.

- **Consortium status:** The consortium and the eDea project are implemented by recognised organisations, such as the University of Thessaly and the University of the Aegean. This combination increases the credibility of the platform. It increases the likelihood of companies and public bodies in Greece adopting the eDea solution and design thinking tools and methods.

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- **Integrated project management support following the design thinking methodology:** The eDea solution has built-in project management functions. This allows professionals, companies, and organisations to manage their entire project within the platform by organising each project phase in a structured and efficient way. Users can configure a complete project plan by specifying the required actions and design thinking tools that must be used at every stage, assign roles and responsibilities to team members, and monitor the project's progress in real time. The built-in project management feature makes the platform particularly valuable for professionals who want to apply design thinking to projects without using separate tools to manage the project. The ability to plan, organise, and execute a project from scratch makes the eDea platform a complete solution for companies, organisations, and teams that wish to leverage design thinking in their projects.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

Weak points describe the obstacles that a project or organisation will have to overcome to operate at the optimal level. These are areas in which the project or organisation needs to improve to remain competitive. The weaknesses of the eDea digital solution are:

- **Need for continuous maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure:** The eDea platform, as a digital solution for learning and implementing design thinking, requires continuous maintenance and upgrading of its infrastructure, so that it remains available and functional for users. The continuous operation of the platform requires the maintenance and upgrade of the server and the related technological infrastructure to ensure the proper functioning of its tools and digital services. In addition, in the medium and long term, regular repairs and equipment upgrades are required for the platform to remain modern and adapt to digital technology developments. Constant technological development brings new demands regarding safety, speed, and user experience, making it necessary to improve the system continuously. The participating organisations and companies must secure the necessary resources to maintain and upgrade infrastructure.

- **Requirement for continuous internet connectivity:** The operation of the eDea platform is based on uninterrupted internet access, as it supports access to content (templates, tools, and activities) and collaboration in both educational and professional settings. For the seamless use of eDea tools and capabilities, participating organisations and companies must ensure stable and reliable internet access, ensuring all users have continuous and seamless access to the eDea platform.

- **Need for continuous development and renewal of content**: For the eDea solution to remain up-to-date and competitive, it must constantly evolve and renew the standard tools and activities. The platform must adapt directly and dynamically to the ever-changing needs of users, integrate new market trends, and use modern research from which new design thinking tools and methods emerge. Investment in research and development (R&D), so that the content of the eDea platform is up-to-date. This

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presupposes the allocation of resources by the participating organisations and companies for the continuous development of new content, tools, and activities in the medium and long term.

2.3.3 Opportunities

Opportunities refer to favorable external factors that can aid growth or give a competitive advantage to an organisation or a new project. The eDea solution recognises the following opportunities:

- **Expansion of the teaching of design thinking in Greek schools of various disciplines:** Design thinking is gaining more and more popularity in Greek universities. It is characteristic that it is now taught in many universities, specifically in schools, not design. For example, it is currently taught at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), School of Informatics and Communication Sciences. At the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), the Master of Business Administration (MBA). It is also taught at the University of Piraeus at the School of Business Administration. At the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Social Sciences. At the Hellenic American University, in the undergraduate program in Business Administration. This expansion of the teaching of design thinking in many fields and faculties creates favorable conditions and opportunities for adopting the eDea platform by major Greek university institutions.

- **Emerging demand in the Greek market for innovative methods, such as design thinking:** Although not fully established in Greece, design thinking has nevertheless experienced a significant increase in recent years following international trends. Greek companies and organisations are gradually coming into contact with design thinking and are beginning to experiment with its approach and tools. Initiatives aimed at spreading design thinking in the Greek market. Such projects include the Service Design Network Greek Chapter and the Athens UX Meetup. Athens UX Meetup focuses on the design of digital products and solutions. In contrast, Service Design Network Greece focuses on applying design thinking to solve complex business challenges, such as redesigning internal processes and improving the user experience throughout the lifecycle of a service, designing the strategy of an organisation or a new product or service, and more. Since major competitors such as Miro® and Mural® have not yet managed to fully establish themselves in a market and industry that is still being formed in Greece, the eDea solution can take advantage of this upward trend in design thinking by offering competitive advantages, such as the integration of educational content and project management tools, as well as the ability to fully support in the Greek language for all its tools and instructions Platform.

- **Increasing adoption of digital platforms to support distance learning in schools and universities:** In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions adopted digital distance education platforms that are widely used today. However, they are combined with face-to-face lectures, as many undergraduate and graduate students

work, making learning flexibility essential. Digital platforms provide accessibility regardless of geographical location, and at the same time, they expand the educational market, attracting students and professionals from abroad.

- **Growing need for lifelong education and vocational training by Greek and European companies:** According to a survey by the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), the results of which were published on the online platform Fortune Greece (Akrikou, 2025), 73% of Greek companies are expected to proceed with retraining actions of their human resources to meet the changing demand for skills and prepare them for new jobs. Also, 42% of companies will invest in staff training to develop additional skills and knowledge in their already existing fields of work. These findings demonstrate a strong trend for continuing education, offering a significant opportunity for the eDea platform, which supports professionals in learning and putting design thinking into practice.

2.3.4 Threats

Threats refer to actors that have the potential to harm an organisation or project or limit its impact. The eDea solution recognises the following opportunities:

- **Strong competition in the target audience of professionals familiar with design thinking:** The eDea platform is called upon to compete with already established solutions, such as Miro® and Mural®, that have a strong presence in the market and provide sophisticated collaborative tools and design thinking standards. These platforms have been established mainly for professionals familiar with design thinking, such as design teams/companies, consulting, or software development companies already applying the methodology to their projects. Although eDea differentiates itself by offering educational support, competition remains fierce in this target audience. To claim a substantial market share, eDea should emphasise its unique advantages, such as facilitating training and a simplified interface for users unfamiliar with design thinking.

