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**INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SERVICES: WORKING TOGETHER WITH CITIZENS FOR BETTER
OUTCOMES**

DRAFT OUTLINE FOR THE REPORT

This document provides an outline of the report on "Innovation in Public Services: Working Together with Citizens for Better Outcomes" (provisional title) which is one output of the Public Governance Committee Programme of Work for 2009-2010. This report is submitted to the PGC for discussion at its October 2009 meeting. PGC delegates are invited to provide written comments by 31st October 2009 on the structure of the report and the breakdown of the chapters, as well as to provide useful examples from their country experience that could be highlighted in the report.

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Introduction

1. The current economic crisis shows the importance of the role of strong and well-functioning public services to create the conditions to renew economic prosperity and protect the welfare of today's societies while ensuring opportunities for future generations. In a time of uncertainties when millions of jobs are destroyed in the world economies, public services are there to protect individuals who lose their jobs to get back into work life (for example, through job searching, advice and training¹). Public services also provide security for disadvantaged and socially-excluded families who suffer from poverty conditions after their incomes have been reduced as a consequence of job losses. For these categories most in need, access to public service is still a key challenge².

2. At the same time, strong public services are increasingly being called to shape the society of the future by contributing to the outcomes of both the individuals (e.g. individual self-realisation, good health conditions, education attainment) and the society as a whole (e.g. reduced inequalities, empowerment of individuals). Modern public services are requested to take into account and anticipate the impacts of structural and environmental changes affecting societies (e.g. aging populations, climate change) and protect them from new and unanticipated threats (e.g. spread of chronic illnesses, pandemic diseases).

3. Governments in OECD countries face considerable pressure to respond to these societal needs and demand for high-quality and inclusive public services. Indeed, they have recognised that existing approaches may not deliver expected results and that there is a need to innovate to increase the performance and accessibility of public services to generate better outcomes for citizens. The OECD is supporting member and non member countries in this process of change by looking at how innovative approaches in public services can help achieve these objectives.

4. Over the past years, there has been a growing government emphasis on the importance of the notion of collaboration with citizens and service users for improving service delivery and as a driver for innovation. By working with citizens and service users in service design and delivery, governments can achieve better outcomes in terms of reducing production costs (e.g. by savings on hospitalisation costs through better prevention schemes), increasing satisfaction (e.g. through more personalised services or by giving more choice and control over the services) and create capacities to face complex societal problems (e.g. overcoming obesity requires both professional intervention and behavioural changes).

¹ HM Government (2009), "Working together – Public Service on your side"

² while public spending in key public sectors has increased, OECD data points to the existence of still large inequalities in access and use of public services (for example in health care services). See OECD Factbook 2009: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics

5. At the core of this notion of collaboration there is the idea that public services can work better when they harness people's interest, energies, expertise and ambitions³. This is for example the case when citizens are given the possibility to reuse data made publicly available by governments to improve a service or produce a new one (e.g. in US, the StumbleSafely website combines maps of local bars and crime data to help people plan safer routes home).

6. The involvement of citizens and users in the design and delivery of public services (also known as "co-production") is one example of innovations across OECD countries which have the potential to transform the relation between service user and professionals. Working together in service delivery is about sharing the benefits, costs, risks and responsibilities to achieve better service outcomes. It opens up new opportunities but also raises important challenges for governments. What happens to government accountability when responsibilities in public service delivery are shared with or transferred to the citizens rather than managed by governmental departments? What are the real costs and benefits for governments and citizens to join up in service delivery?

7. This document presents an outline of the report "Innovation in Public Services: Working Together with Citizens for Better Outcomes" which will present ideas and practices which aim to involve individuals in better citizen-focused service delivery. The report will also try to identify which of these ideas and practices are potentially important sources of innovation. These represent just one example of approaches to public sector innovation but there are many others (e.g. service design principles, public service innovation organizations, innovation incentives and award schemes) which will be presented and discussed in a final synthesis report on innovation in service delivery.

³ HM Government (2009)

Background and definitions

Caroline Tomlinson's disabled teenage son Joe had a problem. He wanted to go to school with all the other teenagers in Wigan (UK) on the bus. But when Caroline approached the social services department to see whether that would be possible they pointed out they already had a block contract with a local taxi firm to transport Joe to school and sending him on the bus would be an additional cost they were unprepared to pay, especially as in the department's assessment Joe would need to be accompanied by two workers to make sure he came to no harm.

