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Bulgaria's Public Sector Innovation Vision and Action Plan Draft

Strengthening the Strategic Approach and Innovation in the
Civil Service in Bulgaria

December, 2024



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Executive Summary

The following strategic document offers an overview of Bulgaria's innovative capacity assessment, and provides the necessary content for the development and adoption of a public sector innovation vision and action plan for the State Administration¹.

Bulgaria's State Administration faces institutional challenges that hinder the capacity to implement reforms needed for economic growth and improved living standards. These challenges are compounded by low public trust, with only 19% confidence in the national government in 2022. Bulgaria has introduced public sector innovations to boost economic development and digitalise services, but these efforts are fragmented and insufficient.

The OECD has carried out an innovative capacity assessment of the public sector in Bulgaria, informed by more than 3,700 heads of organisations and public servants who have participated in surveys, workshops, and bilateral interviews. Table 1 outlines the main findings across governance areas:

Table 1. Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Findings

Governance area	Finding
Strategic steering of public sector innovation	1. Low levels of trust in the national government, potentially due to limited government responsiveness. 2. Bulgaria lacks a strategic framework and central co-ordination in public sector innovation. 3. Most key government strategies do not include or mention explicitly developing PSI capacity.
Leadership, management, and support for public sector innovation	4. More than 50% of public servants innovate, but predominantly executives and middle managers. 5. Innovators face challenges in internal collaboration and resource constraints, like limited access to digital expertise support and data and limited digital skills.
Funding, evaluation, and communication of public sector innovation	6. Explicit institutional support for public sector innovation in Bulgaria exists but is underdeveloped. 7. Limited funding mechanisms for PSI, which limits more transformative approaches. 8. Lack of consistent monitoring, evaluation, and communication of PSI results.
Skills and competencies to innovate at all levels	9. Limited and sporadic training on innovation, mainly focused on senior staff. 10. Only 27% of public servants have the skills to manage and apply innovation processes.
Workforce and incentive strategy for widespread public sector innovation	11. Public servants have low levels of permission to innovate (recognition or autonomy). 12. Lack of a workforce strategy. Competency frameworks and performance management do not include PSI. 13. Overreliance on public servants' intrinsic motivation (personal satisfaction).

Source: (OECD, 2024^[1])

Informed by these findings and based on extensive consultation, the vision of this action plan proposal is to build a more innovative, impactful, and trusted State Administration by 2030. Bulgaria can unlock its full potential by fostering a more robust and widespread approach to public sector innovation. This transformation is not only about enhancing the government's ability to respond to societal needs but also

¹ The project was funded by the European Union via Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the OECD, in cooperation with the European Commission.

about driving the broader impacts of increased economic growth, improved living standards, and renewed public trust in public institutions.

The vision and action plan outlined here has the potential to be integrated into the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030* as a formal strategic mechanism. To achieve this, a new sub-priority on *Public Sector Innovation* within *Priority 10 Institutional framework* would need to be introduced, subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers. Additionally, the proposed actions for the 2025-2027 period could be incorporated into the action plans of the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030*. These actions account for the use of both current and additional resources. It is recommended that the State Administration consider the mechanisms needed to ensure the stability of these funds while maintaining accountability and transparency.

Table 2 outlines the necessary actions to achieve this desired vision. Based on three main pillars, these 7 strategic actions are tailored to Bulgaria based on the country's assessment findings. The action contains a total of 18 specific measures and operational guidance, drawing on best practices from OECD countries.

Table 2. Bulgaria's PSI Theory of Change

Pillars	Actions	Output	Outcome	Impact
Strategic steering	1. Connect public sector innovation with government priority agendas. 2. Reinforce the strategic steering of public sector innovation from the centre of government.	More PSI initiatives support the Administration's priorities and public trust.	Innovative capacity increases in the State Administration	Economic growth, living standards, and public trust in Bulgaria are improved by more and better innovation in the public sector.
Designed for Change	3. Build government-wide support to promote and encourage public sector innovation. 4. Introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation.	More incremental and transformative innovations that are better designed to be impactful.		
Skills and people	5. Build up innovation skills at all levels. 6. Develop a culture of innovation and collaboration that gives permission to innovate. 7. Foster structured incentives to innovate beyond personal motivation.	More public servants at all levels have the skills and capacity to innovate.		

Source: OECD

The responsibility for monitoring and implementing this vision and action plan rests with the Council of Ministers' Administration. The Directorate of Modernisation of the Administration will play a key role in guiding the implementation of the action plan and will establish a dedicated Working Group under the Council for Administrative Reform. This group will coordinate efforts related to public sector innovation, ensuring that objectives, outputs, and timelines are effectively monitored.

Each measure outlined in the action plan has been carefully discussed and refined by the responsible parties, who have collectively committed to advancing its implementation. To support the monitoring and evaluation process, new data collection efforts will be coordinated by the Directorate of Modernisation of the Administration in collaboration with the National Statistical Institute. For further details, please refer to the Public Sector Innovation Measurement Policy Brief prepared by the OECD for the Directorate of Modernisation of the Administration.

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Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Overview

The following chapter summarises the key findings from the OECD Innovative Capacity Assessment of Bulgaria.

1. The following chapter offers an overview of Bulgaria's Assessment of Public Sector Innovative Capacity (OECD, 2024^[1]) carried out by the OECD in 2024. The study was informed by several bilateral interviews and workshops with representatives from Bulgaria's State Administration and beyond. The assessment is based on data from a survey answered by more than 3,700 heads of organisations and civil servants in the country.

2. The OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) defines public sector innovation as something new or novel, implemented, and intended to positively impact a specific context, such as improved outcomes, satisfaction, or public trust (OECD, 2017^[2]). For instance, governments adopt innovative practices or develop innovative solutions to ensure services meet citizens' and businesses' needs, enhance efficiency in administrative processes, or enhance resilience through new methods such as strategic foresight. Public sector innovation can help meet several objectives: reach strategic goals (mission-orientation), prepare for future risks and challenges (anticipation), improve current operating systems (enhancement) and respond to citizens' needs as they evolve (adaption) (OECD, 2022^[3]).

1.1. Context

3. Bulgaria's State Administration faces institutional challenges that hinder its ability to implement reforms to spur economic growth and improve living standards (IMF, 2024^[4]; OECD, 2024^[1]). This is further reinforced by low and declining levels of public trust, with only 19% of people expressing confidence in the national government in 2022 (Gallup World Poll, 2022^[5]). Addressing citizens' needs in innovative ways can improve the public's satisfaction and trust (Kaur and Buisman, 2022^[6]). The 2024 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions shows that increasing the ability of public agencies to embrace new ideas can enhance the government's responsiveness, ultimately helping to restore trust in public institutions (OECD, 2024^[7]).

4. Bulgaria has introduced public sector innovations to boost economic development, improve its research system, and digitalise public services (OECD, 2024^[1]). However, while these top-down efforts have contributed to an emerging innovative capacity, they remain fragmented and are not sufficient to address the country's challenges and accelerate social and economic convergence with more advanced economies (OECD, 2024^[1]).