- **Potential resistance of organisations to the adoption of new methods, such as design thinking:** The adoption of the eDea solution is inextricably linked to the adoption by companies, organisations, and educational institutions of design thinking in the context of project implementation and the context of the educational process. Some companies and institutions may be more wary of new approaches, such as design thinking. This resistance may come from a variety of backgrounds. Factors include the difficulty of changing established procedures, the lack of time and resources for staff training or even the doubt about the effectiveness of the new methods. Particularly in more traditional companies or public organisations, where hierarchical structures and established practices are challenging to change, the integration of design thinking can be met with skepticism.

- **Growing trend of adopting other innovative methods, beyond design thinking, such as agile and lean design by companies and organisations:** Despite the growing

popularity of design thinking at a global level, many businesses and organisations that are called upon to deal with complex projects and challenges at both the operational and societal level are not satisfied with just applying design thinking. They often combine the method with innovative approaches, such as flexible and lean design, to achieve better results. The eDea platform, while providing a complete set of tools for design thinking, does not yet incorporate tools from these other innovative approaches.

- **Speed of technological advancements:** Technology is progressing rapidly, with artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and other advanced technologies becoming increasingly important in the innovation and efficiency of digital tools. For the eDea platform to remain competitive, it is critical to monitor and find ways to integrate new technologies, thus ensuring its sustainability in the ever-changing environment.
- **Budget, and university investment priorities:** Many universities, especially in Greece, have limited financial resources, which makes it challenging to invest in infrastructure, both physical and digital. This financial tightness can be an obstacle to adopting advanced new digital tools to support the educational process.
- **The field of design thinking is not fully established in Greece:** Although Greece is an emerging market, design thinking is not yet widespread, which can create barriers to market penetration and attracting new users. This makes it necessary to have a smart promotion strategy to educate the public and highlight the value of design thinking. to increase acceptance and demand for relevant solutions.

2. Promotion through strategic partnerships

A clear plan to promote and develop a product or service is fundamental to success. This plan is called a promotion strategy and refers to the general approach to achieve specific objectives, such as increasing awareness and attracting new users. The first step to formulate the promotion strategy is to determine the value proposition, i.e., the eDea solution's competitive advantage. Then, considering market trends, competitors, and the target audience of the eDea solution, the actions that will help the participating organisations to disseminate eDea to adopt it even more in educational institutions and businesses are presented and analysed.

The strategy initially focuses on penetrating the Greek market, which has been identified as an emerging market in which competition has not yet penetrated to a large extent. This will be followed by growth and expansion outside Greece, emphasising Europe. This strategy focuses on short—and medium-term promotion actions, while expansion to Europe is part of a second, longer-term plan and will be analysed later.

For the penetration of the eDea solution in the Greek and European market, it is proposed that a promotion strategy be followed based on creating strategic partnerships with companies and educational institutions. In particular, strategic partnerships promote new

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projects, products, services, and/or existing companies and organisations to expand their reach, enhance their brand credibility, and create mutual value through collaboration with other organisations with shared values. As it became evident in the macroeconomic analysis and the competition analysis, the creation of strategic partnerships will be an important parameter for the project's success.

Promotion through strategic partnerships has multiple benefits and advantages for the collaborating bodies, which are analysed below:

- **Organic and authentic interaction with the target audience:** Unlike traditional marketing methods based solely on direct promotion and advertising, strategic partnerships leverage the strengths, networks, and resources of the partner organisations to achieve common goals. Thus, a natural and authentic connection with the target audience is created that does not give the feeling of a forced or fabricated promotion, as is often the case with advertising campaigns.
- **Enhancing credibility for new, innovative products and services:** Partnering with a trusted and established partner guarantees quality and prestige by boosting public trust. This strategy is particularly important for new innovative products and services seeking to establish themselves in the market, and helps reduce any doubts the target audience may have. In this way, the product or service gains access to a broader network of potential users who are more receptive to testing and adopting the new solution.
- **Greater cost-effectiveness:** Cost efficiency and shared resource use are other key benefits. Instead of investing large amounts of money in advertising campaigns, companies can join forces and jointly create actions that benefit both sides. This reduces marketing costs and increases impact, as each partner promotes collaboration through their own channels. They can leverage their existing clientele, distribution networks, and the influence of their partners to establish their presence faster and more efficiently.
- **Greater effectiveness in promoting and adopting innovative products and services:** Strategic partnerships are proving more effective than traditional marketing methods, such as advertising and promotions. According to recent research by the American Marketing Association (AMA), an advertising strategy can be particularly effective in boosting a consumer's interest, i.e. when the audience already has shown attention to the product or service. However, it does not generate new interest in unknown or innovative products and services (Danaher, 2021). On the contrary, strategic partnerships facilitate the dissemination of innovation by giving businesses access to new markets and leveraging the credibility of their partners. Significantly, 44% of companies seek alliances to generate new ideas, gain insights, and drive innovation, while 94% of tech executives consider partnerships crucial to their strategy (Nagle, 2023).

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- **Enhancing innovation and knowledge exchange between partners:** Strategic partnerships not only act as a means of market development, but also as a catalyst for innovation and the continuous development of products and services. Through close cooperation with other organisations, businesses, and institutions, valuable knowledge and experience are exchanged, and new development prospects are created to continuously improve the product or service.

In the case of the eDea solution, strategic partnerships with businesses and educational institutions are the ideal tool for promoting and disseminating project results. Through collaboration with companies, eDea can integrate design thinking into solving business challenges, and with the support of universities and schools, it can become an integral part of the educational process. Through strategic partnerships, eDea can become a leader in education and implementation of design thinking by companies and organisations, ensuring long-term development and widespread adoption of the platform.

The promotion plan based on strategic partnerships is then described.

2.1 Identifying strategic partners

eDea's penetration strategy initially in the Greek market, and then in the European market, includes the conclusion of strategic partnerships with companies and organisations. The aim of these collaborations is for companies and organisations to gradually get acquainted with design thinking and become familiar with the eDea platform as a tool for learning design thinking and as a comprehensive tool for supporting collaboration and project organisation based on design thinking.

