NS INITIATIVE
A New Synthesis of Public Administration

A User's Guide for Practitioners

Jocelyne Bourgon P.C., O.C.

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To Public Servants

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About the Author

The Honourable Jocelyne Bourgon, P.C., O.C., is the *New Synthesis* (NS) Project Leader. She is also President of Public Governance International (PGI) and President Emerita of the Canada School of Public Service.

Ms. Bourgon has vast experience as a public sector leader. She has served as Deputy Minister of several major departments and as Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet for Canada.

She has extensive international experience, including former positions as President of the United Nations Committee of Experts in Public Administration, President of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) and Canadian Ambassador to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Ms. Bourgon is the author of *A New Synthesis of Public Administration: Serving in the 21st Century* (2011). The *NS Initiative* is dedicated to preparing public sector leaders and public organisations to be fit for the challenges of the time.

Foreword

The defining issue facing public sector institutions today is governance. One only has to look at the world around us to see that governments face increasingly complex issues that they cannot resolve alone.

Think of the pressures faced by governments in today's changing world. Societies are moving into a world of information super-abundance, and governments no longer have a monopoly on the access or use of data for policy development, program delivery or performance measurement. Data that was once only available to governments is now widely dispersed throughout society thanks to the World Wide Web. The digital revolution is providing new sources of information and new ways of handling massive amounts of data in order to develop policies and programs.

Citizens expect governments to engage them and to be responsive to their needs. They expect to be consulted by their governments and to have a direct impact on the decisions being taken, whether with respect to how policies are being developed and designed or how programs are designed, developed and delivered. Governments today ignore citizen demands at their peril.

These drivers have come together to test the foundations of longstanding government institutions and public sector leadership behaviours and provide the need and the means for government in the 21st Century to transform for public service excellence.

The World Economic Forum has said that the biggest challenge facing governments today is to remain relevant to their citizens.

The work done by Public Governance International (PGI) fundamentally understands the need for public sector reform, and provides a powerful forward-looking framework to guide public sector leaders through this journey.

The New Synthesis Project argues public sector institutions must move beyond an approach based on organisational policy, program development and program delivery to an approach that leverages both the authority of the state as well as the collective power of institutions and individuals to ensure both societal and civic results.

This is a powerful framework that challenges public sector leaders to rethink how they interact with citizens and their political masters. For there is no doubt that if our public institutions are to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century successfully, they must recognize that they are no longer in 'control', consult genuinely with others in the search for better solutions and outcomes, and engage with political masters, understanding their concerns and that the same time providing advice that is relentlessly focused on the public interest.

This is an exciting time to be a public servant. Yours is a daunting but exciting challenge: to drive change and to make sure that you are continuing to provide value.

As a public sector leader, there is tremendous value in this framework, and the tools it offers, to set the stage for driving the public service into the future. Enjoy the journey!

Maryantonett Flumian
President
Institute on Governance

Acknowledgements

The *New Synthesis Initiative* explores the new frontiers of public administration with a view to providing practitioners with a theoretical framework adapted to the reality of serving in government in the 21st century. It draws lessons from practice and new insights from academia.

This NS User's Guide would not have been possible without the help of many. During the initial phase (2009-2011), 200 academics and practitioners contributed to the *NS Initiative*. An international partnership, involving Australia, Brazil, Canada, the Netherlands, Singapore and the United Kingdom, spearheaded the project during this period. This work led to the publication of *A New Synthesis of Public Administration* in 2011.

During subsequent years, efforts shifted to testing the ideas in practice in different countries and domains of activity. This work involved new partners and some of the earlier ones. More than a thousand public sector leaders participated in NS Labs and NS Workshops between 2013 and 2015. The first NS Master Class for senior public sector leaders was designed and conducted in **Singapore** in 2013. During 2014 and 2015, NS workshops were held in various countries on topics as varied as: building public institutions fit for the challenges of the 21st century, re-thinking the role of the centre of government, the rule of law and voluntary compliance, public sector leadership, and leading public transformation.

There has been an ongoing relationship between the NS team and government officials in **Australia** since the launch of the *NS Initiative*. More

recently, various activities were conducted with the **State of Queensland** to test the relevance of NS ideas in areas such as public safety, emergency preparedness and social services.

Finland has had an active interest in the *NS Initiative* from the start. Periodic exchanges and collaborative efforts have focussed on citizen and community engagement and modernising the role of the centre of government. The work done with the **OECD Secretariat** and the governments of **Finland and Estonia** in 2014 further expanded this work.

Over the years, the *NS Initiative* has benefited from active collaboration with the Government of **Denmark** through MindLab. This work has reinforced NS understanding of the importance of a citizen-centric perspective to policy making and service delivery.

Working in collaboration with the **Community of Practice for Results Based Management** and the **European Commission**, NS ideas were tested with a group of representatives comprised of current and future members of the European Union (EU). The conversations revealed the importance of distinguishing between public and civic results.

A ground-breaking initiative was launched in 2015 in collaboration with the **State of Sarawak**, **Malaysia**. Eleven high-performance teams (HPTs) used the NS Framework to explore solutions to law enforcement and security challenges in domains as diverse as illegal logging, border security and road safety. This work was instrumental in refining several aspects of the NS exploration process. These improvements are reflected in this Guide.

In 2015, a project was initiated with the Institute on Governance (IOG) in **Canada** to design a NS Orientation Program that could be used by organisations interested in leadership development. The results of this work will be used in future years to train trainers and facilitators in various countries, thereby making the NS Framework available to a much larger community of public sector leaders.

Each event was an opportunity to test the applicability of the initial NS ideas and enrich them by learning from practice. The NS Team is indebted to all NS Lab and NS Workshop participants who devoted a great deal of time and energy to generating their own *New Synthesis* to address some of the challenges they are facing. The readers of this Guide are the beneficiaries of the work done by the participants who came before them. Future participants will benefit from the feedback the readers of this Guide will provide.

Finally, this work would not have been possible without the contributions of the PGI Team. The author would like to acknowledge the contributions of Ms. Rachael Calleja for her leadership and writing assistance, Ms. Rishanthi Pattiarachchi for providing coordination and research support and Ms. Queena Li for her contribution to the case study material and design of this volume. I would also like to thank Mr. Ian Allen and Ms. Lisanne Lacroix for their editing support. This work benefitted from the on-going contribution of Mr. Michel Bilodeau who provided the voice of practitioners and challenged the PGI team to keep the practitioner's perspective at the forefront of this volume.

And so, since the search for good government and good governance never ends, the NS journey continues...

Introduction

People in government today serve in a hyper-connected and turbulent world characterised by volatility and uncertainty: a world more prone to global cascading failures.

Serving in the 21st century requires new ideas, a different mental map and an increased openness to different ways of doing things.

Practitioners need a broader view of the role of government in society in order to think their way through and invent solutions to the problems we face as a society.

They need a conceptual framework of public administration fit for this time to guide their actions and decisions. The *New Synthesis* (NS) was launched for this very purpose. To our knowledge, this is the only conceptual framework of public administration that brings together the contributions of government, citizens and other social agents in a single dynamic and interactive discovery process.

The NS Framework is the result of several years of research and practical application. It helps practitioners combine issues, means and capabilities in new ways to produce results of ever increasing value to society. The NS Framework has been used by some 1000 practitioners from various countries including Canada, Australia, Denmark, Finland, Malaysia, Singapore, and some EU member states. They come from a variety of fields and different types of organisations such as central agencies, line ministries and corporate services agencies.

This User's Guide is designed to guide practitioners through their own *journey of discovery*. It combines an exploration of concepts with international examples and exercises.

The *New Synthesis* is an applied process of discovery. The magic resides in finding an original way of combining available resources, means and skills to make progress. Each *New Synthesis* is different and the solutions generated are unique to the context and circumstances prevailing at the time. After exploring this Guide, readers should be able to create their own *New Synthesis* to address the challenges they face in practice or that loom on the horizon.

The User's Guide has two main parts. The first part introduces readers to the NS Framework, the conceptual basis of this Guide.

The second part guides readers through the NS exploration methodology designed to help public sector leaders develop their own *New Synthesis* by applying lenses—*positioning*, *leveraging*, *engaging* and *synthesising*—to a challenge they face in practice. This section uses international examples to illustrate concepts and invites readers to apply their learning through a series of exercises.

Your NS journey begins here.

A New Synthesis of Public Administration Fit for the Time

The role of government is more challenging than ever and governments are struggling to adapt to the fast-changing landscape of the world we live in. Serving in a post-industrial era gives rise to a unique combination of old, new and emerging challenges.

- Public policy issues are more inter-connected than ever.[1] Their economic, social, environmental, technological and political dimensions are intertwined. As a result, an increasing number of public policy issues exceed the capacity of government acting alone.

- Governments serve in a hyper-connected world. They must find solutions to public policy issues in a world where social media transform the issues and contexts within which solutions must be found, as well as citizens' expectations of what government can achieve.[2] Our hyper-connected and interdependent world is prone to volatility and global cascading failures.

- Governments are faced with an increasingly disorderly world characterised by growing friction and declining consensus on how governments can work together to address issues of international and global concern.[3]

- Conventional ideas and practices are leaving government in a reactive position which erodes the

public's confidence in the capacity of government to defend and promote their interests.

The role of public servants today may not be more difficult in absolute terms than the job of those who came before, but it is certainly different.

Nothing is more useful than a good theory, but nothing is more dangerous than a theory that does not keep up with the times. *NS provides a mental map that is substantially different from conventional public administration thinking.* Producing results of value to society and finding solutions to public challenges is a shared responsibility of government, citizens and many other agents. This requires a collective effort, the contribution of multiple agents and the active participation of citizens themselves.

Government must explore how a vast ecosystem of inter-related activities can be shaped and transformed to yield the desired results and steer society through an ongoing process of change. More and more, public policy responses need to cut across boundaries within government, and between governments and other

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[1] Mark Badger, Paul Johnston, Martin Stewart-Weeks, and Simon Willis, *The Connected Republic: Changing the Way We Govern* (United States of America: Cisco Systems Inc. Internet Business Solutions Group, 2004), 1-8.
[2] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Participative Web and User-Created Content: Web 2.0, Wikis and Social Networking* (Paris: OECD, 2007), 12-13.
[3] Thomas L. Friedman, "Takin' It to the Streets," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2013.

sectors. Public sector leaders must explore how to use the authority of the State to leverage the collective capacity of actors across society, adapt to changing circumstances and propel society forward.

A NS journey does not start with answers; it begins with framing questions and articulating what success means.

It focusses on assets rather than deficits in order to build a better future, improve human conditions and ensure fairness across generations.

Introducing the NS Framework

The NS Framework provides a mental map for exploring the dynamic inter-relationships between government, citizens and multiple agents in society needed to produce results of ever increasing public value.

These are the results that we consume collectively and that benefit society as a whole.

A peaceful society governed by the rule of law, an educated population and workforce, safe streets, clean air and clean water are all examples of public goods that make a society worth living in. The NS Framework provides a public sector perspective on the role of the State in society. It is used to explore how government interventions can transform society, the State's relationship with citizens and the inter-relationships between the public, private and civic spheres.

The NS Framework is not a model. The four vectors are independent but inter-related lines of force that delineate a vast *space of possibilities*. What ultimately happens in this space depends on the actions and decisions made by government and many other agents.

The NS Framework provides a dynamic view of the role of government in society. This is in contrast to the conventional view of public administration that focusses primarily on the inner workings of government. This view is too narrow to

Figure 1: The New Synthesis Framework

provide useful guidance to practitioners. The conventional view of public administration is inward-looking. It gives too much weight to the power of analysis and not enough to the dynamic potential of inter-relationships across systems. It sees the world from a binary perspective where matters are exclusively public or private, where politics and administration are separate and where policy decisions and policy implementation are disconnected. This view of the world makes it difficult to see the whole picture and fully grasp how interactions among various components have the potential to transform society.

In practice, policy issues have public, private *and* civic dimensions. Policy decisions and policy implementation are part of the same cycle aimed at inventing solutions to the problems we face as a society. Government interventions transform the world around us, while government is transformed by the changing landscape of the world we live in.

Serving a Public Purpose

Public institutions, public organisations and public servants serve a public purpose. They are responsible for generating *public and civic results*. Public results provide an overall sense of direction to society, while civic results contribute to the governability, adaptability and resilience of society.

The two *vertical vectors* (public results and civic results) are used to frame issues and clarify the desired public outcomes government aspires to generate. Both vectors invite participants to focus on societal results. This helps participants stay connected to the big picture and reveals what particular changes government actions and decisions are designed to achieve.

Public results provide a measure of society's progress. At the most macro level, these results include: economic prosperity, improved human conditions and cross-generational fairness. Desired public outcomes depend on the context, circumstances and mission of a given public organisation.

Civic results, for their part, build a society where people are able and willing to share a future together. This is a society imbued with a civic spirit conducive to collective actions where citizens and communities display the capacity to address and resolve the issues that concern them.[4]

Traditionally, public and civic results were seen as one and the same.

In fact, they are quite different and significant trade-offs are involved in balancing a drive to achieve better public results against a commitment to building the collective capacity of society for generating better results in the future.

[4] For more information, see Jocelyne Bourgon, *A New Synthesis of Public Administration: Serving in the 21st Century* (Ottawa: McGill-Queens University Press, 2011), 34-38.

Using these two vectors helps practitioners bring a *societal and citizen-centric perspective* to government decisions and actions.

The *horizontal vectors* (state authority and collective power) are used to explore how to make optimal use of the authority of the State to generate a desired public outcome.

The authority of the State, although vast, is insufficient to produce a number of desirable results.

Addressing systemic challenges such as poverty reduction, climate change, public security, or public health requires the active contribution of multiple agents in society. In these cases, the authority of the State is used as a lever to elicit the contribution of others. This is also the case when a desired result requires people to modify their behaviours or when the active collaboration of multiple agents is needed.

Conventional approaches have focussed on government as the primary agent in serving the public good and the collective interest. In practice, viable solutions to public policy issues entail a search for balance. Too much reliance on the authority of the State may stifle innovation. Too much reliance on market forces or individual initiatives increases risks and ultimately the costs that may be borne by society.

Governing involves a search for balance between using the authority of the State and relying on the strength of others to generate desirable public and civic results at

a reasonable overall cost to society. At the crossroads of these four vectors, there are tensions to manage, conflicts to resolve and a multitude of possible permutations. The best solution is one that leads to progress in the context of the challenges and circumstances faced in practice.

Relational Government

Public administration embodies a concept about the nature of the relationships that bind government, society and citizens. Many of the forces at play in the early part of the 21st century are transforming these relationships. The NS Framework helps practitioners re-think, re-frame and re-invent these relationships in contemporary terms and in a context specific to them.[5]

Public servants must be able to use conventional and unconventional approaches. They must experiment with new ways of generating solutions to challenges of increasing complexity. Countries with a public administration fit for the times will have a formidable advantage in influencing the course of events in their favour and prospering in all circumstances. Governments fit for the times will best be able to prepare their society for the challenges that lie ahead. One of the challenges faced by people in government today is to ensure their country is among those who will successfully adapt to the challenges of governing in the 21st century. This Guide was designed to assist public sector leaders in carrying out this heavy responsibility.

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[5] Jocelyne Bourgon with Rachael Calleja, *The New Synthesis in Action: A Retrospective of the NS Labs Conducted in 2013-2014 Based on Singapore's Experience* (Ottawa: Public Governance International, 2015), 7.

The NS Exploratory Journey

The NS exploratory journey is an iterative process. It uses various lines of inquiry to help practitioners think beyond conventional approaches and explore uncharted territories.

In this Guide, four exploratory lenses are used. They are called *positioning, leveraging, engaging* and *synthesising*. Each lens corresponds to a set of concepts designed to broaden mental maps and to encourage thinking beyond the conventional. The lenses are complemented by a series of exercises to deepen the exploratory process and approach solution making from different angles.