A few months later however Caroline and Joe enrolled in an initiative called 'In Control' run by a social enterprise for the Department of Health which helps young people with learning disabilities to take control of their own care. Everyone enrolled in 'In Control' gets their own annual budget - the cash equivalent of what they would have received in services - and help to decide how to spend it on the kind of support they need. Caroline and Joe quickly drew up a plan to get to school on the bus with the help of two fellow sixth formers who were studying for care qualifications. Joe was happy.

From Charles Leadbetter and Hilary Cottam, The User Generated State: Public Services 2.0

8. This example shows how such participative schemes involving government working together with users, service professionals and the third sector can improve public service delivery. By putting the user rather than the provider at the centre of service commissioning and delivery, such an approach turns the traditional public service paradigm on its head and empowers citizens to decide for themselves. Joe and Caroline Tomlinson found that their relationship with public services was transformed. They got involved in the decisions on services which directly affect their lives rather than fitting into plans and strategies drawn up by the professionals only. They sought and paid for professional advice and support, but within the context of their own plans⁴.

9. This example of self directed budgets for social care concerning disabled people is of particular interest in the current economic and social climate because it appears to have the potential to increase user satisfaction with services, increase value for money and reduce costs, when compared with traditional forms of social care. However this approach also poses a challenge in terms of government responsibilities and responses, in particular in respect of resource allocation and management, probity and risk management. What are the implications of shared responsibilities and risks in public service delivery? How does government accountability change when risks and costs are transferred to citizens rather than being managed by governmental departments?

10. Developments to directly involve individual users and groups of citizens in the planning and delivery of public services are being described by analysts and commentators as "co-production". This is an umbrella term, within which there are a range of more specific terms such as co-design, co-creation, co-delivery, co-management, co-decide, co-evaluate, co-review⁵ which reflect the different stages of citizen involvement and the different types of input. For example, governments co-produce with citizens when

⁴ Leadbeater & Cottam

⁵ Pollitt, Bouckaert & Löffler 2006

they release information which is then re-used by citizens to produce improved or new services (e.g. to combine information on local bars and crime data to help people plan safer routes home), or when the citizen is involved in the decision of whether a certain amount of the municipal budget should be devolved to a new school or to road restructuring.

11. The definitions below provide a useful starting point.

Co-production is the involvement of citizens in delivery of public services to achieve outcomes which depend at least partly on their own behaviour (Loffler 2008).

The term co-production refers to a way of working whereby decision-makers and citizens, or service providers and users, work together to create a decision or a service which works for them all (Involve UK 2008).

12. The second definition stresses the key aspect of this concept. Co-production is about governments “working together” with others. It also highlights the issue that co-production may involve working with individuals who are service users, individual citizens who do not use a particular service, and groups of citizens, who may or may not be organised as a civil society entity or via a third sector organisation.

13. Governments are experimenting with different types of collaborative approaches with citizens and users as potential tools for innovation and also cost reduction. While there is a growing interest in this area, the development of new models is still in the early stages. Relatively little is known about the innovative potential, risks and opportunities offered by these approaches. There are debates about who should co-produce (individual users, citizens, third sector) and at which stage governments should encourage co-production (planning and design, co-delivery and co-creation; co-review and evaluation)⁶. However as yet there is insufficient evidence about what works in which contexts and what can be delivered in terms of service effectiveness and value for public money.

14. Recognising the importance of creating extensive and comparable knowledge in this area, the Public Governance Committee has included in its Programme of Work for 2009-2010, the preparation of a report which will provide member countries with a comprehensive view of the potential and challenges of working with citizens to deliver user centred policies and services. The report will contribute to this developing public policy field through research and analysis and by the development of a range of tools and techniques which could be useful to countries. Collaborative approaches can be a source of innovation and the report will therefore contribute to a PGC cross-cutting synthesis work on innovation in public service delivery which will look at how innovative approaches in public service delivery can improve public sector performance and responsiveness, and generate better outcomes for service users. Whilst other bodies such as the UN and EC are exploring related fields such as public service innovation and improvement, they are not examining the potential of co-production.

