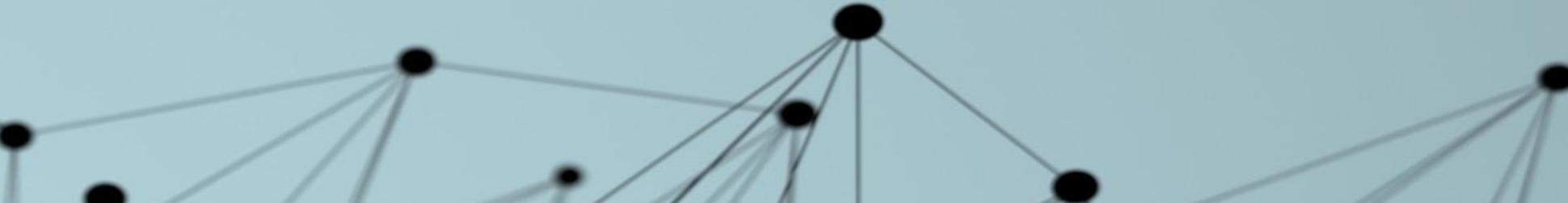


# Design, Policy and Government

Professor Sir Geoff Mulgan



# Design?

Herbert Simon : *'the intellectual activity that produces material artifacts is no different fundamentally from the one that prescribes remedies for a sick patient or the one that devises a new sales plan for a company or a social welfare policy for a state .... in large part, the proper study of mankind is the science of design, not only as the professional component of a technical education but as a core discipline for every educated person'.*

*'All fields that create designs...engineering, medicine, business, architecture, and painting are concerned not with the necessary but with the contingent – not with how things are but with how they might be – in short, with design.'*

-

So how does government need to be designed or redesigned?

# Top down



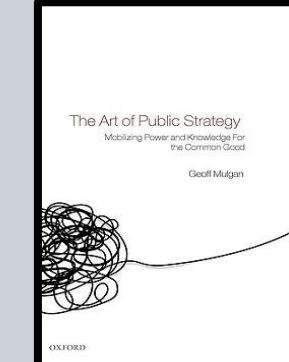
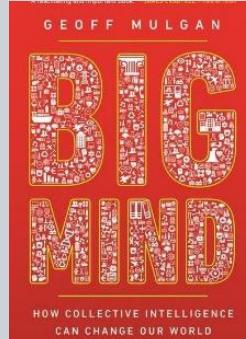
# ...bottom up



# ...in between



# ...and writing books





**ANOTHER WORLD  
IS POSSIBLE**

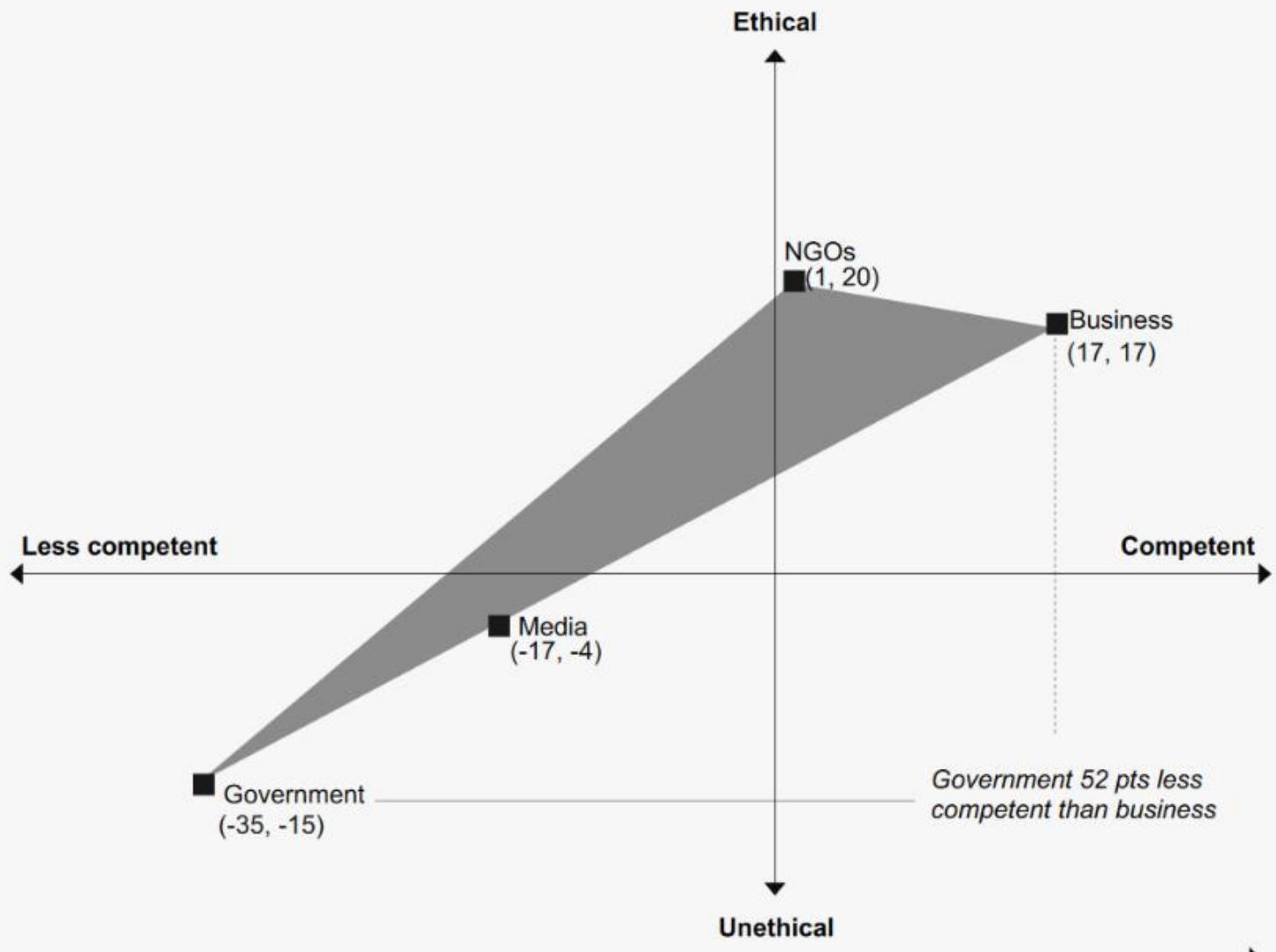
**GEOFF MULGAN**

**WHEN  
SCIENCE  
MEETS  
POWER**  
Geoff Mulgan

# Institutions Out of Balance: Government Seen as Far Less Competent and Ethical than Business

(Competence score, net ethical score)

**GLOBAL 25** Excludes China, S. Korea, Thailand

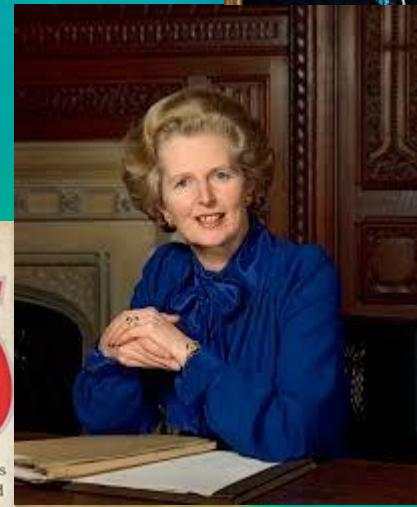
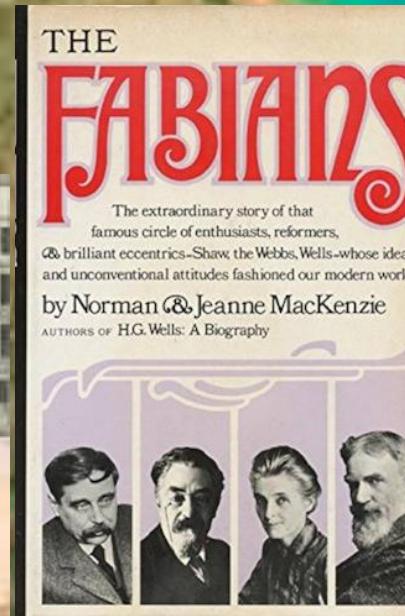
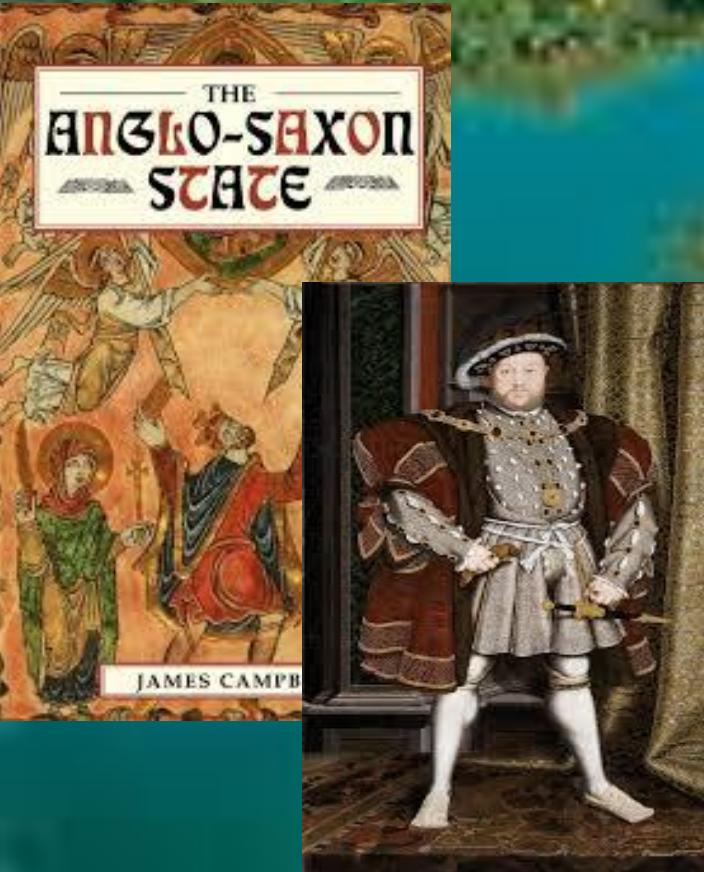


2024 Edelman Trust Barometer. The ethical scores are averages of nets based on [INS]\_PER\_DIM/1-4. Media and NGOs were only asked of half the sample.