The NS exploratory lenses are introduced one by one in this Guide to ensure that the reader has a solid grasp of each concept. However, in practice and in NS Labs, the lenses are used simultaneously. This means that practitioners frame and re-frame the desired public outcomes they aspire to generate more than once as their journey progresses and as they gain new knowledge and engage with others.

Selecting Your Live Case

A NS exploration becomes real when it is applied to a practical situation. The first step is to **choose a live case**. A live case is a *real challenge* or a result that public sector leaders are committed to achieving in the context of their current position. It is recommended that the reader use the same live case for all exercises.

Selecting Your Live Case

- Describe your live case from the **PERSPECTIVE OF CITIZENS** as users, beneficiaries or obligates.

- Can you think of ways that citizen engagement could contribute to:

    - better **PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS**?
    - better **PUBLIC RESULTS**?
    - better **CIVIC RESULTS**?

- What would a 'citizen-centric approach' mean in your case?

Positioning: The Power of a Broader Mental Map

Positioning is the starting point of the NS exploratory journey. It recognises that public policies, programs and services are instruments used to serve a *public purpose*. They are important insofar as they help to move society forward and generate desirable public results.

Figure 2: Positioning

Positioning is about:

- Exploring the inter-relationship between agency, system-wide and societal results;

- Gaining an appreciation of the *ripple effects* of government interventions across vast systems, which may transform behaviours and interactions between the public, private and civic spheres;

- Exploring the vast range of options open to government and the mix of instruments most likely to enable progress and bring about the desired public outcome.

Positioning is a practical search for solutions. It explores what is feasible at the time, in the context and with the resources and capabilities available.

There is more to the role of public organisations than the programs they manage or the services they provide. Their mission extends beyond the borders of their agencies. To fulfill their mission, public agencies must position their contribution in the broader context of government-wide actions, system-wide results and societal outcomes.

Framing an issue in societal terms has a direct and sometimes dramatic impact on the approach that will be selected.

An agency-centric perspective can easily miss the multi-dimensional nature of an issue. It limits the ability of government to discover solutions that lie in the *space between* the contributions of individual agencies and other agents in society. Focussing on agency results inevitably leads to sub-optimal results. Positioning exercises focus on optimising societal results. They challenge conventional approaches and ideas held as immutable truths by bringing a diversity of perspectives to public policy challenges. Positioning is never definitive. It will evolve as public sector leaders engage with others in search of viable solutions, as new knowledge becomes available and experience is gained. Positioning exercises help practitioners discover, connect and articulate the high public purpose served by government actions, decisions and interventions. This *opens the door to public innovation*.

Moving up a Value Chain of Public Results

The challenge for practitioners is to explore what can be done, using resources and capabilities currently available, to move up a *value chain of public results* (see Figure 2). This means generating better government-wide, system–wide and societal results.

Agency results: Practitioners are well familiar with agency results.

These results provide a basis for reconciling inputs and outputs. They define clear responsibilities and accountabilities for the use of taxpayer funds and the exercise of delegated authority. Agency results encourage efficiency and productivity. Public sector leaders have a responsibility for ensuring the efficiency of public organisations, the careful use of public resources and compliance with the laws and regulations set over the years. They have a responsibility to improve agency performance and build the capacity of the agency going forward. Taxes must be collected without leakage, public services must be exempt from corruption and government services must treat all in accordance with the law. Focussing on agency results reveals a *spirit of performance*.

Important as agency results may be, they capture only part of the story. Public agencies must contribute to producing better system-wide results and generating better societal outcomes.

System-wide results: System-wide results exceed the capacity of any single agency or even government as a whole. They require the active contribution of a number of agencies across government, other levels of government and multiple agents in the public, private and civic spheres. This collaboration requires the capacity to work across boundaries.

The responsibility of public sector leaders does not stop at the frontiers of the organisations they lead. They have a *shared responsibility* with oth-

ers to produce better system-wide results. This includes supporting government-wide priorities, contributing to public service-wide initiatives and generating results through vast networks of collaboration in government and beyond. System-wide results require constant exploration of new and better ways to combine issues, means and capabilities to generate better results. It entails bringing together the strength of hierarchical public organisations and the power of vast and distributed networks.

Hospitals provide health care services; some provide community services while others conduct medical research. Whatever their mandate, all hospitals form part of a broader *health care system* and have a responsibility to contribute to the overall performance of the system. Efficient and well-managed schools alone do not guarantee that people will benefit from an accessible and affordable *education system*.

Collective actions allow for the achievement of results beyond the reach of any single agent on his own.

System-wide results are shared results. Focussing on system-wide results reveals a *spirit of invention*.

Societal results: Public results, at the highest level, benefit society as a whole. They are a measure of the overall performance of society and the impact of government actions over time. They are the results that matter most to citizens and elected officials. At the highest aggregate level, societal results include results

such as economic prosperity, improved human conditions, cross-generational fairness and a sustainable biosphere. Public office holders have a *collective responsibility* to optimise the overall performance of the public sector. They bear a special responsibility for using the authority of the State to steer society through an ongoing process of change, create a better future and prepare public institutions that are fit for the future. Focusing on societal results reveals a *spirit of stewardship.*

Public servants serve a public purpose. If this were not the case, there would be a good reason to ask whether these activities belong in the public sector in the first instance. This higher purpose transcends the programs public servants manage, the services they provide and the organisations they run. Discovering and articulating the *higher* public purpose gives meaning to government actions and decisions. It is the starting point of a journey of discovery aimed at inventing solutions to the problems we face as a society.

Agency, system-wide and societal results are inter-related. The continuum running from agency to system-wide and societal results is *scalable*. This means that the words *agency* and *system-wide* have different meanings depending on the issue and context. An agency may be a unit within a department, a department within a large ministry, a ministry within the public sector, or a government among others in the case of a multilateral effort.

The inter-relationships between agency, system-wide and societal

results are not linear; they go in all directions. Articulating the higher public purpose in societal terms and defining what success means for society will influence the way one conceives of a system-wide effort and the contribution of various public agencies. Similarly, an initiative at the agency level may have a ripple effect across government or across systems. It may even transform society. A public transformation process may start at any level. It can be top-down, as is sometimes the case with government priorities, or bottom-up, when the initiative starts on a smaller scale and then expands.

Learning from Practice: From Agency to System-wide Results

When a situation becomes unsustainable, when a challenge cannot be solved by doing more of the same no matter how much people try, this is the time to re-frame the issue, re-think the approach and re-position the contribution of the organisation. It is in these circumstances that NS is most relevant and that a broader mental map is most helpful.

The case of *Children at Risk* provides an illustration of how a different way of thinking can lead to different solutions. The following story is based on a transformation process underway in three different child protection units operating in Australia, the United Kingdom and Singapore. These stories are still unfolding but, taken together, they illustrate how a broader mental map can generate innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

Children at Risk

Child protection agencies have the legal authority to take measures to protect children from *significant harm*.[6] Many countries have a special unit with the authority to investigate allegations of child abuse and remove children from their family environment if there is plausible or probable evidence of harm or risk of harm.

Like many government agencies, the child protection service unit in this story faced an increasing workload and declining resources.[7] This led to high staff turnover that put the ability of the organisation to fulfill its mandate at risk. The manager initially thought the solution lay in improving staff retention and making better use of resources. While progress on these fronts was necessary, such measures did not address the root cause of the problem. The agency was unable to fulfill its higher public purpose, which was to prevent children from suffering harm. The agency was only able to act after-the-fact, once harm had been done, and even then it was not achieving the desired outcome. Necessary interventions were delayed due to a shortage of staff. The agency was in crisis and becoming an emergency responder, intervening only in the most severe situations.

A different approach was needed. The agency was using all its resources to cope with a growing workload. In essence, this meant going from crisis to crisis. The broader purpose of the organisation, *to prevent harm*, could only be fulfilled if the agency shifted some resources from case work to prevention. This involved identifying risks factors,

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[6] Anne Stafford et al., *Child Protection Systems in the United Kingdom: A Comparative Analysis* (London; Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012), 42-49.

[7] Sonja Jütte et al., *How Safe Are Our Children?* (London: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2014), 4-8.

detecting pockets of risk and taking proactive measures. Information related to the detection and prevention of risk was in the hands of social services, schools, the police, community organisations and other actors. The agency chose to free up some resources even if this affected its efficiency in the short-term. Early work led to the identification of six determinants of risk, including a history of family violence, poverty, poor attachment to the labour force, illiteracy and juvenile parents. This work was the first step towards the early detection of pockets of risk, which encouraged other organisations to join forces with the agency. Some organisations shared information while others made a contribution by acting proactively to detect the early signs of risks.

A focus on child protection was giving rise to a *system-wide approach* where each agency remained responsible for delivering on their respective mandate, but also shared a responsibility with others to contribute to a common purpose. The group was *moving up its value chain of results*.

The agencies later discovered that many of the factors linked to children at risk were also associated with families at risk. These findings were valuable to social service agencies dealing with the re-integration of ex-offenders and family violence. This led to inter-agency co-operation on a larger scale.

The group is now exploring what can be done to ensure that families are able to fulfill their *caretaker role*. A broader perspective opened the door to better inter-agency results. It created hope and helped resolve the retention problem at the agency level.

There are many important lessons to be drawn from this case:

An agency centric focus leads to sub-optimal results

An agency-centric perspective reduces the range of available options. When the challenge was framed as staff retention, the problem rested only with team members and their manager: no one outside this group could help or be part of the solution. A broader view revealed the multi-dimensional nature of the issues at play and opened new avenues for collaboration.

The hierarchy and the network

A broader purpose makes it possible to produce better agency and system-wide results by combining the benefits of the legal authority of hierarchical organisations, such as the child protection agency, and the capabilities of system-wide networks across governments.

Optimising societal results

One cannot optimise two points on the same vector. In this particular case, this means that one cannot optimise both agency, government-wide and societal results. There are important tensions and trade-offs between them that may involve difficult decisions, as this case illustrates. Faced with difficult decisions, practitioners are encouraged to optimise upward in order to generate results of increasing system-wide and societal value.

From Agency to System-wide and Societal Results

Public agencies are created by statutes. These statutes define their mandate in broad terms, delineate the authorities they can exercise, and, in some cases, set parameters for the use of those authorities. These statutes do not *define the public purpose* underpinning the use of authority. The public purpose sought must be framed and re-framed to take account of the context and circumstances. The public purpose is actualised in the political context prevailing at the time and in light of government priorities and existing capabilities.

Having the legal authority to act and using it are two very different things.

Clarity of purpose and an articulation of the desired societal outcomes help public sector leaders discern how authority may be used and deployed to greatest effect.

Public purpose comes first and guides practitioners' actions and decisions.

SHORT STORY FROM FIELDWORK: The State of Sarawak in Malaysia is endowed with rich and diverse forest resources; 80% of its 12.4 million hectares is still under forest cover.[8] The forest resource offers huge economic, social and environmental potential that could benefit present and future generations. However, illegal logging is emerging as a serious threat.

The Forest Department was given the objective of reducing the number of offenses by 20 percent in 2015. By the end of December 2015, the Department had handled 210 cases; there were 109 cases of illegal logging, 87 cases of tax evasion and 14 cases of various offenses committed by sawmills. The Department was quick to realise that achieving its objective would not resolve the problem of illegal logging or adequately protect forest lands. Consequently, it decided to focus on system-wide results and put in place a "sustainable forest management system". This system required the involvement of a broad range of agencies with responsibilities in a variety of related fields, including enumeration and tagging, log tracking, royalties, remote sensing and geospatial analytics.

A sustainable forest management system could operate in very different ways depending on the desired societal outcomes. Some societal choices could only be made at the political level because they involved conflicting priorities and required government to arbitrate between the logging industry, the tourism industry, the palm oil industry, local communities and aboriginal groups. Under the guidance of the Chief Minister, the State of Sarawak chose to focus on "the protection and conservation of the forests for the benefit of present and future generations". As a result, the system-wide approach to forest management by the government of Sarawak now includes conservation, protection, public education, enforcement and the enrollment of people as "custodian[s]" of the forest. The public purpose is driving the design and implementation of a government-wide effort.[9]

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[8] Internal documents, the Government of Sarawak.
[9] For more information, please see Jocelyne Bourgon et al., *Enforcement and Safety: A Retrospective of the Sarawak Civil Service High Performance Team (HPT) Retreat 2015* (Ottawa-Sarawak: Public Governance International and Government of Sarawak, 2015), 41-44.

The key points to keep in mind from the preceding examples are:

Focussing on the effectiveness of the whole

Societal, system-wide and agency results are inter-related and contribute to generating results of increasing public value. In the end, what matters most is not the efficiency of the parts but the effectiveness of the whole.

Finding one's North Star

Articulating the higher public purpose brings clarity to government actions and decisions. It provides guidance to practitioners making decisions in a context characterised by complexity and a high level of uncertainty. In this way, the public purpose is the *North Star of public administration*; it provides guidance to public servants at all levels and in all types of agencies. It helps ensure coherence and convergence between actions and decisions across multiple boundaries and vast networks.

In summary, positioning exercises provide an opportunity to:

- *Articulate the higher public purpose* that gives meaning to the actions, decisions or interventions of government.

- *Explore the inter-relationships* between agency, system-wide and societal results with a view to positioning the contribution of a public agency to achieving better societal results.

- Ensure that the initiators of public transformation initiatives have considered their *motivation* and commitment to the initiative.

Positioning Exercise One (P1):
Positioning and YOU

- What **PUBLIC** results are **YOU** committed to achieving?

- Why are you **COMMITTED** to this effort?

- Why should **OTHERS** join in the effort?

- How would this lead to a better **FUTURE**?

Going Further

The following sections encourage readers to explore the challenge they are facing from a diversity of perspectives.

Role Playing

Role playing helps to get out of one's own skin. Useful role playing for public sector leaders includes *thinking* like a Prime Minister, a Minister or a Deputy Minister. Better system-wide and societal results can be achieved if one is able to see issues from different perspectives. This uncovers ways to bridge the gap between what is desirable and what is feasible in current circumstances. It also helps to reconcile aspirations for the future, the capacity to bring about change and the need to build support.

Lines of Inquiry: Role Playing

- *Think* like a **PRIME MINISTER**: Describe the public purpose of the initiative you have in mind as if you were the Prime Minister.

- *Think* like a **MINISTER**: As the Minister responsible for this initiative, explain why the issue must be addressed at this time.

- *Act* like a **DEPUTY MINISTER**: As a Deputy Minister, outline what the department will do to make this a reality.

Mapping the Eco-System

Public initiatives take place in the context of a vast ecosystem of existing laws, regulations, programs and services. Understanding this ecosystem is necessary in order to discover viable solutions and understand the ripple effect that a small action in one part of the system can generate across the whole system.

Mapping exercises may be time consuming, but they are invaluable to gaining a holistic view of an issue. Mapping exercises have internal and external dimensions.

Internally, mapping the existing administrative system reveals the intricate legal and administrative requirements in place, the diversity of agencies involved and the conflicting demands and priorities of various government agencies.

Internal mapping reveals the administrative deficiencies that may curtail the capacity to bring about desirable societal results.

These problems will not resolve themselves. Deficiencies must be identified and addressed to achieve the desired public outcomes.

Externally, mapping exercises can be used to reveal the broad ecosystem within which a policy response takes shape. In this case, it explores the inter-relationships between the public, private and civic sectors.

Lines of Inquiry: Mapping

Map out the existing administrative and regulatory system from a *user perspective*:

- Does the system encourage **VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE**?

- Does it encourage **COLLABORATION** across agencies?

- What can **YOU** do to make the system better?

