



Future
Governance
Forum



Institute for
Innovation and
Public Purpose

MISSION CRITICAL 01

| Statecraft for the 21st century

By Mariana Mazzucato

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About the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

The Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP) at University College London (UCL) brings together cutting-edge academic theory with teaching and policy practice, to rethink the role of the state in tackling some of the biggest challenges facing society.

IIPP works with partners to develop a framework challenging traditional economic thinking, with the goal of creating, nurturing and evaluating public value in order to achieve growth that is more innovation-led, inclusive and sustainable. This requires rethinking the underlying economics that have informed the education of global public servants and the design of government policies.

IIPP's work influences global innovation and industrial policy, financial reform, institutional change and sustainable development. A key pillar of IIPP's research is its understanding of markets as outcomes of the interactions between different actors. In this context, public policy should not be seen as simply fixing market failures, but also as actively shaping and co-creating markets. Re-focusing and designing public organisations around mission-led, public purpose aims will help tackle the grand challenges facing the 21st century.

IIPP is uniquely structured to ensure that this groundbreaking academic research is harnessed to tackle real world policy challenges. IIPP does this through its high-quality teaching programme, along with its growing global network of partners, and the ambitious policy practice programme.

IIPP is a department within UCL, and part of The Bartlett, which consistently ranks in the top two faculties for architecture and the built environment in the world.

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About The Future Governance Forum

The Future Governance Forum (FGF) is a new, progressive, non-profit and non-partisan think tank. We are here to provide the intellectual and practical infrastructure vital to national renewal and the revival of progressive government in the UK.

Our goal is to shape a comprehensive new operating model for the way the country works, delivering effectively across national, devolved, regional and local government. We bring together people and institutions with the expertise to develop and implement new models of partnership, policy development and service delivery.

Our current programmes of work explore:

- **Mission Critical:** how can governments develop missions as more than a signal of intent, but a theory and a practice of government?
- **Impactful Devolution:** how can government meaningfully and permanently devolve power to regional and local level in one of the most centralised countries in the world?
- **Into Power:** how should an administration be set up, and its people empowered, to deliver on its promises?
- **Rebuilding the Nation:** how can we utilise innovative models of public and private investment to deliver future policy objectives?
- **Systems Change:** how can the UK's system of government be reformed to better facilitate not obstruct delivery?

By prioritising these questions we are thinking about new progressive models of governance for the long term.

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About Mission Critical

Mission Critical is one of FGF's flagship workstreams, exploring how mission-driven government can meet the challenges of 21st century public service. It stands alongside four further FGF workstreams, looking at: meaningfully pushing power out to the UK's nations, sub-regions and local authorities; preparing to govern effectively; reforming complex delivery systems to solve difficult public policy challenges; and securing the investment needed for progressive economic revival.

Mission Critical 01 is the first paper in this series. It will be followed by further outputs in FGF's Mission Critical and Impactful Devolution workstreams, which will explore in greater depth the nature of government's relationship with business, trade unions, civil society and local government, as well as citizens themselves, under a mission-driven model of governance.

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As well as *The Entrepreneurial State: debunking public vs. private sector myths* (2013), she is the author of *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy* (2018), *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism* (2021), and most recently *The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens our Businesses, Infantilizes our Governments and Warps our Economies* (2023). She advises policymakers around the world on innovation-led inclusive and sustainable growth. Her roles have included for example Chair of the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health for All, Co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, and a member of the South African President's Economic Advisory Council.

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Executive Summary:

Leading with purpose, governing in partnership

About this paper

This year provides a rare moment for the UK: a potential change of national administration could trigger a radical shift in the way government is structured and delivered. The challenges facing the country have rarely been greater and more complex, and the prevailing model of government as it is currently constructed is not up to the task of tackling them.

This report explores mission-driven government as an alternative theory and practice of statecraft to meet the scale of today's challenges, applied specifically to the context of a possible progressive UK government. In doing this, the paper connects the strategic intent of a missions approach with the practical challenges of UK governance.

This research draws on expert interviews and builds out from the seminal work of author **Professor Mariana Mazzucato** at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP). She has established clear criteria for missions (Mazzucato, 2019) and made the case for mission-oriented government (Mazzucato, 2021). IIPP has extensive experience of working with governments and organisations around the world to implement the mission-oriented approach, including Camden Council, who have been at the forefront of operationalising a mission-oriented approach to public service delivery and organisational change.

The overriding philosophy running through this report is **leading with purpose, governing in partnership**. In short, this means recognising the critical and legitimate role the UK government has in providing a strong direction for society and the economy, while at the same time having the humility to know that it cannot deliver missions alone. As a result, mission-driven government would invest in the strategies needed to work collaboratively in broad coalitions across and beyond the state.

The report is divided into six chapters. Each explores A) a core principle for mission-driven government, B) the reality of today's UK political context and C) the strategies an incoming progressive government should consider.

Six principles for mission-driven government in the UK

Principle 1: Missions should set bold, audacious goals to provide a clear purpose and direction

So a new government should make missions the first priority for the whole of government

- Good missions set a bold and audacious vision to inspire and rally support across society. Solutions for achieving them are not known from the outset, which focuses minds on outcomes (rather than inputs or outputs).
- They should set a direction, but do not determine how goals are reached, leaving room for experimentation and innovation, supported by a test-and-learn culture (explored further in principle 5).
- Missions should be the first priority for the whole of government, signalled from the highest levels of political leadership, and driven across, and crucially beyond Whitehall, resisting the urge to centralise.
- Not all government responsibilities should be absorbed under missions, or what we might call 'mission-washing'; shoehorning everything into missions will only weaken them. There will be critical government work that sits outside missions, but the collaborative, cross-silo way of working that missions inspire will benefit delivery across a range of areas.
- The centre of government needs reform to enable the delivery of missions (explored in detail in Appendix A). Signals, incentives and changing bureaucratic routines will help focus collective energy and workforce skills on the missions.

Principle 2: Missions should focus on the long term

So a new government should embed that mindset into how it appraises, funds and evaluates policy

- Long-term missions provide policy makers and civil servants with a greater sense of purpose, while embracing the networked, messy and complex nature of change.
- Accountability frameworks for missions should focus on learning and expanding knowledge of a system, rather than compliance with narrow objectives. It is important that missions have a clear 'north star' and that the public can track progress.
- Long-term thinking also needs to be baked into the mechanics of the funding cycles to provide stability for different actors and sectors whose investment, innovation and effort is required to develop solutions.
- 'Long term' does not mean abstract: missions focus on concrete problems that require system-wide transformation.
- Today, the reality is that appraisal, funding and performance management drive short-termism at the expense of stability, with ministerial and policy churn the norm.
- Harnessing and directing this system's view of policy making requires a new, dynamic approach to evaluation and accountability, baked into systems such as the Green Book, ringfenced spending and investment in high-quality learning infrastructure.

Principle 3: Missions should galvanise action across sectors and across society

So central government should step into the role of orchestrator

- Unlike prevailing methods of governance, missions provide an explicit function to mobilise multiple actors and provide an interface between the public sector, private sector and civil society.
- To fulfil this potential of missions, central government must adopt a new, more humble mode of statecraft best described as orchestration: not taking responsibility for achieving missions alone, but for creating the space in which a wider network of actors can collaborate and push towards shared goals.
- This requires setting a clear direction, but being flexible about how it is achieved, enabling and empowering actors across sectors and across society to contribute to bottom-up innovation, decentralising power and investing in a networked

approach to collaboration and shared learning with local, regional and devolved government, the private sector and civil society. For the centre, it requires setting the strategic direction, convening, facilitating, and unblocking on behalf of the ecosystem of actors. Outcomes should be held centrally, but with a constant dialogue between the centre and other actors around driving change forward.

- The centre should ultimately be accountable to the public and where progress isn't being made they will need to play a galvanising and capacity-building role to move things forward.
- This is a significant departure from traditional top-down, command-and-control management, instead activating all layers of government and society to work together in pursuit of missions.

Principle 4: Missions need active political management to build, grow and nurture a coalition of the willing

So a new government should develop a strong storytelling capability to connect to people's everyday lives

- Emergent examples of mission-driven strategy or regional policy, from Camden Council to the European Commission, have been delivered against the grain. Delivering a mission-driven programme for the whole of government will be counter-cultural too.
- Missions are about long-term change and commitment across multiple political and financial cycles. They therefore require a legitimacy which comes from wide 'public ownership', from citizens, civic society and the mesh of institutions that are needed to steward missions. In this way they become a collective endeavour and part of a national project of renewal.
- A coalition of the willing creates the permission and authority needed to act.
- Governments need to tell a compelling story that connects missions to people's everyday lived experience, and provide meaningful opportunities for citizen engagement in mission definition, implementation and evaluation to build legitimacy.

**Principle 5:
Missions should be based on a new approach to policy design**

So a new government needs to invest in dynamic capabilities around participation, design, digital and experimentation to make this possible

- Missions exist in unpredictable, messy contexts. This approach needs to emphasise experimentation, prototyping, rapid feedback loops and learning – continually questioning how well policy ideas will survive contact with reality.
- This approach should enable the government to make progress and take risks even where evidence is partial or outcomes are uncertain.
- Mission-driven governments may need to make bold bets. This requires courage, and more tolerance for disagreement and divergence, as long as commitment to the goals is shared.
- Transforming government into a mission-driven organisation will require change in Whitehall, building dynamic capabilities that enable government to adapt to changing circumstances. This is about freeing up some of the best performing civil servants to do the high-impact work that they want to do by focusing on creating a high-trust, high-performance work environment which embraces a plurality of experiences and disciplines.

**Principle 6:
Missions should direct public and private investment in line with mission goals**

So a new government should redesign public financial institutions, processes and tools

- Missions must be well funded, but the quality of finance matters as much as the quantity, especially the need for patient, public capital to enable long-term work, some of which may have low financial returns.
- Missions provide a framework for enabling public finance to crowd in private investment around shared challenges. Without public funding, they risk being little more than goals.
- The government should bake missions into the wiring of financial decision-making in Whitehall by embedding them in the structure and operations of the way that HM Treasury (HMT) runs, and processes such as the spending review and the budget.
- There is significant potential to leverage public procurement to support the missions. While the Social Value framework encouraged commissioners to consider economic, environmental and social value, there are limits to how this is being

applied in practice. There is an opportunity to develop an approach that takes a dynamic and market shaping view of public value.

- Public financial institutions, such as development banks and national wealth funds, also have a critical role to play, given their capacity to provide long term, patient finance for mission aligned investments.

Ultimately, delivering a mission-driven programme for the whole of government is a way to build a strategic, strong centre with a clear vision of the future, working with empowered local, regional and devolved governments, businesses and civil society to realise the promise of national renewal: leading with purpose, governing in partnership.

Summary recommendations

Each chapter of this report includes a set of specific recommendations and gives practical examples of how each of these priorities might be achieved. In summary, an incoming mission-driven UK government, seeking to lead with purpose and deliver in partnership, should:

Principle 1: Missions should set bold audacious goals to provide a clear purpose and direction

1. Set out the purpose of government clearly by, for example, using the existing provision of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to establish and embed a set of missions.
2. Send clear signals of personal commitment to the missions from both the prime minister and the chancellor.
3. Create the teams and governance structures to deliver on the missions, including: ministerial Mission Leads (rather than new ministerial posts); a Mission Leadership Group to oversee all missions; which is informed by a Mission Council comprised of representatives of all tiers of government, the private sector and civil society; with implementation driven by a cross-departmental Mission Team within the civil service.
4. Embed missions in the day-to-day work of civil servants across Whitehall in collaboration with local, regional and devolved government leaders.
5. Build a network of advocates for mission-driven government across the civil service.

**Principle 2:
Missions should focus
on the long term**

6. Strive for a period of political stability, for instance increasing the average tenure of ministerial appointments, and maintaining alignment to missions when ministers do move.
7. Reform approaches to government funding to enable a longer term view, through the rhythm of spending review and fiscal event cycles, and a clearly defined 'preventative' category of spending.
8. Establish evaluation and accountability frameworks that support a learning-by-doing approach and de-risk implementation at scale through a culture of iteration and experimentation.
9. Reform the Green Book to better reflect the need for transformative, non-marginal change.

**Principle 3:
Missions should
galvanise action beyond
central government**

10. Invest in the institutional infrastructure needed to support local areas in delivering missions by, for example, completing the process of covering all areas of England with at least a Level 2 devolution deal in the first half of the next parliament.
11. Create a new policy framework to enable different tiers of government and sectors to work together effectively to achieve the government's missions.
12. Enable strategies for new forms of local accountability and citizen engagement.
13. Mobilise across all layers of government, including devolved administrations, Mayors and Council leaders.
14. Collaborate proactively and intentionally with willing private sector partners and trade unions.

**Principle 4:
Missions should build,
nurture and grow a
'coalition of the willing'**

15. Political management should be at the heart of the mission's approach, with a member of a core group of the Cabinet tasked with ensuring political coherence.
16. Build broad support for a vision for the future, and make it tangible, including by testing that the framing resonates with citizens.
17. Adopt a proactive approach to risk management and plan for how best to leverage and respond to inevitable crises to further the missions.

**Principle 5:
Missions should
be based on a
new approach
to policy design**

18. Build teams and institutions with the capabilities to deliver on ambitious programmes at both the national, regional and sub-regional levels.
19. Shorten the feedback loop between policy design and delivery.

**Principle 6:
Missions should
direct public and
private investment in
line with mission goals**

20. Refresh the Treasury's mandate and operations, including embedding missions in the structure of HMT.
21. Change procurement rules and frameworks so the commissioning authorities are able to leverage their budgets in pursuit of the government's missions.
22. Embed a missions framework in public finance institutions, for example by aligning major public financial institutions with the government's missions, and supporting local areas to develop community wealth funds.

Glossary of key terms

Grand challenge	A difficult but important systemic and society-wide problem with no 'silver bullet' solution. The Sustainable Development Goals set out the 17 most urgent global grand challenges.
Government	Where local, regional, devolved or national is not specified, 'government' refers to national or central government.
Iterating	The process of designing, testing and redesigning a product or process multiple times with the aim of improving quality or functionality over time.
Market creation	The use of public policy to create new opportunities for investment and innovation, catalysing the creation or adoption of goods, services or technologies in ways that would not otherwise have occurred.
Market failure	A situation where markets do not deliver an efficient allocation of resources.
Measurable	Quantifiable with existing metrics or achievements that are evidently 'yes' or 'no'.
Mission	A concrete goal that, if achieved, will help to tackle a grand challenge, designed to set a clear direction for cross-sectoral and cross-actor investment and innovation.
Multiplier effect	The extent to which public investment generates additional rounds of spending and investment in the economy.
Patient finance	Finance that is provided over a longer time horizon than is typically offered by commercial lenders, enabling firms to focus on sustainable growth rather than short-term profits.
Prototyping	The process of making a model of an anticipated end product with a view to testing it, analysing results and making improvements.
Projects	Clearly articulated activities or programmes that address part of the broader mission; for example, an R&D programme focused on developing a new product, service or process that could contribute to mission success.
Spillover	An intangible, technological or other innovation that finds a use and value beyond that originally intended.