5. The State Administration acknowledges the need for greater efforts to expand its innovative capacity. Bulgaria needs to focus on integrating innovation efforts into government priorities and its institutional framework, improving collaboration practices and providing financial resources for innovative projects (OECD, 2024^[1]). Further developing explicit institutional support programmes for public sector innovation, increasing the adoption of innovation skills and risk-taking behaviours, and improving practices to assess and incentivise innovation efforts are crucial for a more responsive and trusted civil service (OECD, 2024^[1]).

1.2. Strategic steering of public sector innovation

6. Innovative policies and services, such as the Startup Visa programme for high-tech firms, the unified national administrative register BULSTAT, and the introduction of new service delivery approaches such as "life and business events", are starting to boost Bulgaria's emerging innovative capacity (OECD, 2024^[1]).

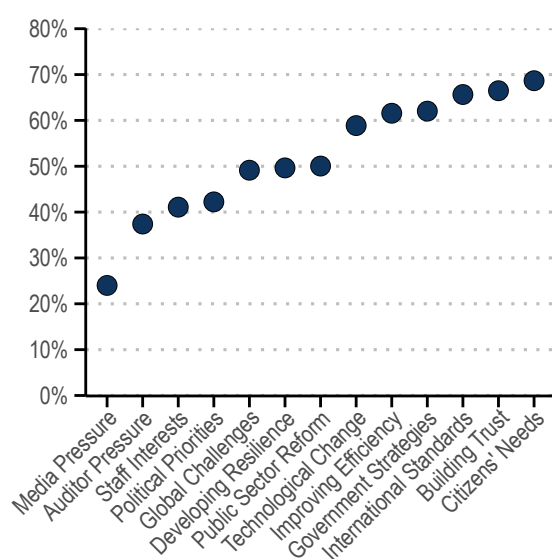
7. A survey answered by over 3,700 public servants and heads of organisations in the country showed that a wide range of drivers influence innovative efforts in an unfocused way (Figure 1.1). Bulgaria lacks a strategic framework and central co-ordination in public sector innovation (OECD, 2024^[1]). This lack

of clear priorities and direction could hinder the achievement of the State Administration's main goals (OECD, 2024_[1]).

8. Several key government strategies, such as the "Digital Transformation Strategy 2030" or the "National Strategy for Preventing and Combatting Corruption 2021-2027", do not include developing innovative capacity as a strategic function or priority (OECD, 2024_[1]).

Figure 1.1. A wide range of drivers are influencing public sector innovation without clear priorities

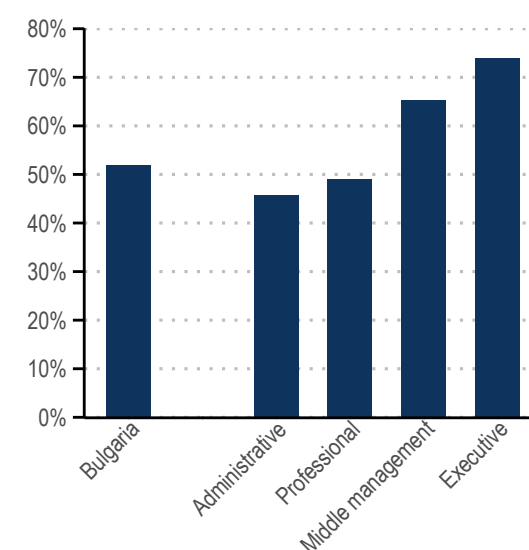
% Public servants



Note: N=3,749. Source: OECD Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Survey, 2024.

Figure 1.2. Public sector innovation is predominantly carried out by senior staff rather than all levels of the civil service

% Public servants



Note: N=2,801. Source: OECD Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Survey, 2024.

1.3. Leadership, management, and support of public sector innovation

9. While more than 50% of public servants indicated having participated in an innovation in the State Administration during the last two years, they were predominantly executive and middle managers (Figure 1.2). This top-down approach could limit the scope and effectiveness of innovation efforts (OECD, 2024_[1]).

10. Public servants engaged in innovative projects face limited opportunities for internal collaboration and resource constraints, especially due to limited access to digital expertise support and data, and limited digital skills across the Administration (OECD, 2024_[1]).

11. Explicit institutional support for public sector innovation in Bulgaria exists but is underdeveloped. An innovation network and an annual innovation competition support the widespread adoption of new methods, create practical solutions, and diffuse innovations (OECD, 2024_[1]). However, they suffer from low awareness, limited participation, and a narrow range of activities (OECD, 2024_[1]).

1.4. Funding, evaluation, and communication of public sector innovation

12. Bulgaria lacks dedicated funding for public sector innovation (OECD, 2024_[1]). Mechanisms such as spending reviews for public sector innovation are limited (OECD, 2024_[1]). As such, current innovations focus mainly on incremental approaches, thereby limiting investment in more transformative opportunities (OECD, 2024_[1]).

13. The State Administration lacks consistent monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation (OECD, 2024_[1]). Moreover, there is little communication about public sector innovation results, limiting the visibility of innovative efforts (OECD, 2024_[1]).

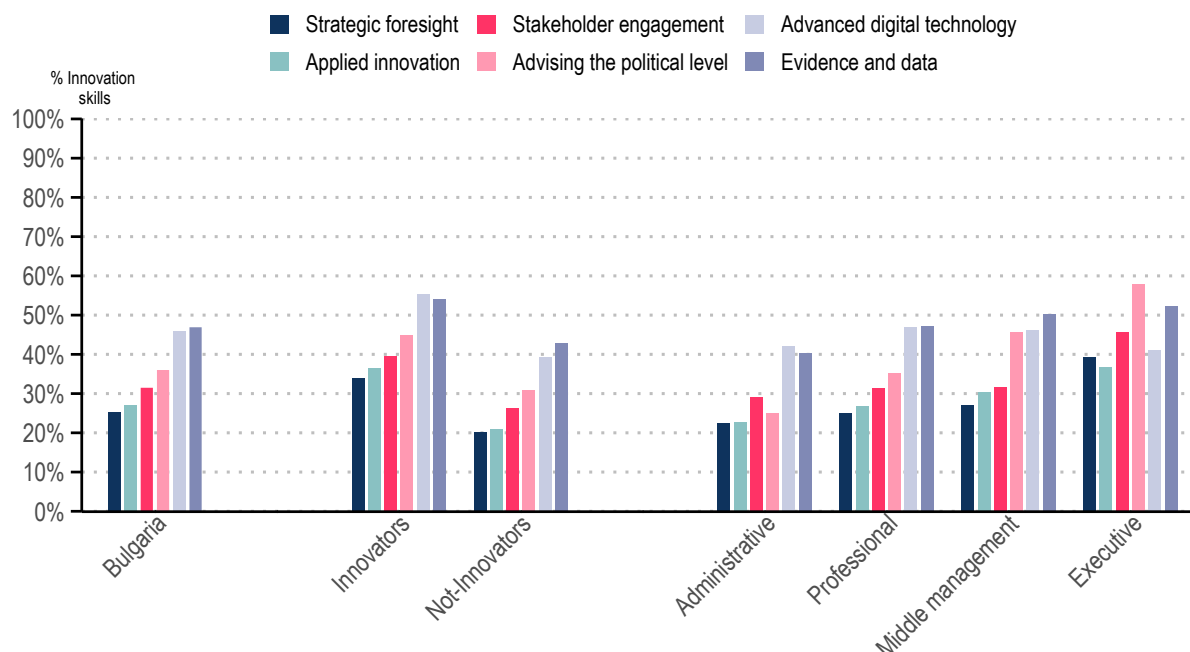
1.5. Skills and competencies to innovate at all levels

14. In Bulgaria, there has been limited and sporadic training on public sector innovation (OECD, 2024_[1]). This has been mainly focused on senior staff and concentrated on skills related to advising political leaders (e.g., research and framing policy issues, developing policy solutions) (OECD, 2024_[1]). Consequently, only 27% of public servants have the skills to manage and apply innovation processes (Figure 1.3) (OECD, 2024_[1]).