Parameters of Public Innovation

The most frequent mistakes made by public sector leaders during positioning exercises are:

- Underestimating their authority to bring about change;

- Overestimating the constraints they face;

- Underestimating the assets available to them; and

- Making their actions conditional upon the support of others.

Public organisations operate under heavy constraints. This is a fact. These constraints may be legal, financial or administrative in nature. Public organisations also operate with limited resources: there will never be enough resources to meet all the needs. Public agencies must therefore balance demands and needs as well as the urgent and the important. This will not change.

Public organisations invent solutions within constraints. These constraints set the parameters within which public innovation must take place. The challenge for public sector leaders is to invent solutions that offer the greatest potential for public impact using existing resources and capabilities. NS fieldwork has revealed time and time again that there is always a way to make progress, notwithstanding these constraints. This requires that public sector leaders be knowledgeable about the full extent of their authority and be willing to use it to the fullest. One often finds that public administrators are not making full use of their *existing authority* and that they have an exaggerated tendency to wait for others to take the first step. Significant opportunities are missed this way.

A useful step for overcoming this tendency is to make a list of the *perceived constraints* that circumscribe action and identify which ones truly result from *legal requirements*. One frequently discovers that there are fewer legal constraints than first thought.

Other constraints and requirements such as those imposed by central agencies, departmental reporting requirements or management control systems do not have the same importance. Some may have been introduced to address issues that have long since disappeared. *They can and should be challenged* if they become an impediment to producing better public results. Constraints, which so frequently frustrate public administrators, often emanate from within their own organisations. In a sense,

they are self-inflicted and self-per-petuating unless they are challenged.

Public administrators have access to significant assets. Understanding the whole system also exposes the constraints that must be taken into account when inventing solutions of high value to society. It is sometimes useful to develop an inventory of assets and capabilities that can be re-deployed to generate more desirable public outcomes. In the Children at Risk case, the agency had to make the difficult decision of letting its caseload increase for a time in order to deploy resources that would improve its capacity to detect and prevent harm. This is a difficult choice. In most cases, it is possible to re-allocate some resources by leaving aside activities of lesser relative value to society.

Look Back and Move Forward

The reader should now be able to articulate the essence of the transformation they want to bring about in a few succinct sentences. Positioning exercises are challenging because they make it difficult to hide behind processes. *Purpose comes first*. Clarity of purpose is a necessary condition for inventing solutions to public challenges and eliciting the collaboration of others.

**Lines of Inquiry:
Lists and Inventories**

- Identify the **LEGAL** barriers to your initiative.

- What can the agency let go of to achieve results of higher public value?

- What assets can be deployed to achieve the results you have identified?

**Positioning Exercise Two (P2):
Positioning Your Live Case**

- Articulate the higher **PUBLIC PURPOSE** that gives meaning to the transformation you are committed to leading.

- What **SOCIETAL RESULTS** will your initiative generate?

- What **SYSTEM-WIDE RESULTS** are needed to make progress?

- What is your **AGENCY** best positioned to contribute in support of this effort?

Leveraging: State Authority and Collective Power

Leveraging is the second lens that is used in a NS Exploratory Journey. Leveraging considers how government can achieve better societal results by building on the strengths of others. This recognises that government does not need to do it all for the collective interest to be well served. Leveraging is about pooling existing knowledge, know-how and capabilities wherever they may reside in government and society to generate solutions to problems of public interest.

In essence, leveraging characterises *smart governments*; those able to achieve the desired public results with the least amount of effort because they have learned to build on the strength of others and have the capacity to sustain collaborative efforts across vast networks.

Before turning to leveraging exercises, it is useful to clarify some basic notions related to the use of the *State's authority* as a lever to generate results of value to society.

The Authority of the State

In most countries, a small group of people have the legal right to use the authority of the State to produce results. This includes the authority to make laws and enforce them, use coercive measures, tax and spend public funds. They owe this privilege to *the position they hold*.

People become public office holders in various ways depending on the governance system in place in their country. In democratic societies, public office holders include elected officials and professional public servants appointed through some form of merit system.

The authority of the State rests with *public institutions*. The separation between institutions and public office holders is an important principle of public administration. Loyalty is owed to the institutions—that is, the *positions* of Prime Minister, President and Cabinet Ministers—rather than the incumbents. This distinction makes it possible to ensure the continuity of the State while encouraging renewal and orderly political transitions.

The ultimate responsibility of public office holders is to exercise the authority of the State to promote the collective interest. What constitutes the collective interest, however, is the subject of fierce political debate. The responsibility for using the authority of the State to serve the collective interests of society does not begin or end with the government in office. Public institutions were built over long periods of time. The laws that govern society today have taken shape over many years. They reflect democratic choices that were mediated over time through political debate and form part of today's governance system. They are the democratic expression of prior choices and form part of today's reality.

Public office holders simultaneously:

- Administer programs and services inherited from the past;

- Transform existing systems and practices to reflect changing needs and circumstances; and

- Implement new measures or invent novel solutions to address contemporary problems.

Continuity and Change

Public sector leaders must ensure the continuity of the State while generating inventive solutions to new and emerging public challenges. Public institutions ensure stability and predictability. This contributes to creating the conditions for public, private and civic innovation.

Governing is a process of *constructive deconstruction* where the authority of the State is used to preserve stability while guiding society through an orderly process of change. It constitutes a *delicate balance*.

Too much reliance on the authority of the State stifles innovation and imposes a high cost on society. Not enough increases the risks borne by society, particularly the most vulnerable. Regardless of the choices made, government is the insurer of last resort, the guardian and *steward* of society in all circumstances. This search for balance is the reason for leveraging exercises.

Leveraging the Power of Others

While the authority of the State is exercised by a relatively small number of public office holders, the power to change the course of events in society is vastly distributed.

Multiple agents in the private sphere, civic organisations, other governments, international and multi-lateral organisations, the media, interest groups and others all have some degree of power to bring about change.

In today's world, the issues facing government have multiple dimensions (economic, social, technological, etc.). They do not and will not fit within the boundaries of any single public organisation or even a single country. Governments cannot re-organise themselves out of this dilemma because re-organisations simply create new boundaries that need to be overcome. Viable solutions require a mix of interventions, some by the public sector and many by other agents in society. They require collaboration across a web of inter-relationships.

Leveraging is a search for practical solutions to complex problems using existing resources, means and capabilities.

Leveraging is about:

- **Pooling** capabilities and resources across multiple boundaries and interfaces to achieve results of higher public value at a lower overall cost to society.

- **Building** on the strength of others. Government interventions form part of long chains of intermediate results where the contribution of multiple agents is garnered to achieve the desired public outcome.

Relying on conventional approaches will not generate viable solutions to an increasing number of public policy issues.

This is most obvious in the areas of health and education or when dealing with issues such as increasing inequalities, public safety or the impact of an aging population and workforce.

Leveraging exercises are opportunities to re-combine skills, resources and capabilities in new ways to move society forward. The authority of the State is the lever used to enroll the contribution of multiple agents and the collective power of society (see Figure 3). One of the key findings of the NS fieldwork is that there are always enough resources around to make progress if we are smart enough to harness them.

Figure 3: Leveraging
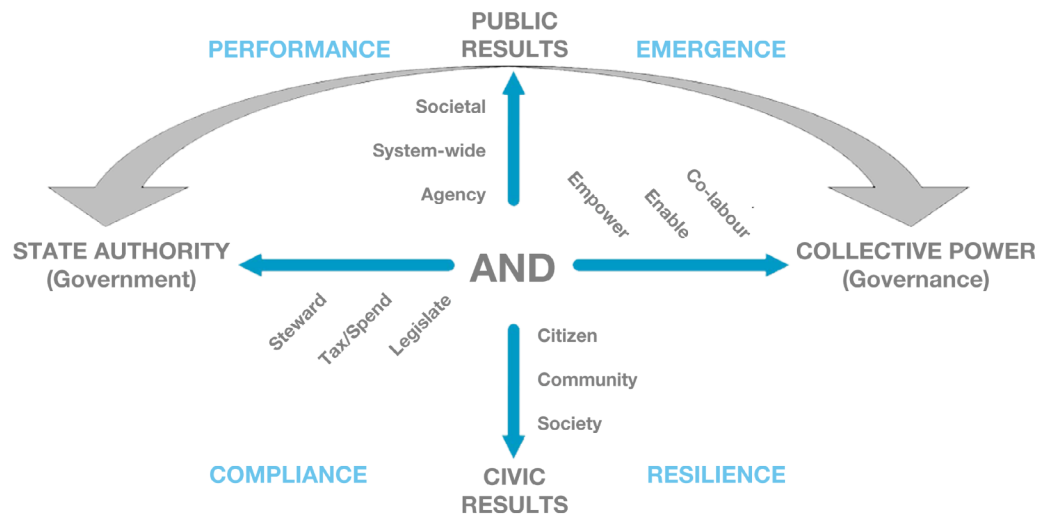
Learning from Practice:
Leveraging Across Systems

Walking through an example is a useful way to gain a better appreciation of the ideas at play. NS provides practitioners with a map for exploring a broad range of avenues open to them. A map does not dictate the journey; it simply enables us to look ahead. The decisions that matter can only be made by the people with the authority to act, in the context and circumstances prevailing at the time.

The case on Brazil's response to HIV/AIDS illustrates how leveraging the power of others and mobilising efforts across government can change the course of events. This case provides a good illustration of leveraging on a large scale and across systems. Government interventions ensured a coordinated approach across government and mobilised actions at multiple levels. These actions transformed behaviours and ensured convergence between the public, private and civic sectors contribution.

Important lessons can be learned from such a macro-scale effort:

Acting proactively

Transformations on this scale do not happen by themselves. They require deliberate and proactive government interventions. In this case, the Brazilian government began to address the challenge in the 1990s by generating

Brazil's Response to HIV/AIDS[10]

In the 1980s, Brazil was experiencing an HIV/AIDS epidemic. The number of cases of citizens with HIV/AIDS was increasing at an alarming rate.[11] The Government of Brazil was facing a number of challenges in its fight against this epidemic, including limited fiscal capacity, the high cost of treatment, limited health infrastructure and a shortage of medical personnel. The challenge was compounded by difficulties reaching at-risk populations due to factors such as high levels of illiteracy, poverty and a dispersed population spread across a vast territory with a large number of Brazilians living in remote communities. In light of such challenging circumstances, experts advised the Government to protect future generations by concentrating its efforts on prevention.[12] Essentially, the opinion of experts at the time was that Brazil did not have the capacity to do much for people already infected with HIV. Eventually, the pandemic would run its course. The priority should be to protect the next generation.

The government of Brazil chose a different course. It opted for an approach that combined awareness, prevention and care. The Government sought to ensure that no one would be left behind in spite of limited resources and challenging circumstances. It mobilised all available assets behind a national effort. It enrolled the contribution of civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community centres and enlisted the support of religious organisations. It mobilised community groups to reach people across the country, even in the most isolated areas. The results were impressive. In 2001, it was estimated that a $232 million investment by government had resulted in total savings of $1.1 billion for society as a whole.[13] By 2002, the rate of HIV infection in Brazil was stable at 0.6 percent, the mortality rate had fallen by 50 percent, and in-patient hospital days had fallen by 70-80 percent.[14] In 2014, UNAIDS reported that the HIV prevalence rate in Brazil remained stable at 0.6 percent.[15]

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[10] More information is available from: Bourgon, *A New Synthesis of Public Administration*, 71-72 or online at http://www.pgionline.com/hivaids-in-brazil.

[11] Maria Goretti P. Fonseca and Francisco I. Bastos, "Twenty-five Years of AIDS in Brazil: Principal Epidemiological Findings 1980-2005," *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* 27, sup. 3 (2007): S334.

[12] Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman and Michael Patton, *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2006), 135-136.

[13] Alan Berkman, et al., "A Critical Analysis of the Brazilian Response to HIV/AIDS: Lessons Learned for Controlling and Mitigating the Epidemic in Developing Countries," *American Journal of Public Health* 95, 7 (2005): 1162.

[14] World Health Organization, *The World Health Report 2004: Changing History* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2004), 23.

[15] Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), *The Gap Report* (Geneva: UNAIDS, 2014), A7.

broad public awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Public awareness led to the mobilisation of citizens, community associations, church groups and health care workers, all of whom joined forces with government.

Building on the strength of others

Government may need to simultaneously leverage the power of multiple agents in different spheres (public, private and civic) at home and abroad.

- To drive down the cost of expensive antiretroviral medication, the Brazilian government enlisted the support of the World Trade Organization to produce and donate generic versions of expensive drugs.

- To address the problem of low medical capacity, the government enlisted 600 NGOs, churches and food distribution centres to support hospitals and clinics. This network was able to reach those affected, even in the most remote areas, thus providing health care to people who did not have access to the traditional hospital-based system.

- To reach isolated communities and overcome the problem of illiteracy, people infected with the disease were enrolled to act as agents. They formed the first line of defense to prevent propagation and promoted the use of preventative measures.

Leading when necessary

The government played an essential role in setting a course of action and mobilising everyone's efforts. The authority of the State was effectively used to deploy resources, keep everyone co-ordinated and reach an agreement with the pharmaceutical sector. However, the results achieved would not have been possible without the active contribution of community-based and civil society organisations, multiple agencies and international organisations. Brazil's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a *collective success story*.

Much has been written about this case.[16] It is an important reminder that a country may be poor in fiscal capacity but rich in other assets that can be used to change the course of events. Governments able to lever the contribution of others, work across boundaries and build on the strengths of partners are *smart governments*. More of these abilities will be needed to face the challenges that lie ahead. Inspired by this case, readers are invited to begin developing their leveraging strategy.

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[16] James W. Begun, Brenda Zimmerman and Kevin Dooley, "Health Care Organizations as Complex Adaptive Systems," in *Advances in Health Care Organization Theory*, ed. S. M. Mick and M. Wyttenbach (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003): 253-288; Fonseca and Bastos, "Twenty-Five Years of the AIDS Epidemic in Brazil"; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, *Getting to Maybe*; Martha Ainsworth, and A. Mead Over, *Confronting AIDS: public priorities in a global epidemic* (Washington D.C.: World Bank Research Report, 1997).

> ## Leveraging Exercise One (L1):
> ### Framing for Collaboration
>
> - What groups (individuals) must you bring on board to achieve the desired outcome you have identified?
>
> - What is in it for **THEM**?
>
> - What would make it **WORTHWHILE** for them to **JOIN FORCES** with you and others?
>
> - What do **YOU** (your agency) bring to the relationship?

Working Across Boundaries

In the example of Brazil's handling of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, collaboration was needed at the international, national, state and local levels. But most often, collaboration is needed *across* agencies operating within the same *system*.

In these cases, leveraging begins by identifying the partners needed to achieve the desired outcomes and providing partners with an incentive to collaborate. Understanding potential partners' situation, motivation and capabilities as well as the constraints facing them is crucial to framing the issue in a way that encourages collaboration across agencies.

Collaboration across organisational boundaries does not happen by accident. Competition is often the norm. Deliberate efforts are needed to counter this tendency, skillful leaders and managers must put mechanisms in place to sustain the efforts of the group. Some degree of procedural definition is needed to enable co-decisions, resolve differences of view and encourage the co-creation of solutions.

Working across boundaries is not easy. While it is essential, it is often met with resistance because the agencies involved in a collaborative effort must relinquish some degree of control. Leveraging the contributions of others and working across boundaries are a defining characteristic of modern governance.

Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)[17]

Technological and clinical breakthroughs in life-extending treatments for children have improved the prognosis of many previously fatal conditions.[18] Children who suffer from complex medical conditions typically require extensive treatment involving life-sustaining equipment, therapeutic services, regular pediatric care and consultations with a large number of medical specialists.[19] They make frequent visits to emergency centres and require frequent hospitalisation.