⁶ Pestoff & Brandsen 2008

15. This paper sets out a draft framework for the report “Innovation in Public Services: Working Together with Citizens for Better Outcomes” and provides an overview of the approach and content of the five chapters.

Methodology

The report will be based on the following methodology:

- **Desk based academic and policy research:** to identify and analyse available data on citizen involvement in service delivery and the theories and conceptual frameworks which underpin it.
- **Desk based research on public sector practice:** to identify existing practices, in particular in OECD countries.
- **Survey of all OECD countries:** to provide quantitative and qualitative information on the current position of citizen involvement in service delivery and to identify good practices.
- **Case studies:** In-depth case studies of different forms of co-production covering a range of countries and types of services.

Overview of the report

Chapter 1 - Understanding citizen involvement in service delivery

16. This chapter will review the development of different theories and practices of collaborating with citizens within the public sector, how it fits into the bigger context of public service reform and its potential contributions to a next stage of government modernisation and service innovation.

Origins and developments of citizen involvement in service delivery

17. We will examine the roots of ideas such as co-production and how co-production differs from and can complement other approaches to public service delivery. This will show how co-production is not a new concept but was developed by American scholars to describe the involvement of citizens or clients in either the public or private sector in the 1970s⁷. The term was little used in the 1980s and 1990s as different public service reform paradigms such as competition and use of the private sector, or the New Public Management were predominant models for modernising governments and improving services. However, there have been practices involving citizens in service delivery, particularly in developing countries and at local or regional levels of government.

18. What is new is that there is now an explicit policy emphasis on partnering with citizens as a potential tool in the continued transformation of public services. This is partly the result of reaching a levelling out of the impacts of other reform models, the further potential of new technology such as web 2.0, and of pressure from citizens and civil society to create services which are user centred, accessible and encourage active citizen involvement. Many of the early wins to increase performance and value for money have been achieved, for example to reduce public costs and improve service quality through competition and partnerships with the private sector, or from e-government programmes⁸. In this context, practitioners are looking towards citizens and users as a force for further transformation.

19. Also the size and nature of the challenges facing governments is prompting more recognition that governments cannot singlehandedly tackle the major challenges of the 21st century. These include global problems such as climate change and water shortage; demographic pressures of ageing populations and migration; and lifestyle and health problems such as obesity or chronic health conditions. All of this is within a context of a worldwide recession and pressure to reduce public spending. OECD governments have been moving away from command and control models and reducing regulation and in this context they need to find other ways of enlisting citizens as willing participants in change processes, for example to improve the environment or to reduce ill health. Change models which more actively involve citizens and users seem to offer the possibility of re-shaping public sector activity to improve service delivery and make better use of resources.⁹

⁷ Parks et al 1981

⁸ OECD 2009 (forthcoming), Re-thinking E-government Services :User Centred Approaches

⁹ Bourgon 2008,2009; Pollitt 2005, Pollitt & Bouckaert 2004

Definitions of concept and policy context

20. This section will review different definitions and approaches to collaboration with citizens which are being developed within public services.

21. There are, unsurprisingly, different approaches emerging from the theory and practice of citizen involvement and they differ in a number of ways as summarised below¹⁰:

- **Who is involved** – individual service users, individual citizens, groups of citizens or civil society organisations.
- **The stage** of the service cycle at which there is “co-activity” - planning, designing, creating, delivering and evaluating services.
- **The nature and depth of the involvement** from ‘once-off’ and surface level input at one end of the spectrum, to close, deep and ongoing user or citizen input at the other end.
- **The type of services and activities** - the different levels of government are responsible for a very broad range of activities and services and this gives rise to different forms of co-production.

22. This section will also identify both the policy contexts in which governments work in partnership with citizens and those in which they do not. For example, to fully understand how citizen involvement in service delivery works, the report will need to include the analysis of the role and contributions of the different levels of government to co-production. Analysis will need to be adjusted also depending on the regional context of service delivery (rural vs urban).

23. The role of the private sector, whilst not the main focus of the report, will be included where relevant, for example in considering partnerships, the development of new markets and services, and new forms of procurement.

