

23BG02 – Output A4

Innovation Measurement

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

October 2024



Funded by
the European Union

Innovation Measurement Policy Brief

Key messages

- This paper outlines measurement activities related to public sector innovation and their uses towards monitoring and evaluation in Bulgaria and makes recommendations for strengthening these functions.
- Measurement is critical to support monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation activities to make evidence-informed decisions and allocate resources effectively relating to public sector innovation.
- There are currently few consistent activities to measure public sector innovation for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation across the Bulgaria's State Administration. The implementation of the public sector innovation Action Plan is an opportunity to strengthen these capabilities.
- The variation measurement of public sector innovation activities globally confirms the need for activities to be linked to the priorities for public sector innovation in Bulgaria.
- The OECD recommends enhancing innovation measurement capabilities in Bulgaria to meet three priorities:
 1. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the implementation of the public sector innovation Action Plan.
 2. Move towards increased international alignment and comparability through the use of validated instruments and participation in international working groups.
 3. Build capacity to evaluate selected innovation initiatives to inform strategic decision-making, programme design, and resource allocation.

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I. Introduction

Background

This paper outlines measurement activities related to public sector innovation and their uses towards monitoring and evaluation in Bulgaria and makes recommendations for strengthening these functions¹.

Monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation helps to support good decision-making and allocate resources effectively (OECD, 2020^[1]). However, there are a number of challenges for measuring public sector innovation specifically – from the conceptual (what should be measured) to the technical (how should it be measured) (Kattel et al., 2018^[2]; Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[3]). Recognising these challenges, the paper provides an overview of international contexts for measurement of public sector innovation and its uses for monitoring and evaluation, before focusing on recommendations for the Bulgarian Administration.

This paper builds on the recent assessment of public sector innovation capacity in Bulgaria carried out by the OECD (OECD, 2024^[4]). The recommendations in the paper aim to support the Administration in Bulgaria as it implements a new Action Plan for public sector innovation in three critical areas:

1. The implementation and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan for public sector innovation in Bulgaria.
2. Measuring public sector innovation over time and aligning with international practices, laying the foundations for increased comparability with international efforts and peer countries.
3. Building capacity to evaluate selected (e.g. high-priority, high-resource, or high-potential) public sector innovation initiatives to inform strategic decision-making, programme design, and resource allocation.

Summary of recommendations

The recommendations are structured around three priorities.

Priority 1. Develop a monitoring and evaluation function for the implementation of the public sector innovation Action Plan.

Responsible parties for dedicated activities in the Action Plan should report progress on action indicators annually to Council of Ministers' Administration (CoMA).

- Action indicators should be well designed, meaning they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound. Action indicators should be under the direct control of the agencies responsible for delivery, without the requirement for substantial inputs or permissions from other agencies.
- CoMA should provide responsible parties with a standard template for reporting on action indicators. Reporting should be accompanied by monitoring and review meetings as appropriate to support effective delivery.

CoMA should monitor progress annually against Output Indicators described in Box 1 (# PSI initiatives support the Administration's priorities and public trust; # incremental innovations and transformative innovations; % public servants at all levels have the skills and capacity to innovate).

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

- This involves using a convenience survey of public sector organisations participating in the cross-government working group responsible for coordinating the implementation of public sector innovation (See Annex 1 for a draft survey).²
- Data on output indicators should be reported on the CoMA monitoring dashboard (proposed in Measure 2.2 of the Action Plan).

CoMA should monitor and report progress annually on Outcome Indicators described in Box 2 (improved innovation climate, confidence in government, skilled public service).

- This involves using the OECD Public Sector Innovative Capacity Individual-Level survey instrument, adapted for use in Bulgaria. Monitoring is also supported by ongoing use of the EU/OECD Employee Survey of Central Government Public Servants.

Priority 2: Move towards increased international alignment and comparability tracking of public sector innovation capacity over time, building on the 2024 baseline.

