Foreword

In the current context of multiple crises, governments must increasingly respond to emerging threats while grappling with more longstanding issues such as climate change or digital disruption. Driven in part by this environment, governments are striving more than ever to innovate to adapt their societies and economies, and to transform themselves and how they design and deliver policies and services. Indeed, recent crises have helped catalyse innovation in the public sector, and innovation has emerged as a much-needed driver of resilience that can generate public value in difficult times.

The need to strengthen trust in government is also a high priority, since it can help governments effectively respond to these challenges. With only about four in ten people in surveyed OECD countries trusting their national government, more can be done to demonstrate inclusiveness, reliability and responsiveness as drivers of trust. Innovation can be part of the equation for achieving these aims; however, only about four in ten respondents, on average across countries, say that their government would improve a poorly performing service, implement an innovative idea, or change a national policy in response to public demands.

Understanding new approaches and spreading successful ideas has thus never been more important. As part of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Mohammed Bin Rashid Centre for Government Innovation (MBRCGI) have collaborated since 2016 to explore how governments are working to understand, test and embed new ways of doing things. These efforts have culminated in 12 reports on Global Trends in government innovation, as well as a deep-dive effort on Cross-Border Government Innovation to tackle global challenges.

This report on public sector innovation trends for 2023 continues the series of annual trends reports. As in previous years, the work for identifying this year's trends has been entirely fuelled by innovation leaders and practitioners working in the field and directly with users and stakeholders in their own countries and communities to design and implement innovative approaches. In coupling OECD research with user-submitted case studies as part of the Call for Innovations global collective intelligence exercise, OPSI has analysed 1 084 innovations from 94 countries and held interviews with innovation teams to derive and understand the latest novel practices. Through synthesising the identified projects and taking into account events, workshops and conversations held with governments around the world, OPSI and the MBRCGI have identified four key trends and 10 case studies that illustrate them. These trends and case studies demonstrate how governments are working to build more resilient and inclusive societies while ensuring greater accountability, equity, empathy and proactivity.

OECD and the MBRCGI celebrate these efforts and hope that they inspire others to take action and replicate their success in their own context. The partners behind this project also greatly appreciate the work of the individuals, teams and organisations undertaking innovation projects and who took the time to participate in the Call for Innovations that fuelled this work. For instance, innovators in Brazil submitted an astounding 112 cases, 53 came from Greece, and 35 or more came from Colombia, Korea and Türkiye. Although not all the efforts uncovered for this work can be featured in this report, many are available on the OPSI Case Study Library, a constantly growing resource where public servants can learn about innovative projects around the world, and even reach out to the teams behind them to learn more.

The report was reviewed by OPSI's Network of National Contact Points; it was approved by the OECD Public Governance Committee on 5 April 2023 and prepared for publication by the Secretariat.

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