15. The generalised lack of specific applied innovation skills, such as prototyping and iterating, or specific competencies, such as innovation procurement, further limit the development of innovative projects (OECD, 2024_[1]).

Figure 1.3. Most public servants do not have innovation skills, especially those in less senior roles

% Public servants



Note: N= 3,633 Source: OECD Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Survey, 2024.

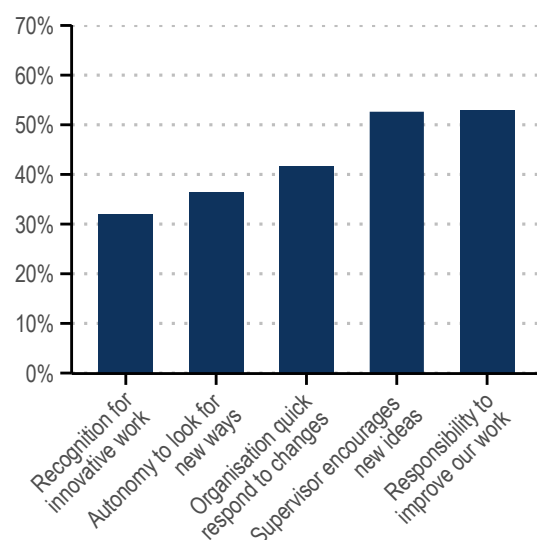
1.6. Workforce strategy and incentives for widespread innovation

16. Public servants, and particularly less senior staff, reported generally low levels of permission to innovate. Only 32% of public servants perceive recognition for innovative work or autonomy to seek new ways of working (Figure 1.4) (OECD, 2024^[1]).

17. Bulgaria lacks a workforce strategy, as its previous 2014-2020 Public Administration Development Strategy has not been updated (OECD, 2024^[1]). Formal mechanisms such as competency frameworks and performance management assessments do not integrate public sector innovation (OECD, 2024^[1]). As such, the main incentive for innovating is public servants' intrinsic motivation (e.g., personal satisfaction, sense of accomplishment) (Figure 1.5) (OECD, 2024^[1]).

Figure 1.4. Public servants usually do not feel they have permission to be innovative in their organisations

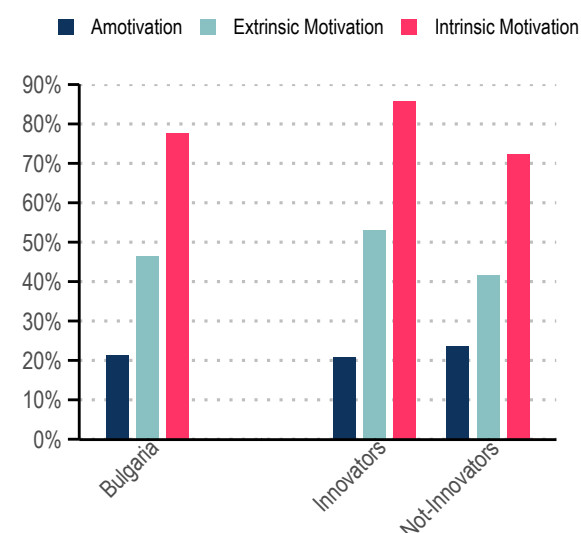
% Public servants



Note: N=3,633. Source: OECD Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Survey, 2024.

Figure 1.5. Current innovative behaviours depend on the personal satisfaction of the public servants themselves

% Public servants



Note: N=3,633. Source: OECD Bulgaria's Innovative Capacity Survey, 2024.

2 Public Sector Innovation Vision and Action Plan Proposal

The following chapter outlines a content proposal for Bulgaria's public sector innovation vision by 2030 and an action plan spanning 2025 to 2027.

18. The following chapter outlines a content proposal for a vision and action plan for public sector innovation in Bulgaria. The vision and action plan proposal has been informed through Bulgaria's Assessment of Innovative Capacity (OECD, 2024^[1]), along with global best practices collected by the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation. Furthermore, several interviews were conducted to discuss the overall insight, feasibility, and operational considerations of the actions presented here.

19. The vision and action plan outlined here has the potential to be integrated into the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030* as a formal strategic mechanism. To achieve this, a new sub-priority on *Public Sector Innovation* would need to be introduced, subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers. Additionally, the proposed actions 2025-2027 could be incorporated into the action plans of the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030*. These actions account for the use of both current and additional resources. It is recommended that the State Administration consider the mechanisms needed to ensure the stability of these funds while maintaining accountability and transparency.

20. The chapter is organised as follows: Section 2.1 introduces a vision for public sector innovation in the State Administration. Section 2.2 outlines a theory of change for public sector innovation, offering a framework that links actions with expected outputs, outcomes, and impact. Section 2.3. details the actions planned for each of the vision's pillars: strategic steering, designed for change, and people and skills. Lastly, Section 2.4. include advice on management and monitoring of the action plan.

2.1. Vision

21. **The proposed Bulgaria's vision is to build a more innovative, impactful, and trusted State Administration by 2030.** By effectively addressing the institutional challenges outlined in the previous chapter, Bulgaria can unlock its full potential by fostering more robust and widespread public sector innovation. This transformation is not only about enhancing the government's ability to respond to societal needs but also about driving the broader impacts of increased economic growth, improved living standards, and renewed public trust in public institutions. These improvements are crucial for Bulgaria's prosperity and social cohesion, laying the foundation for a more innovative and proactive governance.

22. This proposed action plan 2025-2027 centres around three key pillars aimed at achieving this ambitious vision: strategic steering of public sector innovation, a State Administration designed for change, and a workforce equipped with future-ready skills and incentives. These pillars are essential for overcoming the current barriers to innovation and building an administration that can meet the evolving demands of its citizens.

23. **Strategic Steering:** Bulgaria's current public sector innovation efforts lack clear priorities and coordination, which hampers their ability to support the State Administration's main goals. A more strategic and coordinated approach is needed to align public sector innovation with national priorities and ensure its alignment.

24. **Designed for Change:** Public sector innovators in Bulgaria face significant challenges, including limited collaboration practices and resource constraints. To foster innovation, the State Administration needs to create an environment that supports incremental improvements and transformative changes, backed by stronger institutional support and resources to achieve greater impact.

25. **People and Skills:** Innovation skills and risk-taking behaviours are underdeveloped, particularly among lower-level staff. For this transformation to succeed, Bulgaria needs to build a civil service that is equipped for the future with the necessary skills, competencies, and incentives to drive innovation at all levels of the administration.