The competence score is a net based on TRU\_3D\_[INS]/1. Media and NGOs were only asked of half the sample. General population, 25-mkt avg.

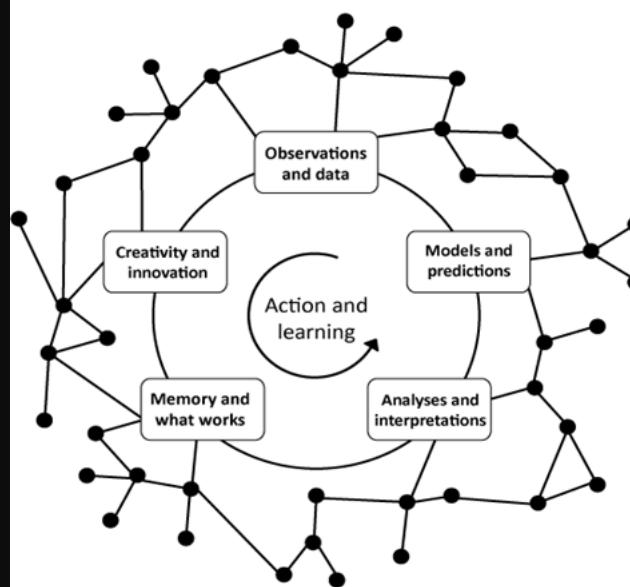
Data not collected in China and Thailand; Due to a translation inconsistency in S. Korea, it has been excluded from this analysis. For full details regarding how this data was calculated and plotted, please see the Technical Appendix.

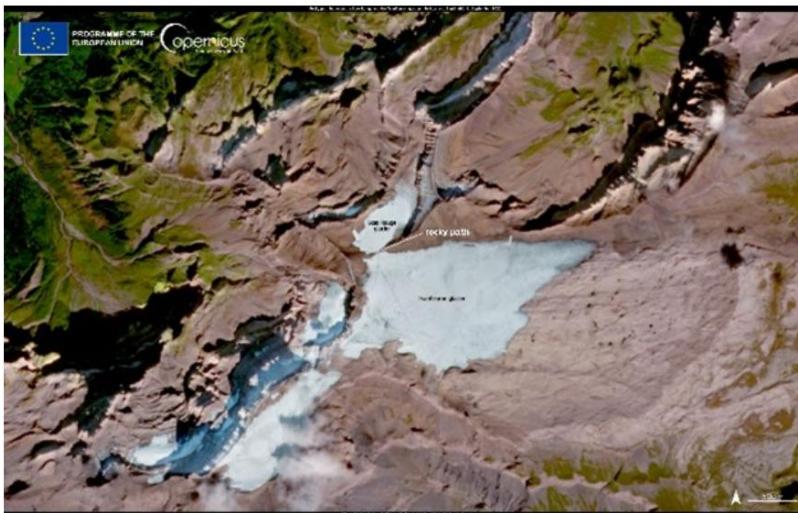
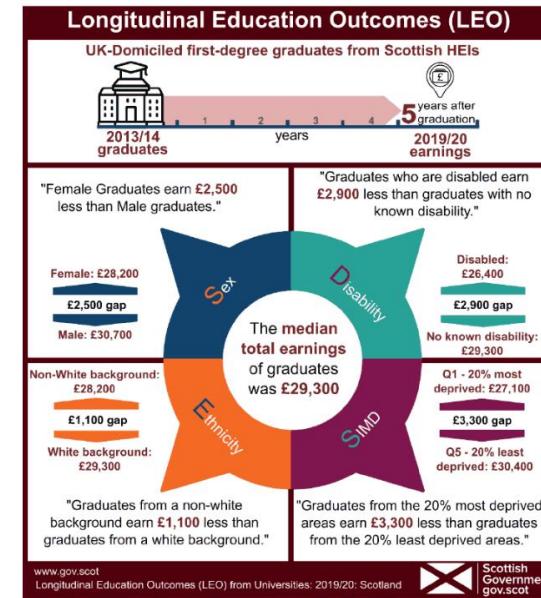
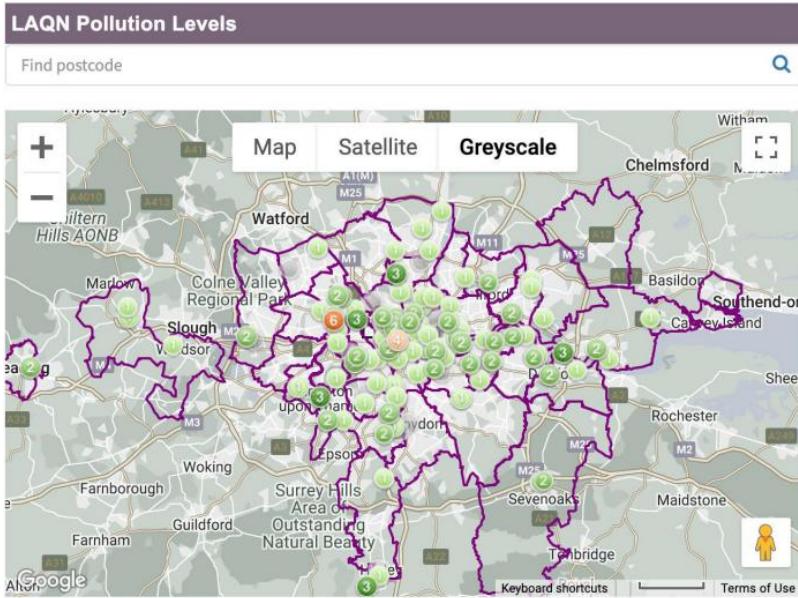
The UK state has accumulated layers of structure over the centuries ... with change usually driven by crisis, failures of competence and trust.



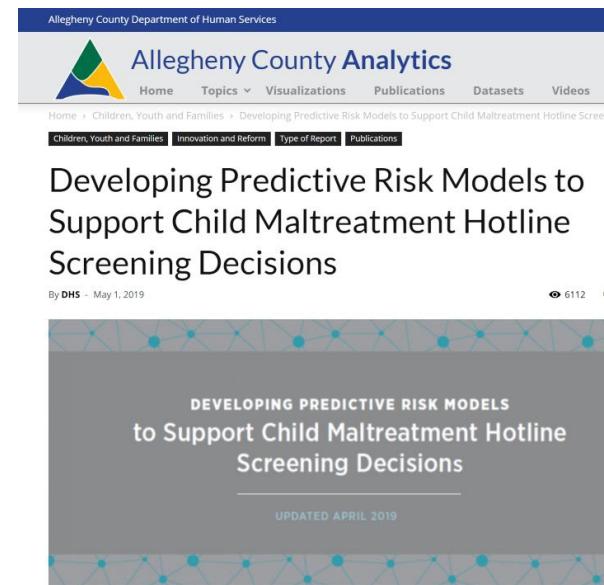
# 1. Shared intelligence as central

Government increasingly depends on the orchestration of intelligence: data, evidence, tacit knowledge, citizen knowledge, the organisation of which should sit at the heart of every government, department and agency.





European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-2 imagery of the Alpine glaciers in 2022



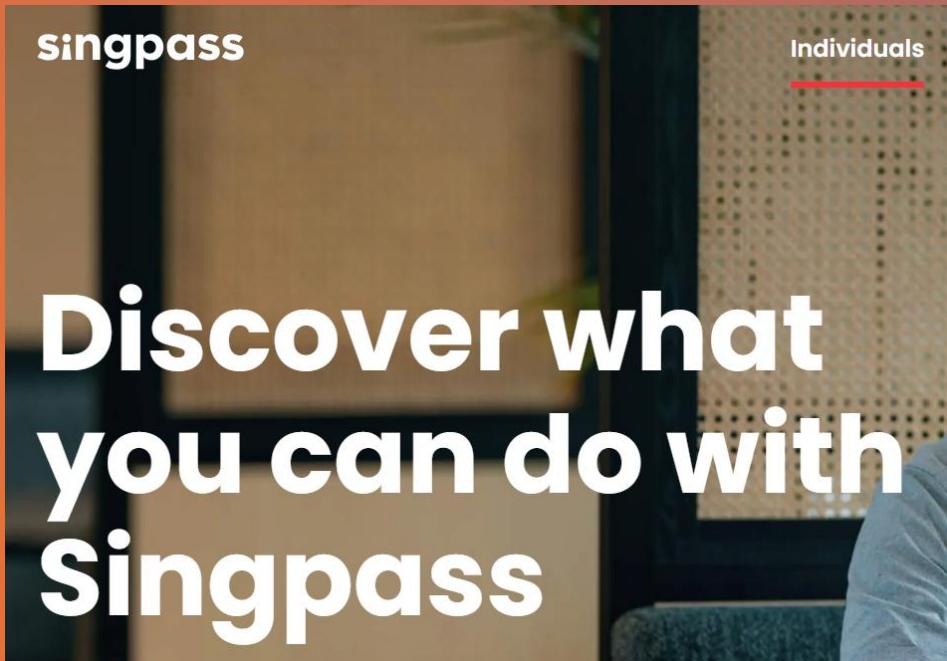
+

•

◦

# Future NHS app?

## Navigating jobs and skills?



**Open Jobs**

Combining real-time data with human know-how to empower your employment. For job-seekers, job-seekers and employers to connect.