About 3,700 children with chronic illnesses, representing 0.14 percent of all children in Ontario, account for 50 percent of the province's pediatric in-patient expenditures. On average, these children require services provided by up to 11 medical specialists. Most of them (93.8 percent) require access to special medical equipment. Their medical condition creates inter-agency and inter-services co-ordination problems. It puts a heavy burden on their family. Parents, particularly mothers, often end-up leaving the workforce to become full-time caregivers. This situation places a high level of stress on all family members, including siblings. Health care costs may be disproportionate but the social costs are even greater. The health care system was not designed for children with chronic illnesses. These patients need a co-ordinated approach across multiple disciplines and organisations.

In 2009, the CEO of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) committed to finding a way to help these children and their families. He prepared the way for an inter-agency collaborative effort by convening and enlisting the support of colleagues. The partners co-designed a three-year pilot programme based on a 'family-centred' approach. This approach included several innovative practices such as the designation of a multi-agency case manager and a "most responsible physician" to co-ordinate medical care.[20] The partners initially funded the programme without support from the Ontario Ministry of Health.

The programme's results show that enhanced co-ordination across disciplines and among service providers improved access to care and provided more support for families. The programme led to shorter wait times and reduced service redundancies. The streamlining of health and social care systems allowed more patients to live at home, attend school and participate in community activities, thereby elevating their overall quality of life. The pilot phase of this initiative demonstrated how similar projects could achieve significant benefits for the children involved, their families and society as a whole at a relatively low cost to society.

Learning from Practice: Leveraging Across Agencies

Cases of challenges such as those faced by the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) are not rare. Readers can readily identify similar situations in their respective working environment. In such situations, people are well aware of the problems. They know what works and when system constraints discourage cross–agency collaboration. Leveraging exercises help practitioners identify the need for inter-agency collaboration and the measures required to make collaboration a reality.

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[17] More information is available from: Elke Loeffler, Shaundra Ridha and Nathalie Cook-Major, "How was it achieved and who was involved?," in *A partnership model for children with complex medical conditions: The Champlain Complex Care Programme in Canada*, last modified December 3, 2013.

[18] Chris Feudtner et al., "Deaths attributed to pediatric complex chronic conditions: National trends and implications for supportive care services," *Pediatrics* 107, no. 6 (2001): E99.

[19] Michel Bilodeau, *The Perspective of the CEO* (Ottawa: Public Governance International, 2015).

[20] Ibid, 2.

NS fieldwork has revealed that leveraging strategies have a number of characteristics in common beyond the ones mentioned in the previous section:

- **Finding a point of leverage (or leverage point):** This is the *rallying point* of a collaborative effort. It defines and embodies the reason why partners are committed to working together. It is shared, significant and used to bring others on board. In the previously mentioned case, the rallying point for CHEO and its partners was the overarching needs of children with chronic illnesses. In other areas, partners may go their separate ways and even compete against one another, but in this one area, they agreed to work collaboratively.

- **Framing for collaboration:** Leveraging requires identifying the key partners needed to ensure the success of collaborative efforts. Who are they? What would motivate them or hinder their participation? The capacity to obtain a contribution from others is enhanced by an understanding of their positions and a willingness to take on their concerns. These considerations lead to a re-framing of issues that embodies collective interests rather than the singular view of the initiating agency.

- **Leadership of proximity:** Working across boundaries requires a special form of leadership. A *leadership of proximity* involves being close enough to detect the issue, committed enough to act and credible enough to secure the contribution of others. Many issues requiring inter-agency collaboration cannot be resolved by decisions taken at the highest level of government. Leaders gain support at a higher level by taking action and demonstrating the benefits of their initiative.

- **Building a coalition:** Public transformation must start somewhere. Regardless of whether the initiators are an individual, a group or an agency, they must build a coalition to guide the collective effort during the early phases. The coalition will most likely include the main organisations as well as interested external groups. In the case of CHEO, the CEO was the initiator and the coalition included several organisations in the region as well as family representatives.

- **Reputation and relationship are leveraging assets:** Reputation and relationships provide practitioners with the legitimacy to initiate actions that span beyond the scope of their organisations. The *power to convene* is a powerful asset. This is the power to invite colleagues and partners beyond one's formal authority to explore the potential for collaborative initiatives. This asset is invaluable.

- **Managing for collaboration:** Working across boundaries and leveraging the contribution of

multiple agencies takes more than good will. It requires good management systems and problem solving mechanisms. The case mentioned above required fairly heavy machinery to support the group's efforts. These mechanisms were co-created by the partners and designed to sustain a collaborative effort.

Leveraging Exercise Two (L2):
Building a Coalition

- What is the **RALLYING POINT** in your case?

- Reflect on the **RELATIONSHIP** you have with the partners you want to enroll (trust, mistrust, no prior relations, etc.).

- What **ASSETS** do you bring to the relationship?

- What will be your first steps towards building a **COALITION**?

Going Further

Leveraging explores how to pool existing assets including knowledge, know-how and capabilities, wherever they reside, to generate better results and invent solutions to intractable problems. This means working across government, agencies and sectors. The following additional lines of inquiry may help readers explore other aspects of their leveraging strategy.

Leveraging Knowledge Assets

Governments frequently operate under heavy fiscal constraints. In such an environment, how best to use limited resources is a key concern. *Leveraging* knowledge assets helps departments deploy limited resources to areas where they have the greatest potential to generate a significant impact. NS fieldwork with law enforcement agencies uncovered many examples of targeted interventions where knowledge assets were leveraged across multiple agencies.[21] Law enforcement agencies look for risk patterns and concentrations in order to develop intervention strategies aimed at unraveling clusters of illegal behaviours. In these cases, a leveraging strategy starts with the pooling of knowledge assets available in relevant government agencies and other levels of government.

Leveraging knowledge assets is equivalent to ensuring that government knows what is already known in a disaggregated way. There may be some limitations to sharing information across agencies, but by and large, these problems are not insurmountable. Leveraging and aggregating existing government-wide information is an important first step. Analytical tools and techniques are available to help practitioners extract meaning and detect patterns from large data sets.

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[21] Bourgon et al., *Enforcement and Safety*, 37-103.

Big Data analysis may still be in its infancy in government, but it has huge potential for improving policy and decision-making. Public administrations do not have a monopoly on data. Data are collected by government at all levels, statistical agencies and multiple international organisations. Academic research and private organisations collect data for their own purposes. Web browsers are meta-data collectors. Polls and surveys of all kinds are conducted regularly. Making good use of data is challenging because of the availability of high volume of data from multiple sources generated with high velocity and in various forms. Much remains to be done for government to make better use of data.

Leveraging Administrative Systems

Public organisations fit for the time must be able to *serve across boundaries*. Boundary spanning is characteristic of modern governance. Despite the increasing need for systems that encourage co-operation, leveraging exercises reveal a lack of systems designed to serve across boundaries. The administrative systems in place today were designed at a time when departments and ministries were ex-

pected to carry out most of their business on their own. The good news is that what was put in place by people in authority at a prior time can be changed by people in authority at this time. Administrative systems are not immutable.

There is a need to complement the systems that have worked well in the past with ramps and *connectors* to co-ordinate government-wide activities, ensure strategic coherence and create solutions with others. Modern public administrators must be able to serve as one, act as one and learn as one.

[22] Full description available in: Bourgon et al., *Enforcement and Safety*, 101-103.
[23] Adam Carey, "Road trauma: Design a big factor in accident statistics," *The Age*, March 10, 2015.
[24] Austroads, *Review of the National Road Safety Strategy* (Sydney: Austroads Ltd., 2015), 53-54, 69.

Lines of Inquiry:
Serving as One

- What **EXISTING SYSTEMS** (administrative, financial, informative, personnel, etc.) support collaborative efforts?

- What **NEW SYSTEMS** are needed for the civil service to **SERVE AS ONE**?

- What can **YOU** do to improve existing systems?

Look Back and Move Forward

Before moving to the next phase of the NS Exploratory Journey, readers are encouraged to take a moment and reflect on their findings so far.

Positioning exercises have shifted the attention from agency results to societal outcomes. These exercises encourage readers to focus on the big picture and the higher public purpose they serve. Focussing on societal results reveals the multi-dimensional nature of complex issues and the need for co-operation across boundaries. This is the power of a broader mental map.

Leveraging exercises reveal the need for collaboration across systems, sectors and government agencies to produce results of higher public value. These exercises shift the focus of attention from a government-centric search for solutions—what governments can do on their own—to a governance-centric perspective—

how better results can be achieved by building on the strength of others or by pooling existing resources and capabilities.

At this point, readers may find it necessary to reposition their live case. It is not uncommon for practitioners to position their issue several times as they gain a broader perspective. Does the positioning of the live case reveal the broad public purpose? The need for co-operation? The inter-relationship between actions at the agency level and system-wide results? Does it bring clarity to the societal results the leader is committed to achieving?

Leveraging exercises encourage readers to think about how to create the conditions for a collaborative effort. Have the key partners been identified? Are you confident in your capacity to secure (or obtain) their contribution? What measures are needed to support the group's effort? What can be done to ensure that the initiative will become self-sustaining? Before moving on to the next section, readers are encouraged to summarise their leveraging strategy in a few sentences.

Leveraging Exercise Three (L3):
Your Leveraging Strategy

- Who will you **ENLIST** first?

- What are the **FIRST STEPS** you will take to enroll others in a collaborative effort and build A **COALITION**?

- What must be put in place to **SUPPORT** the group's effort?

- What needs to be done to **INSTITUTIONALISE** the initiative and make it **SUSTAINABLE**?

Engaging: The Power of Citizens as Public Value Creators

Serving a public purpose and using the authority of the State to promote the collective interest are two foundational principles of public administration. A third defining characteristic of the role of the State is to create citizens and build a citizenry willing to share a future together. The State transforms people into citizens.[25] This role makes public institutions unique and their contribution essential for a well performing and governable society. Engaging citizens as public value creators is the next step in the NS Exploratory Journey.

The Making of Citizens

Citizens are the dark matter of well performing societies. People are not born citizens;[26] they become citizens as they accept the constraints and responsibilities that stem from being members of a broader community.

As individuals, people pursue their interests and the interests of those closest to them.

As citizens, people can rise above their differences because they can only fulfill some of their most fundamental interests by belonging to a larger community.

This is the case, for example, when people aspire to live a peaceful life, maximise their personal safety and ensure the well-being of their children. One of the most fundamental roles of the State is to transform people into citizens. This role includes building a functioning citizenry and generating "a civic spirit conducive to collective actions".[27] These are civic results. These results reduce the cost of friction in society and make it possible for government to pursue a change agenda with a higher likelihood of success.

The State produces citizens in all kinds of ways: through education, a common judicial system, economic and social policies, common rules and social norms. The State gives meaning to a concept of citizenship that becomes real in each country's particular context.

Some of today's most intractable problems are because the State lacks authority to govern with legitimacy. Public institutions are necessary to establish a *governable* society where people agree to live under a common rule, voluntarily forgo the right to take justice into their own hands and resolve their differences peacefully.

The relationship that binds the State, citizens and society is at the very heart of public administration as a discipline and domain of practice. This relationship reflects values and principles that have been forged over long periods of time, but that are constantly evolving.

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[25] Jocelyne Bourgon, "Responsive, Responsible and Respected Government: Towards a New Public Administration Theory," *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 73, no.1 (2007): 7-26.
[26] Michael Saward, "Democracy and Citizenship: Expanding Domains," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. John Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 401-402.
[27] Jocelyne Bourgon, "Leading Transformation: The *New Synthesis* in Action," (presentation, CAPAM Biennial Conference, Putrajaya, Malaysia, October 2014).

Important changes are taking place in the relationship between citizens and the State. Factors such as globalisation, mass migration, new forms of terrorism, rising inequalities, the impact of climate change and many others are transforming what it means to be a citizen and what people expect from their government. There are increasing signs of malaise in many countries. Growing cynicism about politics, declining electoral turnout, the deterioration of public discourse and the rise of dogmatic positions that leave little room for compromise are all manifestations of discontent.

The *New Synthesis* Initiative does not put forward a concept of citizenship or express a view about who should or should not become a citizen, nor does it speculate about the bundles of rights, entitlements and responsibilities associated with modern concepts of citizenship. The *NS Initiative* focusses instead on the relationship between the public sector and citizens. It explores if, when and how a *different sharing of responsibilities* may yield better public and civic results.

The term '*citizen*' in the NS context refers to all persons living in a country whether or not they meet the legal definition of citizen. The challenge of serving in the 21st century requires that we re-conceptualise practices that have served government well in the past. This applies as well to the relationship between the State and citizens.

NS engaging exercises begin with the proposition that citizens are the most important public value creators.

Citizens as Public Value Creators

In the public administration of the 20th century, individuals were assumed to have limited ability to solve collective problems. Individuals were voters and taxpayers with obligations under the law. They were users, beneficiaries or obligates of public services. Governments provided services to citizens. Citizens had no involvement in the development of public policies or the design of public services.

This is still the prevailing view in some countries. This view of citizens has a number of perverse effects. For one, it *crowds out* the contribution of citizens to solving collective problems.[28] It makes very poor use of society's collective capacity to invent solutions and underestimates the assets that users and beneficiaries of public services could bring to the generation of public results. Public policies and programs based on the assumption that people have little to contribute lead to sub-optimal results, create dependencies and erode the natural resilience and resourcefulness of society.

In reality, citizens are the *main creators* of many of the most important public and civic results. Countries derive benefits from a society governed by the rule of law because

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[28] Elinor Ostrom, "Crowding Out Citizenship," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 23, no 1 (2000): 13.

individuals accept their roles as law-abiding citizens. No country can enforce all the laws it promulgates. In return for individuals accepting their legal obligation to pay taxes, countries provide residents with the benefits of an elaborate social safety net and modern public infrastructure. The basic assumption governing individuals' decision to accept the rule of law is that compliance will result in high value creation. Put differently, public investments benefit society as a whole because citizens are willing to accept that they generate results we collectively consume.

Citizens are the main contributors to public health outcomes, public literacy, public safety, and a clean environment. No country, not even one with deep pockets, can generate these results through coercive measures. The best outcomes are not achieved by countries with the highest spending level as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Achieving the best results requires the active contribution of people. People build societies worth living in through the actions they take and decisions they make. Their contribution is the real "Wealth of Nations".[29] *People's investment in building a well performing society far outweighs all other investments, public or private*.

Engaging Citizens in the NS Context

NS exercises for engaging citizens as public value creators explore how to transform the relationship between the public sector and citizens from one of *dependency* to one of *mutual-*

ity and *shared responsibility*. These exercises are used to systematically explore how people, families and communities can play an active role in public policy making and public service delivery, and how a *different sharing of responsibilities* may yield better public and civic results (see Figure 4).

A different sharing of responsibilities between government and citizens is essential for inventing solutions to some of the most challenging problems of our time.

- Some government policies and programs are becoming *unaffordable* because they have crowded out the contribution of users and beneficiaries or have failed to make use of people's assets. This is the case with strategies that address the impact of an aging population on health services and pension programs.

- Some government programs are *unsustainable* without the active contribution of citizens, communities or families. This is the case with public safety programs and initiatives aimed at preventing environmental degradation.

- Some government policies and programs have generated *dependencies* that are detrimental to society's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Examples include policies and programs related to energy consumption, water use and climate change.

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[29] David Halpern, *The Hidden Wealth of Nations* (United Kingdom: Polity, 2009), 2.

