

The future roles of innovation agencies in the age of grand transformation

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23 October, 2024

The current moment



The evolution of innovation agencies

Technologies / missions

DARPA created to spur breakthrough technologies to ensure national security - a nation state focused mission

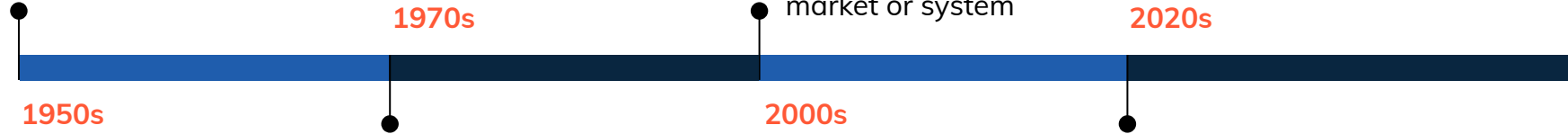


Tekes

Markets / systems

Focused on building innovation capabilities across the ecosystem, and addressing gaps in the market or system

SPRIN-D



Industries / sectors

Focus on the development of competitive advantage and industrial or sectoral capabilities

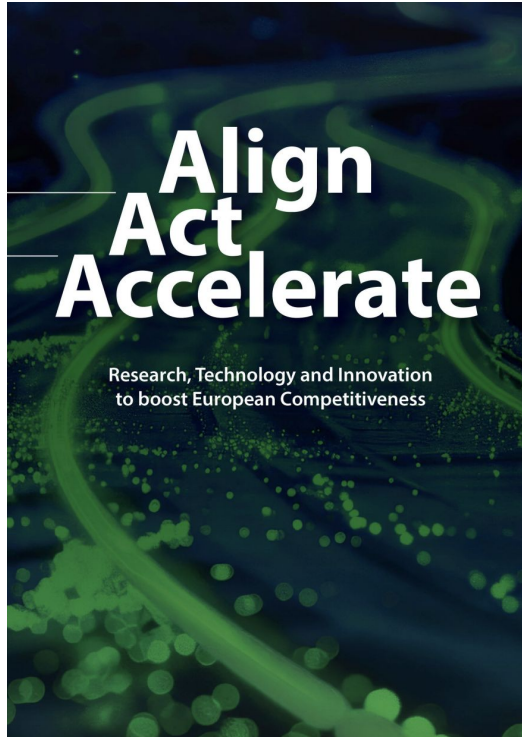
Innovate UK



Societal transformation

Focused on addressing societal challenges, via disruptive or transformative innovation

The transformation of innovation policy



This report highlights “the significant and daunting uncertainties and unique challenges of our time: climate change, war, changing demographics, increasing inequality, pandemics, the erosion of democracy and basic rights, increasing global strategic competition and a constellation of emerging technologies and their interplay with ethics/security/competitiveness, changes in the labour market, fake news and science denial, to name just a few...

“Science, technology and innovation are the critical currency in addressing these challenges.”

What this requires of innovation agencies

A diagram consisting of six circles arranged in two rows. The top row has three circles: blue, yellow, and teal. The bottom row has three circles: red, dark blue, and grey. Each circle contains text. The circles are arranged in a staggered pattern, with the bottom row circles positioned between the top row circles.