CoMA should use instruments for monitoring and evaluation public sector innovation that have been validated through use in other countries wherever possible.

- The proposed monitoring and evaluation plan for the Action Plan (see Priority 1) describes two data collection instruments that have been used internationally: the OECD Innovative Capacity Individual-Level Survey and the EU/OECD Employee Survey of Central Government Public Servants.

CoMA can exploit opportunities to align monitoring, evaluation, and measurement work with international practices, for example through participation in the OECD Working Group on Public Sector Innovation Measurement.

Priority 3: Building capacity to evaluate selected innovation initiatives to inform strategic decision-making, programme design, and resource allocation.

CoMA should develop relevant criteria to enable decision-making on which innovations or programmes would benefit most from dedicated evaluation.

- For example, criteria could consider ‘resource implications’, ‘potential disruption’, and ‘risk of harm or disadvantage’ to guide decision-making.

CoMA should build capacity and ring-fence funding to commission external evaluations of selected innovations and programmes.

II. Context: In Bulgaria and internationally

Current measurement of public sector innovation in Bulgaria

The 2024 OECD assessment, *Strengthening the Innovation Capacity of the Government of Bulgaria*, is the first attempt to measure and assess public sector innovation capacity in Bulgaria (OECD, 2024^[4]). This provides a baseline for further monitoring and evaluation efforts related to public sector innovation.

However, the assessment identifies that there are few consistent activities to monitor and evaluate public sector innovation across Bulgaria’s State Administration, specifically (OECD, 2024^[1]):

² Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method that prioritises accessibility of respondents. There are limitations to this approach (for example, not all public sector organisations provide data), but it is proposed to reduce the burden of reporting on output indicators by prioritising those organisations which are most accessible and most relevant.

- There is no dedicated function for monitoring innovation efforts across the government, and CoMA can further develop its role to align, coordinate and provide high-level guidance for increasing public sector innovation.
- There is an absence of enforcement mechanisms through monitoring and evaluation to ensure that strategies are delivered effectively. This is often compounded by a lack of collaboration in the development of strategies, insufficient resources for strategy implementation.
- Evaluation of innovative efforts are rare across the Administration and, where they exist, they are primarily process evaluations.
- Formal mechanisms to facilitate feedback from ongoing programmes and policies are absent.
- There is little communication about the public sector innovation results, limiting the visibility of innovative efforts.

Comparing approaches and objectives for measurement of public sector innovation internationally

Public sector innovation measurement activities have been conducted in different countries, using different methods, and for different purposes (Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[3]). We can identify four broad categories of purpose around which activities are typically focused (recognising that some activities address more than one objective): (1) monitoring and evaluating the implementation of strategies, plans, and major programmes; (2) measuring the inputs and outputs of public sector innovation; (3) evaluating the impact of specific innovations; (4) raising awareness. Each of these is described below alongside international examples.

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of strategies, action plans, and major programmes.

Monitoring and evaluation of strategies, plans, and major programmes is a critical element of good governance, helping to support decision-making processes and promote public accountability (OECD, n.d.^[6]; OECD, 2020^[1]). In public sector innovation contexts, organisations providing support and coordination for innovation can play an important role to monitor progress towards specified goals or objectives across line ministries and government agencies (OECD, 2017^[6]). This can include the development of indicators, providing regular reporting to track progress, and addressing blockages to plans.

In the context of an Action Plan or strategy, the coordinating monitoring and evaluation role can combine efforts to track ‘action indicators’ (whether activities in a plan or strategy have been delivered by the relevant agency responsible for delivery) and other indicators aiming to monitor whether activities are leading to the wider changes they are designed to affect. For example, Latvia’s [Public Administration Modernisation Plan 2023 – 2027](#) has a monitoring and evaluation plan which combines monitoring at the activity level (action indicators) alongside additional performance indicators (see Box 1) (Cabinet of Ministers, 2023^[8]).

