

# Scaling Up Innovation in the Public Sector



Final report of the Capability Building Programme Project Group

**April 2011**

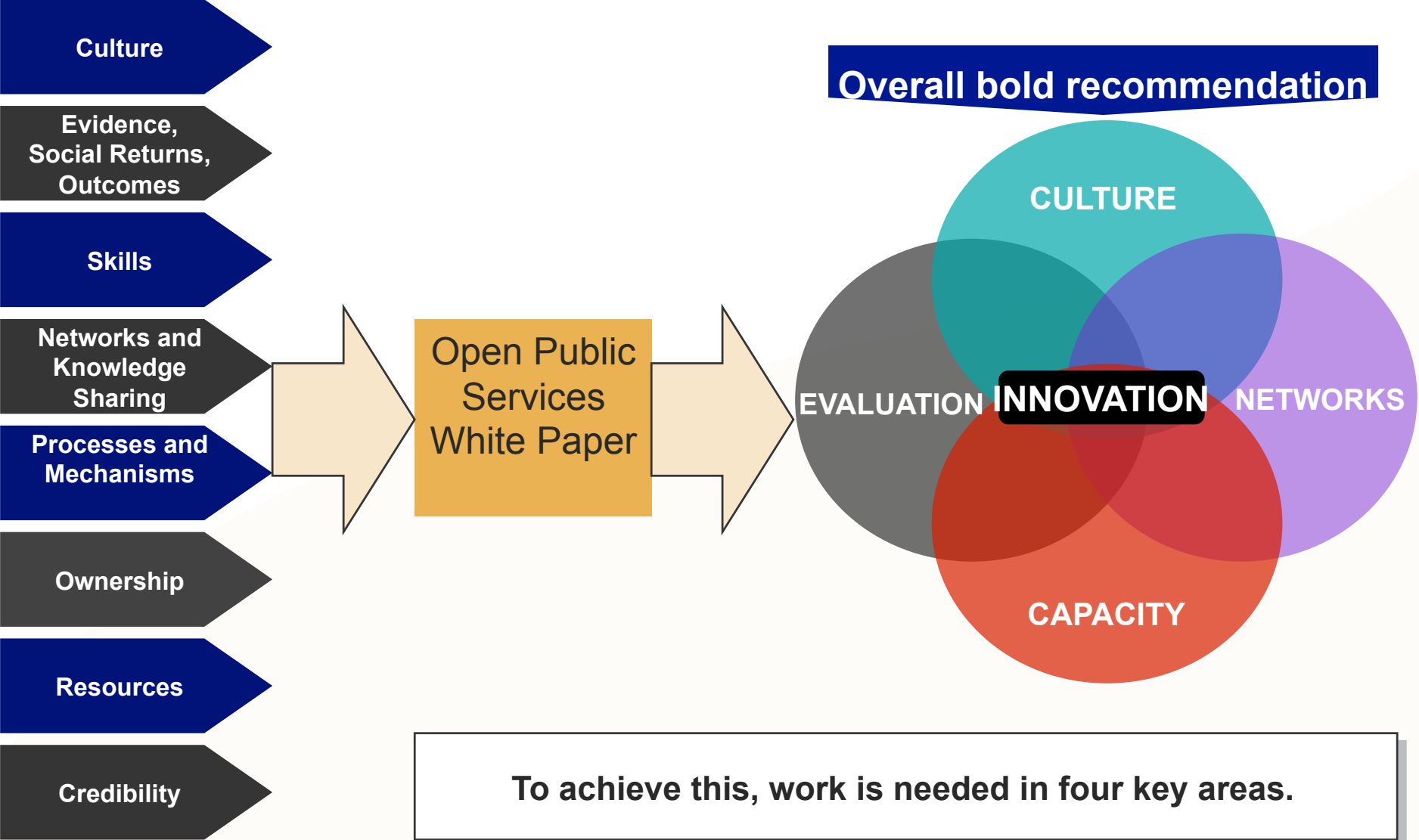
*This report was produced as a result of a twelve week project undertaken by a team drawn from across the public service. It is not a statement of Government policy. Rather, it comprises a set of ideas and propositions to inform and support future policy and service delivery across the wider public sector.*