Finding the
right niche

Collaborating
across the
ecosystem

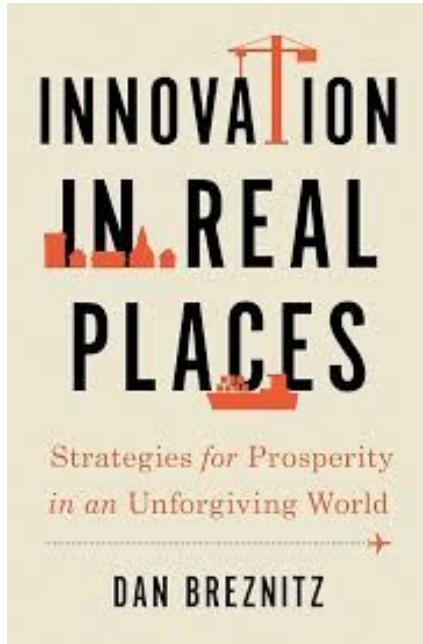
Navigating
tradeoffs

Balancing
agility and
stability

Taking an
experimental
approach

Innovating
with methods

Finding the right niche



Industrial and Corporate Change, 2018, Vol. 0, No. 0, 1–14
doi: 10.1093/icc/dty027
Original article

OXFORD

Mission critical: the ends, means, and design of innovation agencies

Dan Breznitz^{1,*}, Darius Ornston² and Steven Samford³

Table 2. Features of innovation agencies

Model	Organizational features	Examples
Productivity facilitator	Locus of R&D: Private Position in public sector: Peripheral Relation to established industry: Embedded	GTS institutes (Denmark) IRAP (Canada)
Directed upgrader	Locus of R&D: Public Position in public sector: Core Relation to established industry: Embedded	A*Star (Singapore) CORFO (Chile)
State-led disruptor	Locus of R&D: Public Position in public sector: Peripheral Relation to established industry: Autonomous	ITRI (Taiwan) DARPA (The United States)
Transformation enabler	Locus of R&D: Private Position in public sector: Peripheral Relation to established industry: Autonomous	Sitra (Finland) OCS (Israel)

Determining the most important function(s) that the agency can perform

Balancing agility with stability



Long term programmes with
the ability to pivot and evolve

Freedom to experiment with
minimal oversight

Advanced
Research
+ Invention
Agency

ARIA

Collaborating across the ecosystem



Taking an experimental approach

EXPERIMENTING WITH MISSION-ORIENTED INNOVATION: A SIMPLE, FOUR-STAGES SCHEMA		
STAGE	KEY QUESTIONS	EXPERIMENTATION POTENTIAL
1. Defining missions	<p>Who should define missions, and how?</p> <p>Can the process involve the general public, use the right level of expertise, and avoid capture by vested interest?</p>	<p>Testing different ways to reach out to the general public (eg behavioural 'nudges')</p> <p>Experimenting with different approaches to citizens-experts interaction (eg collective intelligence experiments)</p>
2. Convening communities	<p>Who should be involved, and how can we break down silos so different actors can work together?</p> <p>What incentives should relevant stakeholders have?</p>	<p>Testing different ways to bring together actors to collaborate (eg experiments with incentives, structures, funding)</p> <p>Experiment with cross-entity/cross-sector communication channels</p>
3. Choosing instruments	<p>What policy instruments should be used? (eg direct funding, prizes, competitions, tax credits, regulatory changes, procurement, etc.)</p> <p>Which instrument is needed for each goal?</p>	<p>Testing the mechanisms behind policy instruments.</p> <p>Using an 'experimental mindset' to learn from less tangible policy outcomes.</p>
4. Optimising processes	<p>How can each project within a mission best achieve its goal?</p> <p>What tweaks could be applied to improve the project?</p>	<p>Experiment with how funding decisions are made (eg what selection mechanisms reward novel or disruptive proposals?)</p>

Navigating tradeoffs

TAKE THE BUS

Taking an Uber is worse for the climate than driving in your own car

Ridesharing apps lead to higher greenhouse gas emissions than private cars.

Image: REUTERS/Donato Ruane/Tia Photo

By **Tim McDonnell** | Published September 23, 2021

THE CONVERSATION

Culture Economics Education Environment International Politics Social Science Podcasts En español

The carbon footprint of Airbnb is likely bigger than you think

Published 11 sept 2021, 01:48:00 UTC

In its 13 years of existence, Airbnb has grown from a minnow to a whale in holiday accommodation. Today, it offers more than 2.6 million active listings across 220 countries and regions. In Australia, Airbnb lists 316,331 properties — that's 4% of Australia's

Shingy Chang
Senior Director, Global Management and Marketing, South America

Nathan Resnick · Following
Founder at Sourcity | YC W18 | Helping Companies Manufacture Millions of ...
6d · 🌐

If I look at some of the biggest startup IPO losers, the vast majority of them didn't create a net positive for the world.