Reasons for adoption

24. Here we will present the reasons why the active engagement of citizens is potentially useful to governments in the current economic and political climate. The most common and important reasons for adopting such approaches will be identified and are likely to include : 1) **economic** – to reduce costs; 2) **efficiency** – to make better use of resources; 3) **effectiveness** - to improve quality of service, and to achieve better outcomes; 4) **democratic** - to engage with citizens, build trust in governments. 5) **innovation** – to challenge traditional approaches to public service and find new forms of activity and delivery. Citizen focused projects and programmes have shown promise in each of these dimensions.

¹⁰ Boyle 2006, Pestoff & Brandsen 2008, Pollitt, Bouckaert & Löffler 2006, Bovaird 2007, Needham & Carr 2009

25. A citizen based approach also has the potential to **complement and strengthen existing reform programmes**, for example:

- The individual social care budget programme previously cited is seeking to reduce costs and make better use of resources and create a more personalised service for the user and therefore complements the reform agenda around service personalisation and choice.
- Malmö in Sweden has developed the Socanter Social Services Programme and its new online services, with the participation of clients, have helped reach a wider range of people and at less cost than traditional services.
- Kyyjarvi in Finland is using web 2.0 tools to engage with citizens and build trust through an online civic newspaper with very high levels of citizen participation.

26. The Swedish and Finish examples highlight how involving citizens in general or the users of specific services can also strengthen e-government reforms and how new technologies can be drivers for change. Such examples also highlight how different levels of government can be involved in co-production, how national and local governments can work together and how an active citizenry can prompt change.

Chapter 2 – Analysis of citizen involvement in service delivery

27. In this chapter we will examine existing and potential forms of citizen involvement in service delivery drawing mainly on available research across OECD countries. We will also draw on the experiences of developing countries which have a history of collaborating with citizens within the context of scarce resources, as a source of potential learning for OECD countries. An evaluation of the cost benefits and risks of co-production will also be undertaken.

Review and analysis

28. Key elements of this review will be:

- The forms of partnerships which can be used by governments including: co-decision; co-planning and co-design; co-delivery/co-creation; co-review and co-evaluation and their characteristics.
- The levels of government, types of services and government functions where co-production is useful, and which forms seem to deliver most for the public sector.
- Which stages of government planning, delivery and review cycle can involve citizens.
- The degrees of citizen or user involvement on a spectrum from ‘surface level’ and ‘once-off’ involvement¹¹ (for example giving a view about a policy issue or a decision to be

¹¹ Pestoff & Brandsen 2008

made) to deep and ongoing relationships with government services (for example to self manage a chronic health condition with information and advice from professionals) at the other end of the spectrum, and their relevance.

- How people are involved – as individuals, in groups, represented by advocates or civil society organisations.
- The role and input of other stakeholders, in particular the private sector and the third sector.

29. From this review we will develop an analysis of which forms of collaboration seem to work best for different contexts, services and levels of government. We will also identify circumstances, services or functions where there would be little value in co-producing. For example, self-directed service models have potential for individual services such as social care, education and health care but would not be suitable for collective services such as street cleaning. However, other forms of co-activity such as citizen action (for example local clean up days which are common in the USA), may work for such services.

30. The analysis will include different types of services, for example: personal services (health, social care, education); transactional services (payments, information giving), democratic functions and services (interaction, opinions, view); regulatory services (environment, public health); and collective services (transportation, community safety). There can be no single approach for such a diversity of government services. Whenever possible, linkages to the different sector-based approaches to public service reform, such as in health, education, public administration or environment, will be established.

31. We will also look at how some countries involve citizens in the design and development of policies.

Costs and benefits

32. In this part we will review the business case, drawing on available evidence as to the costs and benefits of involving citizens and users in the design and delivery of services. We will explore whether services can be shown to be more effective when they involve co-producing with citizens and users.

33. From the previous analysis, we will then review the actual and potential costs and benefits of citizen input in respect of both quality and effectiveness of services. Some of these benefits are known in general terms but require more in depth analysis; others will only be identified through the research:

- We know for example that to tackle complex issues such as climate change, governments are reliant on citizen co-production and on changes in behaviour. But what kinds of co-production achieve the greatest impact?
- We also know that user involvement can bring in additional resources, for example by sharing the delivery of services with others and can therefore potentially reduce costs to the public purse. But to what extent are these benefits realised?

