

## Chapter 9. Beyond Canada

*This chapter outlines how the model may be of relevance to the governments of other countries.*

## Applying the insights beyond Canada

This development of this review is tied to the past, present and future innovation journey of the Public Service of Canada. It has used a grounded theory (inductive) approach to identify the characteristics and concerns relevant to thinking about a public sector innovation system, and is thus inherently built upon the experience of the Canadian context.

However, as has been highlighted throughout the review, public sector innovation is an issue that all governments are grappling with to some extent. All countries are facing a changing environment with similar drivers, constraints, and structural and systemic issues. While every country's public sector innovation system will be different in its own way, it is likely that every country will resonate to some extent with the issues and the innovation model outlined in this report.

Noting that every country will have its own priorities, concerns, ambitions and history, the innovation systems model introduced in this report has been developed to help governments navigate their way, rather than to tell them their destination. Each innovation journey will be, and must be, different, reflecting a specific, though changing, context. There cannot then be one prescription for what an innovation system should look like or how it should operate. This model is intended, however, to provide core considerations that are likely to be relevant across contexts.

It is suggested that governments seeking to better understand their innovation systems, and thereby have a better chance of being able to draw on innovation as a consistent and reliable resource, will be able to make the most use of the systems model if they reflect on the following:

- **Understanding the past:** What have been the major developments, trends in innovation practice, and successes and failures during the historical journey? How has innovation fit with previous reform agendas? How has the story of and about the civil service included innovation? Without an appreciation of the history, it will be difficult for any innovation “push” to succeed, as it will come up against cultural traditions and legacies that have shaped the current innovation system.
- **Exploring the present:** what is the current lived experience of innovation within the public sector? How does innovation currently occur? Where is innovation happening in spite of, or because of, the existing system elements? A thorough knowledge of the current context will provide insights into the functioning of the system, its strengths and its weaknesses.
- **Considering the possible (futures):** What might happen if things continue on the current path? What if additional efforts were made? What if a radical transformation was set in motion to realise a truly innovative state? Contemplating each of these possible pathways may help to provoke thorough reflection on what it is that is being sought, and whether the proposed options will be sufficient to reach the intended goal.

The OECD, through its Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (the Observatory), will work with other countries to test and further develop the model and associated framework. This will help to ensure that, over time, they adequately account for the nuances that might come from different country contexts, and are able to offer more sophisticated guidance.



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