Box 2.1. Global examples of public sector innovation visions

Ireland

Ireland's Department of Public Expenditure and Reform created a strategy for embedding innovation in the Irish Public Service (Government of Ireland, n.d.^[8]) (Government of Ireland, n.d.^[8]). The strategy contains four priority areas: citizen-centric innovation, culture of innovation, scale-up innovation, and transformative innovation (Government of Ireland, n.d.^[8]). This targeted strategic framework for PSI is framed under a broader transformation strategy for public service, the *Better Public Services* strategy, aimed at delivering to the public and building trust (Government of Ireland, n.d.^[8]) (Government of Ireland, n.d.^[8]).

Latvia

Latvia has worked with the OECD to develop a Public Administration Innovation Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2028) (Forthcoming) (OECD, forthcoming^[9]). The strategy aims to optimise, future-proof, and improve the effectiveness of public administration through innovation. The strategy targets three components of public administration: public servants and their careers, the processes and ways of working within the public administration and the methods used to design and deliver public services with the public at the centre (OECD, forthcoming^[10]).

Romania

Romania has worked with the OECD to develop a Public Sector Innovation Strategy 2025-2029 to accelerate and strengthen the capacity of the public administration to use innovative working methods to achieve its objectives, providing effective and efficient public services (OECD, forthcoming^[9]). Coordinated by the Government's General Secretariat, the strategy sets a path to become "a confident public administration where all civil servants and institutions apply innovation to improve public services and meet society's needs". The actions include measures related to developing a work environment conducive to innovation, public administration that makes the most of new approaches, and a competent professional body with the capacity to innovate (OECD, forthcoming^[9]).

Source: OECD based on cited sources.

2.2. Theory of change

26. **A theory of change is a strategic framework that outlines the steps necessary to achieve a desired long-term goal or vision.** It maps out the sequence of actions, processes, and changes required for a specific impact. By identifying key areas for intervention, expected outcomes, and long-term impact, a theory of change can help a government or other organisations to focus their efforts effectively and align their activities with broader goals. Essentially, it serves as a roadmap that links actions to results, ensuring that the journey from planning to execution leads to the intended transformation.

27. **This theory of change provides a structure for achieving the State Administration's vision of becoming more innovative, impactful, and trusted over the next decade.** As shown in Figure 2.1, the framework is built around the three pillars mentioned above: Strategic Steering, Designed for Change, and Skills and People. These represent the core areas where targeted actions are necessary to enhance the Administration's ability to innovate, deliver impact, and build public trust.

Figure 2.1. Bulgaria's Public Sector Innovation Theory of Change

The figure below represents a theory of change for Bulgaria's public sector innovation vision of becoming an innovative, impactful, and trusted State Administration in a decade.

Pillars	Actions	Outputs	Outcome	Impact
1. Strategic Steering	1. Connect public sector innovation with government priority agendas	More PSI initiatives support the Administration's priorities and public trust	Innovative capacity increases in the State Administration	Economic growth, living standards, and public trust in Bulgaria are improved by more and better innovation in the public sector.
	2. Reinforce the strategic steering of public sector innovation from the centre of government			
2. Designed for Change	3. Build government-wide support to promote and encourage public sector innovation	More incremental and transformative innovations that are better designed to be impactful		
	4. Introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation			
3. Skills and people	5. Build up innovation skills at all levels	More public servants at all levels have the skills and capacity to innovate		
	6. Develop a culture of innovation and collaboration that give permission to innovate			
	7. Foster structured incentives to innovate beyond personal motivation			

Source: OECD.

28. **Strategic Steering:** This pillar focuses on actions to embed innovation as a core element of the Administration's agendas and ensure that innovation initiatives are directed from the centre of government (Table 2.1). The central coordination of these efforts will ensure that innovation is encouraged and actively supported across all policy sectors. By connecting public sector innovation with the country's broader strategic goals, Bulgaria can ensure that its reforms and initiatives are focused on creating long-term value for its citizens. This requires a deliberate and concerted effort to integrate innovation into policy-making and decision-making processes, reinforcing a culture of innovation and experimentation within the State Administration. The target output of this pillar is that more public sector innovation initiatives will support the State Administration's priorities.

29. **Designed for Change:** This pillar concerns actions to create structures and systems that facilitate collaboration across government institutions to support innovation (Table 2.2). Establishing mechanisms that promote cross-government collaboration will enable the sharing of knowledge, tools, and best practices, fostering a more cohesive approach to innovation. Additionally, systematic monitoring and evaluation of innovation efforts are essential to ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. By embedding these practices, the Administration can assess the effectiveness of its innovations and make informed decisions about scaling or adjusting initiatives to achieve maximum impact. Ultimately, an environment designed for innovation will empower public servants to take bold steps in addressing complex societal challenges. The target output of this pillar is that more incremental and transformative innovations will be better designed to be impactful.

30. **Skills and People:** This pillar accounts for actions to invest in training and professional development to cultivate innovation-related skills across the public sector, ensuring that all public servants, not just senior staff, have the tools to manage and implement innovative processes (Table 2.3). Developing a culture of innovation that encourages collaboration, experimentation, and risk-taking is crucial to empowering public servants to think creatively and pursue new solutions. Moreover, creating structured incentives for innovation beyond personal motivation is essential for sustaining long-term engagement. Recognising and rewarding innovative efforts will help foster a sense of ownership and accountability, motivating public servants to actively contribute to the transformation of the State Administration. The

target output of this pillar is that more public servants at all levels will be equipped with the skills and capabilities to innovate.

31. These pillars aim at the outcome of experiencing a marked increase in Bulgaria's State Administration's innovative capacity. Ultimately, the impact will be seen in improved economic growth, enhanced living standards, and rebuilding public trust in government institutions.

2.3. Action plan

32. This pillar focuses on actions to embed innovation as a core element of the Administration's agendas and ensure that innovation initiatives are directed from the centre of government (Table 2.1).

Pillar 1: Strategic Steering

1. Connect public sector innovation with government priority agendas (high-level priority)

Measure 1.1.: Make public sector innovation a recognised core function by formally integrating it into the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030's Institutional Framework Priority*.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Formally adopt Public Sector Innovation as a sub-priority under the *National Development Programme (NDP) Bulgaria 2030 - Priority 10 Institutional Framework* (see more in Box 2.2.)
- This measure is preferred over creating a new strategic framework to avoid duplicating strategic documents and ensure coherence with other priorities and sub-priorities.
- This initiative will require approval from the Council of Ministers, and the design process should be completed within three months. Implementation should occur in a three-month period, utilising the current budget.

Box 2.2. National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030 – Priority 10 Institutional Framework

Advice on the vision for a new sub-priority: Public Sector Innovation

Public sector innovation refers to the introduction of novel approaches aimed at driving impactful change (OECD, 2017^[2]). In Bulgaria, this innovation spans a wide range of initiatives, from adopting cutting-edge technologies to improve efficiency to using human-centred design in policy and service delivery to enhance public outcomes. Examples of innovation in Bulgaria's public sector include incorporating strategic foresight methods into the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030* to better anticipate and shape future strategies, utilising human-centred design in initiatives such as the *Startup Visa Programme* for high-tech companies and the *eProcurement System*, and improving service delivery through approaches such as life episodes and business events. Additionally, the country has simplified administrative procedures for citizens and businesses through its *e-Government Portal*, making processes more digital and streamlined.