Conclusion of strategic partnerships with companies and organisations builds on and highlights the competitive advantage provided by the eDea platform, which bridges education with the labor market.

The first step in the strategy is practical communication to identify the companies, organisations, and educational institutions interested in collaborating and leveraging the eDea solution.

2.1.1 Companies and organisations

It is proposed that companies and organisations be approached in specific sectors. These sectors are selected because they are related to the object of specialisation of the consortium's participating organisations and face significant growth.

Specifically, in the **first phase of development (6 - 12 months),** it is proposed to approach companies from the following sectors:

- **IT software and digital product and system development companies:** A sector in which the University of Thessaly specialises. It concerns companies that develop innovative digital solutions and software for various sectors of the economy. It is characteristic that in a recent study by the company Business Research Insights,

published in 2024, 75% of companies that adopt design thinking, in addition to design companies, belong to the digital product and system development industry. In addition, according to Naftemporiki (2023), the size of the IT software market in Greece amounts to 1.4 billion euros. With an average annual growth rate of 4.5% - 6%. Accordingly, it is proposed to approach incubators and accelerators that help startups to develop and launch innovative digital products and services on the market.
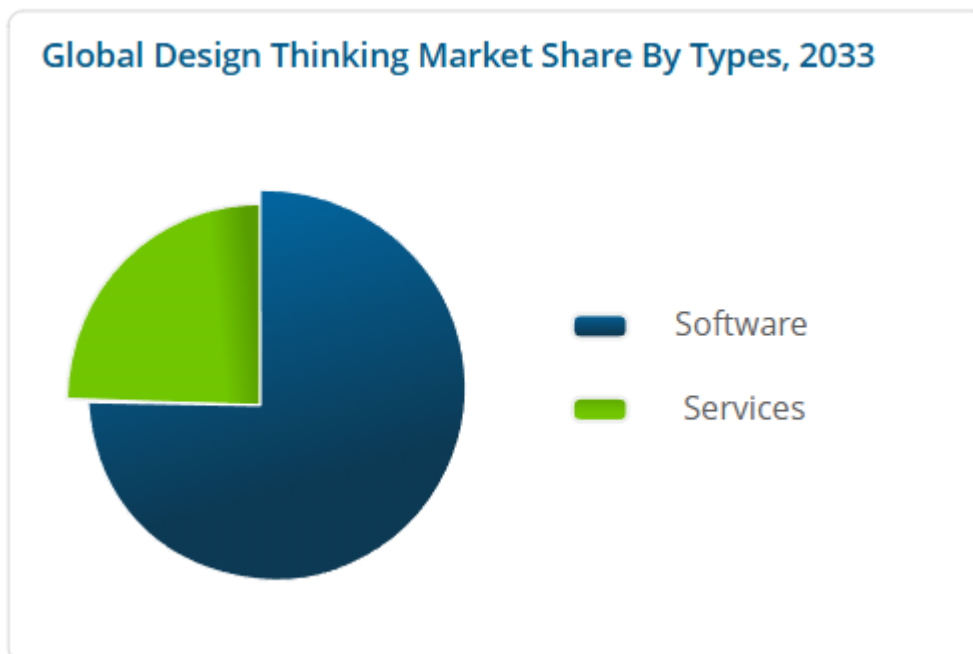
Figure 5: Market share of companies adopting design thinking (Business Research Insights, 2024).

- **Companies in design:** A sector in which the University of the Aegean is specialised. It concerns businesses active in various design areas, such as graphic design, corporate identity design, interior design, digital product design, user experience design, and others.
- **Retail companies:** These are large chains and companies in the retail sector that wish to evolve their strategies and introduce innovations in digital services and channels of interaction with their customers, and the enhancement of digital commerce that contributes to the expansion of companies by eliminating geographical restrictions. According to Vima (Vima, 2025), the market size in the retail sector in Greece amounts to 71.57 billion euros. With an average annual growth rate of 2.4%. It is an important sector of the Greek and global market that follows growth rates and is in a stage of digital transformation. Many of these companies have already set up small in-house design teams to improve the customer experience.
- **Public bodies:** Design4Future, part of the consortium, specialises in applying design thinking to design services and internal processes in public organisations. With the

implementation of gov.gr and the digitalisation of many public services, public bodies are now focused on the digital transformation of the services they provide. This makes the public sector an audience with significant prospects, although it may show more resistance than the companies mentioned earlier. However, collaborating with public bodies can have a considerable impact, as it will impact millions of Greek citizens, offering a much broader scope and influence.

- **Collaboration with professional networks in design thinking:** In this context, and to reach out to companies from these and other sectors, it is proposed to form partnerships with professional networks and existing initiatives, such as the Athens UX Meetup, the Greek Chapter Service Design Network, and the Thessaloniki UX Meetup. These initiatives aim to disseminate design thinking in the Greek market. Therefore, they share common values and thus create a positive framework for cooperation. These groups and initiatives have already created strong communities with over 3,700 registered professionals who follow their actions.

In a second phase of development (1st - 2nd year), it is proposed to approach companies from the following sectors:

- **Telecommunications companies:** Companies that provide telecommunications services and wish to strengthen their position in the market by creating new, innovative products and services that take advantage of the latest technological developments.
- **Energy and sustainable development companies:** Companies that invest in renewable energy, sustainability, and technology for sustainable development.
- **Pharmaceutical companies:** Companies active in the pharmaceutical industry are looking for innovative solutions to improve their services and develop actions with a social dimension. These actions often include partnerships with patient associations, organisations supporting people with chronic diseases, and other initiatives focused on improving patients' quality of life and society at large.

2.1.2 Educational institutions

The first step in the strategy is practical communication to identify university institutions interested in collaborating and leveraging the eDea solution. It is proposed that educational institutions from various scientific disciplines, not exclusively from the design field, be selected as design thinking has now evolved into a horizontal skill applied in many fields.

