Mission-Oriented Innovation: A local perspective

18th PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION CONFERENCE
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21 August 2024

Mission-oriented innovation?

(Let's be honest guys we can't do this)

Overview

1. Why we can't do it in South Africa

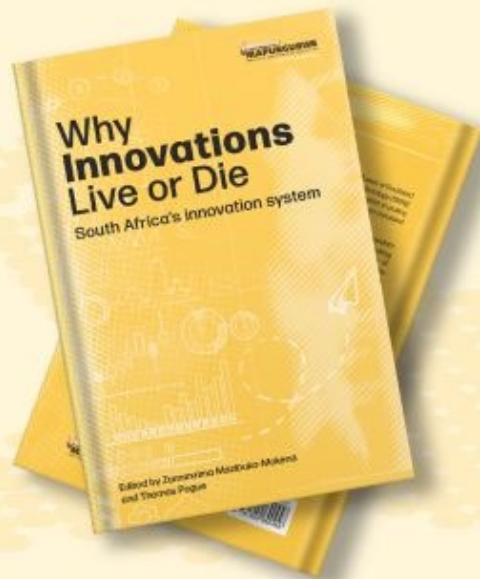2. Why we must do it, still

3. How might we get there

MOI: Why we can't do it in South Africa

- **We've seen this before –** Apartheid Era nuclear technology and space programs; DST's Grand Challenges; IDC and TIA sector challenges; the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Program; etc..

Why Innovations Live or Die
South Africa's innovation system

FACTOR	EXAMPLES OF WHAT THESE FACTORS CAN IMPACT AT DIFFERENT LEVELS:		
	Individual/team	Organisational	System(s)
Barriers and drivers	Lack of skills and capacity Funding Personal traits	Lack of incentives Bureaucracy, management, leadership Sharing of knowledge	Lack of flexibility in laws and policy Structural constraints Political factors Social and technological factors Theoretical and policy failure
Risk, un-certainty and shocks	Consequences of failure (negative performance appraisal) Unintended consequences such as the exclusion of certain individuals	Culture of risk avoidance (negative consequence management practices) Job losses	Negative consequences such as dependency or unemployment Wicked problems
Agency	Ability and support to navigate the structure of social relations underlying processes	Ability and support to navigate inter-institutional dynamics	Ability and support to navigate policy and legislative dynamics

MOI: Why we can't do it in South Africa

or YOU

APPROPRIATENESS?

- **Political pressures:** prioritize short-term electoral gains over long-term investments in innovation.
- **Policy inconsistency:** unstable environment for long-term projects.
- **Ineffective evaluation:** failure to learn & termination of promising MOI projects.
- **Social unrest:** disrupts economic activities and hinders innovation.

CAPABILITY?

- **Financial constraints:** budgetary pressures, and large-scale MOI initiatives require substantial investments.
- **Human capital limitations:** shortage of skilled personnel, particularly in STEM
- **Overreliance on external expertise:** reliance on foreign consultants or technology hinders the development of local capabilities.
- **Dependency on global markets:** fluctuations in global markets impacts the success of MOI initiatives.

PERFORMANCE?

- **Bureaucracy:** Complex bureaucratic processes slow down decision-making and implementation of projects.
- **Corruption:** diverts resources and undermines the effectiveness of MOI initiatives.
- **Weak governance:** hampers collaboration and coordination among stakeholders.
- **Overwhelmed with multiple priorities and constraints:** Energy crisis, infrastructure deficits, and complex socio-economic challenges

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African Centre of Excellence in Digital Governance

MOI: Why we can't do it in South Africa

- In Summary: **MOI has no chance here.**

Why we must do it, still

- "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, **not because they are easy, but because they are hard**, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win."

— John F. Kennedy

Why we must do it, still

- **More urgently & impactfully address our serious challenges:** SA faces complex problems that require innovative solutions (in health, water, energy, etc.). MOI can mobilise resources and expertise to tackle these challenges head-on.

- **We need to secure livelihoods and economic growth:** By focusing on solving societal problems, MOI can stimulate economic growth and create new job opportunities, especially in emerging sectors.

- **Inclusive Innovation:** MOI can promote inclusive growth by ensuring that innovation benefits all segments of society, not just the privileged few.

- **Global polycrises and opportunities:** SA can position itself as a global leader in addressing specific challenges, attracting investment and talent.

- **Public-Private Partnerships**: MOI fosters new collaboration spaces between government, academia, and industry, leading to more effective solutions.

How might we get there

FIX STRUCTURE: <u>Do the right things</u>

- Right mission(s)
- Right actors & partnering
- Appropriate system design
- Enabling ecosystems
- Leverage tech
- Pilot and Scale
- Effective outcomes
- Dynamic value-led MERL

CHANGE: <u>Do things differently</u>

e.g.