Introduction

An opportunity to change

This year provides a rare moment for the UK: a potential change of national administration could trigger a radical shift in the way government is structured and delivered. The challenges the country faces have rarely been greater and more complex, and the prevailing model of government as it is currently constructed is not up to the task of tackling them.

Moving from opposition to power means moving from theory to practice. If the Labour Party wins the next general election, as polls widely predict, it will have the opportunity to adopt a new model of mission-driven government to achieve its stated aims.

From crisis...

The next government will inherit a crisis in the economy, in public service outcomes and in public service mindsets.

Living standards are falling and destitution is rising. Progress on transitioning to a net zero economy is too slow (Climate Change Committee, 2023), and adaptation to the changing climate is minimal. Although the UK is not the only country facing these pressures, it is performing particularly poorly (TUC, 2024). The next government will need to deliver broad-based economic growth across communities, geographies and industries, do so quickly, and be able to tell a story about growth that resonates with and addresses feelings of insecurity amongst ordinary people.

But today's challenges are not thrown up by the economy alone. The next government will inherit a crisis in public service outcomes, with people across the UK struggling to access health care while on waiting lists, to access justice given long court backlogs, and to access essential services in a context where local authorities are effectively signalling bankruptcy by issuing section 114 notices, and where 100 schools were forced to close ahead of the 2023-24 school year (Institute for Government, 2023).

It will inherit a civil service that has been undermined, hollowed out and provided with inconsistent political leadership. There is a dominant mindset anchored in New Public Management (NPM) that sees the state as having a limited role, merely fixing rather than shaping markets. It will inherit a politically driven working culture where civil servants are too often not given the space or permissions to design services alongside the public. Services are designed without assumptions being tested in the real world, storing up risk and leading to continual churn as successive policies fail to survive contact with reality. And it will inherit an approach to delivering services for the internet era, which is so far under-realised, despite early promise (Greenway and Loosemore, 2024).

The current political narrative suggests that investment to deliver urgent social outcomes and address the grand challenges of our time is possible only after growth has been achieved, because of a perceived lack of fiscal headroom. This logic fails to recognise either the necessity of investing in the long-range drivers of growth, such as education, skills and health, and the role of government in shaping new market opportunities that create pathways for investment and innovation.

If the UK does experience a transition of power this year, **the next government will need a radically new approach to economic policy, to social policy and to statecraft itself.**

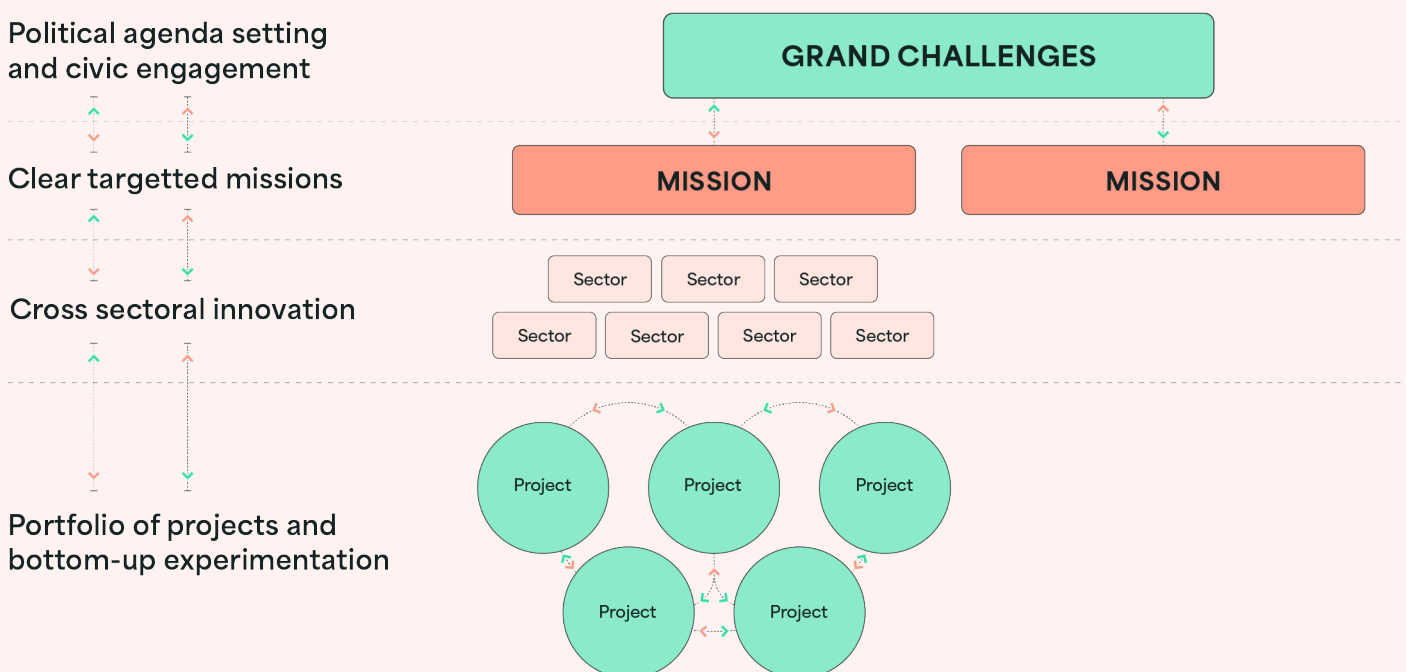
...to renewal

Missions can provide a framework for that alternative statecraft, **reconciling economic and social goals, and galvanising action across the economy and society.**

Missions are concrete goals that, if achieved, will help to tackle ‘**grand challenges**’ - important, systemic and society-wide problems that do not have obvious solutions. Missions set a clear direction for the different actors and sectors whose investment, innovation and effort is required to develop solutions. To achieve missions requires a range of **sectors** to develop solutions, often in collaboration with one another. Missions can be broken down into a portfolio of **projects** - clearly articulated activities that address part of the challenge. Missions should be framed in such a way that they are (Mazzucato and Dibb, 2019):

1. **Bold and inspirational with wide societal relevance**
2. **Targeted, measurable and time-bound**
3. **Ambitious but realistic**
4. **Cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral**
5. **Open to multiple, bottom-up solutions**

Figure 1 - Example IIPP mission map



A new progressive government needs to demonstrate competence, change and leadership from day one in a context of inherited instability, within which there will be a natural temptation to default to the traditional approaches in Whitehall. But in the face of deeper and more interconnected challenges affecting all parts of the country, denuded public services and a vastly different technological and fiscal context than progressive governments have seen before, **prevailing, traditional approaches to progressive government will be insufficient for a party wanting to achieve transformational national renewal at pace.**

The next government should, at the same time, be humble about its ability to know what will work on the ground, and to achieve grand ambitions alone. **It should seek to govern through partnerships** with other tiers of government, the wider public sector (such as the NHS), a renewed relationship with the private sector and trade unions founded in reciprocity, and meaningful civil society engagement. It should be comfortable giving greater autonomy and agency to those working closer to the frontline. It should see its role as one of directing and orchestrating economic and state transformation – keeping all parties accountable to the missions, creating new relationships and networks, finding and unlocking barriers, and systematically sharing learning.

Emergent examples of mission-driven industrial strategy or regional policy, from Camden Council to Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and from Brazil to the European Commission, have been delivered against the grain. **Delivering a mission-driven programme for the whole of government will be counter-cultural too.** The lack of progress in achieving the UK government’s mission-driven approach, as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, demonstrates that without a whole-of-government approach, and especially without Treasury buy-in, missions can fail to deliver.

Successful delivery of a mission-driven approach won’t be easy for a new government in the context of fiscal constraint and the inheritance of a hollowed out system. It will also depend on the strength of a parliamentary majority as a mandate for change. A government committed to establishing a mission-driven approach will have to confront some key questions, including:

About this report:

This report is based on interviews with former senior civil servants in local and central government, policy experts, digital leaders in the public sector and senior leaders in arm’s-length bodies. It brings together the IIPP’s pioneering experience supporting public organisations to deliver missions around the world with original research into the governing context of the UK in 2024.

- What does the centre of government need to do to mobilise a whole of government approach to mission implementation?
- How should monitoring and evaluation mechanisms be designed to support learning and promote innovation whilst ensuring accountability to citizens and to Parliament?
- What shifts are needed to enable effective collaboration between national and local government, the public and private sectors, capital and labour, government and civil society?
- What capabilities does the civil service need to design and implement ambitious policies capable of shaping markets that align with mission goals?

- How should missions be stewarded in a way which accounts for short-term political expediency whilst also building legitimacy and broad-based support needed for long-term change?
- How do policy tools and institutions need to adapt to ensure that public finance is aligned with mission goals?

Although it won't be easy, it is necessary: tackling both the UK's current, urgent challenges and the grand challenges of the future will need a new approach.

In short, delivering a mission-driven programme for the whole of government is a way to build a strategic centre with a clear vision of the future, working with empowered local, regional and devolved governments, businesses and civil society to realise the promise of national renewal.

Figure 2 - An example of a mission map for clean oceans (Mazzucato, 2018a)



Case Study: Camden's Story

The UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), and Camden Council - have been at the forefront of developing both the theory and practice of mission-driven government. In September 2020, IIPP and Camden Council established and co-chaired the Camden Renewal commission, working with a diverse group of experts and community leaders from across the borough - with the overarching aim to reduce inequality and create a fairer, healthy and sustainable local economy following Covid-19. Inspired by community stories and informed by evidence, both of which reflected local people's lived experience of the pandemic, the Commission developed four renewal missions for Camden:

Camden's Missions - and some the Council's work to deliver them - are included below:

- 1. By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food** - Camden have expanded breakfast clubs and holiday hunger schemes across the Borough and are reimagining school catering contracts as part of their universal primary free school meals. They have created a coalition of 40 community organisations working on food poverty, food growing and food waste. They will be launching their first food mission challenge to continue innovation and change in this space;
- 2. By 2030, Camden's estates and streets are creative and sustainable** - Camden have invested in Community Champions (local people employed to support social action), and are looking at ways to use shared community spaces on their Estates - whether by bringing health services into communities, opening up vacant spaces for artist studios or working with residents on community action projects such as local food growing and bike fixing projects. They are developing funding and delivery programmes for retrofit across their estates as part of responding to their community call for climate action;
- 3. By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as its community** - Camden are working with Black on Board to diversify leadership, governor and trustee roles in the Borough with a training and support programme, they are working with schools across Camden to support young leaders in developing their skills and talent and understand different career paths through the Young Leader's Programme. Working with Black Pound Day and Black Owned London, they developed a Future Camden Fund which distributed £350,000 in 2023 to under-represented entrepreneurs;
- 4. By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure** - Camden have worked with Google to launch an AI Campus and they launched the new Euston Construction Skills Centre to support over 150 apprenticeships in new green skills every year. Through their STEAM Commission they have delivered over 250 high-quality work experience placements around the Borough and are aiming for a total of 350 in 2024, and they have launched a Camden young talent guarantee which will provide all Camden young people with support into training, apprenticeship or a job and provide bespoke support for 500 young people.

Camden have been working with Council services, colleagues, anchor institutions, businesses, voluntary sector organisations and citizens to achieve their Missions, and are focusing on:

- Investing resource in delivering “test and learn” projects with communities so that they can understand what gets them closer to achieving their Missions - such as the **We Make Camden kit**.
- Developing the tools and methods needed to measure impact on the missions - such as the **Good Life Camden framework**.
- Developing the wider levers and approaches needed to make a systemic impact on the issues connected to their Missions - such as the **Procurement Incubator** and the **Community Wealth Fund**.

The **We Make Camden kit** has funded 336 community projects since 2022 - focusing on funding grassroots and hyper-local activities in the Borough that support Camden’s Missions - including the **Friday Night Supper Club** for disabled young people aged 16 to 35 and their carers, and **Creators House in Kentish Town** which is a multipurpose studio for young creatives mentoring the next generation of creators.

Camden’s Missions are complex - and rooted in people’s experience of living, learning and working in Camden. In order to have a real understanding of how Camden are delivering against the Missions they have developed the **Good Life Camden Framework** in order to develop the capacities and capabilities to measure what is important to people about their lives in Camden. They developed the framework through 460 community conversations with citizens, and co-designed the framework through a series of workshops with 20 residents. Already, British Land are using the framework to measure their social impact and align their priorities with local community ambitions, and the Council is using the framework to shape a new adults early help service to ensure people can access the services they need when they need them to prevent crisis.

The **Community Wealth Fund**, which was given approval in 2023, will focus on enabling local, diverse small businesses who align with Camden’s missions and struggle to access the mainstream financial system with funding in the form of loans and equity investment. It will embed participation into the governance of the fund, giving local residents more agency over the flow of finance in the borough.

In 2022/23 Camden and IIPP designed and ran a prototype **procurement ‘Mission Incubator’** to explore how the procurement of one of its core services - Long Term Care and Reablement within Adult Social Care - could better support its Estates mission. This work emphasised the importance of putting an economics grounded in public value at the heart of procurement practice, and of local governments taking relational approaches with partners with shared values.