In the first phase, it is proposed that the educational institutions that will be selected for the conclusion of strategic collaborations belong to the following scientific sectors:

- **Business administration:** Design thinking is constantly gaining ground in this area.
- **Technology Sciences:** A consortium partner with expertise in this field.
- **Design:** Three of the consortium partners have experience and expertise.

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The following is an indicative list of proposed educational institutions for the broader adoption of the results of the eDea project to support the educational process:

- **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA):**
  - School of Computer and Communication Sciences.
- **Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB):**
  - Master's program in Business Administration (MBA).
  - Postgraduate Program in Strategy and Business Development.
  - Faculty of Information Sciences & Technology, Master's Program in Digital Methods for the Humanities
- **University of Piraeus:**
  - Department of Business Administration and Management.
  - Department of Industrial Management and Technology.
- **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki):**
  - School of Architecture, Master's program in Advanced Design: Innovation.
- **International Hellenic University:**
  - Department of Science & Technology, Master's program in Strategic Product Design.
- **University of Patras:**
  - Department of Management Science & Technology.
- **Hellenic Mediterranean University:**
  - Department of Electrical Engineering.
- **Hellenic American University:**
  - Department of Business Administration and Management.
- **Akto:**
  - Art and Design College.
- **American College of Greece:**
  - Pierce, Deree, and Alba.
- **Mediterranean College:**
  - School of Business Administration.

The above educational institutions are initially chosen because design thinking is either a subject of their curriculum or they have organised seminars or workshops with external guests in the past to present the method to students. This audience is also considered more mature, with pre-existing knowledge and interest in the subject, which increases the chances of adopting the eDea solution.

2.2 Cooperation for the formulation of activities

It is proposed that the universities participating in the consortium initially collaborate with companies and organisations that will show interest in the eDea solution for the formulation of activities, which are up-to-date, realistic, and have a real customer, the collaborating company or organisation, on which the students will work to learn and practice on design

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thinking during their studies. In this way, companies will leverage design thinking and the eDea solution to provide solutions to a real challenge without requiring much commitment, and therefore much risk. The eDea platform offers a range of ready-made activities. These activities are proposed to be utilised either as they are or to be customised better to meet the needs of the specific customer-company or organisation. The participating organisations of the consortium will work closely at this stage with the partner companies and organisations to help them select or adapt the activities. In this way, it will be ensured that the cooperation will be constructive and beneficial for both sides, the cooperating companies and organisations, and the students and educational institutions.

After the configuration of the activity is completed, the next phase is its integration into university courses, in the context of which students will have the opportunity to get to know design thinking and apply it in practice to provide solutions to operational challenges, in collaboration with the client and with the support of the lecturers. The duration of the collaboration is set at one academic semester. During this time, students will initially form teams and then work on the specific activity following all stages of design thinking, from understanding the problem, researching, and developing ideas to creating original solutions. The eDea platform will act as the primary tool for developing these solutions by offering a modern and dynamic platform to support the educational process and the collaboration of student groups.

To form an efficient and long-term cooperation with a substantial impact, it is proposed that both parties actively participate and involve the partner company or organisation during the semester. In this way, the company will have the opportunity to get in touch, get to know, and test the design thinking and the eDea solution in a safe and collaborative environment under the support and guidance of the consortium organisations without requiring a significant investment on their part beyond the allocation of time by specific executives of the company/organisation. The estimated time is about 5 - 6 man-days per executive who will participate in the process over six months. Through this process, the partner companies will be able to determine whether the design thinking and the eDea solution are applicable and efficient for their own needs and prepare for the future integration of the eDea solution into how they implement their projects.

Below are suggested ways and actions to enhance partner companies' and organisations' active involvement and participation. These ways do not need to be implemented at the same time, while through the implementation process, other ways of active and meaningful involvement can emerge to enhance the impact of the cooperation:

- **Intermediate presentations and feedback during the semester:** It is suggested that interim presentations be organised at regular intervals, specifically after the completion of each phase of design thinking. During these presentations, students will analyse the design thinking method, the tools they followed, and the results of each phase. Partner companies will have the opportunity to provide direct feedback and guidance to student groups, helping them better understand the needs of the business

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> and adapt their solutions. At the same time, through these presentations, the company's executives who will participate in them will get to know better the methodology of design thinking and will be indirectly trained in the value and benefits of this approach, becoming ambassadors of this new method and the eDea solution both in their company and in their wider professional sector.

- **Collaborative workshops for the co-configuration of the solution:** It is proposed that collaborative workshops be organised, where company executives will actively participate in stages of the process, such as the ideation phase. During these workshops, executives will have the opportunity to put the design thinking tools into practice and utilise the eDea solution in collaboration with the students by co-shaping different ideas and possible directions for the final solution. A practical and experiential approach will allow the partner company to understand the process better and see up close how the eDea platform can be used in its projects, thus increasing the chances of its adoption even after the completion of the collaboration.
- **Informative presentations of the eDea solution and the results:** It is proposed that informative presentations for the company's staff be organised in person at the company's premises or online. These presentations will aim to inform executives about the strategic cooperation that has been formed between the eDea organisations and the partner company, as well as the purpose and objectives of the cooperation. Design thinking, the eDea platform, and how they are used to solve operational challenges can be presented. In addition, a detailed presentation of the activity developed in collaboration with the company's executives and on which the students are working could be made. With this process, the company will not only reap the benefits of the solution developed by the students but also gain a meaningful understanding of design thinking. This could be a springboard for the future adoption of the eDea solution, thus strengthening the company's innovation culture.
- **Final presentations and evaluation:** At the end of the semester, it is proposed that final presentations be held where students will present their integrated solutions to the client company. The team that undertook the project will participate in this presentation. At the same time, other company executives could be invited to disseminate the knowledge and experience gained from utilising the eDea solution for creative and collaborative solving of operational challenges.

Finally, after consulting with the partner company and making the necessary adjustments to the challenge, it is proposed to include the activity in the eDea platform's list of activities. Thus, it will become available and open to all platform users, enabling students and teachers to use it and work on a realistic scenario.