# Executive Summary

- This report sets out proposals to support scaling up innovation in the public sector.
- The challenge is complex: there is no shortage of good ideas, big and small, within and outside of the public sector, yet, there is a failure to scale them up and spread innovative solutions. We are in an era of public service reform with pressures on resources and major structural change across the public sector and this may constrain the opportunities and enthusiasm for scaling up.
- However, the shift away from 'Big Government', towards the 'Big Society', including an emphasis on social reform, localism and community empowerment, presents a genuine opportunity to be more radical in galvanising the scaling up of innovation across the Public Sector.
- We reviewed the literature on scaling up innovation and spoke to both 'catalysts' (those who fund, support or design solutions in scaling up) and 'practitioners' (those who do it). We distilled everything they told us into 8 key themes which highlight the conditions necessary to successfully scale up innovation across the public sector:
  - **Culture:** build a culture that rewards and encourages scaling up innovation
  - **Evidence:** make the business case and demonstrate the social return
  - **Skills:** embed skills needed for scaling up and understand that skills to innovate and to scale up are different
  - **Networks:** develop and use networks to make connections, provide advice, share knowledge and create dialogue
  - **Processes:** embed processes and mechanisms that facilitate scaling up
  - **Ownership:** recognise that a feeling of ownership acts as an incentive to share learning about what works
  - **Resources:** manage resources, funding, expertise and support to actively encourage scaling up.
  - **Credibility:** credibility, endorsement and reputation provide the business case for scaling up

We took the eight themes and reviewed them in the light of the Open Public Services White Paper to design our overarching bold recommendation.