Figure 4: Engaging
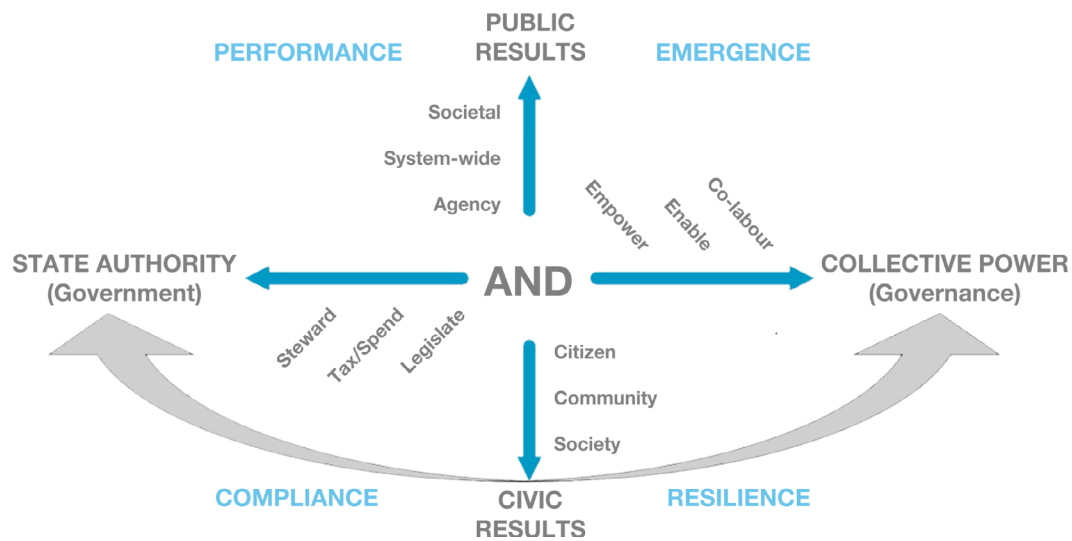
There are many reasons for exploring how to make better use of people's assets.

Engaging citizens as public value creators opens up a new avenue for creating public results, one that avoids overreliance on government or overconfidence in market forces.[30] Engaging offers a more balanced approach to sharing responsibilities between the public, private and civic spheres.

Citizen engagement has both instrumental and intrinsic value. The engagement of citizens can be used as an instrument for generating better public results. It can also produce intrinsically valuable *civic results*.

Civic results are manifest in a civic spirit that encourages collective action. It is recognisable in the resourcefulness of communities dealing with problems of interest to them or in self-reliant individuals taking charge of their life and improving their personal situation.

Civic results build the capacity of society to adapt to changing circumstances and prosper in unpredictable circumstances.

They have a significant impact on the overall performance of a country.

Engaging can take many forms depending on the purpose, context and circumstances. The possibilities span a broad spectrum, ranging from information sharing and consultation to more ambitious arrangements that entail a deeper relationship such as co-creation, co-production and self-organisation. Many options are available to give users of public services greater say, more choice and a more active role in producing results with government.

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[30] Bourgon, *A New Synthesis of Public Administration*, 46-47.

Ultimately, the responsibility for selecting the appropriate form of engagement for the task at hand rests with government. Some approaches are better suited to certain tasks. Every approach entails some risks and potential benefits.

One of the responsibilities of public sector leaders is to ensure that the cost of the approach selected—both in time and effort—is commensurate with expected benefits and appropriate in the context of the circumstances prevailing at the time. Public sector leaders must ensure that the benefits of the initiative outweigh the risks.

A Continuum of Choices

Engaging exercises explore a *diversity of approaches*. These approaches must co-exist and complement each other. Figure 5 illustrates ideas learned from NS fieldwork conducted between 2013 and 2015. It summarises the circumstances in which governments are well positioned to act on their own and when a different sharing of responsibilities is necessary to generate the desired societal outcomes.

Engaging Exercise One (E1):
Think Citizen

- Describe your live case from the **PERSPECTIVE OF CITIZENS** as users, beneficiaries or obligates.

- Can you think of ways that citizen engagement could contribute to:

  - better **PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS**?
  - better **PUBLIC RESULTS**?
  - better **CIVIC RESULTS**?

- What would a 'citizen-centric approach' mean in your case?

Figure 5: Continuum of Possibilities

Acting Alone

There is no expectation that governments will engage citizens in all circumstances. Governments have been elected to make decisions on people's behalf and they have access to many of the tools needed to bring about results.

Participants in NS Laboratories have found it useful to clarify when governments are best positioned to act alone, taking their respective contexts into consideration. In some cases, citizen engagement may be counter-productive or generate societal tensions rather than encourage progress. The obligation of the State to defend minority rights was frequently mentioned as an example. It is also recognised that not all governments are equally receptive to the idea of sharing responsibilities with citizens.

The NS fieldwork has identified three situations in which government is well positioned to act on its own.

This is the case when:

- The knowledge needed to frame an issue is readily available to government. In such cases, actions or policy responses depend primarily on expert knowledge;

- The tools for achieving the desired policy outcomes are in government's hands; and

- Public agencies have access to the information needed to change the initial decision if and when adjustments are required.

Government action through conventional means will continue to be the best approach in a number of circumstances This is an efficient way to mass-produce public results and set common rules and norms. In other cases, government action must be complemented and supplemented by other approaches that enlist the contribution of citizens more directly. The NS fieldwork has produced some important lessons for improving the effectiveness of citizen engagement processes.

First, a clear motive helps government engage citizens constructively. Second, it is important to have some degree of clarity about when a government is prepared to engage citizens and when it is reluctant to do so.

Another lesson worth noting is the need to ensure that the cost of engagement is commensurate with expected benefits. One way to think about this is to consider the cost of diversion. The engagement of citizens implies a reallocation of people's time, from their usual activities to serve a new purpose. People use their time to earn a living, take care of their children or ageing parents, work in the community, rest or pursue activities of their choosing.

Public administrators must consider carefully if the desired public outcome warrants such a diversion. Citizens' time is an asset of considerable value. It must be used with care when the desired public outcome warrants it.

Co-labouring with Citizens

There are situations when governments cannot achieve the desired results or when conventional approaches are leaving behind pockets of under-served citizens because their situations do not fit the mould. In such situations, a different sharing of responsibilities between government and citizens may open up new avenues.

The NS fieldwork has revealed that governments use four types of engagement. Each type transforms the relationship between the State and citizens.

- **Collaborative policy making** brings citizens into the policy making cycle. Governments retain the authority and responsibility for making decisions. They engage with citizens to build public awareness, generate a shared understanding of the consequences that various policy choices entail and forge a broad-based consensus. The credibility of the exercise hinges on the decisions that are made afterwards to give effect to the ideas generated during the engagement process. The sharing of responsibility is revealed in the degree of influence that participants have on subsequent public policy decisions.

- **Co-creation** brings together a diversity of perspectives by drawing from the assets of public agencies, service providers and users. The people and agencies involved shape policy responses adapted to the needs and contexts of the areas where they will be implemented. Techniques such as design thinking, ethnographic surveys and prototyping are frequently used to help users and service providers co-invent better solutions.

- **Co-production** engages public service users and, in some cases, their families and communities in the production of specific public results with public agencies. This entails a shared accountability for outcomes. It makes active use of people's assets.

- **Self-organisation** relies on citizens and communities to generate solutions to issues of concern to them and of value to society. In these cases, government plays an active but supporting role. This role may include fostering an enabling environment, providing the necessary support and monitoring results. Technology-enabled self-organisation is particularly powerful and opens the door to new forms of mass collaboration.

In practice, a *diversity of approaches* is needed to address complex issues. This is a significant departure from conventional approaches to public policy making that focus primarily on government actions and decisions.

Viable solutions to complex issues require a *mix of activities*—some by government, some by government with others and some by citizens. The role of the public sector is to ensure that these activities work synergistically to bring about the desired transformation.

Lines of Inquiry: Tolerance for Citizen Engagement

- Describe, as you understand it, the **TOLERANCE** of government (your ministry and your agency) for citizen engagement.

- Describe the potential for citizen engagement **WITHIN THE ZONE OF TOLERANCE** of government in your case.

- What can you do to create an environment **HOSPITABLE** to citizen engagement?

Learning from Practice:
Public Engagement in Collaborative
Public Policy Making

People are breaking out of a subservient relationship with government.

They expect to have a say in matters of interest to them and play an active role in generating solutions to the issues that affect their well-being.

Furthermore, modern technologies are giving them the means to ensure their voice is heard on matters that matter most to them. These expectations present new challenges for government as well as significant opportunities to transform the relationship between government and citizens. It opens up new possibilities for collaborative policy making. Several initiatives involving mass collaboration and collaborative policy making have taken place in recent years.

Singapore's national consultation initiative strengthened the bond between people and government. This was evident in the creation of new programs in the areas of health, housing and pensions as well as new immigration policies.

Collaborative efforts on such a large scale risk creating expectations that may not be fulfilled. They require willingness on the part of government to forgo some degree of control. This may be unsettling for some governments. In this case, the risks were well worth the efforts. The demand for public engagement in collaborative policy making will continue to increase.

Citizen Engagement in Collaborative Policy Making: "Our Singapore Conversation"[31]

In 2012, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched an initiative called "Our Singapore Conversation". It was a national consultation process designed to engage Singaporeans in discussions about their aspirations for the future of their country. The purpose of the initiative was to build on the success of the last 50 years and chart a course to ensure the future prosperity and well-being of the citizens of Singapore.

The "Conversation" was held in two phases. In the first phase, open-ended questions were used in small group discussions to identify Singaporeans' views, aspirations and hopes for the future. In the second phase, public dialogues were used to explore the major themes that emerged from the small group discussions. Issues like housing, health, education and employment were raised, as were concerns about the well-being of the pioneer generation and the need for a better balance between growth and wellness.

The relevant public agencies and ministries organised the second phase of the "Conversation" by topic. Over the course of the year, more than 47,000 Singaporeans from all walks of life participated in 660 dialogues. Citizens were also encouraged to participate via social

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[31] For more information, see Our Singapore Conversation Secretariat, *Reflections of Our Singapore Conversation: What future do we want? How do we get there?* (Singapore: Our Singapore Conversation Secretariat, 2013).

media platforms. A national face-to-face survey was conducted in four official languages to supplement the information gathered through dialogues and online channels. The initiative resulted in a change agenda framed around five core aspirations:[32]

- **Opportunities**:
  Building a society where anybody can "make a good living and pursue their aspirations" irrespective of their family background.

- **Purpose**:
  The value of "a balanced and fulfilling life" beyond economic success.

- **Assurance**:
  The assurance that "basic needs such as housing, healthcare, and public transport" are affordable and within the reach of citizens.

- **Spirit**:
  Nurturing a common bond that develops "a deeper understanding of the challenges" faced by fellow Singaporeans.

- **Trust**:
  Deepening trust among Singaporeans, and between government and citizens, through effective engagement.

The NS fieldwork and the experience of various countries have revealed some basic conditions for success.

- **Designed for the purpose:** The design of public engagement initiatives requires careful consideration to ensure that the collaborative policy making process is not overtaken by single interest groups, dominated by the loudest voices or controlled by people with the deepest pockets.

- **Clarity of purpose:** Successful public engagement initiatives require clarity of purpose. This helps to ensure meaningful engagement and the adoption of an approach where costs are commensurate with the importance of the issue and expected benefits.

- **Clear rules of engagement:** Rules of engagement should be clear from the start. It is the responsibility of government to explain how the process will unfold, what will be done with the input received, and who will make the final decision and when. This avoids generating false expectations.

[32] Ibid, 4.

SHORT STORY - SEOUL CITIZENS' WELFARE STANDARDS IN SOUTH KOREA: In 2012, the Seoul Metropolitan Government adopted the Seoul Citizens' Welfare Standards with the goal of improving welfare conditions. Developing the standards was an exercise in collaborative policy making that brought together the perspectives of citizens, community organisations, private organisations, government agencies, academics and experts. Today, the City of Seoul is equipped with a policy framework that enjoys strong public support. This has provided the government with the political legitimacy to make difficult decisions and built strong societal consensus in support of Seoul's welfare programs.

The City of Seoul committed 30 percent of its 2013 budget to achieving the standards. The government identified 190,000 citizens in need of assistance. Support programs were provided to improve the standard of living of the targeted population. The City launched a job creation program aimed at creating 152,000 employment opportunities for youth, women and seniors below the welfare standards.[33]

Citizen Engagement: Co-creation and Co-production

Compared to large-scale public engagement exercises, the co-creation of solutions and co-production of results with users and beneficiaries of public services is *much easier*. In these cases, much is known about the people involved and there is an existing relationship between the users and providers of the public services in question. This existing relationship, even if under-developed, provides a basis for exploring how a different sharing of responsibility may yield better results.

In the context of the *New Synthesis* Initiative, the terms co-creation and co-production are used selectively and in a narrow sense. One may find examples in the literature on citizen engagement where these terms are used interchangeably with any form of engagement, including information sharing, communication or consultation. In the NS context, the prefix 'co-' is used *when there is evidence of a sharing of responsibility between the users and the public service agency in question*. In these cases, citizens co-labour with government to generate a policy response and produce results.

Co-creation and co-production do not mean the same thing. Co-creation refers to users and other interested parties labouring with government to invent solutions under existing constraints and within the parameters set by government. In the case of co-production, public services are designed in a way that provides users and beneficiaries with the opportunity to play an active role in service delivery.

Co-creation: Users' Insights as Assets

From a practical perspective, it is important to remember that the decision to co-create a solution does not imply an obligation for government to co-produce the services that will ensue. The two decisions are separate and independent.

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[33] Welfare Policy Division, Seoul Metropolitan Government, *The Universal Welfare Standards enabled by and for the Citizens of Seoul (Seoul Welfare Standards)* (United Nations Public Administration Network, 2012).

Figure 6: Opening Up the Public Policy Cycle
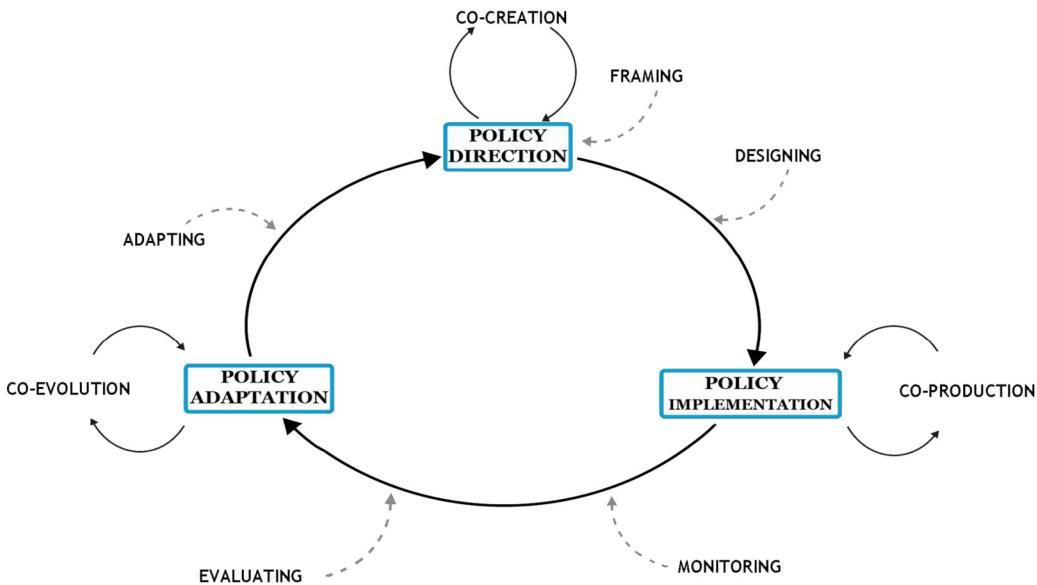
From time to time, government involves stakeholders and interest groups in policy making. This is reflected by the dotted lines in Figure 6. Stakeholder engagement can be used to *frame* a policy issue and design a new approach. It can also be used to *monitor* and *evaluate* results and bring about incremental adjustments. These approaches are well known to government. Although they play a useful role, they do not transform the relationship between government and citizens because government is still in control of implementation and service delivery.