Box 1. Monitoring and evaluation of Latvia’s Public Administration Modernisation Plan 2023 - 2027

Latvia’s Public Administration Modernisation Plan for 2023-2027 defines priority areas for government improvement, including digital transformation, human resource development, innovation, sector policies, efficiency of internal processes and compliance with regulations. Monitoring and evaluation of

the Modernisation plan is coordinated by the State Chancellery and involves monitoring of indicators at two different levels.

At the activity level, the monitoring plan for the Modernisation Plan requires institutions involved in the implementation of the Plan to submit progress statements annually to the State Chancellery. This provides the State Chancellery with information required to assess whether actions have been implemented as intended.

In addition, the Plan puts forward three main performance indicators. Performance indicators are designed to monitor changes that the actions of the strategy as a whole are designed to bring about. Each of these indicators has a baseline measurement and a target measurement:

- The level of trust of citizens in the public administration reaches 50% in 2027 (from baseline of 34%).
- The satisfaction with the public administration reaches 50% (from baseline of 41.5%).
- The executive capacity in the Bertelsman Foundation's Sustainable Management Index reaches 8 points (from baseline of 7.5 points).

In addition to the three main performance indicators, there are six complementary performance indicators, one for each line of action in the strategy. For the action line related to innovation, the target indicator is that 70% of public servants have implemented at least one public sector innovation.

Source: (Cabinet of Ministers, 2023^[8])

Measuring the inputs and outputs of public sector innovation

Measurement efforts aim to quantify innovation across a public sector. Attempts to measure public sector innovation have grown more widespread as recognition of the importance of public sector innovation has grown (Kattel et al., 2018^[2]; Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[3]). Measurement activities can be used by governments to guide the design and implementation of strategies and actions to support public sector innovation provide insights into the climate or capacity for innovation in a public sector, and monitor progress over time.

Surveys of public servants are the most frequently applied approach to public sector innovation measurement (Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[3]). However, the absence of a single unified outcome measure for innovation across the public sector makes the task of measuring public sector innovation more difficult (Arundel, Bloch and Ferguson, 2019^[9]). This means the scope of different public sector innovation measurement activities is varied - from attempts to understand the incidence of public sector innovations, characteristics of innovations, indicators of innovation capacity, or public servants' perceptions of the innovation climate across a public sector (Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[3]; Kattel et al., 2018^[2]). Box 2 describes examples of measurement activities in Colombia, Chile, and in countries using adaptations of the 'Innovation Barometer'.

There is an effort to align measurement activities internationally, enabling comparisons and shared insights between countries. For example, the Innovation Barometer was developed by the National Centre for Public-Private Sector Innovation (CO-PI), in association with Statistics Denmark and the University of Aarhus, and adapted versions of this survey tool are now used in multiple countries (Bech et al., 2021^[8]). The OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation convenes a public sector innovation measurement Working Group, which aims to align measurement activities further across countries.

Box 2. Measuring public sector innovation in Colombia, Chile, and Denmark

Colombia's Capacity Index for Public Innovation (ICIP)

The [ICIP](#) was developed as part of Colombia's National Development Plan 2018-2022, which included a workstream promoting public innovation in Colombia. The ICIP is a commitment by the National Planning Department to systematically measure the capacity of Colombian public entities to innovation, with the objective of providing evidence-based information that supports decision-making and policy formation.

The first measurement activity to inform the index was conducted in 2021 across 718 public entities (including national and subnational). It measures indicators related to public sector innovation across four pillars: innovative talent, management and knowledge uptake, collaboration, and regulations and processes.

Chile's Public Innovation Index

The [Public Innovation Index in Chile](#) is developed by the Government Laboratory of Chile, a state agency formed in 2015 to promote public innovation and accelerate transformation of the State, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank.

Information is collected through online surveys carried out annually, and participation has increased over time (from 37 institutions in 2021, to 50 in 2023). The measurement exercise has provided insights into which capacities are most/least developed across the public sector, and highlighted that public servants are the most common source of new innovations.