- We also need to look more closely at the costs of such involvement, both in the development and set up stages, for example in staff training and citizen training and support, or in the introduction of new systems, for example for devolved budgeting. Also whether there are typically any ongoing additional costs, for example to monitor the quality of services, increases in transaction costs or loss of economies of scale if services become highly customised. We will also examine which approaches to co-producing with citizens can deliver more for less or for the same level of investment.

34. As the issue of motivation in co-production is important, it will be important to examine the driving forces behind citizen and user engagement. An Australian study¹² of three countries (Australia, UK, USA) covering three very different types of services (income tax collection, postal services and support for long term unemployed people) reported that the need to feel valued and the desire to contribute were important motivators for successful co-production. In areas of policy which seek behavioural modifications, such as climate change or lifestyle issues, the question of how to motivate people is also critical. If there is motivation and commitment, governments can tap into user creativity and provide opportunities for personal development for users and for community capacity-building.

35. According to Alford's findings¹³ there are different potential benefits linked to service type and circumstances: "the benefits can accrue in either increased effectiveness or reduced costs or both". His research identified the benefits of co-production in each of the three services studied as:

- Postal services: The benefits were better service (more timely delivery) and considerably reduced costs.
- Support for long term unemployed people: Co-production enhanced some outputs e.g. job readiness, securing jobs but was less effective at finding jobs. There was a modest positive budget impact.
- Tax administration: There were potential savings but employees were given different roles so that other aspects of service could be improved and staff work was re-allocated. Co-production needed to be targeted on areas where clients had a good level of knowledge and competence to achieve the benefits.

36. Some of the benefits of working with service users can be seen in current programmes, for example in health services in the Netherlands where patients are supported, sometimes with new technologies, to manage their own conditions such as diabetes. Such programmes save on the costs of expensive hospital admissions and improve the day-to-day quality of life for users. Other examples such as the expert patients' scheme in the UK, develop knowledge networks and promote the sharing of experiences between users while helping to build their sense of value contribution to society.

¹² Alford 2009

¹³ *ibid*

Barriers and Risks

37. This section will set out the barriers and risks which governments have to face when they involve citizens in service delivery.

38. They are likely to include the following:

- **Skills** - Both governments and citizens/users may not have the skills needed.
- **Organisational culture** - Large bureaucracies can be slow to change and resistant to new ideas, and unwilling to lose control. Professionals may want to protect their own territories and expertise.
- **Costs** - There may be a need for additional resources to fund initial costs and in the current context this might be difficult. There could be increases in transaction costs, and a loss of economies of scale if services become highly personalised.
- **Business cases** - May be weak or not fully developed and potential service improvements and cost reductions may not be realised.
- **Multi-level government** - Lack of co-ordination and collaboration across different levels of government and possible bureaucratic and financial impediments to fund the service innovation generated by co-production.
- **Trust** - If new approaches are only associated with cost-cutting then citizens and users may not be willing to engage. Also implementation may be challenging for governments and users and citizens might become cynical if anticipated changes are not delivered.
- **Equity and inclusion** - The people involved may not be representative of citizens on the whole, less vocal citizens may be excluded and there may be “capture” by particular groups of citizens.
- **Governance** - Governments may be seen as abdicating their responsibilities or increasing the burden on their citizens. They may also lose a whole of government perspective on public services and a fragmentation of services.

Probity and accountability - There could be danger of fraud or malpractice especially in the context of devolving budgets to users. Also there could be reduced accountability if governments lose an overview of service activity.

Chapter 3 – Overview of OECD country practices on involving citizens in service delivery

39. This chapter will analyse the different ways of working with citizens and service users which OECD governments are using. It will present an overview based on the desk-based research and survey of OECD countries:

- **Summary table:** Using analytical models developed from the research, we will develop a table which will take stock of and systematise the different approaches to citizen collaboration being used by OECD countries, for a range of different services and government functions. More detailed case studies will be included as an appendix. We will also include some examples from developing countries.
- **Analysis:** We will review the different approaches from the desk research and country survey with the purpose of: 1) identifying the extent and depth of citizen and user input to public services in OECD countries; 2) identifying which services are using which types of co-production; 3) illustrating the benefits realised from involving citizens and users, including effectiveness and cost reduction; 4) discussing what type of barriers and risks countries have encountered or can anticipate, and how to deal with them; 5) highlighting leading-edge practices based on country experiences.