Mission-Oriented Innovation and Industrial Strategy (MOIIS) and previous UK missions

The UK has attempted to take a challenge-oriented approach to innovation and growth before. The 2017 UK Industrial Strategy set four ‘grand challenges’ as “an invitation to business, academia and civil society to work together to innovate and develop new technologies and industries in areas of strategic importance to our country” (BEIS, 2017). These were:

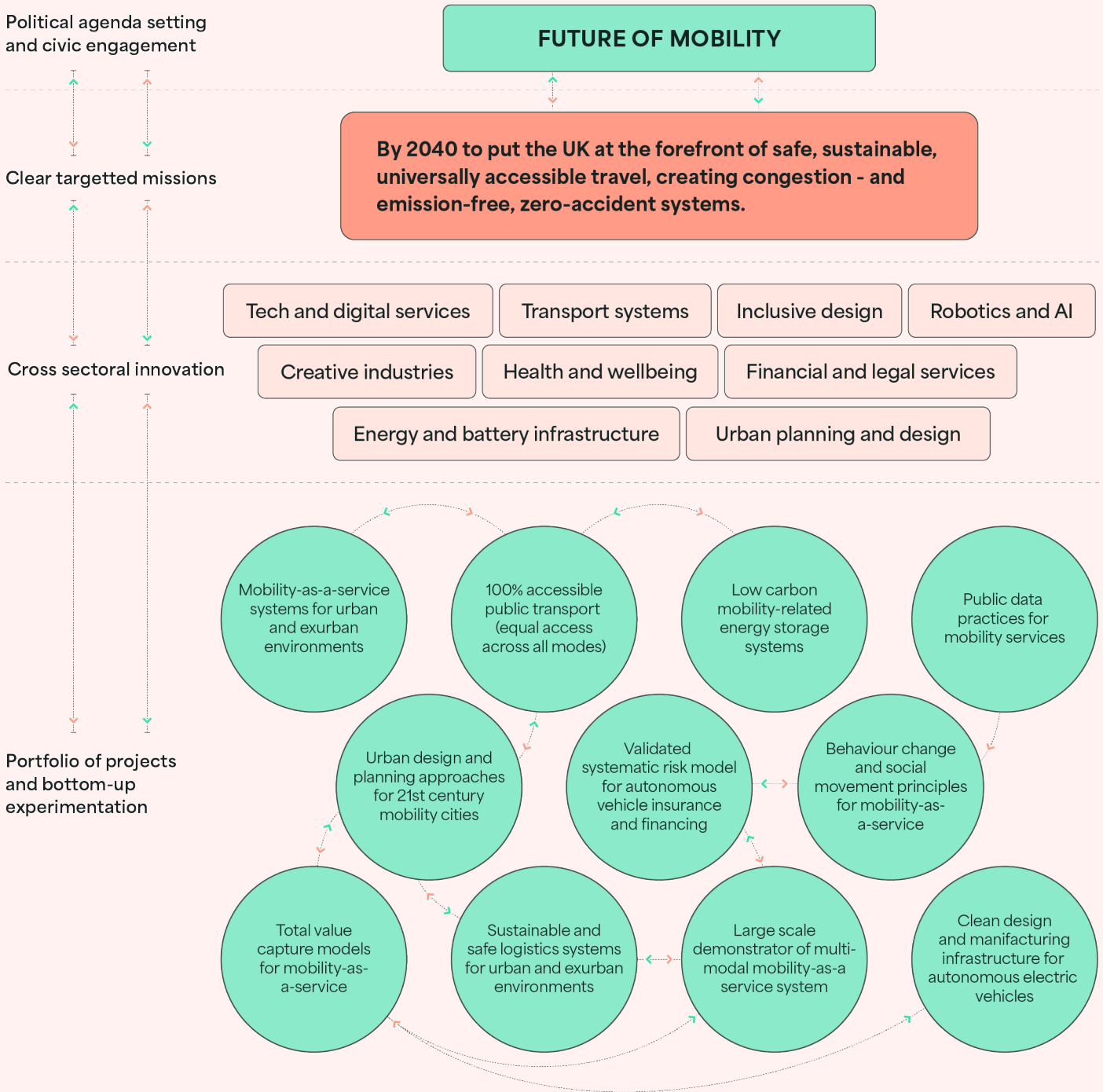
- **Putting the UK at the forefront of the artificial intelligence and data revolution**
- **Maximising the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth**
- **Being a world leader in shaping the future of mobility**
- **Harnessing the power of innovation to help meet the needs of an ageing society**

The strategy warned that the government “must not let a fear of failure make us unimaginative or risk averse” and called for the government to use the full range of its powers, including regulation, funding, sector deals and its convening power. It promised to bring “leading figures from industry and academia to act as expert advisors.”

In 2018 Professor Mazzucato and Lord David Willetts co-chaired the UCL Mission-Oriented Innovation and Industrial Strategy (MOIIS) Commission to advise the government on how to implement this mission-oriented industrial strategy. The Commission released its final report in 2019, articulating eight policy recommendations and eight key implementation steps (UCL Commission for Mission-Oriented Innovation and Industrial Strategy (MOIIS, 2019). Following the change in prime minister, the 2017 Industrial Strategy was superseded by the 2021 Plan for Growth (HM Treasury, 2021).

See Figure 3 for the future of mobility mission map developed as part of the UCL Commission for Mission-Oriented Innovation and Industrial Strategy, 2019

Figure 3 - Future of mobility mission map (UCL Commission for Mission-Oriented Innovation and Industrial Strategy, 2019)



The case for missions

Missions can shape and direct markets

Economic growth has a direction as well as a rate; polluting the environment and then paying for it to be cleaned up can contribute to economic growth, but it's not the type of growth a 21st century government should want. The stagnation of the UK's economy stems partly from an increase in unproductive, extractive sectors. They also stem from a bias towards financialisation, which does not lead to the jobs, productivity or wider wellbeing that growth is supposed to create. Rather than concentrating on just the GDP number, the government needs to aim for a new type of growth - sustainable, inclusive and resilient. This approach creates and sustains a broad democratic legitimacy for growth, which is currently fragile at best.

Social goals (climate, health, equality) and economic goals (growth, jobs, productivity) are not a zero-sum game. Rather, by setting bold missions, governments can open up new market opportunities, catalysing cross-sectoral innovation oriented around solving problems that matter to people and the planet, and creating pathways for long-term investment. **In other words, mission-driven governments do not wait for growth before investing in social and environmental priorities; they turn these priorities into the drivers of growth.** Addressing social goals through missions can lead to economic growth in two ways:

1. Directly, by creating market opportunities through providing a long-term, consistent platform and lead market for new technologies, which can help incubate and scale new products, businesses and industries.
2. Indirectly, by addressing the foundational constraints on economic activity such as ill-health, structural inequality, low skills, poor transport connectivity and others.

For example, a health mission focused on ensuring timely access to diagnostics, or preventing future pandemics, could spark R&D in areas ranging from vaccines to diagnostics and drug treatments, open up clear market opportunities for new health products, and enable the manufacturing of key products to scale up. At the same time, if the mission goals are achieved, a healthier population enables more people to work, supporting growth.

The success of the COVID vaccines is a case in point. The government set clear, time-bound targets to offer a vaccine to all adults (Department of Health and Social Care, 2021) and its innovative, portfolio-based procurement approach ensured the UK had access to a range of effective vaccines (Department of Health and Social Care, 2023). The vaccination programme enabled economic activity to return to near-normal - the indirect, foundational impact. Vaccines also contributed directly to growth - the global COVID-19 vaccine market was worth \$99 billion in 2021 (World Health Organisation, 2023). Three of the vaccines approved for use in the UK were also manufactured in the country, providing high-quality jobs (Smeaton and Harriss, 2021). However, there is a caveat here: across the developed world, the missions focused on national vaccination rates. The result is significant vaccine inequity - high and upper middle income countries have now provided four times as many vaccines per capita than low income countries (Our World in Data, 2024).

Missions can support collective action across public services

This approach can generate productivity gains, jobs and spillovers, and can have a multiplier effect, with each pound invested triggering a much larger gain in GDP (Deleidi et al, 2019). And by investing in the drivers of productivity and growth, governments can expand the economy's productive capacity and decrease the debt-to-GDP ratio (Mazzucato and Ryan-Collins, 2024). Fiscal prudence is not about cutting spending or focusing solely on debt reduction. It must also be about fostering specific forms of growth.

Finally, by reframing government's role away from just 'fixing markets,' a mission-oriented approach recognises that public sector institutions can create value as well as redistribute it. The BBC, for example, has created value and shaped markets through its content (being the first major broadcaster to show women's football), its standard-setting powers, its talent development and its technological innovation (Mazzucato et al, 2020).

Missions promote and direct growth - not for its own sake, but to meet social goals. When they are designed effectively and underpinned by broad-based partnerships, growth is an outcome of all well structured, ambitious missions because they shape new market opportunities, catalysing innovation and investment aligned with the mission's goals.

Public services lack the resource, capacity, capability, organisation and strategic direction to play their full part in addressing the UK's challenges. Successive governments have committed to New Public Management (NPM) as the dominant organising framework for public services in the UK. NPM was introduced to bring competition and choice into public service delivery, so that the profit motive of the private sector could stimulate innovation and thereby improve the quality and citizen experience of public services. But commitment to NPM has failed to achieve the innovation in public services that was promised due to its highly centralising, command-and-control style, a fixation with targets, orientation towards maximising private rather than public value, and undermining of public sector capacity to design and deliver services. Private sector firms have extracted profit while the quality of public services continues to decline.

The old model of siloed delivery and accountability, even if effective in pockets at the turn of the century, is not sufficient for the scale of contemporary challenges; for achieving inclusive economic growth, boosting productivity, reducing health inequalities, adapting to technological advances and addressing the climate emergency. A new way of stimulating innovation is necessary in the pursuit of radical and ambitious strategic goals. **A mission-driven approach can unlock a new national collective endeavour with central, local and regional government working alongside the private sector and civil society.**

Missions act as a call to action with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. This sense of purpose can encourage long-term investment and a focus on outcomes and impact. When a government creates this authorising environment and creates the means for wider society to play a part, it unleashes pent-up capacity and creativity across society.

Over the last five years, a range of governments have adopted a missions framework, from Greater Manchester Combined Authority to the European Commission. The challenge for all of these has been to translate strategic intent into service transformation and thereby achieve a step-change in outcomes for communities.

Missions in practice:

Lead with purpose, govern in partnership

Government has a critical and legitimate role in providing a strong direction for the economy and society. At the same time, it cannot deliver missions alone.

Success will require leading with purpose and governing in partnership.

This means recognising the critical and legitimate role the UK government has in providing a strong direction for society and the economy, with the humility and awareness that it cannot deliver missions alone.

This report is structured around six principles for a new UK government to prioritise if it wishes to shift from the current state of play to a mission-driven approach. These are not intended to be mutually exclusive or discrete; rather, they are interdependent and reinforcing components of a new system. This is not a comprehensive account of everything that needs to be done, but provides a strong starting point for building and embedding a mission-driven government approach in the UK.

Figure 4 - Priority areas for building a mission-driven government

Missions should...

Today, the reality is that...

So a new government should...

1. Set bold, audacious goals that provide a clear purpose and direction

→

There is little sense of the overall purpose of government

→

Make missions the first priority for the whole of government

2. Focus on the long term

→

Appraisal, funding and performance management drive short-termism at the expense of stability

→

Embed a long term view across the policy lifecycle

3. Galvanise action across multiple actors and sectors

→

Decisions are centralised and government struggles to partner effectively with others

→

Act as an orchestrator to collaborate with and empower others

4. Build, nurture and grow a 'coalition of the willing'

→

Mediating between interest groups means change is slow and inertia sets in

→

Tell a compelling story that connects people's everyday lives to the long term vision

5. Be based on a new approach to policy design

→

Policies are designed on paper without making contact with reality

→

Build capabilities around participation, design, digital and experimentation

6. Direct public and private investment in line with mission goals

→

Funding allocations drive government strategy, rather than strategy driving funding

→

Redesign public finance institution, processes and tools

Principle 1. Missions should...

Set bold, audacious goals to provide a clear purpose and direction

Missions are a vehicle for achieving societal transformation, not tweaks to the system, and so should be ambitious by design. Good missions begin by setting a bold and audacious vision that can inspire the public and rally support across society (Mazzucato and Dibb, 2019). For example, Greater Manchester has set a target to be a carbon neutral city-region by 2038 (Greater Manchester, 2021). This can help draw in and mobilise new resources, whereas aiming for incremental improvement alone might struggle to inspire the same level of action and commitment. A prime minister has a huge impact in the first few days of government, so should set an early, radical signal of intent when support is at its highest.

Good missions focus minds on outcomes, rather than on inputs or outputs, and clarify the need for system change and radical solutions. If the government can confidently draw up an action plan on day one to meet a mission over ten years, it is a sign that the mission is not ambitious enough. **Missions should set a direction, but not determine how goals are reached** - they should leave room for experimentation and innovation. This is crucial to achieving 'spillovers' - the unplanned benefits that come from new products and technologies that are developed in the course of trying to achieve a mission.

Missions can create incentives to innovate by articulating problems to be solved, creating an authorising environment to **test, learn, de-risk and scale interventions on the basis of evidence**. In going to the moon in the 1960s, the United States government set a whole suite of 'homework problems' that the private sector could respond to. NASA was (at least partly) responsible for the development of technologies that give us camera phones, home insulation, foil blankets, CAT scans, LEDs, freeze-dried food and baby formula, among others (NASA, 2016).

Invention and experimentation are not predictable, and mission-driven governments should be willing to take on risk and to support the civil service to act similarly (Maddox, 2020). The mandate given to the Advanced Research and Innovation Agency (ARIA) explicitly supports risk taking in the public sector; this approach could inform more systemic changes within the core structure of government.

Case study: health missions

The next government will need to tackle the critical and immediate challenge of reducing NHS waiting times and ensuring patients with health conditions are diagnosed earlier. But an overarching mission to, for instance, eliminate the gap in healthy life expectancy between babies born in the wealthiest part of the country and babies born in the poorest part of the country by 2050 creates the room to address the immediate crisis (such as waiting lists and speed of diagnosis) while inspiring innovations towards the longer term horizon of tackling the social determinants of health. Furthermore, it inspires action across sectors, beyond the levers at the immediate reach of Whitehall and the NHS, so that different levels of government, business from different sectors, healthcare professionals, teachers and parents feel they are a part of a national effort. It might be a more daunting prospect, but it is precisely in responding to this level of challenge that policies and innovations capable of catalysing a step-change in outcomes could emerge.

Today, there is little sense of the overall purpose of government

Governments from 2016 to the present day have failed to articulate a vision for the future or a reasoning for why they should be in government. David Cameron's party failed to settle on whether its overriding purpose was the Big Society or deficit reduction, which Cameron himself has since conceded hampered their ability to deliver in government (Tinline, 2024). While Boris Johnson government's commitment to levelling up provided this in terms of rhetoric, this wasn't met with a whole-government focus that would have led to real transformation, it barely survived contact with the COVID-19 pandemic and it has not been sustained by subsequent prime ministers.

The cabinet is too big and its responsibilities are too broad to function effectively as a strategic decision-making forum (Urban et al, 2024). Prime ministers have typically convened smaller groups of ministers in cabinet sub-committees to establish and champion the government's strategy, but they have often been ineffective or hampered delivery, because they have lacked transparency, clarity of purpose and reach beyond Whitehall.

Furthermore, inter-departmental coordination can be ineffective. This is a longstanding problem - Whitehall is "fundamentally a federal system" (Page et al, 2014) and "repeated efforts to break down departmental barriers...have failed" (Thomas, 2020). Delivering a cross-government agenda has been challenging because ministers "are typically most closely focused on demonstrating results in their own area" and some treat their departments as "fiefdoms" (Sasse and Thomas, 2022). Consequently, departments, as one interviewee said "haven't been used to thinking in that horizontal way about a mission broader than the corners of their department." Departments tend to see a narrow range of uses for the policy tools at their

disposal, rather than broad applications that may help to meet objectives that span beyond their boundaries. In particular, HMT is reluctant to use the wide set of non-spending levers it has to drive the policy agendas of other departments. An exception to this is the sugar tax: its introduction in 2018 led to a 35% reduction in the sugar content of soft drinks (Bowes, 2023), but as the first tax policy introduced specifically to change behaviour (Sassi, 2022), it cut against HMT's long held commitment to tax neutrality (HM Treasury, 2011).