Applying the 'Innovation Barometer' in Denmark

The Innovation Barometer is a survey tool designed to collect information on the prevalence of innovations in the public sector, as well as information about enablers, barriers and characteristics of innovations. Designed in collaboration between the National Centre for Public-Private Sector Innovation (CO-PI), Statistics Denmark, and the University of Aarhus, the tool is now used in multiple countries – including Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, and Sweden. The [Copenhagen Manual](#), published in 2021, is the result of a collaboration between 20 countries to provide guidance on conducting an Innovation Barometer exercise. In Denmark, the Innovation Barometer is used to survey managers of public sector workplaces – including hospitals, schools, police, as well as the central public administration.

Source: (Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[3])

Evaluating the impact of specific innovations

Dedicated public sector teams and institutions exist globally to support the evaluation of specific innovations and policies, as well as the embedding of evaluation practices into more formal and systematic approaches across government (OECD, 2020^[1]; Lázaro, 2015^[9]). The purpose of their activities is to provide evidence about the potential impact of innovations and policies to inform decisions about their implementation, resourcing, or scaling.

Across OECD countries, the centre of government is the main actor that provides strategic direction for policy evaluation (OECD, 2020^[1]). For example, the [UK's Evaluation Taskforce](#) is a joint Cabinet Office and Treasury unit founded in 2020 with a mission to drive continuous improvements in the way government programmes are evaluated in order to inform decisions on whether they should be continued, expanded,

modified, or stopped (Evaluation Task Force, n.d.^[10]). This includes advice and support to government departments on designing and delivering robust, impact evaluation.

In some countries, dedicated publicly funded institutions with varying degrees of independence from government exist to support evaluation and curation of evidence to guide decision-making about innovative approaches. For example, in the United States the [What Works Clearinghouse](#) was founded in 2002 via an investment from the U.S. Department of Education (Institute of Education Sciences, n.d.^[11]). It has a mandate to research education innovations and interventions, determine which studies meet rigorous standards, and summarise findings to inform decisions in the education system. Similarly, the UK's [Education Endowment Foundation](#) is an independent charity founded via a £125 million founding grant from the UK's Department for Education with a mission to summarise, generate and disseminate evidence about approaches to supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Department for Education, 2011^[12]).

Raising awareness

Many measurement activities serve a dual function to raise awareness about public sector innovation by signalling priorities, providing examples, or contributing to an authorising environment where innovative ways of working are endorsed by senior leaders (Das-Doyle et al., 2023^[5]). For example, in Chile, coordinators of the [Public Innovation Index](#) meet with decision-makers to deliver the results and support establishing an action plan for participating institutions. This is supported by a yearly programme to reinforce the 10 capacities identified within the index.

III. Enhancing the monitoring and evaluation approach of public sector innovation in Bulgaria

The variety of approaches to monitoring and evaluation of public sector innovation internationally highlights the importance developing an approach in Bulgaria centred around clear objectives. We can identify three priority objectives for monitoring, evaluation, and measurement of public sector innovation in Bulgaria:

- Priority 1 (short-term priority): Develop a monitoring and evaluation function for the implementation of the public sector innovation Action Plan in 2025.
- Priority 2: Move towards increased international alignment and comparability tracking of public sector innovation capacity over time, building on the 2024 baseline.
- Priority 3: Building capacity to evaluate selected innovation initiatives to inform strategic decision-making, programme design, and resource allocation.

Priority 1: Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the implementation of the public sector innovation Action Plan in 2025.

The short-term priority is to enable high-quality monitoring and evaluation of the proposed public sector innovation Action Plan. This approach should be anchored by a logical framework – the theory of change.