**My search wizard**

Answer questions for the tool to know you and tailor its career suggestions to fit you. Input: type of job you're interested in, your location, your interests, subjects studied, your skills and qualifications, and your 'profile'.

**My career journey**

Understand how to get the right job with a personalised career action plan broken down. See when to make major career decisions, when to take time off, when to move changes and when you have space for experimenting and reflection. Be nudged and supported to make you take your next action and move further along your journey.

**My real-time suggestions**

If it's a job or education, input your location and see where your real opportunities are right now in real time! See learning, local of commerce and expertise areas.

**Future jobs 2030**

How will job-seekers and employers suggested for you change in the future? Use the following features to see what jobs require similar skills and where to upskill to prepare for her dream job. Click through to connect to the job advert - and let the future become now!

**My daily mix**

How will job-seekers and employers suggested for you change? Tailor to your desired occupations, lifestyle or dream location - click through to connect to the job advert - and let the future become now!

**Case studies**

**Tina, 32, Sales consultant**  
Problem: I'm at risk of becoming unemployed with the forthcoming financial crisis. I'm not sure what jobs require similar skills and where to upskill to prepare for her dream job. Click through to connect to the job advert - and let the future become now!

**Sarah, 34, Single Mother of 2, Personal Trainer**  
Problem: I'm looking for a job in the financial industry. I'm not sure what skills are most in demand. Solutions: input your skills and dream website into the search whilst, and plot your new career path. See what jobs you can do and where to upskill to land that dream job.

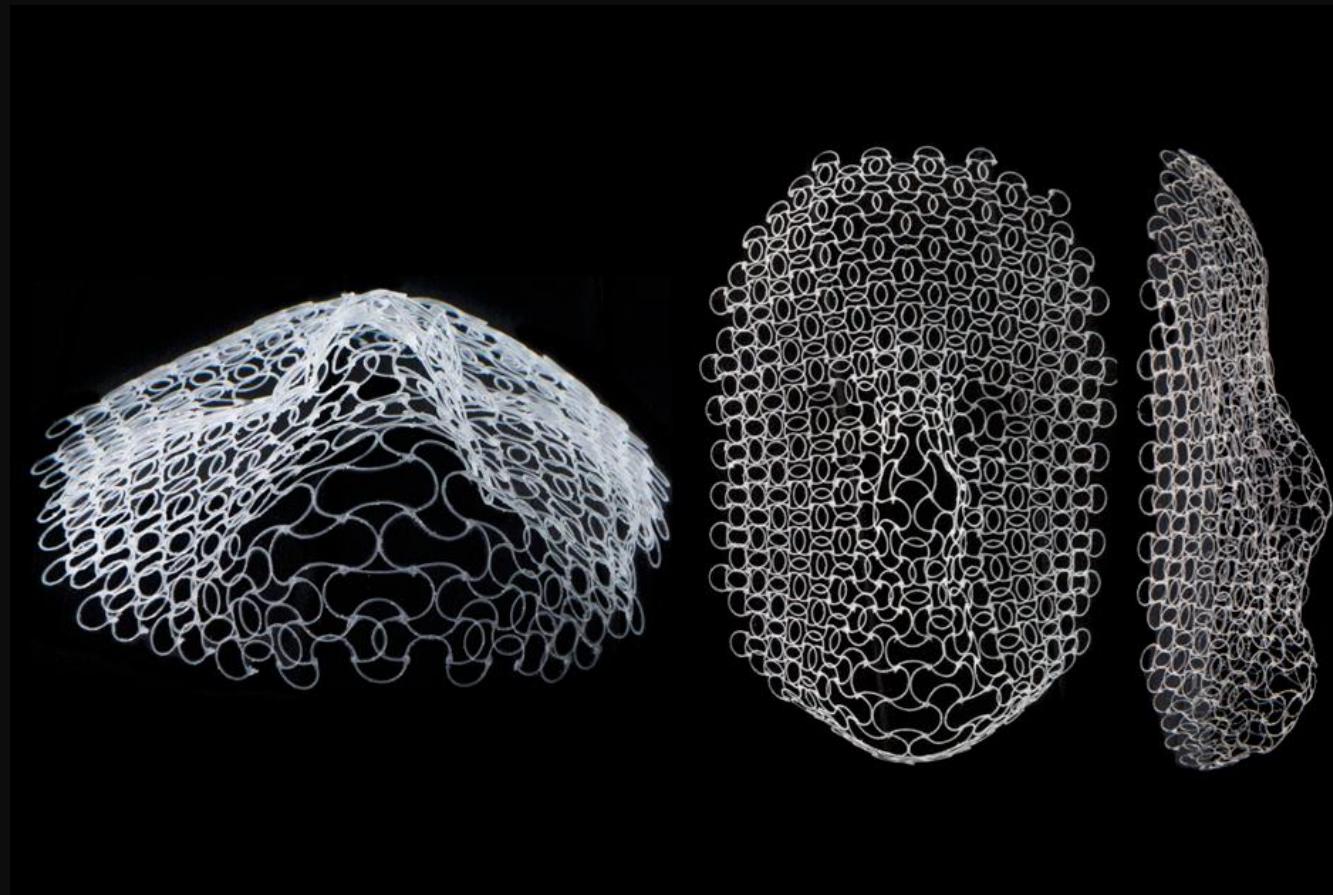
**Billy, 18, Student**  
Problem: I'm obsessed studying for GCSEs and has no idea what to do with my life. Solutions: input your subjects and dream job. Use the tool to have occupations suggested to you. Explore job through video and live chat to see what it's like to work in it. It's ready the. Pick and plot your journey to get there.

## 2. Acting as a mesh

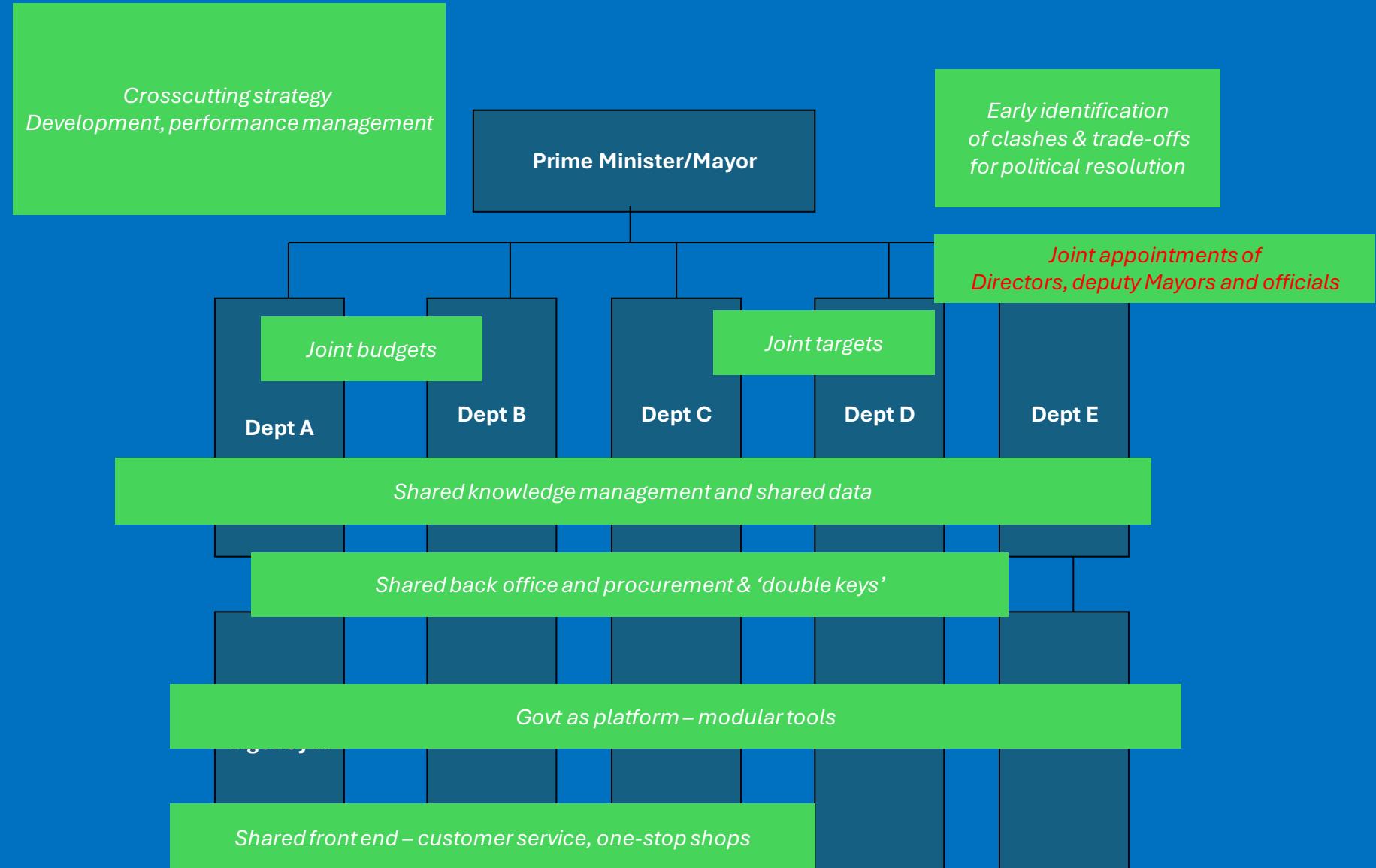
---

Most of government now has to be run as a mesh: linking multiple tiers of government as well as partnerships with business and civil society.

