

# PSI-CO

## Public Sector Innovation through Collaboration

### DURATION

15/12/2015 - 15/03/2020

### BUDGET

881.125 €

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Nowadays, Public Sector Innovation (PSI) is high on government agendas across OECD countries. Confronted with major budgetary pressures and grand societal challenges, governments worldwide experience a need to step beyond conventional wisdoms and sedimented practices. Public sector innovation literature increasingly asserts that the ability of public organisations to engage and set-up collaborative interaction within and across governmental levels and with societal actors determines their innovative capacity. Despite the growing awareness of the need for collaboration, there is a **lack of knowledge** about how such collaborative governance arrangements results in meaningful innovations regarding policies and services, and how different forms of collaborative governance interact and reinforce each other. Also it is unclear what organisational and individual conditions need to be present within administration to foster collaborative governance arrangements. For example, little is known about the extent to which and how new practices of HRM such as New Ways of Working ('Het Nieuwe Werken') encourage and facilitate (or hinder) innovation-enhancing collaborative arrangements.

This project will address this research gap by conducting a multi method study on **collaborative innovation**, studying both (a) how collaborative governance can foster innovation, and (b) by what conditions, in turn, collaborative innovation is supported.

The **overall research question** of this project is 'how and under which conditions do collaborative governance arrangements foster the initiation, adoption and diffusion of innovations in policies and services?'

First, in order to study how collaborative governance can foster public sector innovation, the team will analyse not only the innovative capacity, but also the internal dynamics of collaborative governance arrangements. Second, in order to identify what conditions support collaborative innovation, the team will study the meta-governance of collaborative innovation, as well as characteristics at the level of the individual civil servants involved and of the public organisation concerned. In doing this, specific attention is directed to if and how new practices of organisation and HRM, such as New Ways of Working, foster capacity for collaborative innovation. Also the role of the so-called government-wide innovation architecture is studied.

The project uses multiple methods to address these questions, combining (1) a multiple case study phase, (2) a validation phase (Delphi and international validation), (3) a design-phase with two test cases, using Living Lab methodology and (4) a gap-analysis phase, using quantitative survey data, and (5) this in an international comparative set-up. The project itself is designed to be a collaborative process in which the commissioning government, their civil servants and stakeholders are involved in various stages and through various instruments.

The PSI-CO project is an interdisciplinary research project with participation of four universities and one international partner:

- a) The research group 'Public Administration & Management' -UAntwerpen with expertise on collaboration and meta-governance
- b) KU Leuven-Public Governance Institute with expertise on co-production and HRM ,
- c) AURAP-Université Catholique de Louvain-La-Neuve with expertise on policy learning by civil servants and
- d) SPIRAL-Université de Liège with expertise on participative research and living labs methodology
- e) The Department of Public Administration and Sociology of the Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam for the international validation.

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The project will add to existing **scientific knowledge** by refining methods to study collaborative innovation and creating theoretical and empirical insight through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods into the inter-dynamics between individual and organisational characteristics, collaborative governance arrangements and public sector innovation.

Also, the project will result in validated and tested **recommendations and guidelines** for policy and practice (federal targeted towards the government and the ministry of P&O, towards the organisations involved in case/pilot-tests, and towards individual ministries in the form of the gap-analysis, as well as internationally) on

- a) how to build innovative capacity and effectively bring about policy and service innovation through collaboration;
- b) how to organize and optimise arrangements for transversal coordination with other public actors and co-production with citizens, users, organisations and organised interests;
- c) what kinds of meta-governance, organisational structures and leadership as well as
- d) what skills, attitudes, incentives and instruments at the level of the individual civil servants are needed in order to facilitate and stimulate collaborative innovation;
- e) what this implies in terms of (New) ways of working and innovation architecture.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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