...see more

👍👎🗨️ You and 33,542 others 1,480 comments · 1,217 reposts

Ensuring that innovation helps rather than harms - driving inclusive innovation

Innovating with methods



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Bringing new capabilities
into the organisation

🌟 Hiring: Senior Innovation Designer (Freelance)

The [Netherlands Enterprise Agency](#) 's central innovation team, iNova, is growing and we're on the lookout for a Dutch-speaking Senior Innovation Designer (freelance, 32-36 hours per week, at least 6 months). This role offers a unique opportunity to drive innovation that benefits the internal organization, our clients, and promotes positive change in the Netherlands and beyond.

Your Role:

- ▶ **Accelerate innovation initiatives:** Spearhead projects that push the boundaries from sustainable agriculture to cutting-edge AI technologies.
- 🏠 **Enhance innovation accounting/governance:** Play a pivotal role in refining our framework to measure and govern innovation impact effectively.

About RVO & iNova:

At RVO, we're dedicated to facilitating sustainable growth and innovation across the Netherlands, focusing on critical transitions like climate, energy and digital economy. iNova is at the forefront of professionalizing and catalyzing innovation within RVO.

🔍 We're Seeking:

- An innovator with proven experience (5+ years) in using innovation frameworks to create outcomes.
- A project leader who can engage with a broad spectrum of colleagues and stakeholders across our large organization.
- Someone with expertise in Innovation Accounting.

Innovating with methods

Navigating the data landscape: Insights from the EIC Benchmarking Study

By Sara García Arteagoitia and David Ampudia on Friday, 15 December 2023.



Harnessing and making better use of the data that agencies capture and hold

In the dynamic world of innovation funding, [the strategic use of data is becoming indispensable](#). Recognising this, the European Innovation Council (EIC), in partnership with the Innovation Growth Lab (IGL), has embarked on an ambitious benchmarking study [as part of a bigger project](#). The goal is to explore how innovation agencies across Europe are leveraging data to drive decision-making and strategic operations in order to improve the EIC's standing in this context through the best available practices and peer learning exchanges.