This points to very different organising methods to traditional administrative hierarchy. Systems; weaving; collaboration...

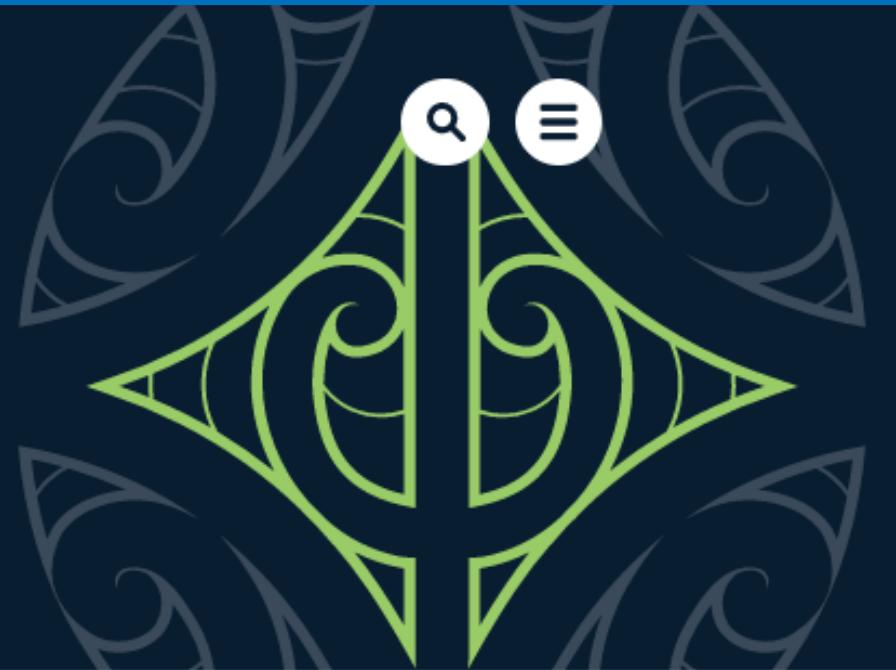


## People & Processes





# Kaiārahi rāngai **System Leads**



**System leads** are appointed under the Public Service Act 2020. System leads are mandated to lead across the Public Service in relation to a particular area or function. They do this by creating a common vision for the future, setting standards and frameworks for agencies to operate within, co-ordinating and supporting best practice and looking for opportunities to work better together.

System Leads are appointed by the Public Service Commissioner to lead and coordinate best practice in a particular subject matter across the whole or part of the State services.

↗ [Public Service Act 2020](#)

System leaders are responsible to their appropriate Minister for achieving agreed outcomes. All of the System Leads have work programmes that have been endorsed by the Government.

↗ [Improving property, procurement, digital, data and information security across the Public Service](#)

### 3. Innovation and experiment

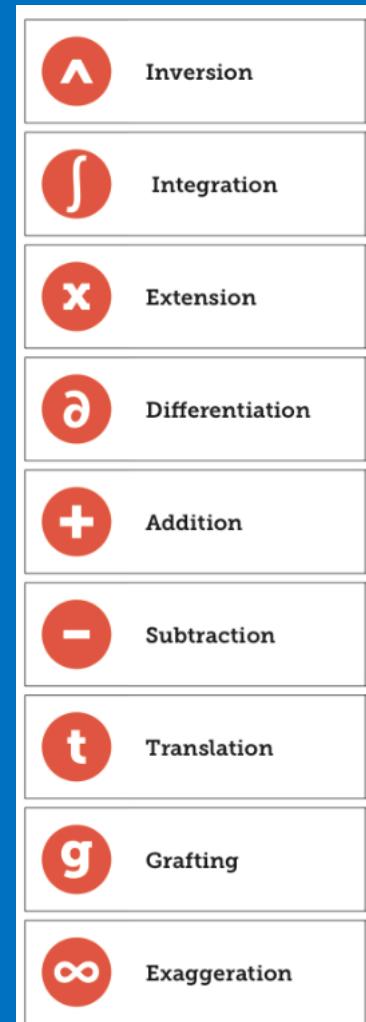
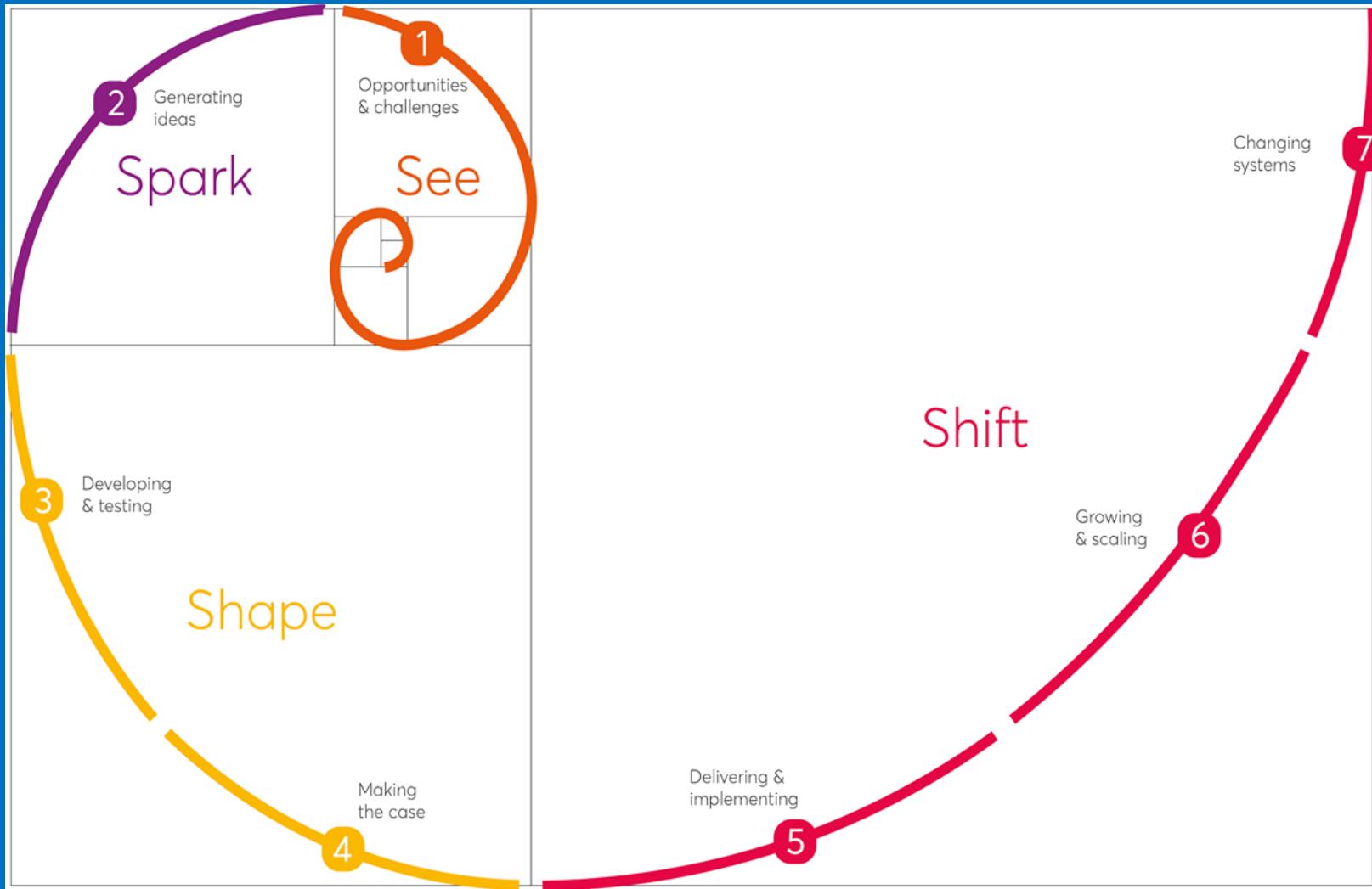
Still a striking mismatch between innovation in science and business – well funded, organised, supported – and often disorganised public innovation, despite the many labs, teams and programmes.



The screenshot shows the Edward Elgar Publishing website. The top navigation bar includes links for Subjects, Products, Browse, Services, Open Access, and Publish with us. A search bar is also present. The main content area displays a book cover for 'Advanced Introduction to Public Sector Innovation' by Geoff Mulgan. The book cover features the Edward Elgar logo and the title in a serif font. Below the cover, the text 'Paperback' and 'Elgar Advanced Introductions series' is visible, along with the author's name and the publication details: 'Publication Date: April 2026 | ISBN: 978 1 03536 357 5 | Extent: c 144 pp'.