2.3 Training in design thinking using the eDea solution

2.3.1 Vocational training of company executives

Training business executives in design thinking can be a strategic promotional tool for disseminating the eDea solution while offering added value to the participating companies. Emphasis is placed on targeted, short, and practical training programs for more participants. Participants may be from the same and/or from different companies and organisations. Promotional actions in the form of educational programs aim at:

- **Familiarization with design thinking:** Familiarization of executives with design thinking and its value for businesses.
- **Generating Interest:** Enhancing the awareness of the eDea solution, as a platform that comprehensively supports team collaboration, organisation, and project management following design thinking.
- **Attracting companies:** Generating interest in leveraging the eDea solution to develop innovative solutions and strengthen the culture of collaboration and innovation.

These training programs are proposed to be short-lived, practical, and conducted online so that professionals from various parts of Greece and sectors can participate. Specifically, it is proposed to organise the following educational workshops:

- **Introduction to design thinking using the eDea solution (2 hours):**
    - Introduction to the basic principles of design thinking.
    - Introducing the eDea solution.
    - Use the eDea solution to familiarise yourself and put into practice a specific tool. It is recommended to focus on one of the most fundamental and widely used tools, such as persona analysis, user journey, or ideation.
- **Training seminar on design thinking using the eDea solution (3 - 4 hours):**
    - Introduction to the basic principles of design thinking.
    - Introducing the eDea solution.
    - Select a specific activity from the eDea catalogue that will have a broader professional interest and implement quick exercises following the basic steps of the activity. Through this process, participants will understand how the combined use of tools allows the gradual formulation and organisation of a project's actions by effectively utilising the capabilities of the eDea solution and following design thinking.

Through the acquaintance and practical application of the eDea solution, users are attracted to the platform, expanding the network of professionals familiar with its capabilities. In addition, an ecosystem of companies actively interested in innovation is created. In this way, eDea emerges as a key tool for supporting design thinking in the business space, enhancing its strategic market penetration. Thus, the vocational training of executives is not just a

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fragmented training action but is part of a broader plan for promoting and developing partnerships, creating the right conditions for businesses to use eDea long-term.

2.3.2 Teacher training

The training of teachers in using the eDea solution is a key pillar for its dissemination and long-term integration into the educational process. The aim is to familiarise teachers with the platform's tools and capabilities so that they can use it effectively in teaching and mentoring students.

To achieve this, targeted training actions are proposed that will be tailored to the needs of academics. These actions can take various forms depending on their familiarity with design thinking.

It has been set out that initially an approach will be made to educational institutions familiar with design thinking and have shown interest in this field by including relevant courses in their curriculum or by organising open seminars to present the method to students. In the context of the promotion strategy, it is imperative to disseminate the results to other educational institutions to inform and educate teachers in design thinking. The following schools are proposed to be approached in business administration, computer science, economics, marketing and advertising, tourism, pedagogical schools, and other related directions. Based on the literature, these disciplines are highly relevant to design thinking. In addition, companies and educational institutions operating in these areas are adopting design thinking (Daymond & Knight, 2023; Martin, Goff & O'Keeffe, 2023).

When presenting the eDea solution, special emphasis should be placed on the fact that teachers can adopt the platform directly. It does not increase the workload of teachers. Instead, it facilitates teachers by offering organised tools and structured activities that guide the lecturer and students in education and hands-on practice in design thinking. Another key point to highlight is that the eDea platform allows students to work on real-world challenges, as many of the activities included in the eDea platform are inspired by real projects and put design thinking into practice by acquiring skills that are valuable for the job market.

Below are some examples of actions that can be organised to reach out to educational institutions that utilise design thinking and those unfamiliar with the method. The main goal is to familiarise teachers with the capabilities of the eDea platform and understand how it can be used to teach design thinking and improve students' educational experience. The approach will be practical, emphasising testing and customising the eDea platform to each teacher's needs.

- **Experiential Seminar - Teaching Design Thinking Using the eDea Solution (2 hours):** The proposed experiential seminar is designed for teachers already familiar with design thinking. It aims to highlight ways in which the eDea solution can be integrated into the educational process, adapted to the needs of each course. Since this target audience is familiar with design thinking, more emphasis is placed on how to

customise the eDea solution's activities to meet their courses' teaching objectives better. Suggested program:

- ○ **Introduction to Design Thinking (15'):** Brief introduction and presentation of use cases from various scientific disciplines, highlighting the added value of design thinking.
- ○ **Presentation of the eDea solution for teachers (30'):** Presentation of the eDea solution's functions and the advantages its use offers in the educational process.
- ○ **Use of the eDea solution (45'):** Create new or customise existing activities of the eDea platform to meet the needs of each teacher and their students.
- ○ **Discussion and resolution of questions (30').**
- ● **Experiential Seminar - Introduction to Design Thinking for Teachers, using the eDea solution (2.5 hours):** The proposed experiential seminar is designed for teachers unfamiliar with design thinking. The seminar will present design thinking and use the eDea platform to familiarise the participants. Since the target audience is unfamiliar with design thinking, more emphasis is given to the presentation of the method and the use of ready-made activity templates to support the teaching of design thinking to their students. Suggested program:
    - ○ **Introduction to Design Thinking (15'):** Detailed presentation of the method and how it is used in the educational process at the University of Thessaly and the University of the Aegean.
    - ○ **Presentation of a project where design thinking was utilised (20'):** In collaboration with the consortium's participating companies, some use cases that show how design thinking is used in various scientific disciplines to solve operational and societal challenges are proposed.
    - ○ **Questions (10').**
    - ○ **Presentation of the eDea solution for teachers (30'):** This presentation will describe the eDea solution's functions and the advantages its use offers in the educational process. At this point, emphasis will be placed on the ready-made activities included in the platform.
    - ○ **Use of the eDea solution (55'):** Experiential practice in design thinking through the eDea solution. It will allow participants to get to know and familiarise themselves with the platform's capabilities while delving into the application of design thinking. Initially, specific activities will be selected from the eDea platform. Then, participants will be divided into groups and asked to implement some of the key steps of the activity.
    - ○ **Discussion and resolution of questions (20').**

Workshops can be targeted at teachers of a specific scientific discipline. For example, a workshop entitled "Introduction to Design Thinking: Application in the Business Administration Sector Using the eDea Solution" can be organised, where the audience will consist exclusively of lecturers from this field. However, seminars and workshops can also be

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held with participating faculty from different disciplines, enhancing the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and adapting design thinking in various fields.