A new government should make missions the first priority for the whole of government

Missions should be a priority for the whole of government, driven across and beyond Whitehall, resisting the urge to centralise. This is not to say missions should become the entirety of government activity; there will always be (and should be) responsibilities and activities held by the government which need not be absorbed under missions, or what we might call 'mission-washing'. Indeed, trying to shoehorn everything into missions will only weaken them. There will be critical government business that sits outside missions, but the collaborative ways of working that missions inspire will benefit delivery across a range of areas.

There is a critical role to play for the centre: strong political leadership through No.10, the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury is essential (Pickles and Sweetland, 2023). As one interviewee said, the "critical factor [for missions] will be the prime minister and chancellor being committed to the missions and being around long enough to engender some stability."

Reforming the centre of government to embed missions

A cross-cutting missions unit with strong backing from the prime minister and chancellor is needed, but its role should be to enable others to overcome barriers to progress. It must combine 'forcing' capacity (focus and a line of sight to No.10 and No.11) with a 'holding' capacity, which creates and cultivates the conditions for missions working. Mission teams should then bring in civil servants across departments as well as outsiders, paying special attention to how to synthesise new voices in government (as opposed to integrating into the existing culture). A suggested mission governance structure is shown in Appendix A. Departments should be expected to incorporate missions into their business planning processes.

A whole of government approach

Missions should sit above central government departments to foster alignment around a set of shared goals, rather than allowing these goals to be reinvented within each department in a siloed way (Mazzucato, 2023a). A mission aimed at achieving a health outcome, for example, would need action not just from the Department of Health, but from departments responsible for housing, green space, transport, industry, innovation and climate. No. 10 and HMT need to give ministers an incentive to cooperate by providing "clear and practical signals towards collaboration", because (as one interviewee said) to make "anything cross-cutting happen you need the prime minister to drive it," and "there needs to be an effective central team to channel the prime minister's political authority and to hold the system to account" (Thomas, 2020).

On the administrative side, there is a clear belief expressed by our interviewees that “Whitehall can do cross departmental – they just need to know that it’s serious and it needs a secretariat.” Mission-driven leadership will have to expend political capital to make cross-departmental missions ‘stick.’

There are a range of approaches to cross-departmental work, but in general governments overemphasise the importance of structures (agencies, departments, roles) and underestimate the importance of processes, relationships and cultures (Mulgan, 2024). Secretaries of state should take responsibility for developing a collaborative culture in their departments – harnessing the camaraderie of working in opposition – that puts the whole of government vision first and breaks the incentive model in which civil servants will refer to ‘my secretary of state.’

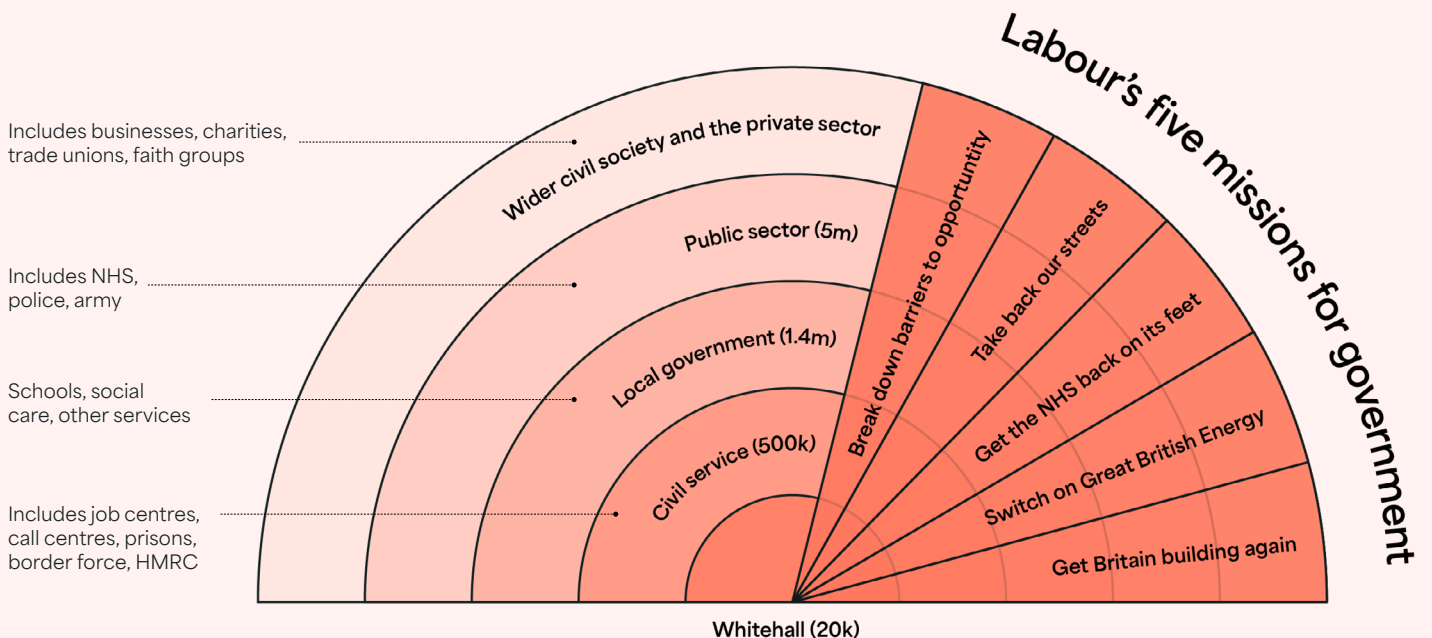
For a government’s missions to be transformative, they need to engage as many of the civil servants, local government officers and public sector workers beyond those working in Whitehall policy roles as possible. There are only ~20 thousand Whitehall civil servants, but 500 thousand in operational roles such as call centres, prisons, Border Force, HMRC and job centres, and a further ~5 million public sector employees, including in the NHS, police and army. A mission will be effective if it is seen as relevant to a significant share of the whole public sector.

A ‘beyond government’ approach to achieving missions in partnership with wider civil society and the private sector is explored in part 3.

A ‘whatever it takes’ mindset

Encourage all departments to use the full range of levers at their disposal. For example, HM Treasury should consider how it can use macroeconomic policy, financial regulation and tax policy in pursuit of the missions.

Figure 5 - A whole of government approach to missions



Recommendations

1. Set out the purpose of government clearly by, for example:

- a. Using the existing provision of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to establish and embed a set of missions.
- b. Introducing a 'programme for government' (Institute for Government, 2024), to set out the priorities of the government as a whole and the activity that the government will undertake.
- c. Publishing the core principles of mission-driven government and a ten-year programme of renewal of governing capabilities.

2. Send clear signals of personal commitment to the missions from both the prime minister and the chancellor by, for example:

- a. Sending mandate letters to the cabinet and ministers to set out a statement of the government's priorities and each individual's role in the missions.
- b. Allocating regular time in the prime minister's diary to focus on mission delivery, assessing what is working, what isn't and where the prime minister's efforts are needed to unblock barriers. This might include hearing from permanent secretaries, businesses and civil society organisations.
- c. Communicating and engaging with civil servants to emphasise commitment to the missions through personal visibility (in person and online), connection and varied storytelling methods that encourage progress in reforming ways of working.
- d. Establishing the cultures and norms for how ministers will work together in government before the election, harnessing the camaraderie of working in opposition.

3. Create the teams and governance structures to deliver on the missions by, for example:

- a. Giving existing secretaries of state responsibility for particular missions as mission leads, rather than creating new ministerial posts focused only on a mission.
- b. Establishing a ministerial Mission Leadership Group as a small strategic leadership body overseeing all missions, informed by a Mission Council comprising representatives of other tiers of government, the private sector and civil society, with implementation driven by a cross-departmental Mission Team within the civil service, with strong ministerial sponsorship and charismatic leadership.

Full details of the proposed governance structure are in Appendix A.

4. Embed missions in the day-to-day work of civil servants across Whitehall in collaboration with local, regional and devolved government leaders by, for example:

- a. Developing Mission Delivery Plans, as an evolution of existing Outcome Delivery Plans, that require all departments to outline clear links between spending requirements and delivering mission outcomes over a ten-year horizon via theories of change for each mission, as well as any business-as-usual activity required within departmental expenditure limits.
- b. Embed collaboration as a core principle in the running of government.

5. Build a network of advocates for mission-driven government across the civil service by, for example:

- a. Communicating the scale of the government's ambition and need for talent in a way that positions the civil service as the most exciting and dynamic place to work, to attract people with the skills needed for mission implementation.
- b. Establishing a high-status training and leadership programme for mission-driven government. This programme could either complement or replace programmes hosted within the Leadership College for Government, with a distinctive pathway for development and progression. This should include local and regional government staff, moving towards a shared vision across different tiers of government.
- c. Establishing mission-based and cross-departmental Communities of Practice that offer network-building opportunities, access to senior civil servants, and opportunities to learn from mission practitioners.

Principle 2. Missions should...

Focus on the long term

By providing a clear, stable, long-term direction, missions set by central government create an environment in which policy makers at all levels of government can see their role in achieving a 'north star', where the civil service is a more attractive place to work and where the private sector can invest with confidence. Setting long-term goals is important, but intent alone is not enough. Long-term thinking also needs to be baked into the mechanics of the policy cycle: appraisal, funding, evaluation and accountability.

Policy appraisal should start from the position that neither the economy nor society has an optimal, steady state and is always changing. Policy makers should therefore "prepare for change that is likely, and bring about change that is desirable" (Sharpe, 2020). Missions fundamentally involve uncertainty, so **appraisal will need to be based on a qualitative assessment of important factors**, instead of giving false precision through assumption-driven quantification (ibid).

Funding decisions should recognise that it is possible to 'invest to save' – that by spending more money in the short term it is possible to reduce costs in the long term. An invest-to-save programme would "aim for a wholesale reduction of demand for (some) public services by shifting the system away from the current treatment and emergency response model towards preventing personal or health crises emerging in the first place" (Lent, 2022).

Accountability for mission goals should emphasise the networked, messy and complex nature of change. That means investing in collaboration and systems-working. Creating a stronger evidence base requires partnering with external stakeholders who have unique access to data and insight across the policy lifecycle, and creating the right conditions and incentives for data sharing.

And finally, while measurement should focus on outcomes, it can be difficult to measure progress along the journey. Accountability between funders and agents should therefore move from one focused on compliance to learning, seeking to expand knowledge of the system (Gronchi, 2023). **The key question for a mission-driven government to tackle is how to establish meaningful accountability frameworks, when the first few years of a mission are likely to be characterised by lots of experimentation. Work will need to go into demonstrating progress to the public, capturing improved outcomes, sharing stories that bring the missions to life and being transparent about gaps to galvanise action.**

Today, appraisal, funding and performance management drive short-termism at the expense of stability

Ministerial and policy churn has become normalised. The UK has seen 16 housing ministers since 2010 and seven secretaries of state for health and social care since 2018. There have been 12 growth plans since 2010 (Reeves, 2024). The UK's fiscal rules last an average of 3.8 years, compared to 13.5 years in New Zealand (Partington, 2024). Missions should outlast individual ministers, but effective collaboration relies on shared purpose and strong relationships built up over time.

We found in interviews that the **Green Book guidance on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects has led to benefit-cost ratios (BCRs) being used to decide what to do, rather than choosing how to do something cost effectively.** Despite recent Green Book reforms (HM Treasury, 2020) it remains the case that most departments are strongly wedded to demonstrating value through BCRs and that they are still integral to Treasury appraisal processes. BCRs make sense if benefits and costs are knowable or at least possible to estimate; however, for transformation programmes or existential risks (like climate breakdown), these estimates are ineffective.

Funding allocations consistently prioritise short-term cost reduction, driven by the UK's unusually powerful Treasury. As a result, departments are often, in the words of one interviewee, "not willing to look beyond the current spending programme or spending review period," because they are not confident enough of support to make long-term planning a worthwhile exercise. HMT reinforces these short-term biases by putting too little emphasis on preventative spending, such as public health initiatives, that would reduce demand on the NHS in the future. In the long term this results in more people with higher levels of need, putting more stress on the system.

Conventional accountability approaches, such as key performance indicators (KPIs), are widely used. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) was structured around 12 well thought-through missions, with a (long) list of metrics defined against each, and ministers were required to assess and report on progress on an annual basis (DLUHC, 2022). Although data is, of course, important, there is a risk that conventional approaches to measuring success risks stifling them. Evidence shows that if **measures of success become targets used for performance management, the most likely result is for actors in the system to start gaming the data** (Lowe, 2023).

KPIs assume that change is predictable and linear, and so incentivise maximising short-term delivery and leave little room for experimentation. KPIs are based on a hierarchical model of change that sees organisations as machines; since the digital revolution, our understanding of how organisations work has changed. **Accountability regimes that rely on tight controls focused on achieving pre-set targets can inhibit effective delivery in contexts of high complexity by preventing frontline workers from using contextual information and their own judgement** (Honig, 2018).

A new government should embed a long-term view across the policy lifecycle

Mission-driven government will need to provide a consistent direction and exercise power strategically to mobilise resources, spur innovation and crowd in investment towards that ‘north star’.

New approaches to policy appraisal

The Green Book includes an appendix on ‘transformational change’ and recognises that some of its methods may not apply in those cases, but deeper work needs to be done to distinguish between appraisal approaches suitable at the mission, programme and project level. The Green Book could reference more innovative and dynamic appraisal and evaluation methodologies, such as asset mapping or public value mapping, and approaches that take into account dynamic spillovers as well as ecosystem-wide transformation and public value creation (BEIS and IIPP, 2020).

Ringfenced spending on prevention

A new government could ringfence preventative investment on an equal basis to capital and revenue budgets by creating Preventative Departmental Expenditure Limits (PDELs) (O’Brien, Curtis, and Charlesworth, 2023). Integrating PDELs into departmental budgets, the comprehensive spending review and local government finance settlements would create fiscal space for preventative investment and establish a basis for long-term improvement in outcomes.

Rethinking evaluation and accountability

Accountability is closely connected to approaches to evaluation - how the system understands what is working and why. There is no off-the-shelf mission evaluation and accountability framework or strong body of ‘best practice’ to follow for a high-integrity systems approach. However, lessons can be learnt from other institutions working in a mission-driven way, as shown in the table below. Design considerations for a mission-appropriate evaluation framework are set out in Appendix B, and further work is required to develop these models.

Investing in high quality learning infrastructure

Reform efforts should be cumulative, rather than constantly reinventing the wheel. Currently there is “limited capacity for looking back and understanding what has worked before - including from governments of different parties” (Sasse and Thomas, 2022). The Evaluation Taskforce and Evaluation Accelerator Fund have been welcome developments, but have been limited by relatively small-scale investment. Central government should be bold in seeing itself as playing a key role in building the infrastructure needed for all arms of the state to learn effectively.

