Public Sector Knowledge Management and Innovation

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Overview

Innovation terrain
The CPSI
Understanding Innovation and Knowledge Management
The Public Sector, KM and Innovation
Drivers in Public Sector innovation
The Process
Food for thought
Innovation terrain in SA

National System of Innovation – driven by Dept. of Science & Technology through TIA, NACI, Science Councils and Tertiary Institutions

Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) – Protect SA’s IP and consolidate innovation initiatives and funding

National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) - advises the Minister of Science & Technology on the role and contribution of innovation in S&T in promoting and achieving national objectives

Innovation Hub (Gauteng, Blue IQ), SMART XCHANGE (Durban), MERAKA Institute
Innovation terrain in SA

The focus has been mainly on science and technology related innovations – recent OECD review of NACI identified a gap that this does not reach or impact on public service delivery

Collaboration with CPSI addresses that gap (service delivery & social innovation)

- Key word – COMPLEMENTARITY
Established in 2001 by Minister for Public Service and Administration with a mandate to drive innovation in the public sector.

Minister is “responsible for establishing norms and standards relating to transformation, reform, innovation and any other matter, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service and its service delivery to the public”.

Public Service Act of 1994 as amended in 2007

In 2008 became the first Government Component (new corporate form) through the Public Service Act as amended in 2007.
Why is Knowledge Management so important for Innovation?

“Expose yourself to the best things humans have done and then try to bring those things into what you are doing.”

Steve Jobs
Recognition of the CPSI's contribution to Knowledge Management
What is PS Innovation?

Defining Innovation (cutting to the chase)

- In a public sector context, it is the creation and implementation of new processes, methodologies, models, products, services and methods of delivery which result in significant improvements in outcomes efficiency, effectiveness or quality (for the benefit of citizens) – Mulgan & Albury (2003)

- “innovation” means the process of transforming an idea, generally generated through research and development, into a new or improved product, process or approach, which relates to the real needs of society and which involves scientific, technological, organisational or commercial activities (NACI Act 55 of 1997)

All definitions from local & international literature, NSI, CPSI, etc. come back to the same interpretation: In a nutshell, it’s about creativity and implementing novel ideas for enhanced performance. It is not only the new product, process or service (noun) but also the process of bringing new ideas into use (verb)
Defining Innovation

- Social Based Innovation is the ability to influence social actions in such a way that benefit is obtained by the social group in its 'tribal' setting, behaving in a way that value is captured by the collective (Systemic Logic).

- Creativity that is contextually relevant (CPSI)

- It's about queues, a patient, enhancing access to government services for rural & vulnerable groups, poverty alleviation in a village, feeding school children, communication gadgets, delivering medicine to the elderly, mobile services, new type of housing, etc.
What is PS KM?

Ability to get the right information, in the right format, at the right time, to the right person, by the right person.

Coordination of the body of knowledge in the public service (explicit knowledge) – 'we don’t know what we know'

Preservation of unrecorded knowledge & experience (tacit): 20% + staff turnover

Creation of platforms for learning and sharing and products for dissemination

Making research and new knowledge accessible

Writing up, learning from, and replicating good practices
Why do we need KM & innovation in the Public Sector? (it is not profit driven with no real 'competition' and 'no market share')

- Despite all the developed policies, legislation, transformation, institutional and otherwise, capacity building, there are still major challenges around service delivery (crime, education, health, etc.)
  
  Growing (and more sophisticated) demand from citizens and a rapidly changing environment - thus the need to provide prompt, improved and personalised public services

  Highly diverse society where the “one-size-fits-all” approach that informed the establishment of the public services is outdated – thus a strong need for innovative approaches to policy and practice

  Huge service delivery / poverty related backlogs

  Limited funding and capacity

  We are still using outdated knowledge and ideas (e.g. Maslow – what are basic needs)
Public sector, KM & Innovation

Government has to create an enabling environment for the (knowledge) economy and society to thrive.

E.g. ease of doing business: WB *Doing Business 2010 Report* ranking: 34 (Mauritius: 17)

We are in a knowledge economy where competitiveness is based on the investment in research and innovation: level of investment in R&D below 1% of GDP – and the fields and quality of research not always 'cutting edge'.

Research to create new knowledge to respond to unsolved challenges

- We need a **solution-focused developmental Public Service** (CPSI's vision)
Knowledge to do our jobs
We are grappling in silos whilst faced by the same challenges
Consultants exploit us by reselling the same work to different departments
Loss of tacit knowledge cost government millions (if not billions)
Explicit knowledge and information not exploited (poor filing, not known, lost) – Do we have.....? No! We said that 10 years ago..... Examples: Electricity capacity, Acid mine water decant

NB: Knowledge Management and innovation is not neutral! We are the custodians. What knowledge we decide to share (or not to share) may have serious consequences. It may improve the quality of life of citizens or destroy livelihoods. (Atom bomb vs nuclear power)
Innovation is about the 'soft' issues

Honesty and Transparency about the challenges

Openness and genuineness about achievements and failures (learning from failures)

- Need to be Politically un-Correct (leave politics to the politicians)

- Flippancy and arrogance in interpretation political agendas & priorities

Careerism (and fear of career limiting actions)

Enjoying the comfort zones, distance between policy makers and the coal face
Respect and Understanding

Research agenda: understanding the fundamental causes of service delivery challenges?