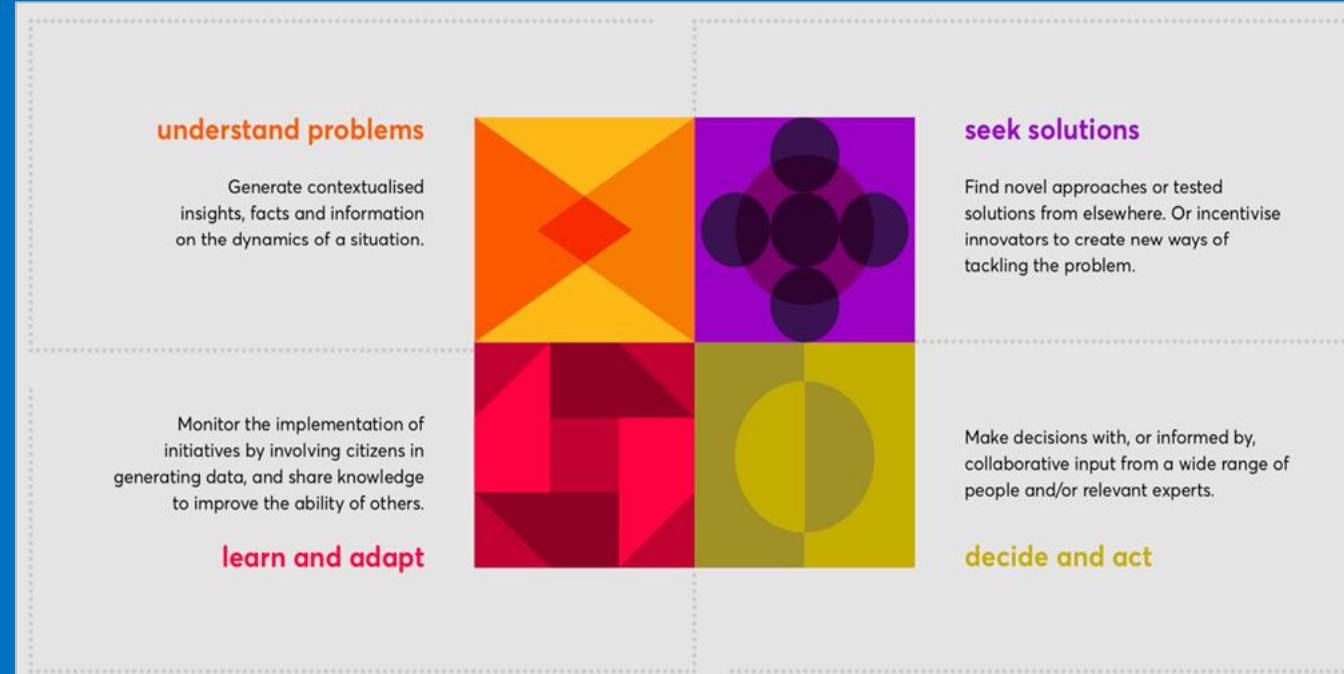


*“The country needs ... bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something. ...” FDR*





accelerator  
labs



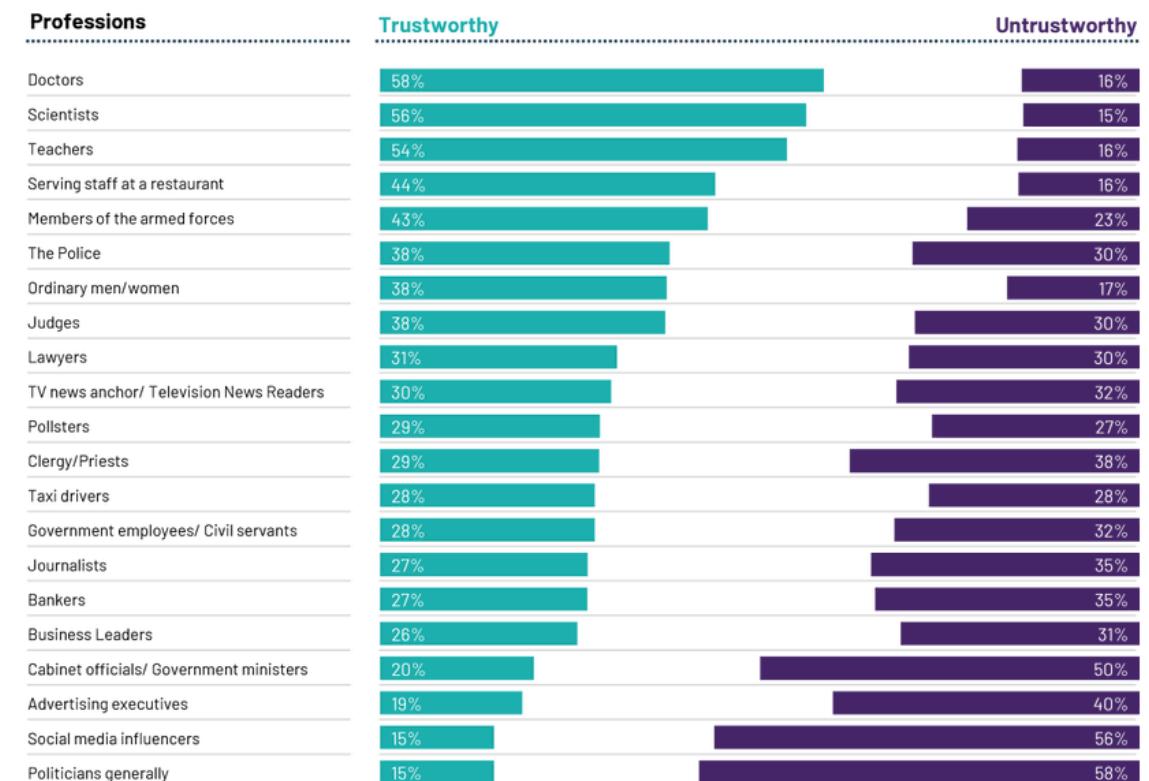
# 4. Trust & engaging the public

The public need ways to engage – to provide feedback, input and share in decisions. 69% of those who feel they have a say in government actions trust national governments, compared to 22% of those who feel they do not have a say.

So reforming engagement – and exploring innovations in democracy - are not an optional add-on, but decisive for restoring trust.

## Global Trustworthiness Ranking 2024

30-country average



Source: 2024 Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Index. Base: 23,530 online adults under the age of 75 across 32 countries, interviewed 24 May – 7 June 2024.

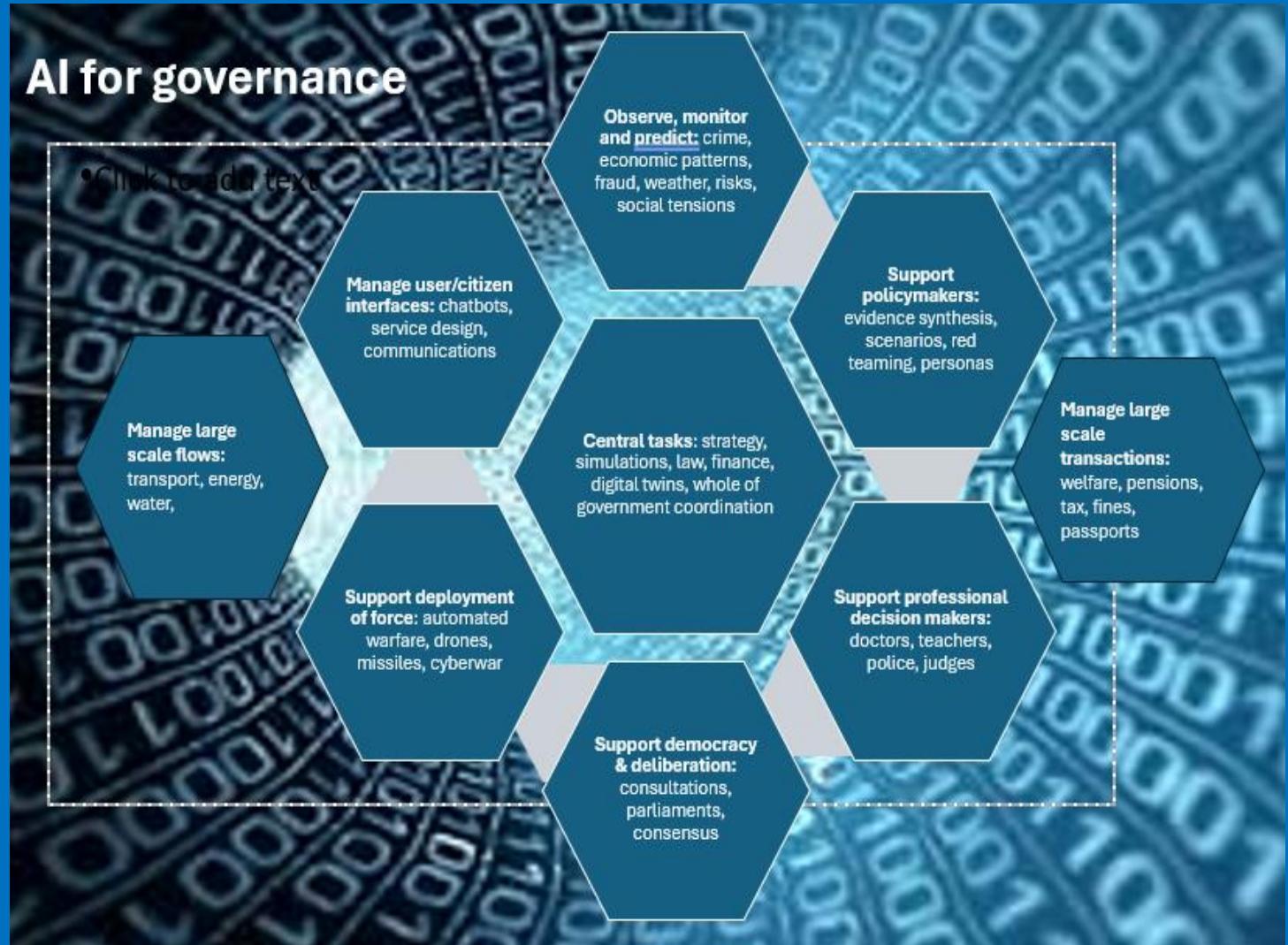


## 5. Using AI wisely

AI has the potential to change almost every aspect of government and there are some impressive initiatives.