1. **Anticipatory Governance**
2. **Digital Transformation**
3. **Creative procurement**

Anticipatory Governance
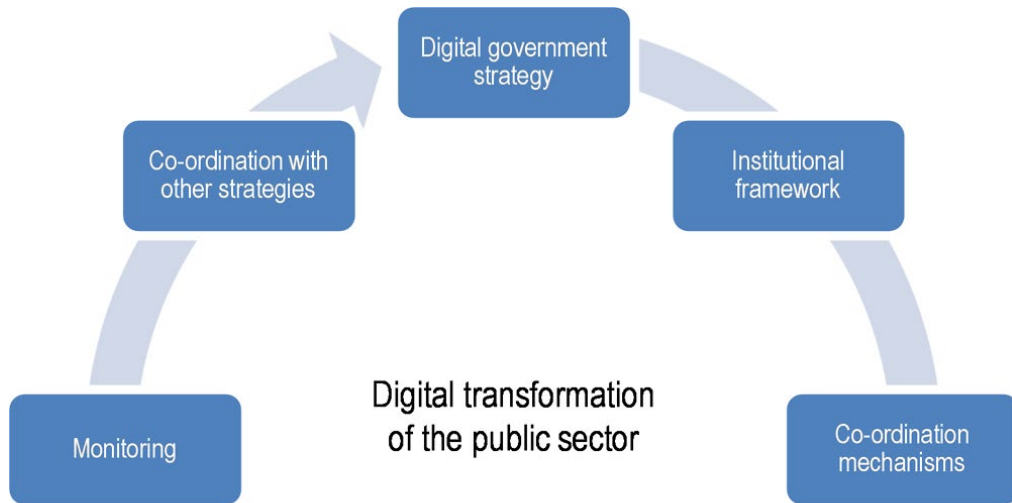

See UN Summit of the Future and CPSI active foresight partnerships

OECD-OPSI, 2023

A shift in logic...

	Mode-I Linear	Mode-II Evolutionary	Mode-III Co-evolutionary
	'CLEVER': complex	'SMART': emergent complexity	'WISE': deeper complexity
WIDER: (actors & factors)	Elite/experts with top-down programme	Elite/experts with open enterprise	Participative co-learning & co-production
DEEPER: (social, technical etc)	Technical & functional analysis	Multi-functional analysis	Multi-dimension, multi-valent, analysis-synthesis
FURTHER: innovation/transition	Problem-solving foresight: for technical innovation	Opportunity-seeking entrepreneurial innovation	Agenda setting foresight & transformative innovation
CIRCULAR: (process)			
Relational thinking: co-learning	Tangible system mapping	Systems of incentives, competition, enterprise	Cognitive capital & *connexus* mapping
Divergent thinking: co-knowledge	Tangible trends / scenarios	Evolutionary trends/scenarios	Alternative futures & synergistic potential
Emergent thinking: co-creation	Specific problem-solving	Innovation & problem insight	Societal co-design & co-innovation
Convergent thinking: co-production	Specific actions/responses	Enterprise strategy & road-mapping	Societal transformation pathways

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Ravetz (2020) Deeper City

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation of the public sector

- Transform **why** we do things
- Transform **what** we do
- Transform **how** we do things
- Transform **who** and what we do things **with**

Citizen-Driven Development happening next door!

Creative procurement

- "Creative procurement refers to new ideas and ways of implementing procurement. It seeks to promote procurement as a strategic policy instrument that can be tailored to support the different objectives and circumstances of municipal government. It is an applied and creative practice, distinct from traditional procurement, which is seen as an administrative compliance procedure for the contracting of goods and services."

- *Creative Procurement Legislative and Regulatory Review Note (2023)* identified that "the legislative and regulatory space exists to try innovative approaches to procurement, however this is in the context of **limited capacity** and a **lack of institutional enablement** to do so"

- "Imagine **how municipal SCM policies could strengthen procurement as an applied creative discipline to support cities' development goals**."

(Creative Public Procurement presentation, National Treasury, 2023)
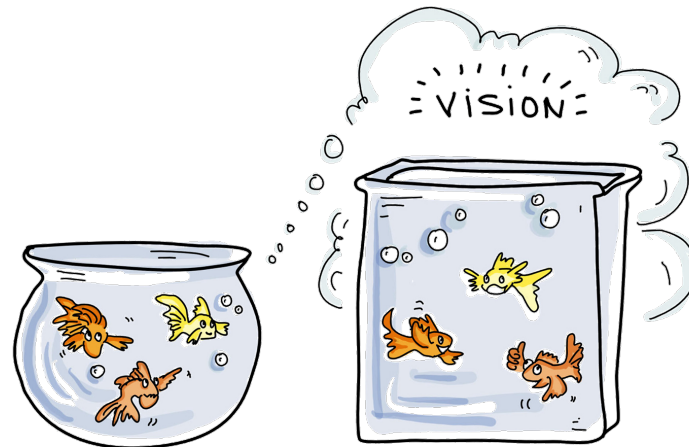
3 sh**i**fts for the future:

HOW DO WE *THINK NEW THINGS*?