Table 1. Evaluation and accountability approaches of mission-driven organisations

Organisation	Context	Evaluation approach	Accountability framework
Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA)	ARIA aims to fund breakthrough technologies that could radically improve life in the UK and abroad, which necessarily involves high-risk, high-reward programmes of work.	Hypothesis driven: Within each research area, project managers define and test technical, social and economic hypotheses.	Accountability is based on proving or disproving the core hypotheses of a research area.
European Commission (EC)	The EC's 100 Climate Neutral Cities Mission aims to transform cities and accelerate their decarbonisation journeys.	Qualitative indicator of progress: "The selected decarbonisation pathway to climate neutrality and the associated transformation drivers be unblocked" (European Commission, 2020).	Accountability is based on identifying and removing key blockers to transformation.
London Borough of Camden	Camden's We Make Camden strategy articulates four missions for the borough.	Participatory: The Good Life Camden framework sets out an index of measures that have been shaped by the community's expressed view of what a good life in Camden looks like.	Accountability is exercised through citizen participation and enabled by Camden's annual 'State of the Borough' report.
Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)	GMCA's clean growth mission aims to retrofit 900,000 homes and 3,000 public sector buildings.	Capabilities: IIPP suggested that the city should measure the total annual capacity of the retrofit system instead of the number of units delivered.	Accountability is based on increasing the capacity and capability of the system as a whole, which supports a focus on experimentation in the early years of the mission.
BBC	The BBC has a multi-dimensional mission with a clear mandate to create 'public value'.	Dynamic public value creation: IIPP worked with the BBC to develop a framework that evaluated direct, spillover and catalytic effects across three dimensions of value: individual, industry and societal.	Accountability is based on a broad notion of public value, which explicitly makes space for tracking second-order effects (such as changing the behaviour of other broadcasters).

Recommendations

6. Prioritise enabling a period of political stability, for example:

- a. Increasing the average tenure of ministerial appointments.
- b. Where possible, keep ministers aligned to a particular mission, even when they move departments. For example, a minister moving from DEFRA to DLUHC could stay connected to a mission focused on health, with their focus moving from food to housing as determinants of health.

7. Reform the approach to government funding to enable a longer term view, for example:

- a. Build greater consistency and predictability into spending review cycles, and reduce fiscal events to one per year (either Spring or Autumn budget).
- b. Create a clearly defined 'preventative' category of spending, to complement the capital/current spend split. Fiscal rules targeting a balanced budget in the current spend category would therefore not apply to prevention budgets.

8. Establish evaluation and accountability frameworks that support a learning-by-doing approach and de-risk implementation at scale through a culture of iteration and experimentation, for example:

- a. Ground the missions in collaboratively designed 'theories of change' and differentiate between early changes, later changes and outcomes.
- b. Adopt new dynamic (versus static) evaluation frameworks that take into account indirect impacts, including spillovers and ecosystem wide transformation and public value creation. These frameworks should aim to evaluate wider system dynamics - not just 'is it working', but 'who is it working for, where and why?' - and to build greater understanding of the government's role and its impact on other actors and the system, rather than focusing only on the impact of commissioned programmes.
- c. Set up mission teams with evaluation experts in order to promote a culture of evaluation, learning and iteration from the start, rather than retrospectively trying to evaluate progress.

9. Reform the Green Book to better reflect the need for transformative, non-marginal change, for example:

- a. Establish policy appraisal guidance that is suitable for missions and transformational change by expanding the current appendix in the Green Book.
- b. Run an extensive programme of training and socialisation within departments, so that there is a shared view between departments and HMT on the appropriate use of BCRs and other methodologies for policy appraisal.

Principle 3. Missions should...

Galvanise action beyond central government

Missions offer a platform for central government to collaborate more productively with local, regional and devolved governments, civil society, trade unions and businesses across sectors. The nature of missions helps to provide a sense of purpose, stability in the policy landscape and market incentives, all of which make an opportunity to partner with the government in social and technological innovation more attractive. Valencia's mission to be climate neutral by 2030 is grounded in the mission 'alliance' it has formed with companies, public actors, civil society, media organisations and academia (Adjuntament de Valencia, 2022).

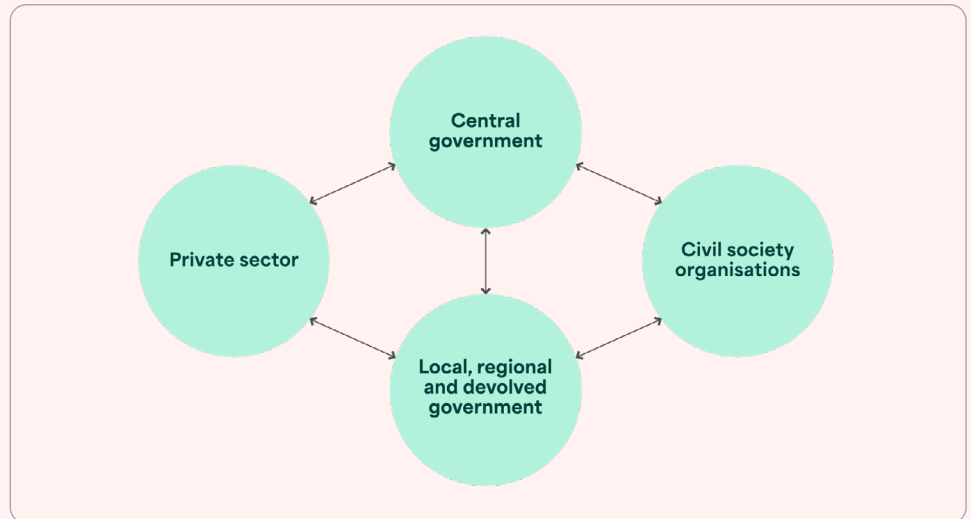
Mission-driven government is humble about its ability to achieve missions alone and recognises that the government is a small part of a much bigger, complex ecosystem, in which change cannot be brought about by diktat. Missions are vehicles for mobilising and engaging with partners across all layers of local, regional and devolved government, in the private sector and civil society.¹ They spark activity across different industrial sectors – for example, a health-related mission would need to engage sectors such as transport, education, housing, conservation, nutrition, health and wider services (Mazzucato and Dibb, 2019). **There is therefore a need for a new method of statecraft, beyond convening, best described as 'orchestration'.**

A more strategic, capable and networked centre of government playing an orchestration role would enable central government to focus its energy on creating conditions for the whole system to move towards its mission goals, with a deeper understanding of the roles and powers of different actors, and with less heavy-handed micromanagement (Conway et al, 2018). For example, to operationalise its clean growth mission Greater Manchester has set up thematic 'challenge groups' that are made up of and led by external partners (Mazzucato et al, 2021).

For missions to succeed, they need to inspire action among actors across all sectors of the economy and society to use their assets and capabilities in pursuit of shared goals. **In short, government is not responsible for achieving missions alone, but it is responsible for creating the space for a wide network of players to collaborate in pursuit of missions.**

¹ From its broadest definition of individuals coming together to make their voices heard to a narrower definition of organisations who structure those connections, such as charities and housing associations - source: <https://civilsocietycommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/What-is-civil-society.pdf>

Figure 6 - Networked relationships across central government as orchestrator, local, regional and devolved government, private sector and civil society



A note on scope:

This research project has highlighted that government needs to create the enabling environment in which partnerships outside central government can thrive, and the need to enable local and regional leaders to adopt a mission-driven approach themselves. Further outputs in the Mission Critical and Impactful Devolution workstreams from the Future Governance Forum will explore the nature of these relationships.

Today, decisions are centralised and government struggles to partner effectively with others

Central government struggles to partner effectively with other actors, which is especially problematic given the UK is one of the most centralised democracies in the world. The result is that “the deadening, controlling hand of central government is stifling initiative and development throughout the country” (Brown, 2022). There is a risk that missions act as a further centralising mechanism, and that the government defaults to a tried-and-tested (but insufficient) command-and-control style of governance.

Local, regional and devolved government

Relationships across layers of government have become strained over the last decade due to features of central government governance and policy, including funding cuts, wasteful competitive bidding processes for funding, and inconsistency and micromanagement in policy areas such as housing

and planning. One interviewee described this as a “pattern of mutual disdain”.

Accountability in UK policy tends to be inwards-looking, vertical and competitive: local authorities are accountable to central government; delivery teams to departments; secretaries of state to the prime minister and parliament, and regions and departments are incentivised to outperform one another. The power dynamics this creates makes it hard to work collaboratively, and be open about learning and improvement. At the local level, accountability is piecemeal, detail-oriented and overly focused on risk minimisation, driven by the fragmentation of local authority funding, and the disjointed nature of powers and duties held at the local level.²

Business and the private sector

The UK government’s mode of partnering with business is often seen as weak, providing bailouts or incentives without setting clear conditions that ensure a public return on public investments. The prevailing view is that the state’s role is to (at best) fix market failures and enable private sector activity, with the assumption that when the private sector is given freer rein, it will always innovate, invest and generate jobs, growth and society-wide benefit (Mazzucato, 2018b).

Recent history in the UK belies this assumption. The UK has had the lowest rates of business investment in the G7 since 2019 and since then the gap has widened; across all 30 OECD countries for which data is available, it performs worse than all except Poland, Luxembourg and Greece (Dibb and Murphy, 2023). Moreover, the trend towards stock buybacks is limiting reinvestment of profits into productive activities. Britain’s biggest companies (FTSE 100 firms) are expected to return £137.2 billion to their shareholders in 2023 (including ordinary dividends, special dividends and stock buybacks) with BP, for example, planning to buy back at least \$14 billion worth of stock between 2024 and 2025 (Mould, 2024).

Civil society

The relationship between government and civil society is similarly unproductive. The insights and expertise (often hyper-local or specialist) of civil society are largely untapped by government. Civil society organises itself to address some of the most complex societal challenges, and drive change in the economy, by improving health and revitalising local economies. Furthermore, it is the bedrock of democracy, as it’s where the case for progress and change is built (Sheila McKechnie Foundation, 2018). Central government has shown little interest in moving beyond consultative approaches with civil society organisations and to citizen participation, although pockets of innovative practice do exist in many local authorities, with interest shown by DCMS and by select committee chairs (Betts and Wollaston, 2018).

² The coalition government’s decision to scrap the Audit Commission was a mistake. It played an important role in ensuring good governance and value for money in local government (even though the balance between contractual oversight and partnership was not right). The current government’s attempt to repair some of this damage - the Office for Local Government - has been introduced without meaningful co-design and is poorly resourced in comparison with the pre-2010 arrangements.

A new government should act as orchestrator to collaborate with and empower others

The necessity to work collaboratively beyond the boundaries of sectors is particularly true in the face of a constrained fiscal environment, and the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental challenges. But focusing on networked coalitions should not be a last resort in the face of acute challenges; it should be **proactively and intentionally sought** by a mission-driven government.

This practice of orchestration must be signalled from the top by the prime minister and chancellor, setting both the direction and the funding strategy, coordinating and nurturing networks and relationships of trust and respect with actors outside government. It must involve solving problems and blockers on behalf of that network, and facilitating and incentivising their role in delivery.

Missions provide a stable policy agenda within which central, devolved, regional and local governments may be able to establish a constructive dialogue, and move beyond the parochialism and distrust that have marred joint working in the past. The ambitious nature of missions will require decentralising reforms to local, regional and devolved governments, regardless of their political stripes, so that “every community can play their full part in delivering national prosperity” (Brown, 2022).

A renewed social contract is required beyond government too, one that is founded in a new “economics of the common good” that prioritises outcomes-oriented policies and partnerships, co-creation and participation, collective learning, knowledge-sharing and accountability, and sharing in the rewards of innovation and investment as well as risks (Mazzucato, 2024).

Mission-driven partnership requires commitment from the Treasury. The Big Society vision of the Cameron government for an empowered civil society was ultimately undermined by a drive to reduce the deficit, with Big Society becoming, to quote Lord Willetts, the “justification of retrenchment: charities will pick up the slack of shrinking government” (Tinline, 2024).

Activating local, regional and devolved government

Central government needs to be able to rally together the institutions of Whitehall, and devolved, local, and regional governments across the UK, and direct them towards the missions. Mayors and leaders across the country “also need a government that wants to work with them in a national partnership for growth and renewal” (Lucas and Hopkins, forthcoming).

A new devolution settlement provides an opportunity to activate capacity and build delivery capability in support of the missions across the entire public sector. Local, regional and devolved government need clear, purposeful and well-defined roles, as well as space and permission to create their own contributions to the missions.

While this report recommends that the government establishes a Mission Council, which would include representation from local government, a new institutional structure is necessary to activate and coordinate mission-driven

collaboration across government. The Institutional Architecture Lab, established in 2023, highlights the need for new and better institutions to help collaborate, communicate and build collective intelligence, and offers a framework for building a field of expertise and practice around purposeful public institution design. A mission-driven government should explore possibilities for forms of purpose-led institutions that would bring tiers of government together.

Devolved administrations

The last Labour Government devoted considerable time and energy to devolution, especially to establishing new devolution arrangements for Scotland and Wales, and for Northern Ireland following the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Twenty-five years on, a new government needs to be confident that the arrangements in place support UK-wide delivery of mission outcomes and take full advantage of the devolved administrations' potential role in securing inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Building devolution infrastructure

A new government should complete the partial geography of devolution in England, "both completing the process and ensuring that it can really deliver on driving growth and good jobs for everyone, everywhere" (Lucas and Hopkins, forthcoming). Devolution of powers and responsibilities to local and regional tiers of government should be based on what is necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

Mission delivery requires all local governments to build innovation capability and use digital technology to develop new ways of tackling complex challenges. The government should scale up successful models, such as the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). LOTI has increased collaboration and built digital capability across the London boroughs and helped to address complex challenges, including homelessness and social isolation (Byrom, Coldicutt and Gold, 2024).³

Building a new policy framework

All missions need to have landing points which connect to local strategic plans. Industrial strategy with a connection to place-based policies (for instance, with mechanisms for engaging distressed as well as high-tech regions, as in the case of current U.S. industrial strategy) and Local Growth Plans are an example of possible mechanisms.

Meaningfully engaging with local government, civil society, businesses and trade unions is important to shape how industrial policy rolls out. Access to public funding can be made conditional on these and other mechanisms for grounding industrial strategy in community- and worker-informed inclusion and sustainability priorities (Mazzucato and Rodrik, 2023).

Mission-driven government needs to implement an industrial strategy geared towards social goals, as one of the mechanisms for delivering missions in ways that translate across different tiers of government and sectors of the economy, so that economic activity and sectoral transformation are aligned with missions from the national to the local level. This provides an opportunity to establish a

³ Forthcoming work from FGF in partnership with Public Digital will address issues around public digital reform at a local level, including new institutions.

coherent, cross-sectoral, long-term direction for investment and innovation for the public and private sectors, which has been lacking for at least the last eight years.