But better results require:

- Experiment and fast learning
- New models of procurement
- Evidence and shared data
- Design of new combinations of AI and collective intelligence



 OPEN ACCESS  PEER-REVIEWED

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Predictive risk modeling for child maltreatment detection and enhanced decision-making: Evidence from Danish administrative data

Michael Rosholm \*, Simon Tranberg Bodilsen \*,  Bastien Michel \*, Albeck Søren Nielsen \*Published: July 10, 2024 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0305974>

- Data: the municipality receiving the referral, date of receipt, notifier (e.g., school, health institution, family member, or police), type of concern registered, and whether the referral is considered severe (e.g., cases of violent or sexual abuse, parental drug abuse, abusive parenting, or inadequate care). This set also contains detailed data from CPS on past referrals, removals, and preventive services for the referred child's municipality. Additionally, it provides information about parents and siblings, like their ages, number of siblings, living arrangements, household size, and household mobility history.

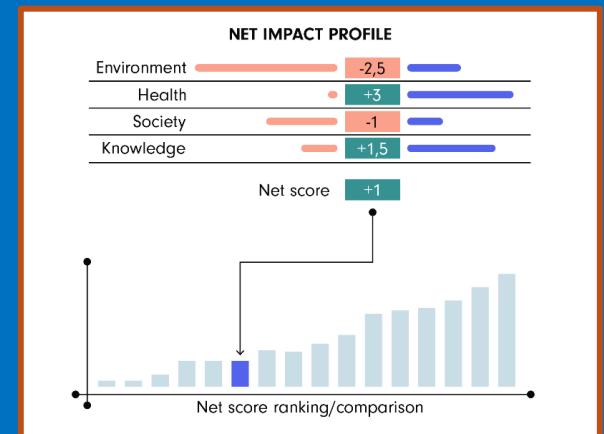
# 6. New Designs for Money

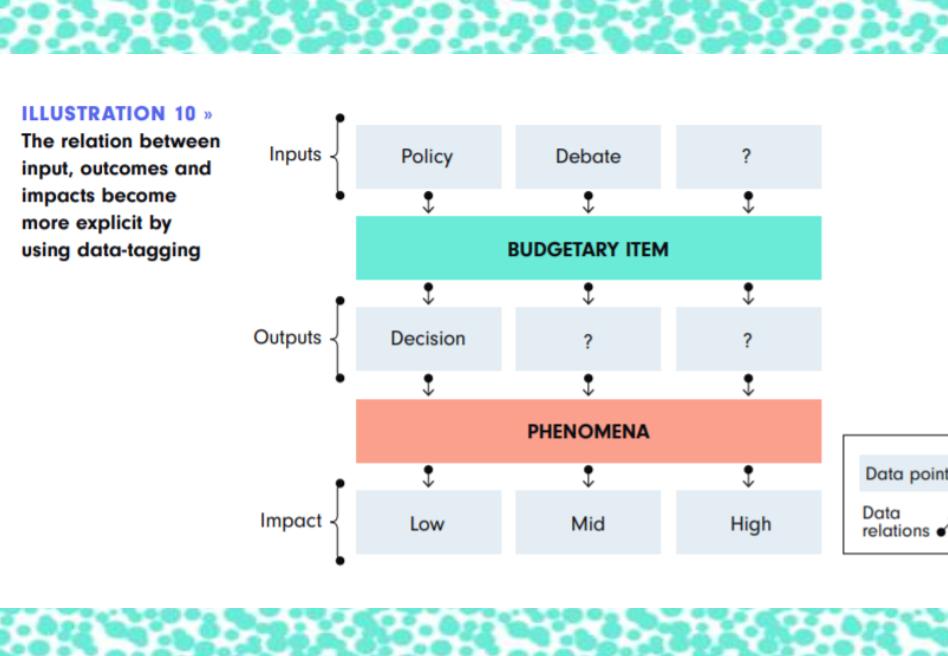
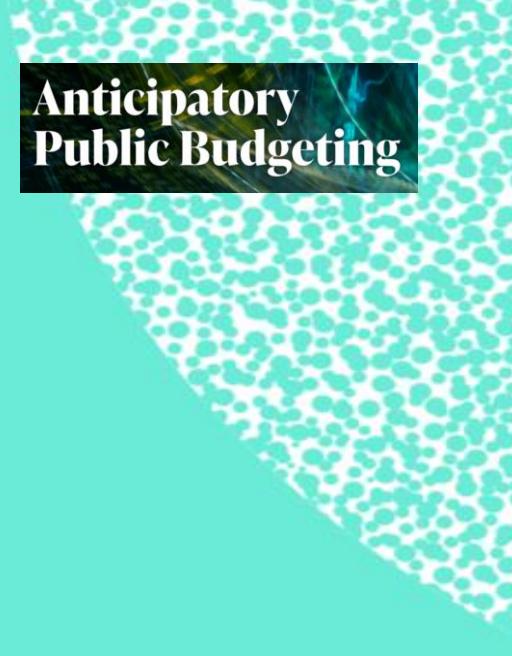
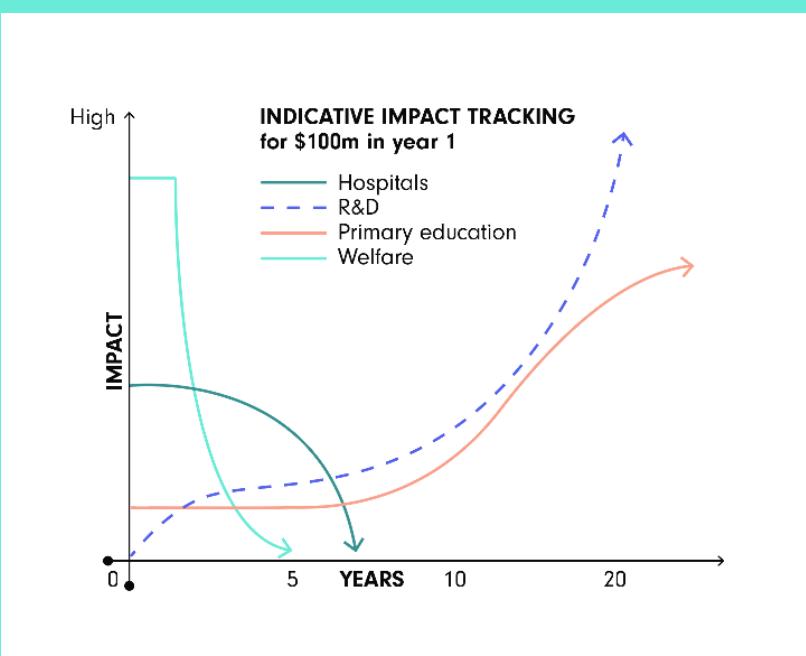
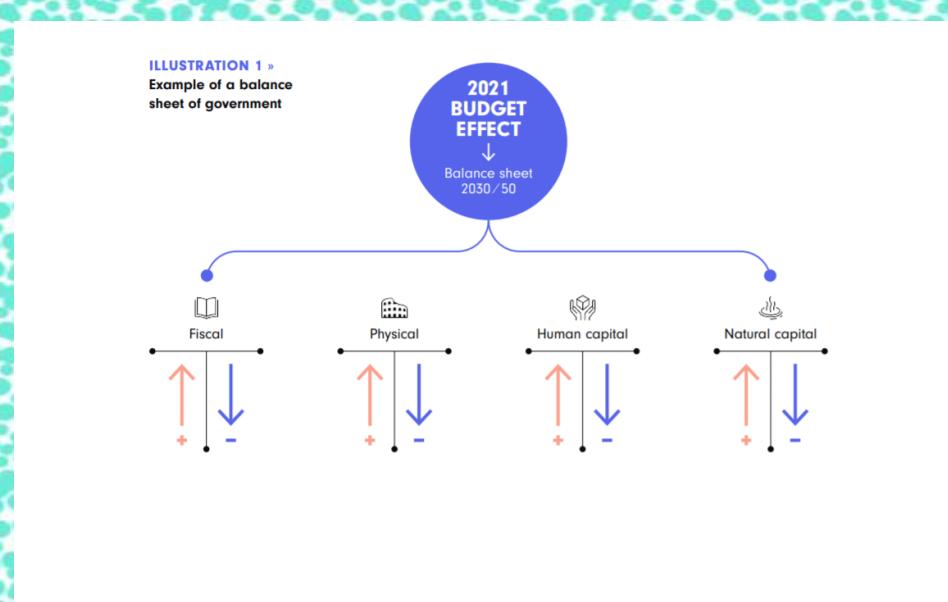
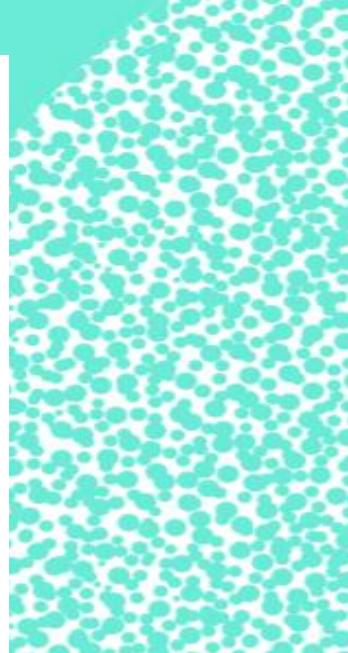
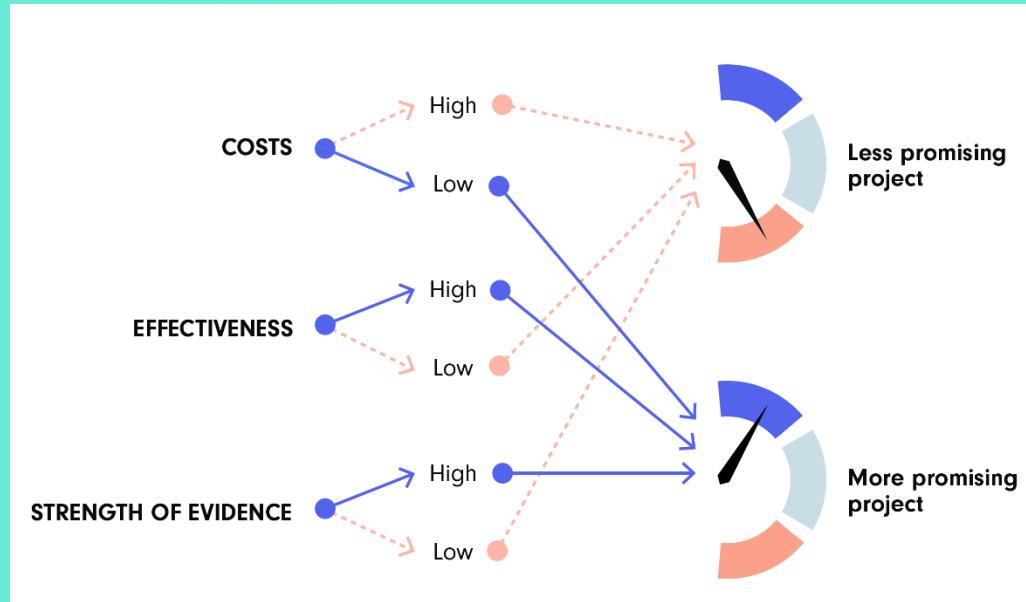
Finance often misaligned with timescales, purposes, impacts.