Chapter 4 – Working with citizens: success factors and organisational impacts

40. Building on the evidence and analysis in the previous chapters, this chapter will describe the factors leading to effective citizen and user input. Much of the current co-production activity in OECD countries is at the experimental or developmental stage. As for other forms of innovation, a key task will be to learn from the experimentation and to identify ways of scaling up or mainstreaming what works so that it becomes part of day-to-day practice rather than special or separate programmes and activities. This section will also look at the kind of skills and capacities which governments will need to develop if they are to embed these approaches into their mainstream practices.

Building blocks and critical success factors

41. This part of chapter 4 will identify and analyse key building blocks and success factors based on available evidence and literature review.

42. A number of recent studies focusing on co-production have identified key factors from co-production practices. The Australian study previously identified the key building blocks of co-production as: interdependency, substitution and competence. Alford also argues that co-production requires:

- **a re-thinking of existing models of service delivery** and theories of public management such as managerialism or contractualism;
- **a re-casting of the roles of public sector staff** - not just producing but influencing clients to co-produce;
- **a broader model of government** - not only producer, purchaser, regulator and subsidiser but also as organiser, enabler, and catalyst of the efforts of groups and individuals.

43. Another recent international project ¹⁴ identified some of the characteristics of effective co-design of public services as:

- **participative**: designing services **with** people, rather than **for** them
- **transparent**: all participants are aware of the methods, processes and purposes
- **ongoing**: continuity of people involved to build close working relationships
- **wide ranging**: to include a multiplicity of views and inputs
- **developmental**: there is exchange of information, expertise and change
- **sharing**: ownership and power is shared with users
- **equal**: valuing of inputs from all those involved
- **outcome-based**: a practical focus, with clarity of vision and direction
- **systematic**: there is a clear methodology and implementation process

44. Key building blocks to implementing a programme of self directed services have been identified as ¹⁵ :

- **People as participants**: active roles for users as active participants rather than passive users.
- **Budgets and financial frameworks**: new approaches need budget disaggregation so resources follow commissioning. User involvement can add to the available resources and ensure that resources are well spent. New approaches to risk management are needed.
- **Workforce reform**: Changing roles for professionals to be advisers, navigators, brokers, service providers, risk assessors and auditors. New skills set to manage more dialogue and collaborative approaches.
- **Creating markets**: need to stimulate a wider market for services which are innovative. This requires new approaches to commissioning.

45. These and other models, together with the experience of OECD countries, will be taken into account and reviewed as a means of identifying some common building blocks for effective collaboration with citizens.

¹⁴ Bradwell & Marr 2008

¹⁵ Leadbetter and Cottam 2007; Leadbetter, Bartlett & Gallagher 2008

Organisational Impacts

46. Implementing these building blocks is likely to have implications for government organisations. The emerging models for effective co-production all emphasise the importance of workforce changes including different roles for professionals, and the need for different competencies and skills sets.

47. This section of the report will identify the range of skills and capacities which governments need to be able to work collaboratively with citizens and individual users. It will review and identify the kinds of organisational changes which will be necessary, which are likely to include: working practices and employee skills and training; creating a culture of openness to change and innovation; organisational frameworks and capacity to manage change; new approaches to budgeting and resource management; new approaches to risk management; building relationships and networks; and using the potential of ICT, for example web 2.0, and tele-support.

Chapter 5 – Next steps and future direction

48. This final chapter will identify the 'what next', that is the major challenges and future needs for those countries who want to develop their own approaches to more actively involve citizens in public services. Also for those countries already active in this field, we will identify the levels of change which can be anticipated as techniques become more sophisticated.

49. This section will also identify the areas for follow-up work which can be undertaken to help OECD countries deepen their understanding of the theory and practice of citizen involvement in public services. These areas could include, for example:

- Developing a database on who is doing what across OECD countries;
- Developing principles or guidelines to help countries develop their practices;
- Producing detailed case studies for particular services;
- Briefings on the potential contribution of new technologies (for example web 2.0) to citizen collaboration;
- Briefings on key related organisational issues such as workforce planning and development; financial frameworks and risk management; approaches to commissioning.