Combined and local authorities should be required to formulate and deliver statutory Local Growth Plans, which connect devolved powers to mission delivery, and a vision of inclusive and sustainable growth (Lucas and Hopkins, forthcoming). A mission-driven government should consider fiscal devolution as an enabler of Local Growth Plans.

Enabling local accountability

Mission-driven government will rely on honest feedback based on trusting relationships between different actors involved in delivery and broad public support. The system should provide central government with assurances on the performance of local public services, ensure value for money, and provide early warning of failure. But it should also support mission-orientation, place-based innovation and learning. That needs new forms of accountability: mechanisms for the centre to be held to account by local and external partners; and accountability to citizens between elections.

These frameworks need a foundation of trust between all layers of government. The prime minister should lead a clear commitment from Whitehall to devolve powers and resources (Quilter-Pinner and Khan, 2023).

A new government will need to set a tone early on in its term to give combined and local authorities confidence that the approach to national renewal will be collaborative, pivoting from the top-down approach of recent years. This may include an openness to more expansive forms of devolution in the future.

Partnerships with the private sector and trade unions

To shift to a more reciprocal model of public-private collaboration requires a fundamentally new set of assumptions about the role of the state, as explored at the start of this report, in shaping markets and directing growth to align with critical policy priorities.

Mobilising and habitually engaging with the private sector and labour is critical for the next government to make progress on its ambitions, not least because the private sector and workers need to be involved in investing, innovating and providing a huge range of new goods and services that support the missions, from health technologies to electric vehicles.

Missions should be designed and implemented in ways that open up new market opportunities aligned with mission goals, including through public procurement.

How this relationship is structured matters. Government support and incentives aligned to missions – such as tax breaks, grants, challenge prizes, technological support, infrastructure and training – should also be designed to maximise the long-term public value created by public investments, socialising the rewards as well as sharing the risks of innovation. Missions can be tools for partnering in a new way with the productive economy, by embedding strong conditions or guardrails in agreements to require certain firm behaviour in exchange for access to public funds and other benefits – conditions such as reinvesting profits in worker training and fair pay, sustainable business

practices, affordable access to resulting products and profit sharing. Notably, unions have a vital role to play in defining the conditions that lead to good jobs. This means purposeful engagement with trade unions on policy development and strategies for achieving missions.

The challenge for governments is not to be ‘business friendly’ as an end in itself, but to drive dynamic and purposeful partnerships oriented around shared goals.

A new contract with civil society organisations

The relationship between central government and civil society must stretch beyond a conception of civil society organisations as delivery partners to engage with civil society actors as true partners with unique expertise and levers for change.

A mission-driven government can create space for effective partnership with civil society across the policy cycle by removing barriers to civil society action (Sheila McKechnie Foundation, 2023), creating long-term funding streams oriented around missions, both directly and through partnerships, and by seeing civil society actors as important experts and innovators involved in co-designing and co-delivering projects in pursuit of missions.

This new relationship requires a new mode of governance which has been tested at a place-based level. For example, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) created five challenge groups (CGs) related to their missions, on which sat GMCA and local authority employees, academics, business and charities (Mazzucato et al, 2021).

The shape of the relationship between central government and civil society in a mission-driven context must focus on scaling radical ideas and experimentation, not just outsourcing delivery of services, but also empowering and nurturing relationships where they exist, which is often at a local level.

Legitimacy for missions through citizen participation

Whitehall often operates within its own bubble, “with policy makers largely closed off to these external sources of input” (Sasse and Thomas, 2022). A third of civil servants were “concerned about the depth and range of perspectives consulted to make policy” (Gandon, 2023). Missions should also be used as a way to fundamentally rethink how the government involves citizens in policy making. The default methods of consultations, focus groups and polling provide limited opportunities for citizens to truly shape policy, and fail to bring them into other areas of the policy cycle (such as agenda setting and evaluation). These approaches also mitigate the challenge around a ‘producer focus’ within public services, linking frontline delivery staff, users and communities to those designing policy.

Mission-driven governments should test new methods of participation, always being intentional and transparent about the specific purpose of engagement. These methods might include citizen assemblies, participatory budgeting and digital deliberation, and be clear and intentional about which methods are appropriate, depending on their desired outcome. This work is often best done at more local levels - the next government should fund and encourage councils and combined authorities to experiment with these practices.

Case study: one way of maximising the public value...

Governments provide significant financial support and other incentives to businesses. To ensure that the public return on this public investment is maximised, governments must deliberately build reciprocity into partnerships with the private sector - and into the contracts that structure these partnerships. One way they can do this is through well-designed conditions that are aligned with mission goals and aimed at delivering public - not just private - value. Conditionalities are important tools for changing firm behaviour. Conditions can be embedded in the contracts that grant businesses access to public sector grants, loans and equity investments, and in the terms of tax benefits and other incentives. Broadly, there are four types of behaviour that governments might incentivise (Mazzucato and Rodrik, 2023):

- Access: ensuring equitable and affordable access to the resulting products and services (dependent on areas like pricing and intellectual property rights)
- Directionality: directing firms' activities towards socially desirable goals (for example, net zero)
- Profit-sharing: requiring profitable firms to share returns (for example, via royalties or equity with government)
- Reinvestment: requiring reinvestment of profits into productive activities (for example, R&D or worker training)

Conditionalities can give industrial policy 'teeth' and help steer the economy towards socially desirable outcomes. The response to COVID-19 offers a good example of the potential of this approach. Many governments provided bailouts to airlines, as travel restrictions meant that the industry would have collapsed otherwise. In France, support of EUR 4 billion for Air France was tied to conditions on efficiency, emissions reduction and use of alternative fuels (Mazzucato, 2022). By contrast, the UK government provided EasyJet with a £1.4 billion bailout with no environmental requirements (Loh, 2021; Mazzucato and Andreoni, 2020).

Too many conditions, or conditions that are too specific in prescribing how businesses must meet them, can restrict innovation, but when set at the right level - not micromanaging, but providing a clear direction and clear guardrails or minimum standards - they are not anti-business or anti-investment. Conditions should be clear, ambitious and measurable, with provisions for accountability and consequences for failing to meet them, to ensure that firm behaviour does, in fact, change. For example, well-designed climate-related conditions could specify a clear, measurable net zero requirement (going beyond simply asking firms to submit a sustainability plan), with interest rates or access to future tranches of funding contingent on meeting it, but without proscribing exactly how a firm must meet it.

In Germany, the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW bank) offered low interest loans and partial debt relief on the condition of improving energy standards and retrofitting buildings; Israel's highly successful R&D programme requires in-country R&D employment and has a profit-sharing mechanism; and the recent CHIPS Act in the USA provides tax incentives for semiconductor manufacturers with provisions that, for example, limit stock buybacks and require investments in childcare for employees (Mazzucato and Rodrik, 2023).

Recommendations**10. Invest in the institutional infrastructure needed to support local areas in delivering missions by, for example:**

- a. Completing the process of covering all areas of England with at least a Level 2 devolution deal in the first half of the next Parliament.
- b. Examine the case for regional institutions which take inspiration from London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) and other examples of excellence from MCAs, and which work in partnership with local authorities to build innovation capability.
- c. Leveraging horizontal national-level networks, such as the Core Cities and the UK Mayors, to support mission delivery.
- d. A multi-year funding settlement for local government.
- e. Exploring options for fiscal devolution, enabling places to control how they raise and manage what they spend.

11. Create a new policy framework to enable different tiers of government and sectors to work together effectively to achieve the government's missions, including:

- a. Launch a national industrial strategy oriented around government missions that set a clear direction for cross-sectoral innovation and investment, and that comprises place-based policies, complemented by regional and Local Growth Plans.

12. Enable strategies for new forms of local accountability and citizen engagement by, for example:

- a. Running citizen-facing mission summits, with mission leads bringing together leaders from civil society and the private sector, as well as members of the public, to assess progress and identify opportunities.
- b. Running '360-degree' reflection sessions with private or third sector partners involved in mission delivery to better understand how central government could work more effectively with partners.
- c. Developing the current Office for Local Government into a new Office for Government Improvement and Learning, and working with regulators such as Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to enable an interconnected and systematic view of public service performance in places.

13. Mobilise across all layers of government by, for example:

- a. Writing to all devolved administrations setting out the government's approach to mission-driven partnerships between the nations of the UK.
- b. Writing to all mayors and council leaders setting out the government's approach to mission-based devolution in England.

- c. Require place-based government agencies and institutions to collaborate with local and regional mission delivery.
- d. Recruiting people with local government experience, such as former local authority CEOs or executive directors, as departmental non-executive directors to advise on how policy will best enable local delivery.

14. Collaborate with willing private sector partners and trade unions, including:

- a. Sending clear signals to businesses that the government is seeking willing private sector and union partners to help achieve its missions. This means moving beyond the language of being 'open for business' and instead making clear that the government is opening up market opportunities that align with its missions, setting a long-term direction for growth and structuring public support for businesses to reflect these missions, as well as wider sustainability and inclusion priorities. It also means ensuring that unions have a meaningful seat at the table in shaping industrial and innovation policy.
- b. Defining problems that need to be solved on the way to achieving the missions, without prescribing how to solve them, and engaging all sectors of the economy in collaborating, innovating and investing to develop solutions.
- c. Improving the structure and ongoing management of all contracts (including for grants, loans, equity investments and procurement deals) with the private sector with thoughtful conditions to share the rewards of innovation as well as the risks - including with labour - and to maximise public value and mission alignment.

Principle 4. Missions should...

Build, nurture and grow a 'coalition of the willing'

Missions are long-term, ambitious by design, and by definition the path to achieve them is unknown at the outset. This uncertainty is counter-intuitive and runs against the grain of how most actors (including the media and opposition parties) expect a government to behave. Although there is scope to introduce new accountability frameworks, the political reality is that there will be intense pressure to lay out a clear and well-defined plan, and demonstrate immediate progress.

Missions are about setting two different rhythms in motion at once. On the one hand they are about long arcs and sustained commitment over time. The most emblematic example of a government mission, the moon landing, was launched by Kennedy in 1962 and the speech was one of his most memorable. At the same time, missions require iteration and experimentation at pace. So they require a type of political leadership that can create the space to connect the big narrative to everyday stories of incremental change. Mission-driven governments should be clear about their legitimate leadership role in leaning into solving wicked problems, but to do so through a process of collective problem-solving with citizens, civil society and business.

The way missions are set and refined, and the way they are framed (so they resonate and activate those who need to help deliver them) are essential for achieving legitimacy and mobilising a diverse coalition. Particularly when thinking about a programme for government, sustaining support over the long term will require the ability to operate within different time horizons. In the short term, governments need to be able to deliver on voter-facing concerns and address the pressing issues of the day, projecting competence and managing an increasingly volatile media environment. At the same time, they need to be able to build on existing innovative practice, find routes to broaden and deepen this, and think about the completely different practices, policy and operating models needed to achieve their stated mission objectives. Doing only one or the other is likely to fall short.

Today, mediating between interest groups means change is slow and inertia sets in

Programmes for transformative change might command broad support for their overall goals. But in planning and delivering concrete steps, divergent views become apparent and it can be difficult to agree on a way forward. Although few people objected to the idea that the UK needs a high-speed rail network, many objected to the particularities of where and how HS2 would be built. Simply overriding opposition is often not an option, as they might be

critical members of the authorising environment. Without their support, the permission to act is reduced, change is slow, inertia sets in and costs rise.

This problem is exacerbated by the quality of the public conversation. Traditional media, under enormous pressure from declining ad revenues, has an ever shorter attention span, prioritising novelty as a means of winning viewers' attention. Leaner operations means fewer core staff with the ability to follow a story or policy programme over its lifecycle, and regional news has declined so rapidly that it provides almost no local accountability. New media models, in particular social media, are incentivised to increase polarisation and manufacture outrage. Small interest groups running campaigns against new infrastructure or development find it much easier to successfully operate in this media landscape than politicians and public managers trying to hold together a diverse coalition to create big changes.

Grand promises for transformational change may be interpreted by citizens as 'jam tomorrow', seen as utopias that have little to do with their everyday struggles (Stears, 2021). Opportunities for engagement are often ad hoc and unconnected to wider strategic questions, providing little reason for people to support change that they may see as risky. This can result in seemingly contradictory behaviours - for example, citizens voting for a mayor who is committed to addressing the housing crisis, but opposing individual developments in a consultation. Too little work is done to connect the macro to the micro, and provide alternative opportunities for citizens to shape how places develop and to consider trade-offs without resorting to a de facto veto.

A new government should tell a compelling story that connects people's everyday lives to the long-term vision

For a government and public servants to be effective, they need authority to act. They must therefore pay close attention to their authorising environment (conditions created by actors who provide political and economic legitimacy) to enable missions to survive and prosper over the long term. Lawmakers, interest groups, clients, other parts of government, regulators, community groups and the general public may all shape the authorising environment, and it is *dynamic* with support constantly ebbing and flowing (O'Flynn, 2021). Mission leaders therefore need to grow the 'coalition of the willing': individuals and organisations who share the values and goals of the mission and are invested in its success.

The uncertainty and complexity of missions has implications for the kinds of authority that public servants need. Rather than general support from a narrow group of senior people, public servants need flexible, shareable and patient authority. The last characteristic is particularly important and refers to the ability of the authoriser to "manage waiting periods, failure and changes in direction, given a passion for attaining the long-term goal." It will be crucial that authorisers do not just support concrete proposals for action, but give explicit authorisation for the experimental approach required (Andrews et al, 2017).

Within the first few months of a new government, the prime minister's time will likely be consumed by international and/or domestic crises. They and their

political colleagues will need to tactfully hold a deep and genuine commitment to missions while responding to the political, electoral or international reality of the day.

A human-centred, everyday narrative of missions

The language of missions can feel abstract and distant. Not just because they talk about the long term, but because it can be hard for people to see the connection to their everyday lives. Government should develop a narrative of missions that draws on people's lived experience and takes an 'on the ground' view of public services that recognises their interconnectedness to urgent priorities, such as the cost of living crisis. For example, a government might describe its energy mission goal in terms of 'access to affordable, reliable and 100% sustainable energy' by a certain date.

Storytelling as a means of making change

There needs to be a constant effort to connect the macro and the micro, and make clear how small changes ladder up into transformation. For politicians and public servants working on missions, this means emphasising storytelling as a critical craft. Storytelling can help change systems by building empathy, shifting mindsets, building new connections and alliances, teaching and learning, and seeing new possibilities (Centre for Public Impact, 2021).

Portfolio management

Missions can be seen as portfolios within which sit nested theories of change. A mixed portfolio enables some tactical projects (creating confidence and credibility), some small but emblematic projects (carrying a message about the direction of travel) and some strategic projects (high value but slow). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been using a portfolio approach, which it describes as "interconnected interventions which together can ignite a long-term transformation in the community" (UNDP, 2024).