A theory of change is a logical framework that describes how individual actions contribute and combine in order to achieve a desired long-term goal or vision (Monitoring and Evaluation News, n.d.^[6]; Better Evaluation, n.d.^[7]). A theory of change follows cascading logic: the team implementing the Action Plan undertake concrete actions (**actions**), these are intended to support changes in knowledge, behaviour, rules and regulations in Bulgaria (**outputs**). In turn, these outputs contribute to changes in operating practice across the public sector (**outcomes**). These contribute to the desired impact (**impact**), which is the highest level change the Action Plan seeks to influence.

The Action Plan for public sector innovation in Bulgaria is built around three pillars of actions: Strategic Steering, Designed for Change, and Skills and People. These represent core areas where targeted actions

are necessary to enhance the Administration's innovation capacity. Figure 1 represents the theory of change for Bulgaria's public sector innovation Action Plan.

Figure 1. Bulgaria's Public Sector Innovation Theory of Change

Three pillars of action contribute and combine to achieve impact.

Pillars	Actions	Outputs	Outcome	Impact
1. 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.
2. 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		
3. Skills and people	5. Build up innovation skills at all levels 6. Develop a culture of innovation and collaboration that give 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

Monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan should be coordinated by CoMA, as indicated by the dedicated action 2.1 in the Action Plan: "Develop CoMA's role in aligned PSI efforts with government priorities, steering, coordinated and monitoring cross-government innovation efforts." To effectively monitor the efforts in the Action Plan, reporting is required at three distinct levels, in line with the theory of change: action indicators, output indicators and outcome indicators.

Action Indicators

Action indicators are the lowest form of monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan and indicate to extent to which an Action has been delivered. Action indicators should be well designed, meaning they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound. Action indicators should be under the direct control of the agencies responsible for delivery, without the requirement for substantial inputs or permissions from other agencies.

Recommendation: Responsible parties for dedicated activities in the Action Plan should report progress on action indicators annually to CoMA. This should be provided via written updates using a standard template provided by CoMA. This activity should be accompanied by monitoring and review meetings as appropriate, providing regular information to ensure and support effective deliver of actions.

Output Indicators

Output indicators enable monitoring of the changes which actions are intended to cause (e.g. "More public servants have the skills and capacity to innovate"). It is important to monitor output indicators to understand if the actions are causing the desired changes described within the Action Plan's theory of change. Outputs are not always directly under the control of any agencies involved in the delivery of the strategy.

The Action Plan includes actions which are design to lead to changes in individual behaviours and knowledge. These changes are typically difficult to observe directly or would require an intensive data collection exercise. This means that output indicators can be proxies for the changes that the actions of the Action Plan are designed to cause. For example, "the # of public servants who attended training related

to public sector innovation” measures the breadth of engagement across the Administration with the topic and is a proxy for “more public servants at all levels have the skills and capacity to innovate”.

Table 1 describes output indicators for each of the three pillars of the strategy. The primary data collection instrument proposed for monitoring these indicators is a convenience survey of public sector organisations participating in the cross-government working group responsible for coordinating the implementation of public sector innovation (proposed in Measure 1.3 of the Action Plan). Although this data collection tool has limitations for observing innovation across the public sector (as not all agencies participate in the public sector innovation network) it is recommended as a practical approach which allows information to be collected regularly with limited additional burden from members of the innovation network. Data on output indicators should be displayed on the CoMA monitoring dashboard (proposed in Measure 2.2 of the Action Plan). Administrative data from the Institute of Public Administration is proposed as a data source to capture the number of public servants attending training related to public sector innovation.

In addition, the OECD Innovative Capacity Survey is proposed as an instrument to capture information for two output indicators. Recognising that this instrument is more resource and time intensive to administer, it is suggested that this data collection is run every three years, in order to coincide with data collection required to monitoring outcome indicators (see ‘Outcome Indicators’ section below).

Recommendation: CoMA should monitor and report progress annually on output indicators described in Table 1 using a convenience survey of public sector organisations participating in the cross-government working group responsible for coordinating the implementation of public sector innovation and administrative data (See Annex 1 for a draft survey).