Co-creation and co-production imply a different sharing of responsibilities and recognise the need for government and citizens to work together to produce results. In co-creation, government forgoes some degree of control over the solution that will be found or the design of the services that will be provided.

After all, the solution is not known from the start; it will be created along the way through a collective effort. Co-creation and co-production *operate within certain boundaries*. Government retains control over setting the parameters within which a solution must be found, taking into account factors such as existing legal obligations and fiscal considerations. Government ultimately decides whether or not the initiative will be implemented and through which delivery channel.

Learning from Practice: Co-creation

Co-creation opens the policy making and service delivery design processes to the people most directly affected. This provides invaluable insights into how people actually interact with government and public agencies. It is at this point that public policy choices become real for

most people. Co-creation offers an opportunity for government to improve the impact of public initiatives by tapping into the knowledge and insights of users and sharing the responsibility for creating viable and practical solutions with them. Users of government services are the people who are the most knowledgeable about the challenges they face in everyday life. Below are some of the lessons learned from NS fieldwork and other countries' experiences with co-creation initiatives.

- **Co-creation is more than talk:** Co-creation initiatives are focussed, targeted and methodical. They do not start with answers and a defined position as is the case with consultation exercises. They start with a recognition of the need to invent solutions with users in order to achieve better results.

- **Focus on the human experience:** Co-creation initiatives are user-centric. They focus on the human experience as well as the interactions among people and between people and public agencies.

- **Empathy:** Co-creation requires empathy. Issues must be considered from the perspective of those most directly affected. Ideas are identified, tested and modified in response to user feedback.

- **A methodical iterative process**: Co-creation requires organisation and a methodical approach. The process must be kept simple. It must have a beginning and an end. Open ended timelines increase costs and discourage participation.

Elder Care in Denmark[34]

In the town of Fredericia, Denmark, an aging population was putting significant pressure on services and resources earmarked for elder care. A new approach developed by the Municipality of Fredericia sought to address this challenge by engaging seniors as co-producers of their own care. The program empowered seniors to define the services they needed to pursue an active live on their own terms. Using co-creation and co-production approaches to leverage the resources and strengths of seniors has yielded remarkable results. An evaluation of close to 450 participants found that 45 percent are now self-reliant "in all matters of everyday life" 40 percent need less care than before and 85 percent have a better quality of life. For the municipality, this has resulted in a lower cost and a greater capacity to face the challenges associated with an aging population.

Design thinking and techniques are a practitioner's best friend in co-creation processes because they put users at the centre of the creative process and bring rigour when the time comes to documenting the user's experience.

[34] For more information, please visit: http://www.pgionline.com/elder-care.

Engaging Exercise Two (E2):
Co-Creation

- Describe the potential for **CO-CREATION** in your case.

- What can you do to give users a greater **VOICE** and more **CHOICE**?

- What can you do to encourage users to make **DECISIONS** and take action?

Co-production:
A Public-Citizen Partnership

Unlike other forms of engagement, co-production involves government partnering with citizens and communities to *produce* public results. Co-production starts with the recognition that the users of services are assets. It views public results as a *shared responsibility* that brings together public agencies and citizens in a manner that builds the capacity of users and beneficiaries, their families and communities to take charge of issues relevant to them.

Co-production opens up an alternative approach to government-centric services and market solutions. Deregulation, privatisation and public-private partnerships have been used extensively by some countries in recent years. In some cases, these measures were taken in response to fiscal pressures. In other cases, the marketization of public services reflected an ideological view of the role of government in society. These countries subscribed to the view that people's interests are better served by the market than by government. Something of profound significance is at play when government is considering whether a service should be produced by the public sector or left to market forces. This decision is not simply about the choice of delivery channel; it is primarily about the *nature of the good*. Is it a public good that should be available to all under certain circumstances or a private good that will be produced if it is profitable and accessible to those who can afford it?

Government decisions constantly recalibrate the interface between the public and private spheres.

Co-production expands the range of options open to government for the production of public goods. It is, in essence, a public–citizen production model.

The concept of co-production is anchored in a few basic principles.

- First, citizens are assets and there is always a way of putting assets to productive use.

- Second, public agencies that do not consider co-production as a possible avenue reduce the range of options available to government and are likely to produce sub-optimal results.

- Finally, not everything in society should be monetised and marketised. A well performing society requires strong public, private and civic capabilities.

The case of the *Swedish Clinic of Internal Medicine* illustrates how co-production was used to generate better health outcomes, better services and a better use of public resources. The participants of NS Labs and workshops have drawn several lessons from their experience with co-production and from international examples. One of the most important lessons they learned is that sometimes the riskiest option is the status quo and the least risky option is to try something new.

Swedish Clinic of Internal Medicine[35]

At the Highland Hospital in Eksjow, Sweden, long wait lists were preventing the clinic from offering timely treatment. This was a source of concern for both the patients and staff of the gastroenterology unit. Regularly scheduled appointments were using most of the medical staff's time but were marginally useful in detecting the risks of imminent flare-ups and crises. These acute conditions typically arose between regular visits and necessitated visits to the emergency room. Long wait times were adversely affecting patients' health and increasing the likelihood of extended hospital stays.

The medical staff devised a new approach. They re-designed the system from the patient's perspective. The new system placed patients at the centre of *two streams*: a *community stream*, composed of family and friends, and a *medical stream* comprised of hospital staff.

Patients were prompted to play a more active role by monitoring their medical condition when their health was stable. This reduced the need for routine visits and freed up the medical team's time so staff could focus on patients requiring more intensive care. Patients enrolled in the program were guaranteed timely access to medical staff in the event that they experienced a flare-up.

[35] Jörgen Tholstrup, *Empowering Patients to Need Less Care and do better in Highland Hospital, South Sweden*, last modified June 2014.

Patients, with the support of their family became *co-producers* of their health care services. This approach led to significantly improved results. Waiting lists were eliminated, the number of unscheduled visits by patients with flare-ups declined from two per day in 2001 to two per week in 2005. This led to better patient access to treatment, improved health, lower morbidity rates and reduced stress on the unit's budget and staff.

Co-production is a Low Risk Option

When a situation is unsustainable, there is little to no risk involved in experimenting with new approaches. In such cases, the riskiest proposition is to preserve the status quo. In the above example, the status quo was affecting patients. It was time to frame the issue from a different perspective and explore different ways of doing things.

A Citizen-centric Perspective

Conventional approaches place the expert (a physician in the example above and a public servant in other examples) at the centre of the service delivery function, with the user in a peripheral position and the staff in a supporting role. In cases of co-production, the services are re-thought from the user's perspective. The Swedish clinic's patients were in the *middle* of two service delivery streams: a community stream made up of family and friends and a medical stream composed of hospital staff.

Users as Co-producers

In enabling settings, activities are re-thought in such a way as "to involve patients more intensively in their own care" and "give them greater personal responsibility for their health".[36] In this context, patients become co-producers. They partner with the medical team and share the responsibility for their treatment.

A Diversity of Approaches

Co-production in no way diminishes professional responsibility. Conventional practices and new approaches must co-exist. In the preceding case, patients enjoyed a high degree of control when their health was relatively stable, but medical staff exercised professional control when they required treatment. In-patients were active participants in daily sessions with medical staff involving the monitoring and assessment of results.

Learning and Adapting

Extensive measurements are needed. Data is essential to demonstrating the impact of new approaches and ensuring their sustainability. Today, the results speak for themselves. The information gathered over the last ten years can be used to assess the results achieved by the Highland Clinic compared to other clinics in Sweden.

[36] Ibid.

> ## Engaging Exercise Three (E3):
> ## Co-production
>
> - Describe the potential for **CO-PRODUCTION** in your live case.
>
> - Would this produce better public results? Better civic results? Both?

Community-based Co-production

At the outset, the *NS Initiative* focussed on co-production involving government and the users of public services. Fieldwork has revealed, however, that community-based co-production also deserves attention. Communities played a key role in many of the strategies crafted by the participants of NS workshops. They were the co-producers of results in several areas ranging from border and water management to crime prevention.

Community-based co-production initiatives present a number of common characteristics and offer similar advantages. They bring decisions closer to users in the areas where the impact of government interventions will be felt. They improve the capacity for timely adjustments and course corrections. They involve a real sharing of responsibility and enable formal and informal groups at the community level to play an active role.

The importance of community-based co-production approaches appeared most clearly during a project undertaken in the spring of 2015 with the State of Sarawak in Malaysia. The participants were asked to uncover solutions to some of the most intractable law enforcement challenges confronting the State. The initiative brought together heads of agencies and senior public officials from 109 government agencies, including 21 federal agencies, 51 State agencies, 28 statutory bodies and 9 government-owned or government-linked companies.[37] The initiative evolved over several months and led to a number of government-wide strategies that are currently being implemented.

SHORT STORY - COMMUNITY IN BLOOM IN SINGAPORE: Forty years ago, NParks, the national park agency, started the greening of Singapore. The concept awas to create a Garden City. The project was ambitious and very successful. There was no public or community involvement in the project. Government was in charge and NPark was the agent. Forty years later, the project evolved towards creating a "City in a Garden". It envisaged an urban environment where all the elements appear to be located in a landscaped garden.

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[37] This includes government-linked companies that are established as limited companies under the Companies Act.

This project required a public culture that valued green space and the protection of the environment. It required a public attachment to green space as a public good in order to balance quality of life and the pressures for development. The community in bloom project built a strong bond between communities and the community gardens in their neighbourhood. Gardens are created and managed by community groups in the vicinity of housing estates, public institutions and some private organisations. NPark remains the main agency involved, but this time around, their role is to support and encourage communities' efforts. Their public mandate goes beyond gardens and the plants; it is to build communities that value and take charge of their green space with a little help from government. NPark is involved in community building as much as park management. The gardens are in bloom because the communities are in bloom.[38]

Learning from Practice: Co-production through Community Engagement

The work of the Sarawak Civil Servie during the 2015 HPT Retreat was an important reminder that co-production arrangements are not limited to government and individual users of public services. A citizen–centric approach to problem solving can make use of communities' assets to generate better public and civic results.

The Sarawak Civil Service HPT Retreat 2015[39]

The theme of the 2015 HPT retreat was "Enforcement and Safety". Eleven teams were set up to find solutions to compliance issues of concern to the State. The topics listed below were selected because of the negative impact they were having on government revenues, the environment, society and Sarawak's reputation. Participants recognised, right from the outset, that these complex issues required a co-ordinated, government-wide approach and that inter-agency co-operation, citizen engagement, stakeholder participation, improved administrative systems and targeted enforcement strategies would all be needed to make progress. The topics included:

- Illegal logging
- Illegal sand extraction
- Illegal retail outlets
- Waste management
- Integrated management of water catchment areas
- Road safety
- Illegal dumping
- Open burning
- Illegal entry of foreign nationals
- Illegal palm oil fruit harvesting
- Metal thefts

The teams used the NS Framework as a tool to explore and develop their enforcement strategies. The results were published in the Fall of 2015. The proposed strategies used a broad range of approaches and most recommended some form of co-production arrangement at the community level. For instance, the strategies to eradicate illegal dumping, improve road safety, reduce the use of open burning, prevent illegal logging and improve border management made explicit provisions for the engagement of communities and put in place working arrangements involving a number of local agents, including local authorities. The arrangements frequently included shared responsibility for detecting issues and monitoring results. Several included co-decision mechanisms. Others required training of local groups, and collaborative and co-ordinated enforcement efforts.

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[38] A full case study is available in: Jeanne Louise Conceicao, "Community in Bloom: Creating Space for Community Ownership," in *Case Studies: Building Communities in Singapore*, ed. June Gwee (Singapore: Civil Service College, Singapore, 2015), 57-78.

[39] A full account of the HPT Retreat is available in: Jocelyne Bourgon et al. *Enforcement and Safety*, 18-34.

Enabled Self-Organisation: Users as Public Value Creators and Initiators

Self-organisation occurs all the time. People take initiative, join voluntary organisations and commit time and effort to activities and causes of interest to them. These are manifestations of a vibrant civil society populated by an active citizenry and a diversity of voluntary organisations. Voluntarism and voluntary organisations operating with or without the support of government does not mean that there is a sharing of responsibilities with government to generate results of value to society. Voluntary organisations are free to pursue matters of interest to them and operate independently from government. In the context of the *NS Initiative*, the focus is on self-organisation activities that entail sharing the burden of generating public results with government.

In these cases, the key questions are: *What can government do to generate the enabling conditions that encourage people to pursue their individual interests in a manner that also promotes the collective interest? How can government encourage people to act as citizens who collectively share the responsibility for a well performing society?*

Technology-Enabled Fishery Compliance in New Zealand[40]

The Ministry of Fisheries in New Zealand was facing compliance problems. Fishermen argued that they could not easily obtain official information about catch sizes, catch limits or changing rules and regulations relevant to each of the six fishing zones off the coast of New Zealand.

In response, the Ministry designed a smart phone application that made it easier for fishermen to comply with the government's environmental protection laws and fishing requirements. The application allowed fishermen to receive real-time updates about changes to the minimum size of a fish, the number of fish that could be caught each day and the rules as they applied to different zones. Since releasing the application, the Ministry has reported a decline in formal warnings issued by enforcement staff and a reduction in criminal prosecutions.

[40] For more information, please visit: http://www.pgionline.com/technology-enabled-fishery-compliance-in-new-zealand.

Of particular interest is how government can use modern information and communication technologies to *enable and encourage* self-organisation. Some governments are actively exploring new avenues to enable citizens to self-organise and invent solutions to issues of concern to them. Two cases are presented, one from New Zealand and the other from the United States, to illustrate the potential of technology-enabled self-organisation.

Learning from Practice: Technology-Enabled Self-Organisation

Most people want to do the right thing and aspire to be part of a collective effort that makes a difference to society. The challenge is to discover how to make it easy for people to behave as *good* citizens. In the New Zealand case, the fishermen understand very well that their livelihood depends on preserving the stocks, and the key to a successful enforcement strategy was to give fishermen the tools to become *fishery protection officers*. In the case of Envision Charlotte, every citizen became an energy conservation agent.

Envision Charlotte[41]

Envision Charlotte is an "alliance of major employers, building owners and managers along with municipal and technology leaders" to make smarter and more sustainable building choices through collaboration, innovation and community engagement.[42] Through its Smart Energy Now initiative, Envision Charlotte aims to reduce energy consumption by using technologies that enable individuals and companies to monitor their energy usage in near real-time, thereby empowering them to make better decisions. The community can see data about its collective energy usage on digital displays in the city centre. As a result, people adjust their behaviour to reduce their individual costs leading to aggregate energy savings. The sum of many small behavioural changes is having a significant impact on the city's overall goals. Envision Charlotte aspires to create "the most sustainable urban core in the nation". Its goal is to reduce energy consumption in the city's urban core by 20 percent over five years. Work is under way on a similar program to reduce wastewater and develop innovative waste and air quality programs.

Engaging Exercise Four (E4): Enabling Self-Organisation

- What is the potential for **SELF-ORGANISATION** in your live case?

- What can you do to encourage **TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED** self-organisation?

[41] Envision Charlotte, *Envision Charlotte Project: 2016 Building Technologies Office Peer Review* (United States of America: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, 2016).
[42] Envision Charlotte, "About Envision Buildings," accessed August 12, 2015, http://envisioncharlotte.com/about/envision-buildings.

Look Back and Move Forward

The readers should take a moment to review their NS journey to date.

- Positioning exercises focussed on the big picture have helped readers reconnect to the public purpose that gives meaning to government actions and decisions.

- Leveraging exercises have allowed readers to gain a deeper appreciation of the impact government actions may have on the willingness of others to cooperate.

- Engaging exercises have encouraged readers to think about how to better make use of people's assets to invent solutions and generate better public and civic results.