Many **innovations** to build on:

- Public pound multiplier
- Well-being budgets
- Whole of government accounts
- Phenomenon-based budgeting
- Social and development impact bonds
- Impact assessment in investment
- Budget transparency and open data

But new operating models needed!





# 7. Cost and complexity reduction



A key challenge for any bureaucracy:  
how to reduce complexity and costs –  
regularly, and ruthlessly.

Taxes, processes, protocols, burdens  
on citizens and businesses – all tend to  
become more complex over time.



## Exclusive: DOGE 'doesn't exist' with eight months left on its charter

By Courtney Razeen

November 23, 2022, 8:17 AM PST · Updated 11 hours ago



# DEMOS

## DOGE DONE BETTER

THE CASE FOR PROGRESSIVE EFFICIENCY AND A STREAMLINED STATE



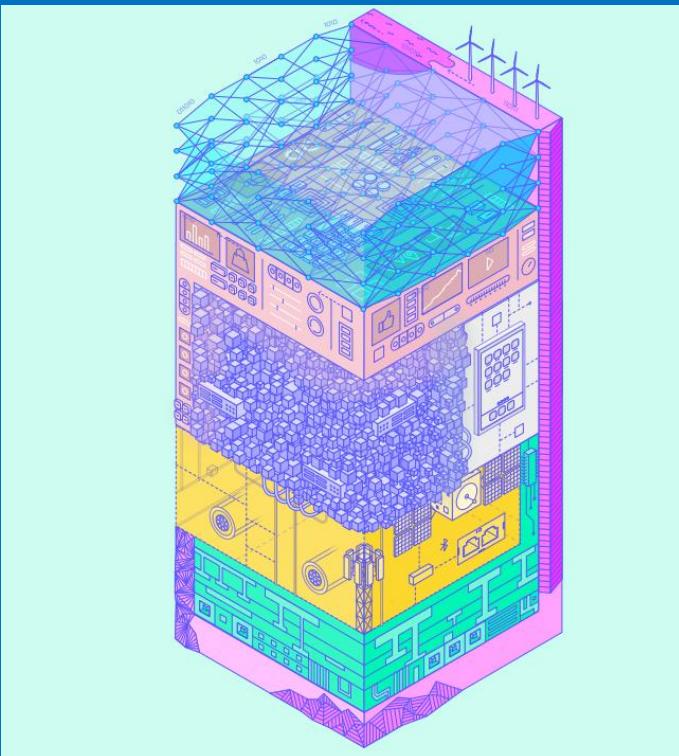
# 8. Designing New Public Institutions

Most public institutions look very similar to their equivalents 20 or 50 years ago – unlike business or civil society. What are the future equivalents of the BBC, NHS, Open University ....



# Stack-based institutions

Mutual transparency,  
triggered hierarchy



Assembly/federated  
governance for meta-  
issues

Knowledge, data and intelligence

Capital, investment, returns

Infrastructure planning, implementation and operation

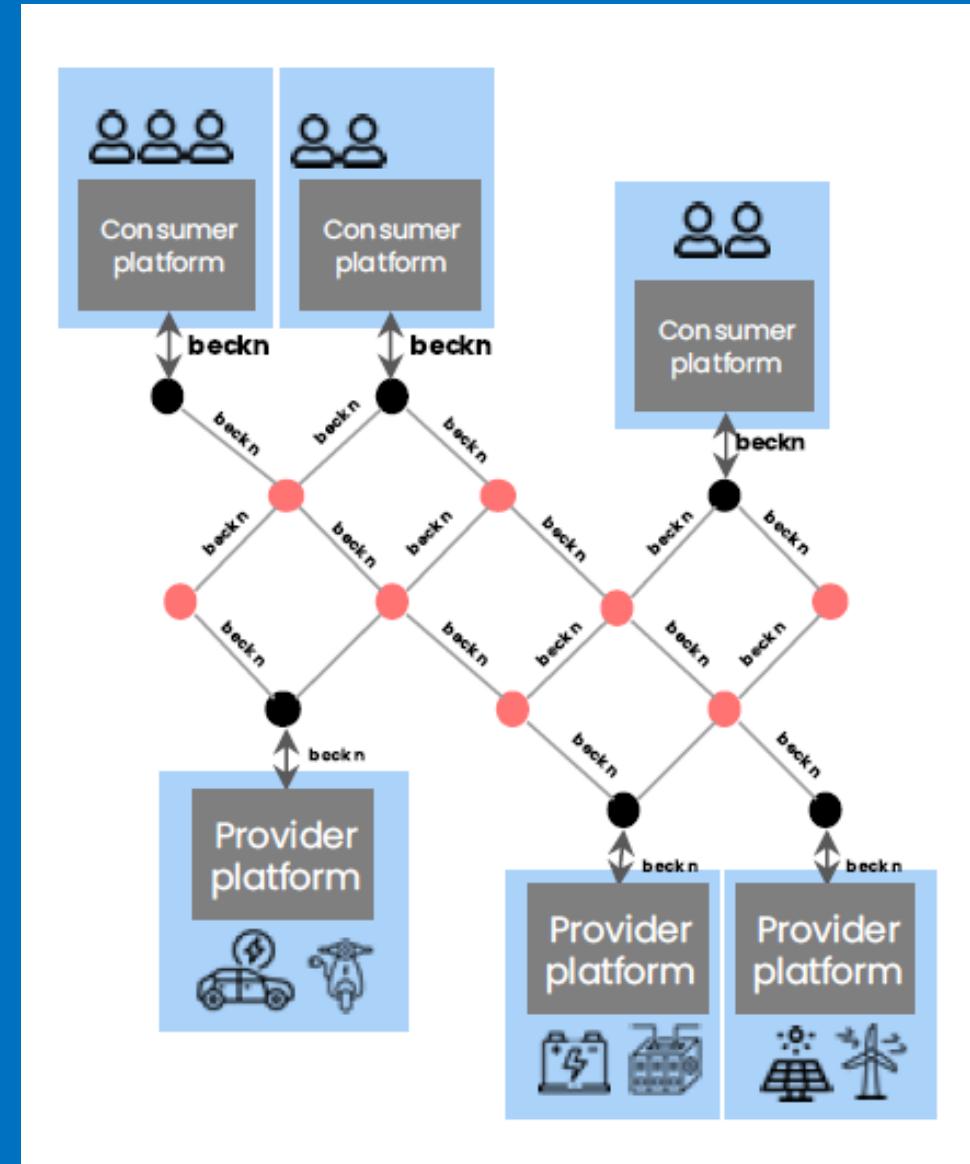
Design rules

Experiment

Rules of behaviour – waste, streets

# Protocol-based institutions

Like the Internet, new institutions set protocols and rules of interconnection and impose requirements for interoperability, sharing data, use of platforms and series of APIs ... supporting ecosystems of autonomous organisations: highly suitable for energy