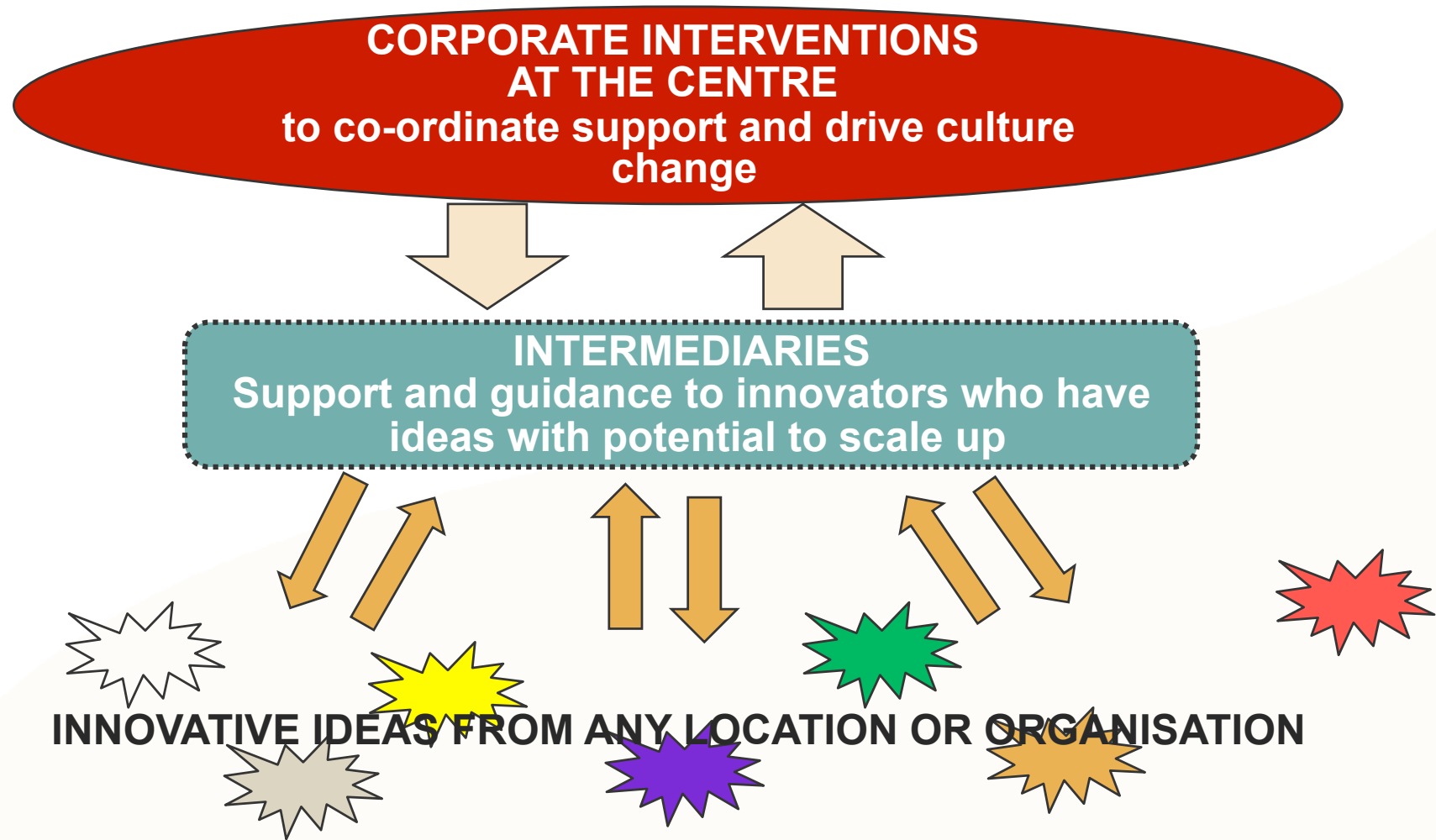
# Executive Summary

- To create the systemic change required under our bold recommendation, we identified four areas for priority action:
  - Create the conditions that maximise the **capacity** for innovative ideas to scale across the public sector;
  - Ensure that the public sector has the **organisational culture, leadership, and people** conducive to supporting the scaling up of innovative ideas.
  - Establish **networks** that facilitate the dissemination of innovative ideas that could be scaled, supporting the spread of knowledge; and
  - Use **appraisal and evaluation** of innovative ideas to provide the business case for scaling, to ensure the right ideas are implemented and driven forward.
- We have proposed nine recommendations in response to these four areas:
  1. Government should consider the merit of drawing together a **small central resource** to co-ordinate support for the scaling up activity needed to bring about the required organisational and cultural change at the centre. This should also include linking in to the Open Public Services White Paper recommendations on common evaluation.
  2. Central and local government should work together to establish a **programme to facilitate and encourage public sector organisations at all levels to proactively come together** to scale up specific innovations or areas of good practice from any source or sector. This should include: finding a way to pull together cross-agency teams to work on specific time-limited scaling projects; establishing Action Learning Sets; developing evaluation to suit different organisational circumstances; and support to make a business case for scaling up.
  3. Establish an **expert learning network in outcome-based commissioning** for those working in both policy and practical delivery.

# Executive Summary

- 4a. Design a **model for portfolio management of resources** whereby a number of ideas are funded in parallel and funding from those that fail is diverted to those that succeed. Test the model and document the learning.
- 4b. Adopt the learning from the testing of the portfolio funding model and **implement the model**.
5. Explore whether the tested **model /process for scaling up digital innovations can be applied more widely** and apply it.
6. Use **corporate tools , skills development and leadership activity** to encourage effective scaling up of innovation.
7. Establish a **mentor or buddy scheme** for individuals who have an idea they want to scale, offering one-to-one support to establish that the idea can be scaled and the best method for doing so. In turn, those supported are actively developed as change agents by the mentor to support others in the cycle.
8. Establish an **one stop online shop** for public sector innovators to find out about innovative ideas that could be or have been adopted or adapted elsewhere.
9. Add a category to existing **Civil Service Awards** to incentivise scaling up activity to both reward effective scaling up activity and provide an opportunity to articulate the range of ideas that can be successfully scaled in future.

In designing our recommendations, we considered the need to both facilitate scaling up from the centre and find ways to provide dynamic support at the point where scaling up is happening



A change is needed at a range of levels: central, local, individual

**Here are our nine key recommendations in more detail. The first two concern central support for innovators.**

For each of the recommendations below, we set out what should be done, by whom and when. Where we can, we also link to the work done by the team to test or start acting on the recommendations and set out the longer term improvement we expect to be the result of acting on the recommendation.

**1. Central co-ordination**

Government should consider the merit of drawing together a small central resource to co-ordinate support for the scaling up activity needed to bring about the required organisational and cultural change at the centre. This streamlining will simplify overall co-ordination of support while allowing for individual differences in approach. This should also include linking in to the Open Public Services White Paper recommendations on common evaluation.

Who implements: Proposed timescale: Areas tested by project team: How the world will be different as a result

BIS / DCLG	2011	Not tested	It will be clearer where to get support for those with good ideas to both assess the potential to scale and how best to do so. As scaling up becomes the norm, it becomes natural to embed it into policy design and delivery.
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**2. Expert resource pool**

Central and local government should work together to establish a programme to facilitate and encourage public sector organisations at all levels to proactively come together to scale up specific innovations or areas of good practice from any source or sector. This should include: finding a way to pull together cross-agency teams to work on specific time-limited scaling projects; establishing Action Learning Sets; developing evaluation to suit different organisational circumstances; and support to make a business case for scaling up.

Who implements: Proposed timescale: Areas tested by project team: How the world will be different as a result:

BIS / LGID	2011	Project team process is itself an example of running a time-limited scaling project	Better and more cross-government working leads to: more effective sharing and application of learning; development of a public sector innovation mindset; a strong evidence base.
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## Our next three recommendations concern commissioning and funding

### 3. Outcome-based commissioning

Establish an expert learning network in outcome-based commissioning for those working both in policy and practical delivery. This should include talking to Local Authorities and LGID. It will help those involved understand the range of approaches being used and share learning about what works best and in what circumstances.

Who implements: Proposed timescale: Areas tested by project team: How the world will be different as a result:

DH

December 2011

Not tested

Clearer commissioning processes and increased accessibility to more potential applicants which in turn will lead to better outcomes. Clear evaluation processes and outcomes.