Readers are invited to look back to the previous exercises and to make the necessary adjustments to their positioning and leveraging exercises before turning their attention to ways of engaging citizens as public value creators. A wide range of options is available to government. The magic of a *New Synthesis* resides in how multiple elements are brought together and interact with each other in a way that propels society forward and builds a better future. This is the topic of the next chapter.

Engaging Exercise Five (E5):
Engaging Citizens as Public Value Creators

What is the potential, in your case, for a different sharing of responsibilities between government and citizens through:

- **CO-CREATION?**

- **CO-PRODUCTION**?

- **SELF-ORGANISATION**?

What is Synthesising?

It is time to go back to where this journey began. The role of the State is to steer society through an ongoing process of change so that it can adapt, evolve and prosper in unforeseen and uncertain circumstances. To prepare a society fit for the future, public institutions must be able to adapt to the changing landscape of the world we live in and respond to citizens' emerging needs and expectations of government.

Government cannot find solutions to the problems that stem from living in a hyper-connected, global, inter-dependent and increasingly disorderly world by relying on ideas that gave rise to these problems in the first instance or by putting their trust in practices that have worked in the past. There is a need to re-think issues from a different perspective, re-position the role of government in society and re-define the relationship between the State and citizens in contemporary terms.

On one hand, there is a need to protect and preserve the practices that have made modern societies governable and improved human conditions. These practices help maintain stability and ensure the continuity of the State. Well performing public institutions are essential to well performing societies.

On the other hand, there is a need to ensure that government has the capacity to invent solutions that will keep pace with the increasing complexity of the problems we will face as a society. People in government today must lead society through a process of change and build public institutions fit for the challenges that lie ahead. No institution, public or private, is fit for all times; public institutions must evolve with the society they have the mission to serve.

Public sector leaders need to work from a broader mental map and an expanded view of the role of government in society. There is a need for a *New Synthesis* of public administration that brings coherence to a diversity of concepts, principles, techniques and practices and integrates findings from a diversity of disciplines and domains of practice.

Like medicine and engineering, public administration is by nature inter-disciplinary. It integrates academic and practical discoveries in ways that are applicable to a diversity of contexts and circumstances. This raises the question of the basis upon which the insights derived from disciplines as diverse as economics, political science, public law, design thinking, behavioural economics, adaptive system, complexity theory and others should be integrated. *What basis* can be used by public sector leaders to guide their actions and decisions?

A New Synthesis integrates government actions and decisions around four interacting sets of principles.

- **A public purpose:** Public institutions and organisations serve a public purpose. Articulating their higher public purpose provides them with a sense of direction and gives meaning to their actions and decisions. It generates momentum and makes it possible to enlist the contribution of others in government and across sectors. A public purpose brings a distinctively public sector perspective to the role of government in addressing collective challenges.

- **Societal outcomes:** Public organisations produce public and civic results that are essential to a governable and well performing society. The role of public organisations is to generate results of ever increasing value to society; in other words, public organisations must favour societal results over agency results. This brings a societal perspective to public sector actions and decisions.

- **The authority of the State:** This is the lever used to steer society through an ongoing change process. The State uses the instruments it has at its disposal to harness the collective power of society, build on the strengths of others and generate desirable societal outcomes. This brings a total system perspective to governing.

- **Citizens as public value creators:** The responsibility for producing results of value to society is the shared responsibility of government, citizens and all agents in society. This responsibility extends to all citizens and all generations, present and future. Policies and programs designed to make use of people's assets open up new avenues for producing public results. This brings a citizen-centric perspective to public policy making and public service delivery.

Figure 7: Synthesising
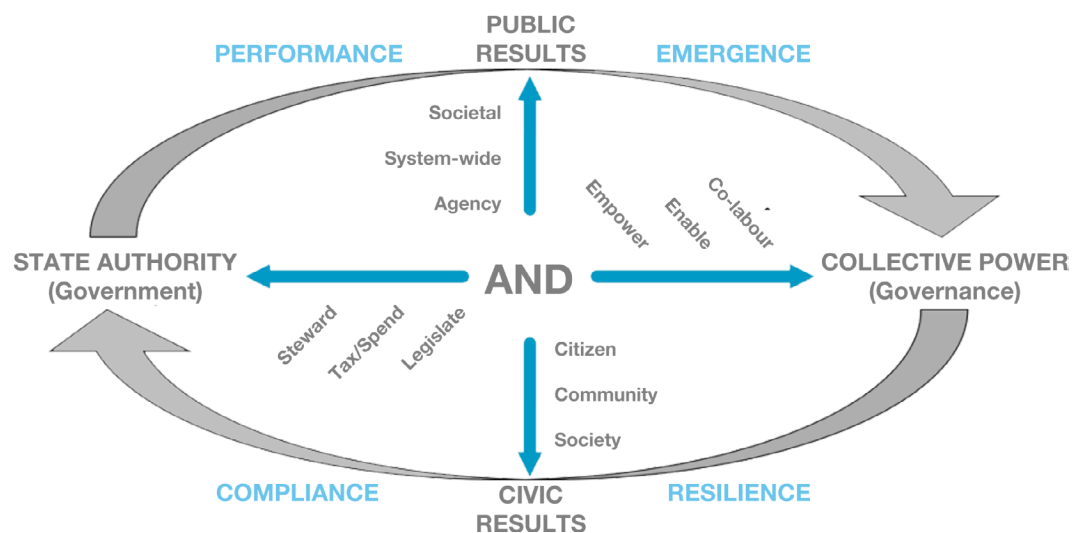
Government actions and decisions transform society. Governments are simultaneously transformed by the actions of others in an ever changing environment. Public transformation is a *dynamic process*. Consequently, a public response is not a definitive answer but rather an experiment in progress that evolves as progress occurs.

Leading public transformation is about opening a *pathway towards a better future*. The NS Exploratory Journey helps practitioners weave together the many strands and elements needed to take a group down such a path.

A Pathway to a Better Future

Each *New Synthesis* is unique. It can only be crafted by the people with the authority to use the levers of the State to launch a change process designed to bring about a desired outcome in a specific context and set of circumstances.

A *mix of actions and interventions* operating in synergy with each other is needed to bring about viable solutions to complex issues and intractable problems. In essence, public sector leaders are exploring *interventions* that could transform people's behaviours and change the interrelationships between the public, private and civic spheres in a way that would generate a more desirable outcome for society. They are searching for a way to open up a pathway towards a better future. This pathway is made of multiple elements, some laid down by government, some

by multiple agents in society and many by citizens themselves. The key question at this point of the journey is *how everything fits together*. Synthesising focusses on the overarching narrative that brings together aspirations for a better future, a sense of direction and a call to action.

Successful public transformation initiatives involve, in some way, all the key elements outlined in this guide.

Every example and every story presented in this guide contains all the elements of a New Synthesis.

While some of the examples were selected to illustrate particular concepts, each one is supported by a narrative of change that brings internal coherence to a collective effort. What can we learn from those who have successfully opened a pathway to a better future?

One such initiative is the Singapore Prison Case. This case was first documented in the early days of the *NS Initiative*. An update has recently been published.[43] It has been unfolding for more than 15 years and therefore it provides concrete evidence that is not always available in the case of initiatives that have been launched more recently. Often time, the real impact of public policy initiatives only becomes visible after many years.

SPS invented a *pathway towards a better future* and everybody benefited from it. It started with a few committed officers using the resourc-

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43 Lena Leong, "Towards a Society without Re-offending," in *Case Studies: Building Communities in Singapore*, ed. June Gwee (Singapore: Civil Service College, Singapore, 2015), 11-38.

es available to them at the time. It was based on a deep sense of public purpose and the desire to make a difference.

Focussing on societal results enabled SPS to see new possibilities, identify new partners and create space for others to contribute. While the broad direction was set at the start, most of the elements were invented along the way.

Progressively, SPS' *New Synthesis* included custody, rehabilitation, prevention, after-care, a family support program, a community-based program, an employers' program, training and so forth. In the end, *everything fit together* and worked synergistically to generate a viable and sustainable solution.

Learning from Practice: The Singapore Prison Service (SPS)[44]

In 1998, the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) was a secure and safe institution with a zero escape rate. From that perspective, SPS was fulfilling its basic mission. But at the same time, all was not well at SPS. Overcrowding was putting a strain on infrastructure and resources. SPS was suffering from a shortage of labour due to staff retention and recruitment problems.

From a societal perspective, the situation was even worse. The recidivism rate was 44.4 percent, which meant that almost half of ex-offenders found themselves back in prison within two years. In spite of all its hard work, SPS was not contributing

to building a *safer society*. Even more troubling was a disturbing trend that revealed the presence of "inter-generational prisoners"; the children of inmates were becoming offenders. Left unchecked, this trend suggested that SPS would consume an ever increasing share of public resources while societal costs, resulting from the inability to re-integrate ex-offenders, would keep climbing.

A vicious cycle was in full swing. The situation was unsustainable. How could a prison system reduce the risk of recidivism and repeat offences? How could a "high security ship" be used for rehabilitation with the help of officers, inmates, employers, inmates' families and the community? How could SPS bring about such a fundamental societal change? Was this even SPS' role? This case provides a good illustration of how government interventions can and do transform society. It also shows that successful public innovation is the result of a collective effort.

This journey unfolded in several phases. A small group of committed officers and staff embraced the concept of rehabilitation. They took a number of measures that transformed the role of prison officers interested in experimenting with new approaches. At first, the group did not have the support of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The MHA believed that the "[p]rison service had gone soft".[45] Nonetheless, the initiative followed its course and created a *ripple effect*; more officers came on board. One year later, in 1999, SPS unveiled its new mission: "to protect society through the safe custody and reha-

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[44] A full account of this is available in: Lena Leong, "Towards a Society without Re-offending," in *Case Studies: Building Communities in Singapore*, ed. June Gwee (Singapore: Civil Service College, Singapore, 2015), 11-38.

[45] Chin Kiat Chua, *The Making of Captains of Lives: Prison Reform in Singapore 1999 to 2007* (World Scientific Publishing Company, 2012), 28.

bilitation of offenders". Prison officers had become agents of change.

The inmates created the *second wave of change* by enrolling in rehabilitation programs despite their initial reluctance. More changes were introduced; rehabilitation profiles and programs were created. In 2000, SPS started an educational institution, the operating philosophy of which was "School First, Prison Second". Predictably, the change process generated tensions. There were dissenting voices. In addition, some experienced prison officers expressed legitimate concerns about the cost of the new initiatives and argued that the new way of doing things would make their work even more challenging. These were valid concerns. The prison guards' efforts would come to naught and the recidivism rate would not drop unless the community provided ex-offenders with a second chance. It was time for a *third wave of change*, one that required support beyond the confines of SPS. Offenders needed the support of their families, potential employers, communities and the general public after their release from prison.

The Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) is a self-funding statutory board operating under the MHA. It plays a key role in finding employment for and providing training to ex-offenders. In 2002, SCORE joined forces with SPS and took on the role of "building bridges of hope for offenders and their families". It contributed to creating "a safe community by successfully reintegrating offenders". SPS had found

an important ally. The initiative was spilling out of the prison system and into the public domain. The message that was conveyed to the public focused on giving ex-offenders "a second chance" to become valuable members of society.

The public campaign called the *Yellow Ribbon Project* was highly successful. It stressed that families, friends, neighbours, employers and communities hold the key to the "second prison". A *Yellow Ribbon Fund* was created to provide support for reintegration and provide family assistance. Employers expressed interest in hiring ex-offenders. The number of volunteers involved in community support and after-care programs grew from 76 in 2004 to 2,625 in 2013.

A *fourth wave of change* was afoot. This time, the challenge of reintegrating ex-offenders into society was seen as a shared responsibility and was broadly supported by the public. The transformation process that started with a few committed individuals was changing the image Singaporeans had of themselves as a society.

Fifteen years of data documents the progress of SPS over time:

- The number of inmates who received training increased by 65 percent between 2009 and 2013.

- The recidivism rate dropped from 44.4 percent in 1998 to 27.4 percent in 2011.

- From 2010 to 2014 about 2,100 families received government assistance.

- The *Criminal Registration Act* was amended to strike out criminal records for minor offences.

- The number of employers in the job bank doubled between 2004 and 2013.

- The number of inmates who secured jobs before they left prison more than doubled from 951 in 2009 to 2,114 in 2013.

This case provides a good illustration of how government interventions can and do transform society. It also shows that successful public innovation is the result of a collective effort.

Focussing on societal results: The SPS transformed itself from an organisation focussed on keeping prisoners in jail (agency results) to one centered on the successful re-integration of ex-offenders into society (societal results). For employees, this meant a shift in thinking: they went from ensuring that prison doors were bolted and locked down to becoming "captain of lives".

Leveraging inside, across and beyond: Public transformation rarely enjoys overwhelming support from the start. Support is gained progressively as the initiative unfolds and generates evidence that it is worthy of support. In practice, there are always sufficient resources and capabilities available to get started. The rest will come as others come on board.

Shared and mutual responsibilities: In the end, societal changes may be initiated by government but they must be owned by society. Public and community ownership make societal changes sustainable.

Synthesising Exercise One (S1):
YOUR *New Synthesis*

- What are the main elements of your **PATHWAY TO A BETTER FUTURE**?

- How do the various elements complement each other?

- In a few words, how would you explain the change you aspire to bring about to someone you want to enlist?

Narratives of Change

Up to this point, the exercises have prepared the way for readers to formulate a narrative of change to address a challenge they have identified. Public sector leaders must give voice to the change they aspire to bring about. They must articulate a compelling narrative to create an impetus for change. This narrative exposes the gap between the current reality and the desired outcome. It expresses a commitment to do something about the situation. It brings coherence to a group's actions.

What are public narratives? Narratives are powerful statements. In fact, successful social movements in history have been driven by a narrative that inspired people to do amazing things.[46] Readers will remember Nelson Mandela's call for "Healing Through Truth" which helped put an end to apartheid while averting the risk of racial conflicts and insurrection; President Lula's declaration that "No one [would] be left behind" in the fight against HIV/AIDS;[47] or, in the above example, SPS employees' aspirations to be "captains in the lives of offenders committed to our custody".[48]

Narratives are a distinctive way of organising ideas so that they communicate a purposeful direction. They are integral to transformation initiatives. They have a "power of pull"[49] because they engage people at an emotional level. Formulating a narrative is a discursive process that helps to clarify choices and pro-

vides answers to fundamental questions such as: Why does this matter? Why should we care? Why should we take action? In the end, narratives reveal what an organisation stands for and the values that unite people as a community.

A narrative of change reconciles ambitions for a better future with concrete actions.

It generates a shared understanding of the differences between what is and what could be. It provides an impetus for change.

A *narrative of change* is never static. It evolves as progress takes place.

NS Narratives of Change

There are many voices and multiple perspectives in a NS Narrative: the voice of the initiators, colleagues and subordinates, the voice of elected officials and the voice of the people most directly affected by the initiative in question. NS narratives are *shared narratives*. A common effort towards a desired public outcome does not mean that all actors share the same motivation. It does mean, however, that there is enough synergy among them to sustain the necessary collaboration and convergence of efforts. The *point of intersection* of the various voices becomes the shared story that supports the group's endeavour. Countries, communities, and organisations weave collective stories out of multiple threads.

