

Alexander Toporov

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Design leader and innovation catalyst
integrating systems thinking to drive
sustainable impact

Experience

Lead Designer, Yara International, Singapore (June 2021–May 2025)

- Led Rapid Design Team, an internal innovation practice applying design thinking and lean startup methods to unlock strategic challenges, from sustainability tracking platforms to AI-enabled tools, helping cross-functional teams move from stuck to shipping.
- Built and scaled global design system serving 50+ teams across 60 countries, reducing time-to-market by 40% and delivering \$6M in efficiency gains through systematic reuse and knowledge sharing.
- Managed and mentored distributed team of 15 designers and engineers across multiple time zones, establishing agile practices, design operations, and a culture of experimentation and continuous learning.
- Partnered with regional teams across 5 continents to co-create and localize digital agriculture products, ensuring accessibility and cultural relevance for millions of smallholder farmers in emerging markets.
- Established governance model enabling autonomous regional innovation while maintaining global consistency.
- Drove inclusive design standards to make products accessible to millions of farmers across diverse literacy levels and connectivity environments.

Senior Designer, Yara International, Singapore (May 2018–May 2021)

- Led 0→1 product development for climate-smart agriculture tools (FarmWeather, FarmForward), reaching 5M+ farmers across Asia and Africa through human-centered design and rapid prototyping.
- Conducted ethnographic field research in India and Kenya, translating farmer insights into product strategy and two patents in climate-smart AgTech (hyperlocal weather forecasting, nutrient deficiency detection).
- Designed Digital Leaf Color Chart mobile app, validated through field trials, resulting in 15% yield improvement for rice farmers in Southeast Asia.
- Built a foundational design system optimized for low-bandwidth, low-literacy contexts, demonstrating how design can drive inclusion and impact at scale.

Design Consultant, Ébauche, Remote, (March 2009–April 2018)

- Partnered with 20+ early-stage startups across fintech, real estate, IoT, and SaaS, providing 0→1 product strategy, UX design, and design system development to help founders move from idea to launch.
- Applied lean startup methodologies, running design sprints, prototyping experiments, and user testing to validate product-market fit before heavy investment.
- Collaborated with co-founders to establish design-to-development workflows, enabling small teams to ship high-quality products fast.

Core skills

Innovation facilitation · Design thinking · Lean startup methods · Design systems · Product strategy · Systems thinking · Sustainable innovation · Cross-functional collaboration

Education

- **Master's in Innovation and Research for Sustainability (MIRS)** – ISEG Lisbon School of Economics and Management, Lisbon (2025–2026)
- **Executive Program for Design Leaders (DLX)** – Future London Academy, London (2023–2024)
Innovation strategy, entrepreneurship, systems thinking, and design leadership for global challenges

Patents

- **Co-Inventor, Downscaling Weather Forecasts (US 11500126B2)**
Method for delivering hyperlocal weather predictions to resource-constrained farmers in emerging markets. Granted in US, EU, CN, CA, AU, BR, CO, PH
- **Co-Inventor, Detection of Nutrient Deficiency in Plants (EP 4030889A1)**
System for cost-effective, mobile-based nutrient deficiency detection using image calibration. Granted in EU, CN, CA, AU, BR, CO