Efforts to build a more innovative, impactful, and trusted State Administration will continue by developing a strategic and coordinated approach to public sector innovation, establishing support programmes and mechanisms to support incremental and transformative initiatives, and fostering incentives and adopting skills and competencies to innovate. Public sector innovation efforts in the Administration will focus on increasing the number and quality of innovative initiatives in the Administration. This transformation is not only about enhancing the government's ability to respond to societal needs but also about driving the broader impacts of increased economic growth, improved living standards, and renewed public trust in public institutions. These improvements are crucial for Bulgaria's prosperity and social cohesion, laying the foundation for a more innovative and proactive governance.

The key pillars of this sub-priority are: (1) the strategic steering of public sector innovation, (2) a State Administration designed for change, and (3) a workforce equipped with future-ready skills and incentives. A coordinated approach will be developed by strategically steering and monitoring innovative efforts from the central government, along with providing high-level guidance for other ministries to develop public sector innovation as a central function. The State Administration will focus on creating support programmes to incubate and pilot cross-government innovation, increasing the current Innovation Experts Network and the Innovation Competition, improving the adoption of mechanisms such as the innovation procurement, and further resources for incremental and transformative initiatives. Furthermore, the Administration will focus on building a civil service that is equipped for the future by providing skills and competencies training programmes, improving the public servants' mobility programme, and creating incentives such as an innovation award for public servants to drive innovation at all levels of the administration.

Indicators Institutional Framework – Sub-priority Public Sector Innovation

Indicator	Source	Baseline Value	Target Value
OECD Innovative Capacity of the Public Sector of Bulgaria	OECD	Emerging (1.7)	Managing (3.0)
OECD Share of public servants involved in an innovation	OECD	53%	70%
OECD Share of public servants with innovation skills	OECD	20%	40%
OECD/EU Innovation Climate Indicator	OECD/EU 2024 Survey of Central	Forthcoming	To be defined

	Government Public Servants		
Source: OECD			

Measure 1.2.: Develop and adopt measures for public sector innovation in the State Administration in the action plans of the *National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030*.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Integrate this dedicated action plan for public sector innovation into the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030 yearly action review, including the specific budget and innovative capacity indicators described below.
- Ensure that this annual plan reflects both strategic goals and ongoing monitoring processes.
- The design and approval process should be completed within three months, utilising the current budget. Implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis.

Measure 1.3.: Upgrade the existing *Working Group on Transparency and Access to Information* under the *Council for Administrative Reform* to coordinate the implementation of public sector innovation and monitor objectives, outputs, and timelines.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Convene all actors involved in public sector innovation as part of a formal working group to ensure cross-departmental collaboration and alignment with the national development plan.
- Increase stakeholder engagement by ensuring political and executive-level buy-in, which will enhance commitment from all parties.
- The working group should be established within three months, and the process should be funded through the current budget. Implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis.

2. Reinforce the strategic steering of public sector innovation from the centre of government (medium-level priority)

Measure 2.1.: Develop CoMA's role in aligning public sector innovation efforts with government priorities, steering, coordinating, and monitoring cross-government innovation efforts.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Create/update a dedicated job position within CoMA to oversee the alignment of PSI efforts with government priorities, including responsibility for coordinating across departments and monitoring progress.
- Develop an online dashboard to track and display the progression of public sector innovation actions, making the progress transparent and accessible to stakeholders.
- This position should be designed and established within six months, with additional domestic budget required for one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member. Implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis.

Measure 2.2. Build CoMA's function to provide high-level guidance on PSI across key government strategies and organisations, offering templates and tools for PSI development.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Within the same job position, offer guidance and practical tools and templates for PSI to other ministries and agencies, ensuring a unified approach to innovation connected to the PSI vision in the 2030 NDP.
- Develop an online space to monitor efforts (preferable online dashboard) and facilitate collaboration among various organisations engaged in public sector innovation, enabling the sharing of best practices and resources.
- The position and online space should be operational within six months, with additional domestic budget required for platform development and operation. Implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis.

Table 2.1. Pillar 1: Strategic Steering

The table below outlines actions, measures, responsible parties, considerations, indicators, timelines and resources.

Actions	Measures	Responsible parties	Considerations	Timeline and resources
1. Connect public sector innovation with government priority agendas. Priority: High	1.1. Make public sector innovation a recognised core function by formally integrating it into the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030's Institutional Framework Priority.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally adopt Public Sector Innovation as a sub-priority in the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030 under Priority 10 Institutional Framework. Prefer integration over a new framework to avoid duplication and ensure coherence with other priorities. Obtain approval from the Council of Ministers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 3 months Implementation: 3 months. Resources: Current budget
	1.2. Develop and adopt measures for public sector innovation in the State Administration in the action plans of the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate the innovation action plan into the NDP's action plan, including budget and capacity indicators. Ensure the annual plan reflects strategic goals and ongoing monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 3 months Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Current budget
	1.3. Upgrade the existing Working Group on Transparency and Access to Information under the Council for Administrative Reform to coordinate the implementation of public sector innovation and monitor objectives, outputs, and timelines.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a formal working group to ensure cross-departmental collaboration and alignment with the NDP. Secure political and executive-level buy-in to increase stakeholder engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 3 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Current budget
2. Reinforce the strategic steering of public sector innovation from the centre of government. Priority: Medium	2.1. Develop CoMA's role in aligning PSI efforts with government priorities, steering, coordinating and monitoring cross-government innovation efforts.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create/update a dedicated job position in CoMA to coordinate PSI efforts, monitor progress, and ensure alignment with government priorities. Develop an online dashboard to track and display innovation progress for transparency and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 6 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Additional domestic budget
	2.2. Build CoMA's function for providing high-level guidance on PSI across key government strategies and organisations, providing templates and tools.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the same job position, provide guidance and tools for PSI to other ministries to ensure a unified approach. Create an online dashboard and space for monitoring, collaboration, and sharing best practices among organisations engaged in the innovation action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 6 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Additional domestic budget

Box 2.3. Global examples steering public sector innovation from the Centre of Government

Colombia's National Planning Department

The Department advise the President of Colombia on public sector innovation issues, identifying cross-government barriers and measuring innovative capacity (Government of Colombia, n.d.^[11]) (Government of Colombia, n.d.^[11]). Within the framework of the 2022-2026 National Development Plan, the Department steers public sector innovation by promoting experimental approaches to address the needs and challenges of citizens, incentivising the use of data for decision-making and management, and managing the National Public Sector Innovation Committee (Government of Colombia, n.d.^[11]).

France's Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP)

Under the authority of the Prime Minister, the Directorate leads the Public Transformation Programme as defined by the Interministerial Committee for Public Transformation (CITP) (Government of France, 2023^[12]). The Directorate ensures the implementation of the government's priority policies, coordinates administrative actions to simplify procedures, and improves service quality for users. In collaboration with inter-ministerial partners, The Directorate also supports innovation, skills development, organisational transformation, managerial practices, and public management (Government of France, 2023^[12]). Additionally, the DITP accelerates high-impact government projects with the assistance of its in-house consultants, experts, and the Fund for the Transformation of Public Action (FTAP) (Government of France, 2023^[12]).