Successful teacher training is not only about making effective use of eDea. It also acts as a dissemination and promotion strategy. Faculty who adopt the platform become its ambassadors in academia, enhancing its penetration into more institutions. At the same time, the collaboration with universities already interested in design thinking creates prospects for long-term collaborations, expanding the user network and utilising the platform in different scientific fields.

2.4 Short- and medium-term promotion objectives

Below is a proposed plan for the implementation of strategic partnerships with companies and educators to get to know the eDea solution and use it in projects and to support the educational process:

Short-term promotion objectives:

The first phase of development is estimated to last one year, and the following actions and objectives are proposed:

- **Targeted networking with companies and collaboration with software companies, retailers, design companies, and public organisations for activity design:** Identify and communicate with 3 - 5 companies and organisations interested in innovation, offering them an easy and low-risk way to test the eDea solution. This will be achieved through the development of activities and collaboration with groups of students who will propose solutions to real business challenges.
- **Presentations:** Organize meetings, events, and internal presentations to companies to present the eDea solution.
- **Targeted networking with educational institutions in business administration, science, technology, and design:** Collaboration with 3-5 universities to utilise the eDea solution as a key tool to support the educational process.
- **Organisation of training seminars:** Implement 3 - 5 open training sessions for professionals and educators, highlighting how eDea can support innovation, business problem solving, and the educational process.
- **Dissemination of results:** Collaboration with existing professional networks and utilisation of social media to disseminate results enhances the awareness and penetration of the eDea solution in the Greek market.

Medium-term promotion objectives (1st - 2nd year):

The first phase of development is estimated to start in the second year. In this context, the following actions and objectives are proposed:

- **Expansion of networking to companies in other sectors, and cooperation for the formation of activities:** Expansion of the scope of collaborations with 3-5 more

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organisations from the sectors of telecommunications, energy, and sustainable development while maintaining the same low-risk approach through cooperation with student groups.

- **Expanding networking and exploitation of eDea solution in educational institutions:** Collaboration with 3 - 5 additional universities to leverage the eDea solution to support the educational process. Increase the user base to the target audience of students and teachers by 10 - 15% compared to the first development phase.
- **Extend the use of the eDea solution to existing partners:** Encourage greater participation of the working groups to extend the use of design thinking and the eDea solution to company projects.
- **Training program development:** Design and implement a structured training program for professionals who wish to integrate design thinking into their work processes by utilising the eDea solution as a key tool. The program should be flexible in terms of attendance time and offered online to attract participants without geographical limitations. It should also be accompanied by university certification, enhancing its recognition in the labor market.
- **Dissemination of results:** Collaboration with existing professional networks and using social media to disseminate results enhances the awareness and penetration of the eDea solution in the Greek market.

Recommended **key performance indicators** for evaluating the promotion strategy:

- Traffic to the platform (Google Analytics).
- Number of registered users.
- Number of participants in the training seminars.
- Number of universities using the eDea solution.
- Number of individual university courses leveraging the eDea solution.
- Number of companies using the eDea solution.
- Number of individual projects in which the eDea solution was used

In summary, the proposed partnership strategy has multiple benefits. The proposed promotion plan is sustainable and creative. It leverages organic strategic partnerships while maximising impact with minimal resources, thereby contributing to faster dissemination and adoption of the eDea solution by educational institutions and the market. This approach is cost-effective, as it does not require a significant investment and is based on the use of the existing resources of the participating organisations of the consortium. This strategy can be implemented with relative ease and low cost. At the same time, it strengthens the cooperation between educational institutions and companies, creating a two-way benefit relationship. Companies gain from students' participation in real-world business challenges, while students gain valuable hands-on experience, enhancing their skills and employability. In addition, using design thinking in the context of these partnerships promotes innovation and creativity by enhancing the position of all participants in the market and their business processes. In this way, the proposed promotion strategy of the eDea solution focuses on

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promoting the platform and creating an active user base that will contribute to its long-term sustainability.

3. Business model

The business model is essentially how a company, organisation, or consortium generates revenue to make a profit from its activities. It defines how it provides value to its customers through specific products and services that they can use to meet their specific needs, fund its operation, and secure revenue. The business model defines the methods by which a company can turn its solution, product, or service into a sustainable source of income. This includes formulating the revenue streams and strategy to deliver that product or service to the target audience.

Businesses with various revenue streams have a more extraordinary ability to ensure their long-term viability, as they can reduce the risk arising from reliance on a single type of revenue (McKinsey & Company, 2017). Diversifying revenue streams allows businesses to adapt quickly to market changes and create new growth opportunities. Correspondingly, they may face fewer difficulties in times of economic uncertainty, as they have multiple sources of revenue operating in parallel.

However, there are also limitations. Managing multiple revenue streams can increase operational complexity. This can lead to increased operational costs for managing, promoting, and supporting customers, ultimately affecting operational efficiency and resource allocation (Robinson, 2018). Similarly, a business can lose its focus if it fragments its resources into many different services, resulting in it being unable to deliver maximum value in any sector. This can negatively affect customer satisfaction and overall brand power (Tatum, 2019).

To sum up, having multiple revenue streams can enhance a business's viability through diversification of income sources. This does not automatically ensure success, as it risks resource depletion, customer confusion, and operational inefficiencies. The key to a balanced distribution of revenue streams is to find the right combination that maximises the growth of a venture, ensuring that the model aligns with the business's strengths and market demand, while avoiding the pitfalls of over-expansion. According to studies (Chesbrough, 2007), if you have a central area of expertise, it may be best to focus on it until you have the resources and the ability to differentiate yourself without compromising the quality of the products and services.