:**imagine**:

new **THINKING** for futures

- Creating new forms, reforming old paradigms, and (re)inventing our futures
- Challenging assumptions and conventional, hegemonic "wisdoms"
- Innovation and creative problem-solving
- Local, public engagement and visioning
- Empathy and pluralist perspectives

!Reproducing futures

Radical inclusion: creating spaces and systems that actively embrace and value the participation and contributions of people from all backgrounds, identities and perspectives

!Exclusive futures

3 shifts for the future:

HOW DO WE *WORK WITH PEOPLE IN NEW WAYS*?

:include:

new **PROCESSES** for futures

ONE VS MANY

Dismantle systemic barriers and biases that exclude marginalised groups and perpetuate inequalities:

▪ Power imbalances and structural inequalities

▪ Invisibilities, voicelessness

▪ Safe and welcome spaces

▪ Intersectionality of identities, experiences

▪ Systemic barriers and unlearning biases

▪ "Invited" vs. "invented" spaces

!Sustaining old power structures

Transversal governance transcends hierarchical boundaries
- Horizontal cooperation and collaboration among different actors
- Participatory decision-making processes
- Systemic approach to complex challenges
- Adaptive, flexible & iterative approaches to policy design and implementation
- Integration of policies, strategies, actions across various sectors and levels
- Importance of multilevel governance
- Promotes knowledge exchange, learning and capacity building
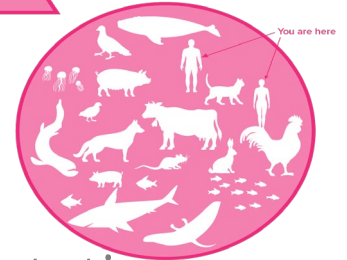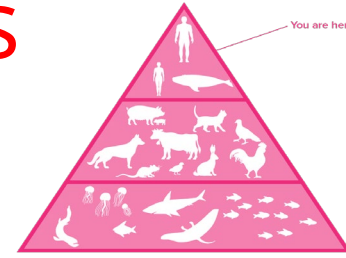
3 shifts for the future:

HOW DO WE *ACTUALLY ENABLE NEW WAYS*?

:institutionalise:

new **SYSTEMS & ENVIRONMENTS** for futures

3 shifts for the future:

HOW DO WE *THINK NEW THINGS*?

:imagine
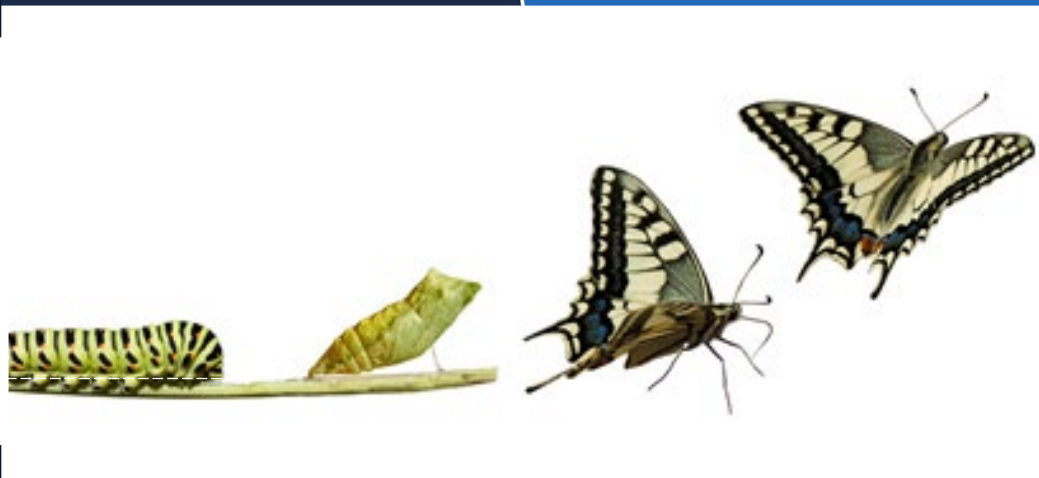
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Let's talk...
Questions?
Ideas?

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