Impact Canada

Impact Canada, situated in Canada's Impact and Innovation Unit in the Privy Council's Office (Centre of Government) aims to develop innovative policy and programme methods to better address governmental priorities and positive outcomes to the public. The organisation provides expertise in behavioural science and advanced policy research through a rotating fellows programme and an open innovation challenge programme (Government of Canada, n.d.^[13]).

Source: OECD based on cited sources.

Pillar 2: Designed for Change

This pillar concerns actions to create structures and systems that facilitate collaboration across government institutions to support innovation (Table 2.2). Recommendations on providing the necessary resources for innovation are included in Box 2.6.

3. Connect public sector innovation with government priority agendas (high-level priority)

Measure 3.1.: Design a framework on how to integrate innovative policymaking methods further into the policymaking process based on the OECD project in 2025.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Strategic Planning Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Ensure synchronisation of this framework with the incoming OECD project on innovative policymaking to leverage best practices and avoid duplicating efforts.

- Develop criteria for selecting innovative small-scale projects to test different innovative approaches to policymaking. Pilot innovative policy design methods in different policy areas. Build capacity in the administration for implementing innovative approaches in the design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies (see examples in Box 2.4).
- The design of this framework should be completed within 12 months, with funding sourced from additional external budgets provided by the European Commission and the technical support of the OECD. Implementation of the framework should be permanent on a yearly basis.

Measure 3.2.: Upgrade the current innovation network and competition with formal mandates and financial resources to increase scope and activities.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration, and the Institute of Public Administration.

Operationalisation:

- Develop a two-tiered network, with separate levels for leadership and public servants to ensure a targeted approach for innovation at different levels.
- Provide formal mandates and allocate additional resources to diversify activities and increase participation of public servants in innovation initiatives.
- Focus on enhancing digital and data skills across the network to strengthen capacity in these critical areas.
- The design process should be completed within six months, with additional funding sourced from the domestic budget. Implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis.

Measure 3.3.: Create an internal communication campaign to encourage innovative approaches at all levels.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Develop and roll out an internal campaign that encourages innovative thinking at all levels of the public sector, showcasing success stories and available tools.
- Make innovation toolkits and case studies easily accessible to public servants to foster a culture of innovation.
- The campaign design should be completed within three months, with additional funding required from the domestic budget. Implementation should last a month on a yearly basis.

Box 2.4. Global examples of frameworks and programmes for innovative policymaking and services initiatives

Frameworks and programmes that foster innovative policymaking and service initiatives across the public sector are generally based on design sprint formats that actively involve public participation. By leveraging collaborative, time-constrained methodologies, teams of public servants act as public entrepreneurs by addressing complex cross-government or specific challenges to enhance the public administration's efficiency, public satisfaction, public trust, or other public outcomes.

Objectives of these frameworks and programmes generally aim to:

- Promote innovation: Drive the adoption of innovative work methods and solutions.
- Enhance collaboration: Foster cross-organisation collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Engage citizens: Incorporate public input directly into the policymaking and/or service design process.
- Accelerate experimentation: Rapidly prototype and test solutions to improve agile experimentation.

Overall, the format of these frameworks and programme includes several stages, such as:

1. Understand: Map out the problem involving the public and prioritise areas to focus.
2. Ideate: Co-create ideas and develop solution concepts.
3. Decide: Make decisions on the best solutions and turn ideas into testable policies and services.
4. Prototype: Rapidly build prototypes for both digital and in-person interactions.
5. Test: Gather feedback from a diverse group of users and stakeholders.
6. Pilot: Evaluate the innovation in a controlled environment and plan its scaling.

These programmes aim to contribute to outputs and outcomes such as:

- Innovative Solutions: Development of innovative solutions for cross-government challenges.
- Innovative capacity: Reinforcement of innovative capacity to improve collaboratively policies and services.
- Public Trust: Increased public trust through innovation adoption and public participation.

Global examples of such programmes include:

- US's 10x Investments: The US Federal Government's venture studio offers a structured programme to incubate innovative ideas from public servants, focusing on research, discovery, development, and scaling of solutions (US Government, 2023^[14]).
- Estonian Innosprint Model: The Government of Estonia has an agile sprint framework and programme that brings together interdisciplinary teams to define a problem and create a user-tested solution (Government of Estonia, n.d.^[15]).
- Portugal's LabX: The Government of Portugal has diverse programmes to generate and diffuse innovations in public services using citizen participation and human-centred design methodologies (Government of Portugal, n.d.^[16]).
- Chile's Agile Sprint: Chile's Government Lab has an agile sprint framework and programme to co-create innovative solutions requested by public institutions. Through a four-phase sprint-

style process, a dedicated team addresses policy and service design challenges using agile, collaborative, experimental and people-centred innovation methodologies (Laboratorio de Gobierno, n.d.^[17]).

- Latvia's Innovation Lab: Latvia runs an innovation sprint process where teams from the national and municipal public administration understand and redefine the problem, develop, test and prototype solutions (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[18]). The tested solutions are later scaled and implemented through the participant institutions (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[18]).
- UK's Policy Lab: The lab partners with policy teams to run innovation projects that leverage design, experimental, participatory and people-centred methods. The Lab's project models can be catered to the specific challenge or policy problem of a public entity (Policy Lab UK, 2024^[19]).

Source: OECD

Measure 3.4.: Create an action plan to improve the effectiveness of the current innovation procurement procedure and its training.

Responsible party: Public Procurement Agency and Institute of Public Administration.

Operationalisation:

- Considering the existent benchmarking review of Bulgaria's innovation procurement policies (see more in Box 2.5), develop a specific action plan to ensure improvement with European standards.
- Actions could include a monitoring framework, adoption guidelines, specific training, and starting the discussion to guide the establishment of spending targets in organisations.
- Enhance IPA's current training for public procurement officers to boost capacity in implementing innovative procurement practices.
- Join the OECD Working Group on Innovative Procurement to align with international best practices.
- The specific action plan and training improvements should be designed in three months and implemented within three months, using the current budget.

Box 2.5. European Commission - Bulgaria's Innovation Procurement Review

In a European comparison of national innovation procurement policies, Bulgaria ranks last, at 30th place. The country has only adopted about 9.09% of the necessary policy measures to create a fully developed framework for innovation procurement.

There is a significant need for strengthening this framework to fully exploit its potential. While Bulgaria has implemented the EU's public procurement directives, providing a foundation for such a framework, it lacks nearly all critical elements required to structure an effective innovation procurement policy. These missing elements include a dedicated action plan, spending targets, and a monitoring system for innovation procurement. Furthermore, innovation procurement is not prioritised in horizontal and sectoral policies, including ICT policies, and there is a lack of structured capacity-building measures such as a national competence centre or training programmes. There is also an absence of an Intellectual Property Rights policy in public procurement that supports innovation. Additionally, the country underutilises value-for-money award criteria, variants, and preliminary market consultations. There is a need to enhance competition in the national procurement market to improve the prospects for companies with innovative solutions to compete with established providers.