The (positive) shock doctrine

Crises are unavoidable, especially in an increasingly unstable world. Although they distract attention, they also provide windows in which radical reform is possible. Right-wing actors have been successful in using disasters to push through pro-corporate measures - what Naomi Klein refers to as the 'shock doctrine' (Klein, 2007). Progressive governments can build the same capability for different purposes, to create a sense of urgency and motivation around missions. Mass house building after the First World War ('Homes for Heroes'), the birth of the modern welfare state (combating Beveridge's 'five giants') and the COVID-19 vaccine roll out stand out as moments in which crises led to positive renewal.

Recommendations

15. Political management should be at the heart of the mission's approach, with a member of a core group of the cabinet tasked with ensuring political coherence. Vitally, however, this cannot compromise on the integrity of the approach.

16. Build broad support for a vision for the future and make it tangible, for example:

- a. Test the framing of missions to ensure their framing resonates with citizens, using language that connects with individual and collective values, but avoids government by focus group.
- b. Put collective and social imagination at the heart of the missions approach, with **participative approaches informing the theories of change**, and used to stretch ambition and explore trade-offs.
- c. Initiate a series of 'catalyst' projects or 'system demonstrators' which embody the approach, create momentum and create opportunities for storytelling.

17. Adopt a proactive approach to risk management, and plan for how best to leverage and respond to inevitable crises to further the missions.⁴

⁴ See [Into Power 01: Lessons from Australia and the United States](#) on how Australian Prime Minister Albanese turned early international meetings to his advantage and [Into Power 02: The Conservative Party's 2010 transition from opposition to government](#) for lessons from the Conservative Party's preparations for government ahead of the general election in 2010.

Principle 5. Missions should...

Be based on a new approach to policy design

A humble, mission-driven government accepts that the process of innovation is unpredictable and that cycles of iteration, learning and improvement are necessary, rather than assuming that the outputs of innovation will be final and definitive after a first iteration. A mission-driven government should therefore adopt experimentation as a mainstream form of policy making.

Experimentation of this type rests on a different mindset - a belief that government should be humble about its ability to know how policy will work in practice when working in complex systems. The world “is a complex, interconnected finite, ecological- social- psychological- economic system. We treat it as if it were not, as it were divisible, separable, simple and infinite. Our persistent, intractable global problems arise directly from this mismatch” (Meadows, D. 2008). As such, the economy (as one interviewee expressed), is “not a machine where if you press a button you know something will happen.” A fundamental strength of mission-driven government is that there is no need to pretend that there is a known roadmap to solving a challenge at the outset - by supporting experimentation, facilitating change, and orchestrating a system of actors and interests, a mission-driven government may iteratively determine innovative and impactful courses of action.

A mission-driven government should also create an environment in Whitehall and across the public sector where the outputs of innovation can be quickly reviewed, regulated, and brought into the mainstream of public service delivery. An environment of this kind gives different partners more confidence to “begin solving a problem as soon as they have reached a thin consensus on a common direction and initial, exploratory approaches” (Annala et al, 2021).

Policies are too often designed on paper without making contact with reality

Civil service policy advice currently risks being “too often disconnected from reality” because Whitehall officials are rarely expected to engage with the public (Slater, 2022). In most policy making processes, the analysis and programme design happens before anything has been tested on the ground.

Skills highly valued in the civil service policy profession have traditionally included policy advice, working with ministers and managing parliamentary business. There is also an increasing focus on skills in co-design, design research, operational delivery and deliberative participation, but these capabilities are not widespread. As a result, those who develop policy in the UK often have a limited understanding of how people will experience it. This is evident

in a number of areas within the UK's welfare policy and was a feature of aspects of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in which rules varied from place to place and changed frequently. The lack of public engagement and design process, combined with centralised policy making processes and a top-down view of policy implementation (Brown, 2022), contributes to limiting the impact of policy in the UK (Hunter, Hudson and Peckham, 2018).

The UK government also has a history of over-reliance on the big consulting firms, which undermines the ability of the civil service to learn by doing. For example, Deloitte was hired by the UK government to help design its Test and Trace system, earning £1 million per day from the contracts (Waugh, 2021). This negatively impacts the ability of the civil service to hone its skills in solving challenging problems, and specifically in designing and delivering test and trace programmes, which will very likely be needed again in the future. Instead of outsourcing, governments must invest in their own capacity to manage towards bold goals (Mazzucato and Collington, 2023).

A new government should build capabilities around participation, design, digital and experimentation

While bureaucratic attention is the lifeblood of missions, and this attention can be incentivised and channelled in particular directions through organisation, leadership and management of the workforce, it also needs to be appropriately skilled. Delivering any programme of transformative change requires the public sector to have dynamic capabilities – the abilities required to “assess and adjust policy and implementation practices” on an ongoing basis (Kattel, 2022). Those capabilities exist at both an individual level (skills) and an organisational level (structures, routines and culture). Good missions are ambitious, so there will inevitably be some distance between their intended outcomes and the potential of the available tools. Innovating towards new tools therefore becomes a necessary process to achieve mission goals.

What these capabilities all have in common is that experimentation, iteration and uncertainty are central to their practice. There is no requirement for practitioners to know the answer to a question or to design a perfect solution to a problem before they have had a chance to experiment, iterate, listen, learn and scale.

A culture is needed where civil servants are rewarded for embedding these capabilities in their work. Experimentation and innovation need to be valued and supported by the institutional culture of the civil service. In practical terms, civil servants have to be encouraged by senior leadership, be incentivised by reward and progression, and feel motivated by the opportunities associated with new ways of working to take on responsibility for projects with real risk and uncertainty attached.

Changing the institutional culture of the civil service shouldn't be underestimated as a task. In order to encourage the emergence of a culture that values and encourages experimentation and innovation, a new government should expand its scope to take in broader civil service reform – to effect changes to the civil service's established model of leadership, the prevailing progression pathways

and the extent to which departments are siloed in order to create conditions where design practice can flourish.

Changes will need to be mindful of the norms, values and career incentives of civil servants. Civil servants often care about clarity, stability and purpose, so that they know where they stand, that they can get on with their work without frequent changes in direction and that they are making a difference for the public. While civil servants want to make a difference, the prevailing culture, which is especially dominant in the policy profession, makes it clear that career progression is often contingent on handling the politics of ministerial and departmental interests (Slater, 2022). For missions to succeed, the senior civil service and ministers need to demonstrate and communicate that they value greater collaboration across departments and beyond Whitehall, a focus on real-world impact and innovation in policy making. This must include consciously reforming accountability systems so that risk taking and innovation is encouraged.

Participation and engagement

Government needs to be bolder in centring the lived experiences of the public in the design of public policy and public services. This is essential to create policy and services that holistically respond to people's needs, build their strengths and prevent negative outcomes in the long-term. Civil servants therefore need to be equipped to bring those experiences and a diversity of voices into the policy making process. This will require sets of skills and practices that are currently mainstream in many local authorities, but undervalued among the current political leadership in Whitehall. The civil service may draw inspiration from across local and regional governments where new models of citizen engagement, including citizens assemblies and participatory budgeting, have been progressed.

Digital and data

The Government Digital Service evolved from its founding in the early 2010s, in the wake of repeated failures to digitally modernise government, to become "a global leader in government digital transformation, mimicked by many countries across the world" (Kattel and Takala, 2021). Its success can be measured in the omnipresence of its products, such as Gov.uk, the professionalisation of digital and data, and the mainstreaming of digital practice in Whitehall.

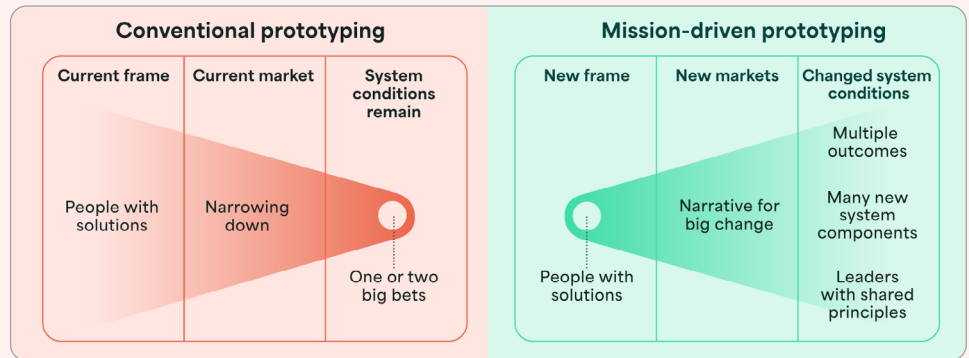
A new government will have opportunities to build on this success by expanding the value proposition of digital in government beyond utilitarian notions of efficiencies and transactions. A government that articulates a clear purpose and embraces innovation offers professionals in digital and data an opportunity to evolve their practice, build new capabilities and define new ways of working that may support progress towards mission goals.

Design, agile approaches and prototyping

Design approaches use rapid, low-cost testing and prototyping of elements of policy interventions to make progress visible, support learning, de-risk deployment and push the boundaries of what is possible. Unlike the industrial or tech sectors, missions aim to create system change over time, and so the approach to prototyping has to move from a 'narrowing down' to 'field-building' mentality (Figure 7). This kind of experimentation will "be vital to managing the long-term nature of missions, the high degrees of uncertainty and frequently changing surroundings" (Bjork et al, 2022). Experimentation in policy design and imple-

mentation is therefore an important discipline and culture to nurture to support mission teams to work iteratively and continually test assumptions.

Figure 7 - Conventional vs mission-driven prototyping (Winhall, 2021)



Policy design is an emerging field of practice that is being built across Whitehall departments, local government and academia. A new government has an opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of design as integral to policy development and set expectations for policy design practice to be integrated into any new policy proposals.

Reward and progression

Too often, civil servants are not incentivised by the structure, culture or leadership of the civil service to engage in ways of working that sit outside a norm that is anchored in NPM or that transcend siloed departmental interests.

Performance-linked progression within a mission-driven civil service should depend on demonstrating delivery of outcomes, collaboration (across teams, Whitehall departments or tiers of government), relationship-building, network-convening, sensitivity to complexity and innovation.

A culture change is needed among the political leadership of the civil service in order to communicate consistently to civil servants that bold and ambitious work that carries a degree of risk can fast-track career progression, because it corresponds to the government's goals. Senior leadership will set the culture by the way they talk about and respond to the results of experimentation - whether failure is something to be ashamed of or something to learn from.

The re-design of Universal Credit between 2013 and 2016 offers an example of ways of working that should be embraced. A reset of the service design and delivery approach provided "clarity of intent and focus on outcome over output" (Greenway and Loosemore, 2024). The new approach provided a basis for a multi-disciplinary team of designers and researchers to collaborate, brought together policy and operational experience, and combined accountability for outcomes with autonomy for the team in determining how to deliver them. The test and learn approach that the team took "was designed to maximise the amount of learning about what would and wouldn't work in reality, at pace" (Ibid). The impact of this approach was transformative, enabling the design of an end-to-end system that accounted for a huge number of unanticipated challenges and complexities, and that progressed from a pilot to a national rollout. While the Universal Credit system remains flawed and significantly underfunded, this approach to designing the service offers an example for the civil service to learn from and emulate.

Recommendations

18. Build teams and institutions with the capabilities to deliver on ambitious programmes at both the national and regional level, for example:

- a. Investing in recruiting and training people with the dynamic capabilities required to deliver on an ambitious, mission-oriented agenda, building on the success of, for example, the Government Digital Service, as well as learnings from the National School of Government.
- b. Establish a high-status training and leadership programme for mission-driven government, for which civil servants and officers from local and regional government are eligible. This programme could either complement or replace programmes hosted within the Leadership College for Government, with a distinctive pathway for development and progression.
- c. Building the digital and innovation capacity of local government by investing in regional institutions, learning from the success of the London Office of Technology and Innovation.⁵
- d. Providing a career opportunity for technologists in the private sector to deliver purposeful work in government for a set period of time, signalled from the top of government, as well as a graduate pipeline.
- e. Establishing specialisms in design research, service design and policy design in order to more capably develop policy in-house, drawing on the lived experiences of the public in the design of public services and public policy.
- f. Recruit and reward based on competencies such as collaboration, experimentation and innovation across the policy lifecycle. This could be achieved by refreshing and updating the Civil Service Competency Framework and Success Profiles, Senior Civil Service Performance Management Framework and the Civil Service Code, and through secondment opportunities across layers of government.

19. Shorten the feedback loop between policy design and delivery by, for example:

- a. Requiring policy teams to spend more time out of Whitehall to understand how policies make contact with communities and services on the ground.
- b. Bringing the voices and perspectives of the public into the policy development process via inclusive participation processes.

⁵ The Future Governance Forum is currently exploring place-based digital transformation in greater depth.

Principle 6. Missions should...

Direct public and private investment in line with mission goals

Missions need to be well funded, but to usher in a decade of national renewal, both the quantity and quality of finance matters. Not all finance is equal; missions require patient public finance (Mazzucato and MacFarlane, 2019; Mazzucato, 2023b). One of the first things the Scottish Government did as part of the Clyde Mission was to establish a Mission Fund, providing £10 million to support capital projects that deliver economic stimulus and contribute to mission outcomes (Scottish Government (Business, Industry and Innovation), 2021).

Public investment increased significantly in New Labour's time in office, but has flatlined since 2010 (Dibb and Murphy, 2023) - the UK is below the average of G7 and OECD countries. Private investment is worse still, where the UK is bottom of the G7. Policy instability and a lack of investment have led to poor UK growth and returns, with the private sector and pension funds looking overseas for higher returns. To rectify this trend and provide a clear strategy for higher returns from UK assets, it is essential to provide economic, fiscal and policy stability, combined with stronger institutional arrangements (Dyson and Spencer, 2023).

Public investment guided by clear, long-term missions is the best way to generate broad-based growth and raise living standards. Public investment can shape and create markets by channelling loans, grants, guarantees, procurement contracts, and debt- and equity-based instruments towards companies that are willing to invest in solving specific problems. Keeping investment at current levels will limit the UK's prospects for economic growth and limit how much the next government could fund public services.

Nearly a third of government spending in the UK is through public procurement - worth £306 billion in total in 2020/21 (House of Commons Library, 2023).

There is a significant opportunity to leverage procurement spend in pursuit of social goals and missions. The last ten years have seen a big shift towards embedding social value in procurement, and the Procurement Act 2023 aims to enable small business and social enterprises to better compete for public contracts (Government Commercial Function, 2023). Contracting authorities will also be given new duties to deliver value for money, maximise public benefit and be seen to act with integrity (Stephenson Harwood, 2023), and more flexibility over process, contract terms and award criteria (ibid). A mission-driven government should use demand side levers such as procurement, advanced market commitments and challenge prizes to accelerate the development and deployment of new technologies that can help address social challenges.