Considering the above, the proposed business model for the eDea solution is based on the principle of gradual development, which ensures sustainability, efficiency, and the optimal utilisation of available resources while providing the possibility of securing revenue from different streams. Specifically, instead of simultaneously importing all revenue streams, a staggered 3-step approach prioritises the platform's steady development through strategic partnerships. The main reason for this choice is to minimise risks, reduce user acquisition costs, and create a strong market position before expanding into new services.

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3.1 Subscription model

The **first development phase** focuses on working with universities through a licensing and subscription model. This is chosen as the initial strategy, as university institutions provide consistent revenue through annual contracts, have predictable procurement processes, and enable the creation of a large and active user base of students and professors, making them a reliable source of recurring revenue through licensing agreements. Universities can integrate eDea into their curriculum, allowing students to use the tool in real-world learning conditions. This differentiates the solution from competing platforms like Miro® or Coursera® that do not directly integrate into the teaching process. Integrating eDea first in universities creates a ready-made talent pool, increasing brand awareness and making it more attractive to companies later when corporate partnerships are launched. The fact that among the collaborating organisations in the consortium are 2 Greek universities that are pioneers in design thinking creates ideal conditions for adopting the eDea solution in universities and attracting the specific target audience.

Also, this revenue strategy builds on and leverages one of the eDea solution's competitive advantages: It provides activities and ready-made structured steps for professors to help guide students in learning and practicing design thinking. Thus, teachers do not have to invest time in creating all the content for their course from scratch, as this is already provided by the eDea platform.

The **pricing strategy** for this revenue stream adopts a tiered pricing model to better meet Greek universities' financing capacity while ensuring the sustainability of the eDea solution. According to the proposed pricing model for the Greek market, universities' annual fees depend on their size.

- **For small universities with less than 500 students:** The suggested price ranges from €5,000 to €7,000, providing an affordable price that encourages the platform's adoption.
- **For medium-sized universities with 500 to 2,000 students**: The price ranges from €8,000 to €12,000, ensuring a strong balance between accessibility and sustainability of the platform.
- **For large universities with over 2,000 students**: The recommended price ranges from €12,000 to €15,000, which remains lower than international standards but ensures the sustainability of eDea's revenues.

In this context, the **3-year revenue forecast** for this revenue stream is:

Year	Small universities	Medium-sized universities	Major universities	Total universities	Total revenue per year

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1st year	5.000€ (3 customers)	8.000€ (2 customers)	-	5	31.000€
2nd year	5.500€ (4 customers)	9.000€ (3 customers)	12.000€ (3 customers)	10	85.000€
3rd year	6.000€ (7 customers)	10.000€ (8 customers)	13.000€ (5 customers)	20	187.000€
Total revenue					303.000€

Table 1: Subscription model - Forecast revenue streams over 3 years.

3.2 Professional certification in design thinking

At the same time, a professional training program in design thinking is proposed in the **first phase of development**. This second revenue stream utilises the target audience of professionals and companies.

Specifically, it is proposed to create a **certification course in design thinking**, which will be initially provided in Greek and the future in English. The course will be constantly available, allowing professionals to attend it whenever they wish and at the pace that suits them. To achieve it, participants will have to complete specific tasks, while in this context, the activities provided by the platform. The papers will be evaluated by the consortium universities that will grant the certification to the successful candidates.

The certificate will bear the signature of the universities of the consortium, thus giving significant prestige and credibility to the certification. This makes the certificate highly competitive and recognisable in the labor market, as employers will see it as a reliable proof of competence and expertise in design thinking. The seal of these universities enhances the credibility of the certificate by making it more attractive to professionals who want to boost their resume and gain a competitive advantage in the market.

The **pricing strategy** is based on the pay-per-use model. Since the professional training and certification market is very competitive, we need to ensure that the prices of the eDea solution are aligned with the international market standards, offering a good combination of accessibility for users and business sustainability for eDea. For this reason, the certification cost is initially chosen to range from €250 to €400. According to customers, brand value positively influences consumers' willingness to pay a higher price (Dwivedi, 2018). Similarly, customers may be wary of buying an important service or product at a very low price, fearing that the quality will not be satisfactory. For this reason, because prestigious universities will provide the certification, the price cannot be too low. Nevertheless, it remains competitive

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compared to other programs offered by competitors such as Coursera® and IDEO® U. At the same time, it is affordable based on the average salary of a professional in Greece. Since the salary framework is different during the expansion phase in Europe, the price will be revised to adapt to the situation.

A major benefit of this revenue stream is that it creates a passive revenue stream since the content will be created once and will be available for continued use. Amortization of investment costs is done quickly, and the process offers an efficient way to generate revenue while enhancing the sustainability of the eDea solution and its presence in the vocational education market.

The **3-year revenue forecast** for this revenue stream is:

Year	Certification cost	Number of professionals who will buy it	Income
1st year	250€	100	25.000€
2nd year	300€	150	45.000€
3rd year	350€	250	87.500€
Total revenue			157.500€

Table 2: Professional Certification - Forecasting revenue streams over 3 years.

3.3 Corporate innovation support services

Following the successful consolidation of eDea, the **second phase of development** focuses on the entry of a new revenue stream related to providing services to enhance corporate innovation. At the same time, the revenue stream based on the subscription model for educational institutions remains available and growing. In this model, businesses pay to set up activities that students will work on to learn. Put design thinking into practice and propose solutions to business or societal challenges, using the eDea solution. This strategy creates a strong link between academia and the job market, allowing students to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios and providing businesses with access to innovative ideas and new talent. This connection of education with the labor market is a significant opportunity that no other competitive platform offers in such a strong and meaningful way, which is why it was considered important to form a source of income around this model.

At the same time, this phase allows eDea to acquire a second source of revenue based on cooperation with the private sector by exploiting the user base it has already built through

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the universities. This enhances the project's sustainability while significantly differentiating eDea from its competitors by offering something unique in the market. This service allows Companies to access innovation and resources at a much more competitive price.