Jointly and collaboratively investigate and confirm service delivery challenges and policy failures / policy implementation failures.

Respect for the citizen.
Innovation is about the 'soft' issues

Altruism (re-igniting passion and compassion)

Humaneness – passion for changing lives for the better

Empathy
With the citizen receiving the service
With the frontline public servant

Spirituality – reconnecting with your values

Holistic view of citizens' needs

"Finding it within yourself to do something about it"

Health and Wellness: how can we expect a medical worker to care for others if we do not care for her?
Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

Public sector institutions have a zero-failure, risk-unfriendly culture governed by the PFMA, M&E is outcomes based, baffling procurement practices, thus there a need for:
   Innovation funding for research, testing & piloting

   Best/good practice and lessons sharing, diversity in wisdom

Private sector drive and entrepreneurship

   Academic rigor

   Service delivery focus – CPSI does not deliver a service

• Triple Helix model: government, academia, industry in partnership

   Co-innovations for mutually beneficial solutions: private innovations to public, public innovations to private – leveraging each other’s strengths

Innovation is about networking
Cross-sector integration

Integrated nature of challenges (poverty, unemployment, education, housing)

- Breaking down departmental silos & fostering cross-departmental and cross-sphere co-operation and coordination
  - Holistic approach - teaching, feeding children, organising social grant, employing parents at school
  - Trans-disciplinary solutions – finding solutions in other sectors

Role of CPSI as:
  Facilitator & Catalyst
  Knowledge Broker
  Systems Integrator
  Enabler

Innovation is about networking
Create Space for creativity and innovative thinking

Space and unlock resources for
Interrogating challenges and potential solutions collaboratively (with experts and stakeholders)
Dreaming, thinking differently, challenging paradigms
Testing and piloting, failing and starting again
Risk taking

“MULTIMEDIA INNOVATION CENTRE”
Management guidance
Technical assistance
Support in developing and financing implementation
Repository of innovation related content

“South Africa Alive with Possibility”
From Good Practice to General Practice:
Replicating and scaling up

Knowledge Management infused into projects:

- Once a solution has been piloted with success it should be mainstreamed / implemented within own sphere of influence, then
- Shared with other provinces or departments or service delivery institutions for replication (adapting)
- It is a prerequisite for innovation (roots) to prevent us from continuously reinventing the wheel (once A GREAT innovation)
- It is an outflow of innovation (fruit) because we want to replicate GREAT innovations.

Need to be adopted as a ‘way of life’
Innovation is about a learning culture and sharing of knowledge

**Learning from each other**

- Ideation - opportunities for generating and sharing ideas
- Conversation – engaging, peer criticism
- Exposure – the answer may be sitting next to you in a conference
- Analysis – getting to the bottom of an issue
- Continuous building of capacity
Innovation is about a learning culture and sharing of knowledge

Understanding the bigger picture

Need for responsiveness (address pressing matters)

Knowledge of real problems
Knowledge of available practices: Wealth of international and local resources – UNPAN, UN, WBI, EU, OECD, Professional bodies (such as CAPAM), journals, COPs and other platforms

Need for pro-activeness (future looking)

Climate Change
Migration
Pandemics
Technological Developments
Sustainable Development
It always seems impossible until it’s done.  

Nelson Mandela
Innovation is a process and a product

Stimulate and support ideas for innovation

Investigate and confirm service delivery challenges

Analyse and learn - put effective knowledge management system in place.

Promote and diffuse successful innovation/solution
PROMOTE & DIFFUSE SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION

STIMULATE & SUPPORT IDEAS FOR INNOVATION

Creative and enabling environment

REFLECTION

INVESTIGATE & CONFIRM NEEDS & CHALLENGES
EXPLORE RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS

Research and Development

Implementation and replication

Validation & Adapt

Selection

Pilot & test

Analysis and Learning

Creative and enabling environment

Partner & Stakeholder Management

Diversity & Change Management

Knowledge Management

Strategic Management
A recent Korean study found that ‘goal clarity’ has a significant negative relationship with innovativeness. Is it possible that an overemphasis on setting “Vision, Mission & Objectives” and M&E systems may impede risk taking and creative thinking?

“We have world class policies but implementation is a problem”
Who is the custodian of this value judgment? Executive, academics, senior officials? Do the practitioners agree?

Need for Pragmatism. Innovation should be:
Just right (spot on)
Clear, simple, understandable and implementable in a meaningful way
Talk to citizens’ needs – be well informed by practical realities
Siyabonga

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