Table 1. Output Indicators

Pillar	Output	Indicator	Data collection instrument	2024 Baseline	Frequency of data collection
Strategic Steering	More (specific targets to be agreed after baseline established) PSI initiatives support the Administration's priorities and public trust.	# of PSI initiatives associated with each area of Bulgaria's National Development Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This indicator will provide information about the number of PSI initiatives. 	Convenience survey of working group member organisations	N/A (new measure)	Annually
		% of PSI initiatives surfaced associated with each area of Bulgaria's National Development Plan.	OECD Innovative Capacity Survey	N/A (new measure)	2025/2026
Designed for Change	More (specific targets to be agreed after baseline established) incremental innovations and transformative innovations ³ .	# of PSI initiatives categorised as 'incremental'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This indicator will provide information about the characteristics of innovations. 	Convenience survey of working group member organisations	N/A (new measure)	Annually
		# of PSI initiatives categorised as 'transformative'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This indicator will provide information about the characteristics of innovations. 	Convenience survey of working group member organisations	N/A (new measure)	Annually

³ Incremental innovation: Gradual improvements to existing systems, processes, policies, and services. Example: Digitalising tax collection systems. Transformative innovation: A fundamental change that substantially reshapes structures, processes, or systems, creating new ways of addressing challenges or delivering value. Example: Introducing a nationwide digital identity system enabling seamless access to government services (OECD, 2022^[22]).

Skills and People	More (specific targets to be agreed after baseline established) public servants at all levels have the skills and capacity to innovate.	# public servants attended training related to public sector innovation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This indicator will provide information about the take-up of training and capacity building activities. 	Administrative data from Institute of Public Administration	N/A (new measure)	Annually
		# of PSI initiatives using a defined innovation method. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This indicator will provide information on innovation methods (such as user-centred design, data science, innovative finance, innovation partnerships, etc.). 	Convenience survey of working group member organisations	N/A (new measure)	Annually
Cross-cutting		Share of public servants involved in an innovation	OECD Innovative Capacity Survey	53%	2025/2026

Source: OECD

Outcome indicators

Outcomes are the system-wide changes across the Bulgarian Administration which increase public sector innovation capacity. As described in the 'Theory of Change', all the activities of the Action Plan are designed to combine to achieve these outcomes. The outcome of the Action Plan is 'Innovative capacity increases in the State Administration'. The OECD's Innovative Capacity Framework recognises that there are many factors influencing overall innovative capacity (Kaur et al., 2022^[14]). Therefore, three cross-cutting outcome indicators are proposed: improved innovation climate; confidence in national government; and a skilled public service.

Table 2 describes the outcome indicators proposed. Three data collection instruments are proposed to collect information about outcome indicators:

1. **OECD Innovative Capacity Survey:** This multi-level survey is conducted by the OECD to understand the innovation capacity of a country's public sector. It collects information from individual public servants, heads of organisations, and a country representative. By carrying out a new assessment in 2025/2026, the Administration will be able to compare public sector innovation capacity indicators over time, using the OECD 2024 assessment as a baseline.
2. **EU/OECD Employee Survey of Central Government Public Servants:** This survey is the first wave of a standardised employee survey for central administration, allowing countries to collect perception data at organisational and country-level, and permitting international comparison. The questionnaire has been designed by the project Advisory Group to assess the drivers of employee engagement, wellbeing, as well as team and organisational performance, by exploring relationships between these outcomes and constructs such as working conditions, leadership quality, job autonomy, learning and development opportunities, perceived innovation climate, the use of technology, trust and more. Currently 8 countries are taking part (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, the Netherlands), with observer countries providing employee engagement data (Denmark, Norway and United Kingdom) for a broader sample. By using this survey, the Administration will be able to compare indicators of employee perception of innovation climate over time.
3. **OECD Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions Survey:** This cross-national survey is conducted by the OECD on public trust in government and public institutions, representing over 50,000 responses across 22 OECD countries. By joining this cross-country study, the Administration will be able to monitor public trust in the national government and civil service over time, recognising

that 'improved public trust in government' is one of the desired impacts of the Action Plan stated in the theory of change (OECD, 2024^[17]).