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[46] John Hagel III, "The Untapped Potential of Corporate Narratives," *Edge Perspectives with John Hagel*, October 7, 2013.
[47] Bourgon, *A New Synthesis of Public Administration*, 71.
[48] Leong, "Towards a Society without Re-offending", 15.
[49] John Hagel III, John Seely Brown, and Lang Davison, *The Power of Pull: How Small Moves, Smartly Made, Can Set Big Things in Motion.* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

Figure 8: Leading Transformation – Narratives of Change
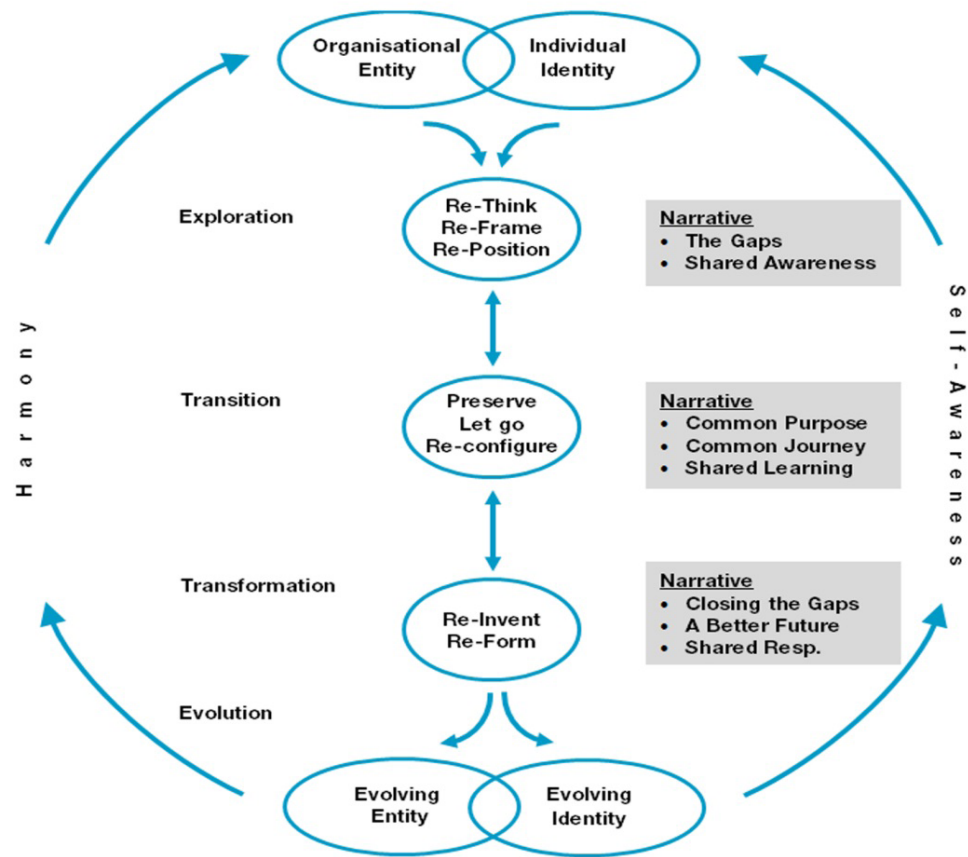
NS narratives are not stories in the traditional sense. Stories have a beginning, a plot and an end. Instead, NS narratives are open-ended. They are adaptive; the outcome cannot be predicted, and it unfolds and takes shape through action. NS fieldwork has revealed that public narratives go through a number of phases.

During the initial phase, some people come to realise that things must change. The situation may be untenable or there may be untapped potential. The gap between the current reality and aspirations for a better future are becoming painfully obvious. Conversations generate a better understanding of the differences between the past, present and potential future situations. This is the *exploration phase*. It helps to generate a shared awareness of the challenges at hand.

During the next phase, the group is frequently faced with difficult choices. New activities are starting up but old ways of doing things are not being abandoned. This uses up all the available time and resources.

The *transition phase* is a challenging one. New activities may have a higher potential and be of higher public value but where will the resources come from to support these new activities? How can government make room for new approaches that are still in their infancy? Until the initiative shows some concrete results and gains broader support, it is unlikely that much help will come from external sources. This was the case for *CHEO*, the child protection services in Australia, the United Kingdom and Singapore and the Singapore Prison Service.

The *transition phase* tests the resolve of those who launched the change process. It can span many years. CHEO's pilot project stretched over three years. In the case of the Singapore Prison Service, the transformation and all its inter-related dimensions took shape over the better part of ten years. During the transition phase, narratives are used to reinforce the common sense of purpose across an expanding circle of collaborators. They capture the collective journey and build awareness of the lessons learned along the way. They celebrate the group's efforts and successes and articulate why the initiative is worthy of political and public support.

The *transformation phase* presents a different set of challenges. A new reality has taken hold and is replacing the one that existed before. If the initiative has been successful up to this point, there is a compelling story to tell about how it has contributed to a better future and better results for citizens. This is the

time when key elements are consolidated, changes institutionalised and measures adopted to ensure the sustainability of the new reality. The narrative during this phase encourages broad ownership and builds public support. It is the *shared narrative* of a country, a community or an organisation that has undergone a significant change process. It is the basis from which future changes will take place.

A long cycle of change has come to an end. It started with a few committed individuals and ended up in the hands of a vast number of people. But this is also the beginning of a new cycle of change. Sooner or later, a few committed people will come along with aspirations for a better tomorrow. They will search for and invent a new pathway towards a better future.

Factor-YOU

In closing, a few words must be said about the Factor–YOU of public administration.

Public sector leaders are not separate from the transformation process they lead; they are part of it.

The way they think about their role and the role of government has a direct impact on the solutions they will find and the results they will achieve with the help and support of others.

A narrow view of the role of government in society is unlikely to generate the optimal use of the levers of the State. A minimalist view of the role of government may erode the capacity of public institutions and organisations to detect emerging issues or to intervene proactively in order to influence the course of events in a more favourable direction. There are countless examples of situations where governments have been taken by surprise and have taken action when the costs to society were at their highest.

A narrow view of the role of the public sector is unlikely to uncover solutions that lie just beyond the border of hierarchical organisations. It reduces the range of options open to government. The broader the view, the easier it is to invent solutions to complex issues that require the pooling of knowledge, know-how, resources and capabilities across vast systems.

A narrow view of the role of public servants in some ways replicates the subservient relationship between citizens and the State that once characterised the functioning of government. Such a view makes poor use of people's assets and no country is rich enough to waste resources that can be put to productive use.

The way public sector leaders think about the role of the State and the way they frame issues open up or close off possibilities. The leaders form part of the context that affects the transformation process taking shape under their leadership. This is the Factor-YOU of public administration.

Snythesising Exercise Two (S2): Factor-YOU

- The narrative that matters most is the one **YOU BELIEVE IN** and are prepared to put energy behind to make it a reality.

- What will be different in a year from now because **YOU WERE THERE**? In **5 YEARS** from now?

Conclusion:
The Story that Matters is the One You Will Invent

In the end, everything must fit together: conventional and new practices, existing skills and emergent capabilities, government authority and the collective capacity for change. Only you and the people around you can discover the best way forward. Keep in mind that a few committed people can change the course of events.

The mission of the public sector is like no other: it is about propelling society forward, inventing a better future and improving human conditions. There is no better place to start than here, and no better time than now.

And so... the journey continues.

Annex I: NS Exploratory Flowchart

Your NS Exploration Journey: Positioning

Supplementary Lines of Inquiry (If Needed)

Selecting Your Live Case (p. 5)

- Describe your live case from the **PERSPECTIVE OF CITIZENS** as users, beneficiaries or obligates.

- Can you think of ways that citizen engagement could contribute to:

  - better **PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS**?
  - better **PUBLIC RESULTS**?
  - better **CIVIC RESULTS**?

- What would a 'citizen-centric approach' mean in your case?

Positioning Exercise One (P1): (p. 12)
Positioning and YOU

- What **PUBLIC** results are **YOU** committed to achieving?

- Why are you **COMMITTED** to this effort?

- Why should **OTHERS** join in the effort?

- How would this lead to a better **FUTURE**?

Positioning Exercise Two (P2): (p. 15)
Positioning Your Live Case

- Articulate the higher **PUBLIC PURPOSE** that gives meaning to the transformation you are committed to leading.

- What **SOCIETAL RESULTS** will your initiative generate?

- What **SYSTEM-WIDE RESULTS** are needed to make progress?

- What is your **AGENCY** best positioned to contribute in support of this effort?

Look back, adjust as needed and move forward.

Lines of Inquiry: Role Playing (p. 13)

- *Think* like a **PRIME MINISTER**: Describe the public purpose of the initiative you have in mind as if you were the Prime Minister.

- *Think* like a **MINISTER**: As the Minister responsible for this initiative, explain why the issue must be addressed at this time.

- *Act* like a **DEPUTY MINISTER**: As a Deputy Minister, outline what the department will do to make this a reality.

Lines of Inquiry: Mapping (p. 14)

Map out the existing administrative and regulatory system from a *user perspective*:

- Does the system encourage **VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE**?

- Does it encourage **COLLABORATION** across agencies?

- What can **YOU** do to make the system better?

Lines of Inquiry: Lists and Inventories (p. 15)

- Identify the **LEGAL** barriers to your initiative.

- What can the agency let go of to achieve results of higher public value?

- What assets can be deployed to achieve the results you have identified?

Your NS Exploration Journey: Leveraging

Supplementary Lines of Inquiry (If Needed)

Leveraging Exercise One (L1): Framing for Collaboration

(p. 21)

- What groups (individuals) must you bring on board to achieve the desired outcome you have identified?
- What is in it for **THEM**?
- What would make it **WORTHWHILE** for them to **JOIN FORCES** with you and others?
- What do **YOU** (your agency) bring to the relationship?

Leveraging Exercise Two (L2): Building a Coalition

(p. 24)

- What is the **RALLYING POINT** in your case?
- Reflect on the **RELATIONSHIP** you have with the partners you want to enroll (trust, mistrust, no prior relations, etc.).
- What **ASSETS** do you bring to the relationship?
- What will be your first steps towards building a **COALITION**?

Lines of Inquiry: Serving as One

(p. 26)

- What **EXISTING SYSTEMS** (administrative, financial, informative, personnel, etc.) support collaborative efforts?
- What **NEW SYSTEMS** are needed for the civil service to **SERVE AS ONE**?
- What can **YOU** do to improve existing systems?

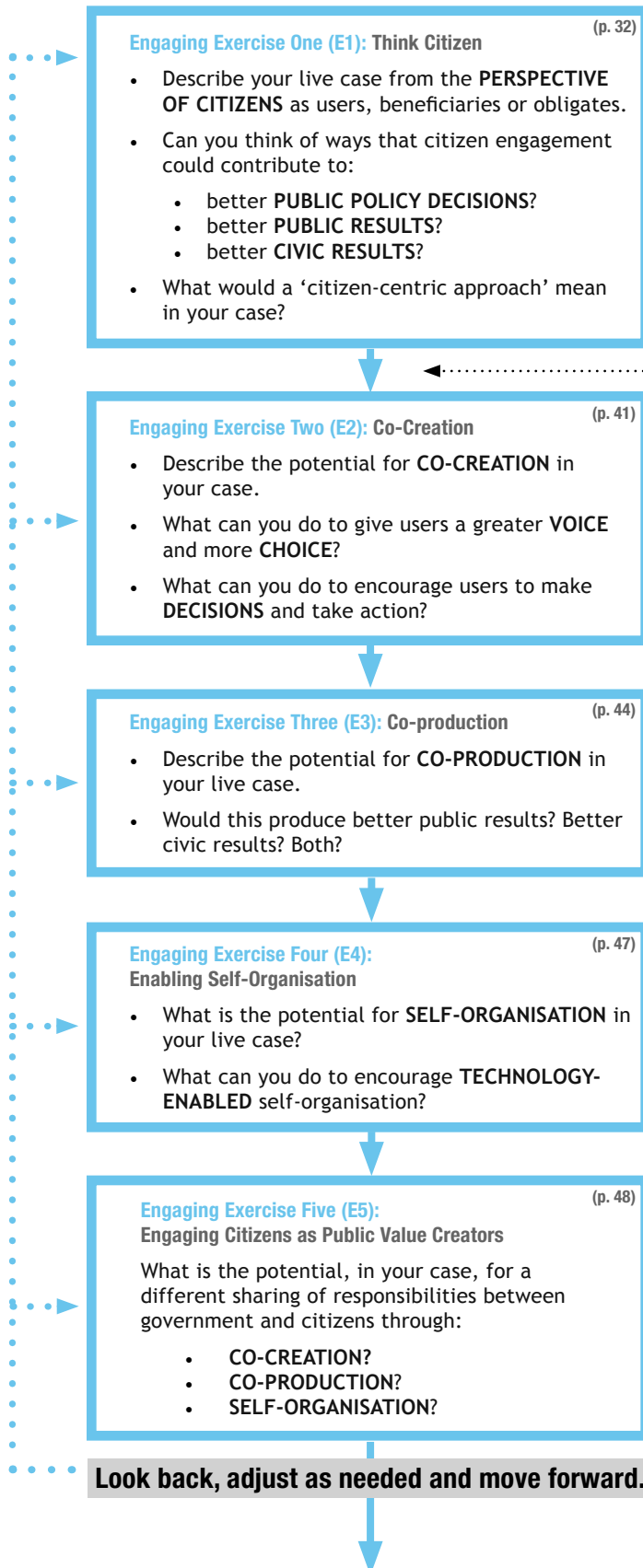### Leveraging Exercise Three (L3): Your Leveraging Strategy

(p. 27)

- Who will you **ENLIST** first?
- What are the **FIRST STEPS** you will take to enroll others in a collaborative effort and build A **COALITION**?
- What must be put in place to **SUPPORT** the group's effort?
- What needs to be done to **INSTITUTIONALISE** the initiative and make it **SUSTAINABLE**?

Look back, adjust as needed and move forward.

Your NS Exploration Journey: ✍️
Engaging

Supplementary Lines of Inquiry (If Needed) 🛢️

Engaging Exercise One (E1): Think Citizen   (p. 32)

- Describe your live case from the **PERSPECTIVE OF CITIZENS** as users, beneficiaries or obligates.

- Can you think of ways that citizen engagement could contribute to:

  - better **PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS**?
  - better **PUBLIC RESULTS**?
  - better **CIVIC RESULTS**?

- What would a 'citizen-centric approach' mean in your case?

Lines of Inquiry: Tolerance for Citizen Engagement   (p. 35)

- Describe, as you understand it, the **TOLERANCE** of government (your ministry and your agency) for citizen engagement.

- Describe the potential for citizen engagement **WITHIN THE ZONE OF TOLERANCE** of government in your case.

- What can you do to create an environment **HOSPITABLE** to citizen engagement?

Engaging Exercise Two (E2): Co-Creation   (p. 41)

- Describe the potential for **CO-CREATION** in your case.

- What can you do to give users a greater **VOICE** and more **CHOICE**?

- What can you do to encourage users to make **DECISIONS** and take action?

Engaging Exercise Three (E3): Co-production   (p. 44)

- Describe the potential for **CO-PRODUCTION** in your live case.

- Would this produce better public results? Better civic results? Both?

Engaging Exercise Four (E4): Enabling Self-Organisation   (p. 47)

- What is the potential for **SELF-ORGANISATION** in your live case?

- What can you do to encourage **TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED** self-organisation?

Engaging Exercise Five (E5): Engaging Citizens as Public Value Creators   (p. 48)

What is the potential, in your case, for a different sharing of responsibilities between government and citizens through:

- **CO-CREATION?**
- **CO-PRODUCTION?**
- **SELF-ORGANISATION?**

Look back, adjust as needed and move forward.

Your NS Exploration Journey:
Synthesising

(p. 54)

Synthesising Exercise One (S1):
YOUR *New Synthesis*

- What are the main elements of your **PATHWAY TO A BETTER FUTURE**?

- How do the various elements complement each other?

- In a few words, how would you explain the change you aspire to bring about to someone you want to enlist?

(p. 58)

Snythesising Exercise Two (S2):
Factor-YOU

- The narrative that matters most is the one **YOU BELIEVE IN** and are prepared to put energy behind to make it a reality.

- What will be different in a year from now because **YOU WERE THERE**? In **5 YEARS** from now?

Congratulations!

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Chapter 1: Positioning

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