### 4a. Portfolio Funding: develop

Design a model for portfolio management of resources whereby a number of ideas are funded in parallel and funding from those that fail can be diverted to those that succeed. This allows innovators to 'test it, prove it, grow it and adopt it'. Test the model with practitioners both within DH structures and with a range of Local Authorities.

Who implements: Proposed timescale: Areas tested by project team: How the world will be different as a result

DH National Innovation Fund

Model developed: Sept 2011  
Testing starts: Jan 2012

Team identified potential attendees for a co-design session but were not able to complete in time.

Fear of failure and risk are reduced so more people are more likely to scale up more good ideas.

### 4b. Portfolio funding: adopt

Adopt learning from the testing at recommendation 4 and implement the model

Who implements: Proposed timescale: Areas tested by project team: How the world will be different as a result

(TBC)

2012

Not tested

Risk is reduced by application to the most suitable kind of resource funding

## We also have recommendations about making best use of tools, frameworks and individual support

### 5. Scaling up framework

Explore whether the tested model / process for scaling up digital innovation can be applied more widely and apply it.

Who implements:	Proposed timescale:	Areas tested by project team:	How the world will be different as a result:
DCLG / BIS / LGID	December 2011	Digital Scaling Up framework (see Annex J)	Innovators 'new to market' find it easier to scale up. Can be used in conjunction with mentor or other expert resource

### 6. Corporate tools

Government should use corporate tools (e.g. Include scaling in Business plans and individual objectives); skills development (e.g. Include in CSL Skills Strategy and competency framework); and leadership activity (e.g. Cabinet Secretary champions scaling up in guidance and speeches) to encourage effective scaling up of innovation

Who implements:	Proposed timescale:	Areas tested by project team:	How the world will be different as a result:
HMG: CO lead	2011	Talked to Defra about mainstreaming scaling up into Government's crowd-sourcing approach to e.g. prevent regulation that works against scaling up	Principles and process of scaling up become embedded in Civil Service culture and policy through senior buy-in, recognition of value of scaling up and better staff engagement

### 7. Mentor scheme

Establish a mentor or buddy scheme for individuals who have an idea they want to scale. The mentor provides one-to-one support to establish that the idea is scalable and what support is needed to make it happen. In turn, those supported are actively developed as change agents by the mentor to support others in the cycle. This requires explicit support from the employing organisation e.g. Allowing time for meetings

Who implements:	Proposed timescale:	Areas tested by project team:	How the world will be different as a result:
HMG: DCLG lead	2011	Natural Value Ambassadors at Defra are a network of credible change agents who will include a focus on scaling up ideas	A virtuous circle of support and active learning ensures a constant stream of developed and scaled ideas to improve public service.



## Our final two recommendations will help innovators find ideas or advice on and offer an incentive for scaling up

### 8. One-stop shop

Establish a one-stop online shop for public sector innovators to find out about ideas that could be or have been adopted or adapted elsewhere. This should signpost existing sources of advice (e.g. Business Link, the Innovation Launch Pad and LGID's Community of Practice), be in a searchable format and capture examples of successful scaling up in an interactive way.

Who implements:

Proposed timescale:

Areas tested by project team:

How the world will be different as a result:

DCLG / BIS

December 2011

Identified current platforms and sources of support and have started talks to establish a single platform.

Simpler and more consistent means of finding out about ideas and tools that might help individuals scale up and benefit from existing practice. Networks develop to offer additional peer support.

### 9. Award

Add a category to existing Civil Service Awards to incentivise scaling up activity. This will both reward effective scaling up activity and provide an opportunity to articulate the range of ideas that can be successfully scaled in future. It can also be used to help identify a network of Scaling Up Champions or future mentors.

Who implements:

Proposed timescale:

Areas tested by project team:

How the world will be different as a result:

HMG: BIS with CO lead

2011

Initial conversation with awards team was positive

Successful scaling up and the people who do it are recognised and become role models for others which leads to more successful scaling up.

# Executive Summary

- Finally, we have reviewed the learning for team members as future change agents and highlighted some examples of how this has helped them improve their working practice. We have also organised a number of events or other means of disseminating the learning from the project:
  - Civil Service Live workshop on scaling up innovation in July 2011
  - Post-project diffusion event to share recommendations with interviewees and workshop attendees
  - Share report with the BIS Public Sector Innovation Delivery Group which includes organisations interested in public sector innovation
  - DCLG Policy Picnic to highlight project findings and what this means for the Civil Service
  - Blog post on the Public Sector Innovation portal
  - Project LinkedIn group: taking forward conversations about scaling up
  - Innovate! Newsletter: dedicated edition to scaling up innovation project.
  - DCLG Executive team meeting item