The proposal for the **pricing strategy** utilises the pay-per-use model. Pricing will be scalable, depending on the size of the company and the scale of the services they wish to use.

- **For smaller companies with a staff of up to 50 people:** The proposed fee ranges from €5,000 - €6,000. This provides the opportunity to collaborate with the consortium organisations and an educational institution from the list of partners to formulate an activity on which the students will work and provide solutions.
- **For medium-sized companies with a staff of 50 to 200 people:** The price is suggested to range from €7,000 to €10,000. The service package includes the possibility of collaborating with the consortium organisations to shape the activity. The company will also be able to choose the educational institution with which it wants to collaborate to find innovative solutions.
- **For large companies with a staff of more than 200 people:** The price is suggested to range from €15,000 to €20,000. The package of services includes the possibility of collaborating with the consortium organisations to formulate the activity, the possibility of choosing the educational institution with which the company wishes to collaborate, and specialised consulting services for the adoption of design thinking and the eDea solution in more projects with greater involvement of the working groups.

The proposed plan enhances corporate innovation while ensuring the sustainability of companies' use of the eDea solution. Specifically, the package for large companies offers not only the opportunity to collaborate with educational institutions but also contributes to formulating a strategic plan for adopting design thinking and the eDea solution adapted to each company's needs and projects. In this way, companies integrate innovation based on their actual needs.

The strategy focuses on large clients to achieve a more significant revenue stream. Large companies usually have the means and need to invest in innovation methods such as design thinking, and they are more likely to have already used such methods. Therefore, this more mature audience is ready to invest in innovation to enhance their competitiveness.

In this context, the **3-year revenue forecast** for this revenue stream is:

Year	Small companies	Medium-sized companies	Large companies	Total companies per year	Total revenue per year
1st year	5.000€ (1 customer)	7.000€ (2 customers)	15.000€ (2 customers)	5	49.000€

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2nd year	5.500€ (3 customers)	8.000€ (3 customers)	17.000€ (4 customers)	10	108.500€
3rd year	6.000€ (4 customers)	9.000€ (6 customers)	19.000€ (10 customers)	20	268.000€
Total revenue					425.500€

Table 3: Corporate innovation support services - Revenue forecast over 3 years.

In the corporate client space, eDea's main competitors include platforms like Miro® and Mural® that offer subscription models for using collaboration and design thinking tools. However, for a new product to enter a saturated market, such as this one, it must offer a unique value proposition that significantly differentiates it from the competition. The eDea solution has this unique proposition, as it connects education to the labor market, thus creating an interface between students and businesses that no competitor provides. Therefore, a model that leverages the specific value provided by the eDea solution and builds a revenue stream based on it is considered more appropriate.

4. Overall feasibility assessment of eDea solution implementation

The eDea solution focuses on the training and implementation of design thinking. It is aimed at a broad audience, from educational institutions, students, and university professors, to companies and professionals from various market sectors with different levels of familiarity with design thinking, from beginners to advanced.

The eDea solution aligns with modern market trends by incorporating elements such as micro-learning, which allows users to access an extensive list of design thinking tool templates and be trained through real-world scenarios. At the same time, it supports distance education and work, responding to the needs of the modern professional environment. In addition, it manages to shape sustainable revenue streams while maintaining open and free access to the list of tools of design thinking, contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and innovation.

In particular, eDea is a critical resource for professionals and companies to develop design thinking skills and apply them to solve complex business and societal challenges. Companies and organisations can collaborate with educational institutions to find innovative solutions to challenges by participating in the platform. In this way, companies gain access to new talent they can hire to enhance innovation further.

For teachers and educational institutions, the platform offers a range of ready-made templates, activities, and tools that can be used to enrich their educational work and prepare students for the demands of the modern labor market. Depending on the industry, the ability to personalise their activities and thematic direction makes the eDea solution highly flexible and adaptable to the needs of different sectors and courses. In addition, the platform makes it easier for teachers to apply design thinking in their teaching by reducing the preparation time of the lessons and allowing the use of the ready-made tools and content provided by the eDea platform without having to configure the training material from scratch.

For students, the eDea solution contributes to developing technical skills in design thinking and soft social skills directly related to design thinking, such as collaboration, creative thinking, and empathy. In addition, it provides students with a unique opportunity to work on real projects in collaboration with companies by making the learning process interactive, modern, directly connected to the market, interesting, attractive, and practical.

The eDea solution presents significant value and prospects for penetration and growth in the Greek and European markets. Despite the industry's competitiveness, eDea differentiates itself by combining academic collaboration and the practical application of design thinking to real-world problems, making it a unique solution in this market.

The eDea solution provides a perspective for sustainable revenue based on recurring subscription models from universities and the provision of certifications for professionals who wish to invest in their skill development by leveraging a passive revenue model that helps to amortise initial costs quickly. However, it provides open and free access to standard tools to spread design thinking in the Greek market. Finally, it leverages its competitive advantage to

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create a substantial revenue stream, making it an innovative solution in this market. It contributes significantly to enhancing innovation in companies in Greece and abroad, focusing on the European market.

The pricing strategy described above is tailored to the Greek market, considering the financial capabilities of universities, businesses, and professionals in Greece, with the prospect of price adjustment when the eDea solution is expanded to the European market. The envisaged goals for disseminating and adopting the platform in the Greek market are realistic, with an initial focus on universities, gradual expansion to corporate customers, and simultaneous development of certification and vocational training programs.

In addition, the strategy based on the gradual introduction of the 3 main revenue streams of the eDea solution business model ensures the project's gradual and sustainable development by making the most of each previous phase to enhance the next one. At the same time, it limits business risks and allows the business model and market penetration plan to be adjusted based on feedback.

In summary, the feasibility of implementing the eDea solution is positive, as it offers significant opportunities for creating a competitive business model by focusing on forming revenue streams that leverage its competitive advantages in relation to the competition.

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