CoMA should monitor and report progress annually on Output Indicators described in Box 2 using the OECD Innovative Capacity Individual-level Survey and the OECD/EU Employment Survey of innovation climate.

Table 2. Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Data collection instrument	Baseline	Frequency of Data Collection
Improved innovative capacity	Innovation capacity	OECD Innovative Capacity Survey	Emerging (1.7)	2025/2026
Improved innovation climate	Innovation climate indicator	OECD/EU Employment Survey	Forthcoming	2027
Trusted government	Trust in national government and civil service	OECD Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions Survey	19% National Government (2022) - Gallup World Poll	Biannually

Source: OECD

Priority 2: Move towards increased international alignment and comparability.

The development of output and outcome indicators also supports the tracking of changes in public sector innovation capacity as a whole in Bulgaria. The Administration should ensure that such efforts are carried out in collaboration with relevant public sector innovation measurement efforts internationally and ongoing efforts, facilitated by the OECD, to move towards greater alignment and comparability between public sector innovation measures.

As described in Section '*Comparing approaches and objectives for measurement of public sector innovation internationally*', there many challenges for aligning public sector innovation efforts. However, two concrete steps should be taken by the Administration: (1) ensure that data collection instruments used to monitor public sector innovation in Bulgaria are based on validated instruments used by other countries; (2) opportunities to align Bulgaria's ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and measurement work with international practices, and to learn from experiences of other countries' efforts to measure public sector innovation.

Recommendation: Ensure that data collection instruments used are validated and used by other countries. The proposed monitoring and evaluation plan for the Action Plan (see Priority 1) describes three data collection instruments.

1. The OECD Innovative Capacity Individual-Level Survey: This survey is used by the OECD to carry out country assessments of innovative capacity. The Administration in Bulgaria may wish to collaborate with the OECD to carry out another full assessment of innovative capacity in the future to track results over time, or to administer an adapted shorter version of the survey (recognising which questions are essential for reporting on outputs and outcomes). Whatever the approach to implementation, questions should remain the same to ensure comparability between years, and comparability between other countries using the same survey instrument.
2. EU/OECD Employee Survey of Central Government Public Servants: Opportunities for ongoing use of this survey tool would enable continued benchmarking and cross-country comparisons.
3. The convenience survey of innovation working group organisations: This survey should be designed using questions from the OECD Innovation Capacity Organisational-Level Survey (which already draws some questions from the Innovation Barometer and Copenhagen Manual), with additional questions included to ensure tracking of output indicators described above.

Recommendation: Exploit opportunities to align measurement work with monitoring and evaluation international practices, for example through participation in the OECD Working Group on Public Sector Innovation Measurement. Close working with ongoing efforts to align measurement efforts internationally will enable the Administration to:

- Benefit from lessons learned by other countries in public sector innovation measurement efforts through sharing of practices.
- Enable greater comparability of public sector innovation efforts in Bulgaria with peer countries.

Priority 3: Building capacity to evaluate selected innovation initiatives to inform strategic decision-making, programme design, and resource allocation.

Increased capacity to evaluate specific innovations and programmes can further support evidence-based decision making and prioritisation of resources. Evidence from evaluations can help to inform decisions about implementation, adaptation, resourcing, or scaling of innovations and programmes. Recognising that the CoMA does not have responsibilities for developing an evaluation function in the centre of government, two smaller steps are proposed which could support greater capacity for evaluation over time.

Recommendation: Develop relevant criteria to enable decision-making on which innovations or programmes would benefit most from dedicated evaluation.