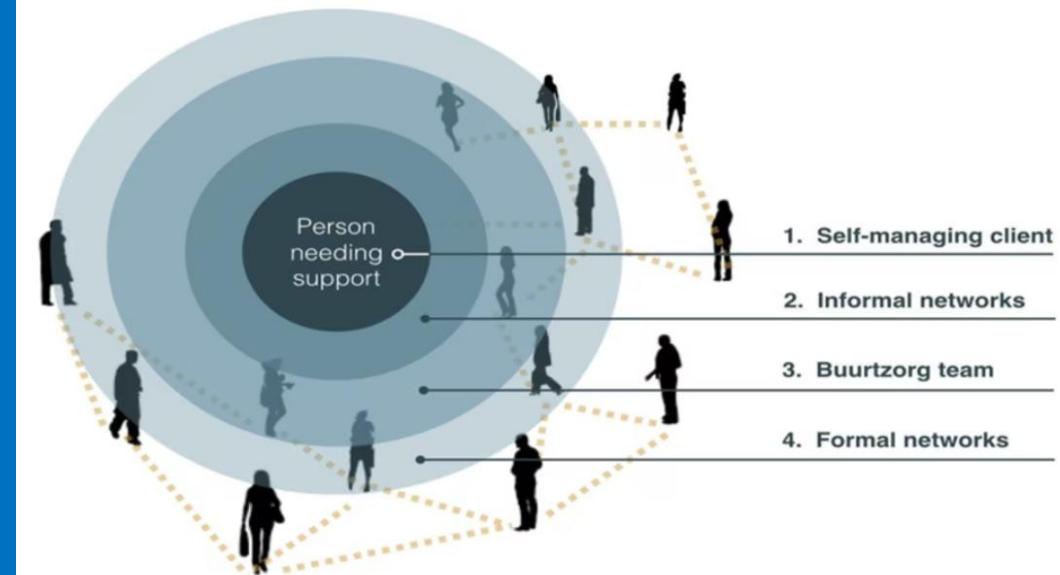
# Mycelium-like networked institutions

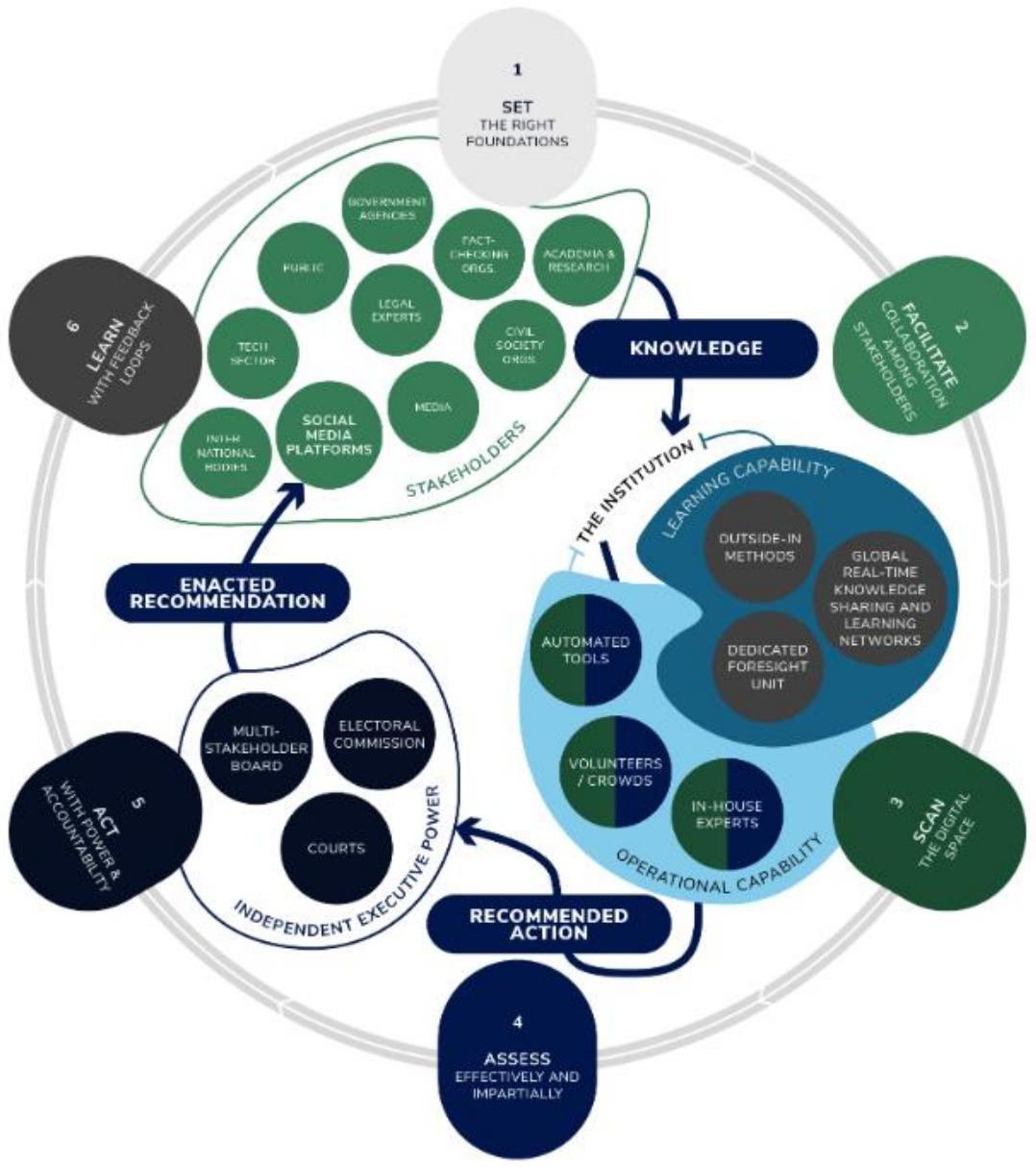
Multiple entities loosely coupled, providing mutual support, acting both above and below ground (ie with both formal and informal networks), highly flexible and resilient, cellular network: highly suitable for care but also relevant for research, technology adoption



## Buurtzorg Onion Model

Buurtzorg works inside out, empowering and adaptive, supportive and network creating.





# SAFEGUARDING ELECTIONS IN THE AGE OF AI AND SYNTHETIC CONTENT: A FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTORAL INTEGRITY INSTITUTIONS

ALEŠ ČAP  
SIR GEOFF MULGAN

WHITE PAPER #001

FEBRUARY 2026

TIA

THE INSTITUTE FOR AUTOMATION AND  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

# 9. Designing New Spaces for policy



## Creating useful policy steering rooms

Mobilising the 4Ps for better decisions

QQ

Giulio Quaggiotto

GM

Geoff Mulgan



### THE PROMISING

*Things that are working in different sectors, countries, places that hold promise*

### THE POSSIBLE

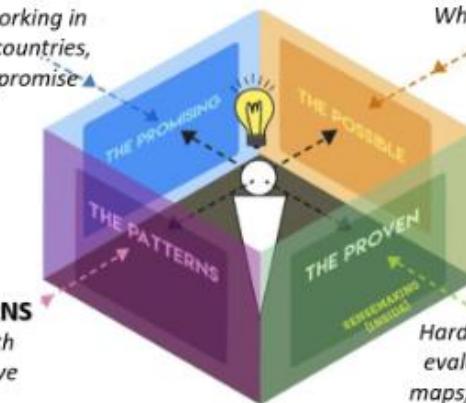
*Where might it all be in 10 to 20 years*

### THE PATTERNS

*Working with what we have*

### THE PROVEN

*Hard evidence drawing on evaluations and evidence maps, thematic reviews and syntheses*



# 10. New skills and mindsets



20 <sup>th</sup> century	21 <sup>st</sup> century
<b>Policy design as a separate science</b>	Policy & implementation seen as an end-to-end process
<b>Analytical and logical policy design</b>	Problem solving as key – and understanding different kinds of problem
<b>Law, economics as primary</b>	Science, technology and digital
<b>Managing</b>	Mobilising and engaging – work in networks, meshes, weaves
<b>Innovation as a private sector activity</b>	Innovation as vital for public sector
<b>Organisations/structures</b>	Systems as a key unit of action
<b>Finance as central function of governments</b>	Intelligence function as central function of governments
<b>Assumptions about behaviour</b>	Drawing on empirical psychology
<b>Primarily present-focused</b>	Future orientation
<b>Western theory and examples</b>	Global theory, cases and ideas

# 11. Strength without weight as a design ethos





Government needs a repertoire of very different methods for very different tasks (like a hospital) – and should avoid the over-generalisation of fashions: top-down command and control, New Public Management, privatisation, missions, abundance .... –

# Nesta...

## DESIGN IN PUBLIC AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

### WHAT WORKS AND WHAT COULD WORK BETTER

Geoff Mulgan

January 2014

**The radical's dilemma: an overview of the  
practice and prospects of Social and Public Labs  
– Version 1**

Geoff Mulgan, February 2014

## How to organise centres of government

## How to orchestrate intelligence in governments (data, evidence etc)

## How to modernise public finance

## How to support public innovation

## How to organise 'whole of government' action

## How to improve government skills (officials and politicians)

## How to use AI in government

## How to design a 'relational state'

## How to handle crises

## How to reorganise procurement

## How to reform democracy

## How to shape strategy

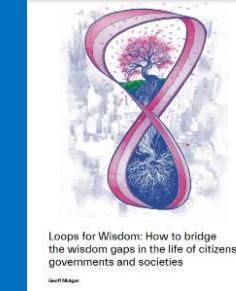
## How to modernise regulation

## How to run efficiency drives

## How to reignite imagination

## How to design new public institutions

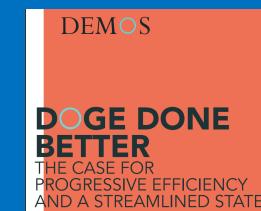
## How to organise policy for science



Will governments ever learn? A study of current provision and the key gaps



The relational state: How recognising the importance of human relationships could revolutionise the role of the state



Thinking systems: how the systems we depend on can be helped to think and to serve us better