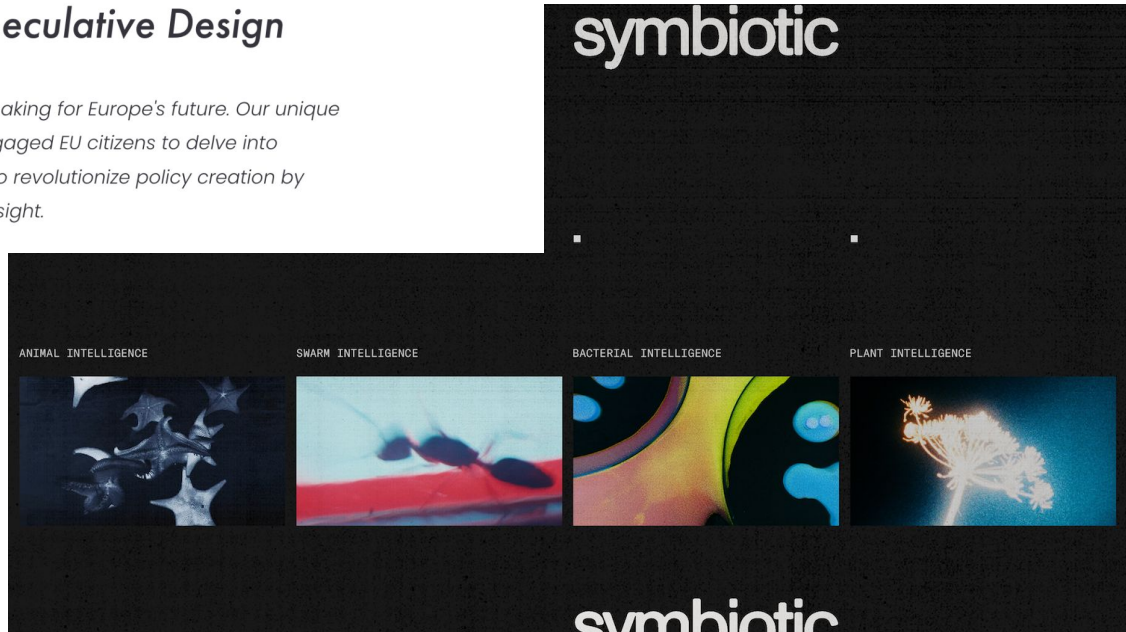
Innovating with methods

Futures Garden - Blooming Seeds

Pioneering Policy Innovation through Speculative Design

At Futures Garden, we embark on a visionary journey to redefine policy-making for Europe's future. Our unique platform collaborates with leading futurists, innovative designers, and engaged EU citizens to delve into emerging trends and issues crucial for Europe's tomorrow. Our mission? To revolutionize policy creation by intertwining speculative design with creativity, empathy, and analytical insight.

‘Learning from the future’, as well as the past



Dig deeper

Nesta...

HOW INNOVATION AGENCIES WORK:

International lessons to inspire and inform national strategies

Alex Glennie and Kristian Busch
MAY 2016

nesta

Agents of Change

Making innovation agencies as innovative as those they support

Alex Glennie
August 2018

1. The changing role of innovation agencies

In chemistry, a catalyst is a substance that speeds up a reaction without being consumed or changed itself by the process. It typically does this by reducing the energy needed to activate a reaction, or by changing the way a reaction works.

National innovation agencies – defined broadly as government-funded or managed bodies that exist to stimulate innovation-based entrepreneurship and growth, via other financial or cultural means – are the catalysts in this process. They are the primary responsibility of national governments to provide financial support to businesses and startups, to create an environment where the most significant innovations can be developed and scaled. They can also change the way that innovation works – for example, by helping firms to develop the skills and capabilities needed to build and scale businesses.

However, the modeler has some limitations. First, it supports the supporting innovation is also a complex process, where the catalyst or agent itself will need to provide the results. The ability to create the most significant innovations is not only a function of the quality of the support provided, but also of the quality of the support provided. The quality of the support provided is a function of the quality of the support provided. The quality of the support provided is a function of the quality of the support provided.

INNOVATION AGENCIES AS CATALYSTS OF CHANGE

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN INNOVATORS

Taftie taskforce on the 'soft power' of innovation agencies
Final report
June 2018

Taftie IGL nesta

A Comparison of the Characteristics of TAFTIE and RELAI Innovation Agencies

Alex Glennie
Nyamapa Zolho
Hugo Castro

IGL Taftie RELAI IDB

Taftie Presidency 2023 RECONSIDERING THE ROLE OF INNOVATION AGENCIES AND MUTUAL LEARNING

Taftie

INNOVATION AGENCIES

CASES FROM DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

Alex Glennie and Kristian Busch

WORLD BANK GROUP

Past, present and future of innovation agencies in Europe

Rainer Kattel
Deputy Director and Professor of Innovation and Public Governance
UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose
WORLD BANK GROUP

About the Innovation Growth Lab

IGL is a global policy lab that aims to increase the impact of innovation and productivity policies through novel ideas, experimentation, data and evidence.

To do this, we bring together policymakers, researchers, practitioners and funders to address key policy challenges in the fields of **science, innovation, entrepreneurship and business** in order to contribute to more productive, inclusive and sustainable economies.

To advance our mission, IGL brings together a network of leading government bodies and foundations who share our vision - the **IGL Partners**. This includes innovation agencies from a number of OECD countries.





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