Source: (European Commission, 2024^[20])

4. Introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation (medium-level priority)

Measure 4.1.: Establish a framework to monitor the State Administration's innovative capacity and evaluate PSI initiatives.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Create indicators and a section within *the Report of the State of the Administration* to monitor PSI initiatives on an annual basis.
- Create a framework to assess the State Administration's innovative capacity annually and adjust the action plan based on the findings.
- Carry out evaluations or contract evaluation services for specific PSI initiatives at early stages to ensure they generate public value and address any potential challenges in a timely manner.
- See more details on the OECD Policy Brief on Innovation Measurement for the Council of Ministers Administration – Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.
- The design of this framework should be completed within nine months. Implementation should occur in three months on a yearly basis, utilising the current budget.

Measure 4.2.: Increase innovation's results visibility and communicate them in a yearly innovation.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically the Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Regularly communicate innovation results across the State Administration, including its digital platforms to the public.
- Organise a yearly innovation summit, bringing together government and non-government actors to showcase initiatives, promote learning, and highlight results.
- The design for the summit should be completed within six months and implemented in three months on a yearly basis, requiring an additional domestic budget.

Table 2.2. Pillar 2: Designed for Change

The table below outlines actions, measures, responsible parties, considerations, indicators, timelines and resources.

Actions	Measures	Responsible parties	Considerations	Timeline and resources
3. Build government-wide support to promote and encourage public sector innovation. Priority: High	3.1. Design a framework on how to integrate innovative policymaking methods further into the policymaking process based on the OECD project in 2025	CoMA's Strategic Planning Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure synchronisation with the incoming OECD project on innovative policymaking to leverage best practices and avoid duplicating efforts. • Develop criteria for selecting innovative small-scale projects to test different innovative approaches to policymaking. • Pilot innovative policy design methods in different policy areas. • Build capacity in the administration for implementing innovative approaches in the design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for design: 12 months. • Implementation: permanent yearly basis. • Resources: Additional external budget from the European Commission and technical support from the OECD
	3.2. Upgrade the current innovation network and competition with formal mandates and financial resources to increase scope and activities.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate and Institute of Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a two-tier network for leadership and public servants to target innovation at different levels. • Provide formal mandates and more resources to diversify activities and boost public servant participation. • Prioritise digital and data skill development across the network to strengthen capabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for design: 6 months. • Implementation: permanent yearly basis. • Resources: Additional domestic budget.
	3.3. Create an internal communication campaign to encourage innovative approaches at all levels, including making available resources such as toolkits and cases.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch an internal campaign to promote innovation at all levels, sharing success stories and tools. • Make toolkits and case studies easily accessible to foster a culture of innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for design: 3 months • Implementation: one month yearly basis. • Resources: Additional domestic budget
	3.4. Create an action plan to improve the effectiveness of the current innovation procurement procedure and its training.	Public Procurement Agency and Institute of Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the existing EC review of Bulgaria's innovation procurement mechanisms to develop a specific action plan to ensure improvement with European standards. • Actions could include a monitoring framework, adoption guidelines, specific training, and starting the discussion to guide the establishment of spending targets in organisations. • Enhance IPA's current training for public procurement officers to boost capacity in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for design: 3 months. • Implementation: 3 months. • Resources: Current budget

			implementing innovative procurement practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join the OECD Working Group on Innovative Procurement to align with international best practices. 	
4. Introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation. Priority: Medium	4.1. Establish a framework to monitor the State Administration's innovative capacity and evaluate PSI initiatives	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create indicators and a section within the Report of the State of the Administration to monitor PSI initiatives on an annual basis. • Create an annual framework to assess innovative capacity and adjust the action plan accordingly. • Evaluate early-stage PSI initiatives to ensure positive public impact and address challenges early. • See more details on the OECD Policy Brief on Innovation Measurement for the Council of Ministers Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for design: 9 months. • Implementation: 3 months yearly basis. • Resources: Current budget
	4.2. Increase innovation's results visibility and communicate them in a yearly innovation summit.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate innovation results across the State Administration, including its digital platforms to the public. • Organise a yearly innovation summit to connect actors, showcase initiatives, and share results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for design: 6 months. • Implementation: 3 months yearly basis. • Resources: Additional domestic budget

Box 2.6. Directing public sector innovation through funding and cross-government collaboration

Bulgaria could adopt more systematic budgeting mechanisms to promote public sector innovation, as highlighted by the OECD (OECD, 2024^[1]). The budget process plays a pivotal role in creating opportunities and incentives to enhance innovation capacity (OECD, 2017^[2]). OECD research shows that budgeting can influence innovation in various ways—by restricting, stimulating, accommodating, or being unresponsive to innovative practices—depending on mechanisms such as financial incentives, fiscal frameworks, programme and performance budgeting (OECD, 2024^[1]).

Currently, Bulgaria's use of these mechanisms for public sector innovation is limited, with a primary focus on spending reviews to identify inefficient processes and performance deficits (OECD, 2024^[1]). Most public organisations lack dedicated funding for public sector innovation, resulting in strategic misalignment, limited scope, and inconsistent innovation capacities across government agencies (OECD, 2024^[1]).

To address these challenges, Bulgaria could expand the use of spending reviews and allocate budgets specifically for long-term innovative projects aimed at improving public outcomes. The Ministry of Finance and the Council of Ministers' Administration could issue guidance for public organisations on leveraging budget and funding mechanisms for innovation. In alignment with the National Development Programme (NDP) Bulgaria 2030, this guidance should include mechanisms such as budget allocations and spending reviews. For example, Denmark's spending reviews have led to shared service initiatives, improving efficiency in back-office management functions (OECD, 2017^[2]). The OECD report on spending reviews provides insights into best practices in this area (Tryggvadottir, 2022^[21]).

Additionally, Bulgaria could adapt its system of programme and performance budgeting to encompass innovative initiatives into the annual budget process. This approach would enable public organisations to prioritise long-term, cross-cutting innovation projects. For instance, the UK's Budget Office uses performance evidence from innovative policies and services to enhance resource allocation in key areas such as education (UK Government, 2023^[22]).

Source: OECD

Pillar 3: Skills and People

This pillar accounts for actions to invest in training and professional development to cultivate innovation-related skills across the public sector, ensuring that all public servants, not just senior staff, have the tools to manage and implement innovative processes (Table 2.3).

5. Build up innovation skills at all levels (high-level priority)

Measure 5.1.: Expand current State Administration training offer in innovation to encompass all levels and functions across the civil service.

Responsible party: Institute of Public Administration.

Operationalisation:

- Expand the innovation competition's training sessions and make them available to all public servants.

- The design process should be completed within three months, and implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis, with additional funding required from the domestic budget.

Measure 5.2.: Establish learning-by-doing cross-government capacity-building programmes.

Responsible party: Institute of Public Administration.

Operationalisation:

- Develop training programmes of varying lengths, including an online module based on the OECD's innovation curriculum (See global examples in Box 2.7.)
- Integrate skills for applied innovation, digital literacy, data analysis, and citizen participation.
- Assess whether online training should be mandatory for new officials and conduct regular evaluations for relevance and effectiveness.
- Encourage participants to join the innovation network and competition.
- The design should be completed within one-year, and implementation should follow a one-year period on a yearly basis. This would require additional domestic budget.