CoMA should develop specific criteria to inform decisions about which innovations and programmes are most suitable for external evaluation. For example, criteria may consider:

- ‘Resource implications’: innovations and programmes which would require significant investment of resources to scale are likely to require more evidence to secure investment.
- ‘Potential disruption’: innovations and programmes which would require significant disruption to existing processes and policies to implement at scale are likely to require more evidence to secure investment.
- ‘Risk of harm or disadvantage’: innovations and programmes which have higher potential to impact negatively (for example, they may disproportionately affect vulnerable or disadvantaged populations) are likely to require more evidence to mitigate potential risks of harm.

Recommendation: Build capacity and ring-fence funding to commission external evaluations of selected innovations and programmes.

Commissioned external specialists can be used to provide independent evaluation of selected innovations and programmes. CoMA should develop internal capacity to define technical requirements for external specialists. This will enable the Administration to commission evaluations as required with a high degree of flexibility.

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Annex 1. Draft Survey - Convenience survey of working group member organisations to assess public sector innovation output indicators.

This survey is to be completed by a representative from the ministries and agencies participating in the Working Group on Public Sector Innovation under the Council for Administrative Reform.

This survey aims to monitor the outputs indicators defined for the Sub priority Public Sector Innovation, part of the Priority 10 – Institutional Framework from the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030. Please feel free to include supporting material.

To review the survey beforehand, please click here [insert link] to access a PDF version. For support, or if you have any questions while completing the questionnaire, please contact [contact]

The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Section A: Your Organisation

A1. What is the name of your organisation? *

[List of organisations]

A2. What is your name? *

A3. What is your role in the organisation? *

A4. What is your email? *

Section B: Innovation in your organisation

B1. Is your organisation part of the Working Group on Public Sector Innovation under the Council for Administrative Reform? * [Single-select]

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

B2. Is your organisation responsible for any specific measure of the action plan related to the Priority 10 Institutional Framework – Sub priority Public Sector Innovation from the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030? * [Single-select]

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

B3. How many innovative projects has your organisation undertaken in the last year? * [Open answer]

A public sector innovation' is something novel to your organisation, implemented and impacting public value (efficiency, effectiveness, quality, etc.). Public sector innovation can include service, product, process, organisation, communication, and policies.

[Number field]

Section C: Innovative Project 1 [Repeat this section for every innovation project]

C1. (If >0 in B1)

Has this contributed to the National Development Programme “Bulgaria 2030”? Please select all the priorities from the National Development Programme impacted by this project. * [Multi-select]

- ☐ Priority 1: Description
- ☐ Priority 2: Description
- ☐ [...]
- ☐ None of them

C2. How would you categorise this innovation project? Please select one of the following options. * [Single-select]

An incremental innovation refers to gradual improvements to existing systems, processes, policies, and services. Example: Digitalising tax collection systems.

A transformative innovation refers to a fundamental change that substantially reshapes structures, processes, or systems, creating new ways of addressing challenges or delivering value. Example: Introducing a nationwide digital identity system enabling seamless access to government services

- ☐ Incremental Innovation
- ☐ Transformative Innovation

C3. Please describe the project: what was the problem and solution addressed in this project? Who were the main beneficiaries? What were the main results, and how did they impact the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030? * [Open answer]

[Text field]

C4. Did the project follow any of these stages? Please select all the stages that apply to the development of the project. * [Multiple-select]

- ☐ Understand: Identifying and analysing the root causes of a problem or opportunity.
- ☐ Ideate: Generating co-created and practical ideas to address the identified challenge.
- ☐ Prototype: Developing a tangible or conceptual representation of a proposed solution.
- ☐ Test: Evaluating the prototype to gather feedback and assess feasibility and impact.
- ☐ Pilot: Implementing the solution on a small scale to refine and validate its effectiveness.
- ☐ Scale: Expanding the solution to a broader context for widespread adoption and impact.
- ☐ Implementation: Operationalising the solution fully within the system or organisation.

C5. Please describe the innovation process carried out for this project, referring to the stages and stakeholders involved. * [Open answer]

[Files field]

C6. Please share any relevant documentation or links. [Open answer]

[File and links field]