New institutions have a role to play in providing long-term investment. The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB), launched in 2021, has a remit to provide £22 billion of infrastructure finance in partnership with the private sector and local government, primarily focused on tackling climate change and supporting regional

growth (HM Treasury and UK Infrastructure Bank, 2024). As a Treasury-owned company with operational independence, UKIB is an example of institutional innovation aimed at providing long-term funding and working in a new way with the private sector. Wealth funds can also help redistribute wealth by creating collective ownership of capital and assets (Mazzucato et al, 2022). Labour's plan to introduce a National Wealth Fund as a means of driving the energy transition is a step in the right direction, although how the returns to that investment are managed will be critically important in determining whether it is effective in creating broad-based prosperity or private gain.

Private investment alone will not meet the scale of challenges the country faces, but government has a crucial role to play in crowding in and directing investment in line with missions. Mission-oriented investment may also be encouraged through well targeted tax incentives (Dibb, 2022).⁶

Today, funding allocations drive government strategy, rather than strategy driving funding

HM Treasury is unusually powerful. Its role as both an economic growth ministry and the finance ministry in charge of overseeing departmental spending is unique; other countries separate those functions out to different departments. The 'finance ministry' has dominated in recent years, which is why HMT sees, as one interviewee said, "its main function as saving money, so it would get in the way of anything else happening if there was a risk of spending going up." Without a mission-driven approach at the Treasury, a mission-driven approach in other corners of government will at best fall short.

The Treasury's tight control of the Spending Review process means that it is difficult for No. 10 and the Cabinet Office to set and direct government strategy. The result is that the tail often ends up wagging the dog - **the strategic ambition of the government ends up being based on the Treasury's budget allocations, rather than the other way around.** HMT's power and influence is well understood by Whitehall, where (to quote one interviewee) the "connection to the Spending Review is what matters most to civil servants." Furthermore, the UK's system of multiple fiscal events per year and one-year funding settlements prioritises political flexibility at the expense of providing clarity about future funding levels. This creates political risk for private sector partners, and increases uncertainty for local governments and other public bodies over their future budgets.

The ability of contracting authorities to use procurement strategically and in support of missions also remains limited. As a function, public procurement is often based in teams responsible for legal and financial matters rather than policy strategy. It is generally focused on risk management, efficiency maximisation and gravitating to the lowest cost option. Approaches that extend beyond these considerations have gained traction, but still fall short of the potential for strategic procurement to shape markets that contribute to mission goals. For example, the social value paradigm looks beyond cost to consider social, environmental and economic benefits. However, social value

⁶ The Future Governance Forum's Rebuilding the Nation workstream develops this in more depth.

is often approached in an ad-hoc way; is seen as an add-on, rather than as core to the contract, with price still being the dominant consideration; and is overly focused on quantifiable benefits (Cottell and Tabbush, 2022). In practice, it remains the case that the dominant procurement paradigm is of controlling costs and minimising risk (Mazzucato and Wainwright, forthcoming).

A new government should redesign public finance institutions, processes and tools

Mission-driven government provides an opportunity to reimagine the role of the Treasury and design mission-oriented public finance tools and institutions.

HM Treasury's mandate and purpose

HMT exerts power through a range of mechanisms that enable or restrict government spending. Since 2010, high priority has been placed on reducing departmental spending and officials have often seen their role as a check and balance on department plans. But HMT is a highly political department and very responsive to the chancellor's direction. **Under the last Labour Government, one interviewee said the "Treasury saw its role as actually trying to deliver something with the money, not just performing the role of the money police,"** in particular on cross-government priorities such as child poverty.

If the government's missions were deeply internalised by HMT, as one interviewee noted, "that would be a really powerful position." A mission-driven Treasury should be "part of the mission boards as an equal contributor," with officials seeing their primary role as using the broad range of HMT's powers to advance the mission.

Mission-oriented procurement

A mission-oriented procurement practice means recognising the strategic role that it can play in achieving the government's policy goals and going beyond the social value approach, towards a broader notion of public value (Mazzucato and Wainwright, forthcoming). This would take into account the dynamic, long-term impact of procurement contracts on the direction of the wider market, in line with mission goals, as well as the quality of processes and relationships created as a result. Using procurement strategically as a lever to drive missions requires procurement officers who feel empowered and confident. If the culture of procurement teams remains risk averse, or wedded to procurement as a neutral, transactional process, then changes to policy may not be enough to change practice.

Public finance institutions

The governance structures of public financial institutions, such as wealth funds and development banks, means they are not normally under pressure to deliver short-term returns and so can invest in long-term, transformative projects (Mazzucato et al, 2022). These institutions are vital contributors to mission implementation, with the power to direct public finance and crowd in private finance in line with mission goals. Mission-oriented mandates for development banks, such as those deployed by Germany's KfW and Brazil's BNDES, signal a desired direction for the economy and help to catalyse investments in areas for which markets do not yet exist (Mazzucato and Macfarlane, 2023).

Recommendations

20. Refresh the Treasury's mandate and operations, including:

- a. Embedding missions and core mission metrics in the structure of HMT, with progression clearly linked to officials' creative problem-solving in delivery.
- b. Co-locating Treasury officials in departments or with mission teams for part of the week to build a sense of shared ownership over the missions.
- c. Sending a strong early message that the government believes the purpose of tax policy is behaviour change as well as raising revenue.
- d. Make it clear that it expects Treasury officials to consider *all* policy levers as suitable for advancing the missions.

21. Change procurement rules and frameworks so the commissioning authorities are able to leverage their budgets in pursuit of the government's missions, including:

- a. Establishing a mission-oriented National Procurement Strategy, based on the principles of market-shaping, mission-orientation and public value maximisation.
- b. Establishing a training programme for procurement leaders in local government, arm's-length bodies and other public sector anchor institutions to embed the principles of a mission-driven procurement approach.

22. Embed a missions framework in public finance institutions, for example by:

- a. Aligning major public financial institutions with the government's missions, such that their grant, loan and equity investments become vehicles for financing the development of bottom-up solutions that respond to mission goals, crowding in private finance and leading to a multiplier effect - for example, institutions such as UK Government Investments (UKGI), UK Export Finance (UKEF), the UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) and the British Business Bank (BBB) (Dyson and Spencer, 2023).⁷
- b. Supporting local areas to develop community wealth funds in ways that support the government's missions, following Camden's lead (Mazzucato et al, 2022).

⁷ Further work in FGF's Rebuilding the Nation series will build out recommendations on the future of public banks and funds.

Conclusion

Prepare to govern differently

If the UK sees a transition of power in 2024/25, the next government will inherit a stagnant economy, public services in crisis and a stalling climate transition. Tackling these challenges will require a fundamentally different approach. Mission-driven government presents an opportunity to invest in social and environmental goals as a strategy for driving growth that works for people and the planet. But it requires a different type of state - one that leans into its role in shaping markets, catalysing cross-sectoral innovation and investment, and directing growth to align with bold missions.

Missions reimagine statecraft as networked, delivery-focused, innovative and collaborative, and set the state up for a more humble mode of governance, orchestrating across all layers of local, regional and devolved government and beyond, while creating a collective sense of national renewal across society.

A new government is never more powerful than in the first days and weeks, and should use that time to make radical, mission-driven commitments. It should also implement the enabling structures required across the whole of government, so that when the political reality of international and domestic crises consume the prime minister and chancellor's time, the importance of the missions is not lost.

To realise the potential of a mission-oriented approach, it cannot remain a superficial narrative device. It must become the trigger for a fundamental overhaul of how the government works, to make it fit to address the complex and urgent challenges facing the UK today. This report has outlined concrete steps to shift towards leading with purpose and governing in partnership.

Appendix A: Suggested mission governance structure

Design challenge: mission director

As set out in the diagram on the next page, the mission director will have responsibility for leading the Mission Unit and line-managing the five mission teams. They will therefore be a very significant figure in government, and their performance in the role will be critical to the successful delivery of the government's missions. A new mission-driven government will have to make a decision on who the mission director should be.

The government may wish to consider the following design principles:

- The mission director should be an individual with a public profile that signals government commitment to the missions and attracts involvement from businesses, civil society and local government.
- They should be an expert in public administration, with a detailed understanding of the missions approach and an ability to collaborate constructively across Whitehall and with local and regional government.
- They should share, or at least be able to represent, the political priorities of the prime minister.

Design challenge: mission teams

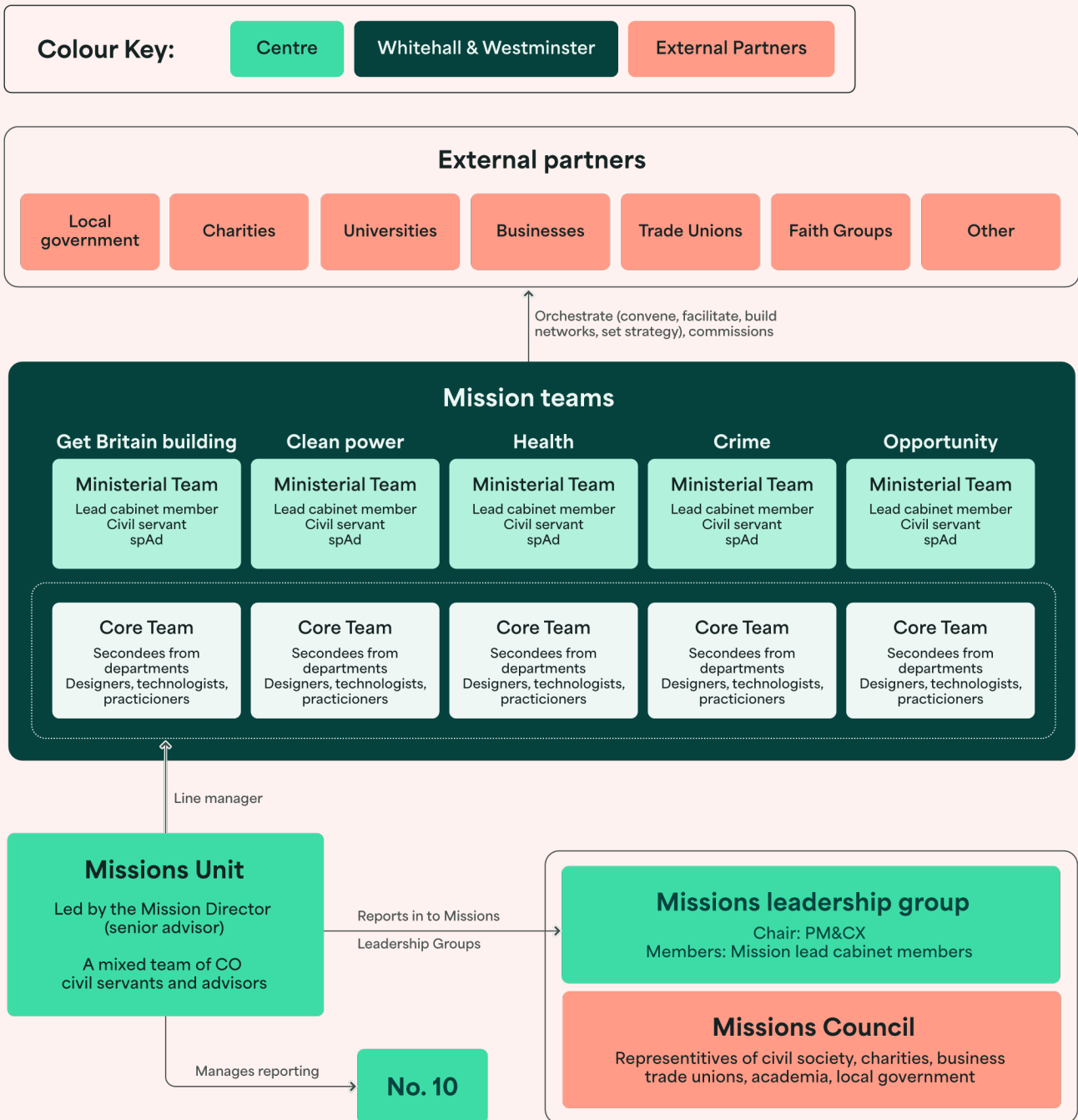
As set out in the diagram on the next page, a mission-driven government would establish a mission team for each of its missions. These teams would be multi-disciplinary, bringing together secondees from across government, as well as designers, data analysts, technologists, subject matter experts, and practitioners in democratic deliberation and participation. They would be responsible for the orchestration of mission delivery in government and across relevant industries and sectors. A new government will have to decide where in Whitehall the mission teams sit.

The government may wish to consider the following design principles:

- The mission teams should have direct accountability to the mission director.
- The mission teams will need to report to ministerial teams comprising the lead cabinet member, other relevant secretaries of state and SPADs.
- The missions teams will need to be able to engage broadly across Whitehall and externally.

The government may wish to consider the following design principles:

- Locate the mission teams within the Cabinet Office.
- Locate the mission teams within No.10.
- Locate the mission teams in government departments corresponding to their lead cabinet members.



Appendix B: Design considerations for a mission evaluation framework

The Greater London Authority (GLA) has been running a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) since 2019. The way it works in practice is a good example of a mission-driven institution: aiming for transformative change, with a mandate to innovate and tackle problems differently, and working in deep partnership with communities. VRUs have since been set up across the country; researchers involved in evaluating their work provided important reflections on their approach (Caulfield et al, 2023). The key takeaways, which should inform the development of a missions accountability framework, are:

Evaluation should aim to increase understanding of system dynamics, not just seek to prove impact of interventions.

- Don't just ask 'Is it working?' but ask 'Who is it working for? Where? Why?'
- Focus on identifying plausible connections between interventions and outcomes, rather than attributing single causal factors.
- Evaluate 'out' to understand the government's role in the system, as well as 'down' to understand the impact of commissioned interventions.
- Build up a wide set of data around the issue, but do not try to reduce the mission down to one or two (or five) key metrics.

Evaluation should be participative, and based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, underpinned by a strong theory of change.

- Use a live theory of change to give evaluations context, co-produced with system stakeholders.
- Observe and reflect on process, decision-making and a theory of power,⁸ rather than relying only on quantitative targets and good data.
- Make evaluation 'on the ground' and participative - not just reporting numbers up the chain.
- Work in the open as much as possible - close feedback loops with communities who have fed into the evaluation.

For evaluation to be meaningful and helpful, it has to be designed in from the start, not commissioned afterwards.

- Include evaluation experts in mission teams from the start.

⁸ "It is very difficult to achieve lasting change without a theory of power. There are two aspects to this: a clear sense both of how power needs to be (re)distributed and how to deploy the machinery of government to deliver this" (Tinline, 2024. [Into Power 02: The Conservative Party's 2010 Transition from Opposition to Government](#)).

- Use the first year of mission work to develop coherent theories of change, build system coalitions and design an evaluation approach, rather than trying to deliver interventions.

While these points reflect the experience of the VRU, they centre on post-hoc evaluation rather than ongoing accountability and assurance. A live theory of change, as noted, is essential to give evaluations context and can be used to underpin an accountability framework by highlighting the changes that might be expected as a mission-driven government works towards its goal. Integrating a rapid feedback loop into an accountability framework via indicators of change will enable a government to learn, adapt and iterate its approach.

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