6. Develop a culture of innovation and collaboration that gives permission to innovate (high-level priority)

Measure 6.1.: Update the Human Resources Planning Methodology to make innovation a focus.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Follow the OECD recommendations on human resources management policies from the assessment *Supporting Bulgaria's Public Administration* (OECD, 2022^[23]).
- Revise the Human Resources Planning Methodology to position innovation as a component and implement specific actions to improve recruitment and professional development, enhancing the Administration's employer branding.
- The design process should be completed within six months, and implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis, using the current budget.

Measure 6.2.: Create a mandate for an HR working group under *Council for Administrative Reform* to coordinate and monitor the implementation of innovation-related workforce initiatives across the Administration.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Ensure the group provides strategic guidance to heads of organisations on the importance of innovation-related workforce initiatives and their adoption.
- The design should be completed within six months, and implementation should be permanent on a yearly basis, with current budget resources.

Measure 6.3.: Assess and improve the current mobility programme for public servants to ensure effectiveness in professional development of the employees.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Strengthening civil servants' mobility can be a concrete tool for career development that allows for building innovative skills and capacity. Moreover, these programmes can support attracting candidates with innovative backgrounds to the public sector.
- Following the OECD assessment *Supporting Bulgaria's Public Administration* (OECD, 2022^[23]), evaluate both temporary and permanent mobility mechanisms for public servants.
- Ensure opportunities are systematically communicated across the Administration.
- Improve communication in mobility criteria and process and ensure that sponsorship requirements are manageable for candidates.
- The review should be completed within three months, and implementation should occur permanently on a yearly basis, using the current budget.

7. Foster structured incentives to innovate beyond personal motivation (medium-level priority).

Measure 7.1.: Revise the current competency framework and performance management guidelines to include innovation behaviours, digital skills and public participation competencies.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Develop an updated competency framework that integrates innovation, digital skills, and public participation across the administration.
- Adopt OECD guidelines to incorporate an innovation dimension into the new competency framework.
- The design should be completed within 12 months, and implementation should occur permanently on a yearly basis, using the current budget.

Measure 7.2.: Create formal incentives and reward mechanisms to encourage innovative behaviour, including a yearly innovation award.

Responsible party: The Council of Ministers Administration (CoMA), specifically Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.

Operationalisation:

- Evaluate the creation of incentives, such as salary increases and promotion criteria, linked to innovation for both junior and senior staff.
- Organise an annual innovation award, allowing public servants and citizens to vote on the administration's most innovative implemented initiatives (Current IPA competition is focused on ideas and not implemented initiatives).
- The design should be completed within six months, and implementation should occur in a six-month period on a yearly basis, requiring an additional domestic budget.

Table 2.3. Pillar 3: Skills and People

The table below outlines actions, measures, responsible parties, considerations, indicators, timelines and resources.

Actions	Measures	Responsible parties	Considerations	Timeline and resources
5. Build up innovation skills at all levels. Priority: High	5.1. Expand current State Administration training offer in innovation to encompass all levels and functions across the civil service.	Institute of Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand innovation competition training sessions to all public servants. Encourage participants to join the innovation network and competition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 3 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Additional domestic budget.
	5.2. Establish learning by doing cross-government capacity-building programmes.	Institute of Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop varied-length training programmes, including an OECD-based online module. Integrate skills in innovation, digital literacy, data analysis, and citizen participation. Assess making online training mandatory for new officials and conduct regular evaluations. Encourage participants to join the innovation network and competition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 12 months. Implementation: 12 months on yearly basis. Resources: Additional domestic budget
6. Develop a culture of innovation and collaboration that gives permission to innovate. Priority: High	6.1. Update the Human Resources Planning Methodology to make innovation a focus.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the OECD recommendations on human resources management policies from the assessment Supporting Bulgaria's Public Administration (2022). Make innovation central to recruitment and development. Implement actions to improve recruitment and employer branding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 6 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Current budget
	6.2. Create a mandate for an HR working group under Council for Administrative Reform to coordinate and monitor the implementation of innovation-related workforce initiatives across the Administration.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide strategic guidance to heads of organisations on the importance of innovation-related initiatives and their adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 6 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Current budget
	6.3. Assess and improve the current mobility programme for public servants to ensure effectiveness in professional development of the employees	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete tool for career development that builds innovative skills and capacity. These programmes can support attracting candidates with innovative backgrounds to the public sector. Following the OECD Bulgaria's Public Administration assessment recommendations, evaluate both temporary and permanent mobility mechanisms for public servants. Ensure opportunities are communicated clearly and improve transparency in mobility criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 3 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Current budget
7. Foster structured incentives to innovate beyond personal motivation. Priority: Medium	7.1. Revise the current competency framework and performance management guidelines to include innovation behaviours, digital skills and public participation competencies.	CoMA's Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the competency framework to include innovation, digital skills, and public participation. Adopt OECD guidelines for the innovation component in the new competency framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for design: 9 months. Implementation: permanent on a yearly basis. Resources: Current budget
	7.2. Consider formal incentives and	CoMA's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate incentives such as salary increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline for

	reward mechanisms, including a yearly innovation award.	Modernisation of the Administration Directorate.	and promotions tied to innovation for all staff levels. • Organise an annual innovation award, with public servants and citizens voting on the best initiatives (Current IPA competition is focused on ideas and not implemented initiatives).	design: 6 months. • Implementation: 3 months on a yearly basis. • Resources: Additional domestic budget
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Box 2.7. Innovation capacity-building programmes

Austria's Innovation Compact Course

GovLab Austria offers a Compact Course on Innovation where participants can select from a range of seminars and courses on innovation topics including rethinking administration, community building, innovation methods, sandboxes, participation, change management and more (GovLab Austria, n.d.^[24]).

Chile's Public Sector Innovation School

Chile's public service school offers a catalogue of public innovation courses on topics including open innovation, agility for innovation, capacities to innovate, facilitation for change, governance and leadership for innovation and many others (Escuela de Innovacion Publica, n.d.^[25]).

UAE's Public Sector Innovation Diploma

This diploma, delivered in partnership with Cambridge University, aims to empower future public sector leaders to work in innovative ways to tackle real-world government challenges. It blends training, workshops and field visits to equip leaders with the tools needed for innovation leadership (MBRCGI, n.d.^[26]).

Romania's Public Sector Innovation Leaders Training

This hands-on three-hour training course covers the basics of public sector innovation, introduction to common innovation methods, an overview of innovation portfolio management and leadership competencies for public sector innovation (OECD, 2024^[27]).

Source: OECD based on cited sources.

Timeline

Pillar	Output	Year 1 (2025)				Year 2 (2026)				Year 2 (2027)			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Budget allocation													
Strategic Steering	1.1.												
	1.2.												
	1.3.												
	2.1.												
	2.2.												
Designed for Change	3.1.												
	3.2.												
	3.3.												
	3.4.												
	4.1.												
	4.2.												
Skills and People	5.1.												
	5.2.												
	6.1.												
	6.2.												
	6.3.												
	7.1.												
	7.2.												

Design	Implementation
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