EFFICIENCY UNIT
VISION AND MISSION

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To be the preferred consulting partner for all government bureaux and departments and to advance the delivery of world-class public services to the people of Hong Kong.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide strategic and implementable solutions to all our clients as they seek to deliver people-based government services. We do this by combining our extensive understanding of policies, our specialised knowledge and our broad contacts and linkages throughout the Government and the private sector. In doing this, we join our clients in contributing to the advancement of the community while also providing a fulfilling career for all members of our team.

This brief was researched and authored by the Research Division, Institute of Public Administration, Ireland (www.ipa.ie/research). The Research Division provides applied research services for policy makers in a wide range of public service organisations, drawing on an extensive network of contacts and experience gained over more than thirty years.

OTHER EFFICIENCY UNIT DOCUMENTS

The Efficiency Unit has produced a number of guides on good practice on a wide range of areas, including outsourcing and contract management. These may be found on the Efficiency Unit website at www.eu.gov.hk.
Foreword

In the past when societal problems were less complex and speed of information flows less fast, governments worldwide could survive by pigeon-holing problems. This no longer works in the modern society. Efforts to address complex problems such as waste management, the family, drug abuse and public health, etc. can no longer be contained within departmental boundaries. Fragmented and uncoordinated handling of public issues often attracts more criticisms than the issue itself. Many public sectors in developed economies are consequently embarking on a ‘joined-up’ government drive.

Opinion surveys on public services consistently point out that the Government scores relatively less well in its ‘responsiveness’. This suggests that our citizens are becoming increasingly demanding. More and more, the public is aware of the service delivery provided by the private sector and expects the public service to match the efficiency, coordination and convenience offered by the best in the private business world.

The Hong Kong Administration does, from time to time, reorganise its structure so that this more closely matches the needs, priorities and expectations of the community. But despite such positive moves, there will always be issues that fall within the purview of multiple bureaux, departments, non-government organisations and private sector service providers.

Addressing these cross-cutting challenges is rarely easy. Greater use of e-technology is one means of dealing with the problems, but it is far from the only approach that is needed. It is a tall order to expect our frontline staff to act in a joined-up manner if there is no display of commitment from the top. Experience shows that breaking of silos is the most difficult change management agenda of all. This, however, will be the ultimate test of government efficiency as well as public trust.

This report explains what is meant by joined-up government, and highlights some of the successful – and unsuccessful – approaches that have been adopted by other governments. We hope that it will provide some inspiring food for thought.

Head, Efficiency Unit
April 2009
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WHY JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT?

Public administration involves dealing with a myriad of tasks. Some of these tasks are straightforward and easily attended to, while others are more complex or ‘cross-cutting’. These latter issues pose implementation challenges for the ‘top-down’, hierarchical arrangement of government. Such challenges are not always appreciated by the public, who are accustomed to instant customer-centred services provided by the private sector. The rising expectations of citizens mean that fragmented structures for public service delivery are not tolerable. In response, new methods and forms of organisation and action have been developed in order for this fragmentation to be successfully addressed, and also to allow governments to transcend traditional ‘silos’ as they tackle persistent and emerging challenges. One term that has come into common usage to capture this development is joined-up government.

As with many such terms, however, joined-up government denotes a wide range of activities and developments. In general, joined-up initiatives seek to enhance coordination and integration within public sectors that have become too disjointed. They also seek to align incentives, structures and cultures of authority in order to fit critical tasks that cross organisational boundaries. E-government initiatives have become one of the more common means of joining up public services, but as this report demonstrates, effective joined-up government requires more than just e-services. Furthermore, joined-up government is not the preserve of the state apparatus alone, and governments frequently engage in new forms of collaboration with non-government or civil society organisations in a bid to achieve a joined-up approach.

FOCUS AND BENEFITS OF JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT

The focus of joined-up government can vary considerably. For example, it may refer to the organisational level (inter-departmental, or national-local); to a particular social group (pensioners, immigrants); to a policy issue/sector (transport, education); to a geographical area (neighbourhood, county); or to mode of service delivery (one-stop-shop, e-government portal). Based on these interpretations, we can therefore say that joined-up government is those policies and practices which overcome traditional boundaries in order to improve services to particular social or population groups, and which enhance government and sectoral coherence.

Some of the perceived benefits of joined-up government include:

- Improving outcomes for a particular group or location
- Addressing complex social or economic issues
- Exploiting economies of scale
- Improving service delivery by delivering services through alternative means
- Promoting thinking about new ways of doing things by bringing together people from a range of backgrounds and perspectives
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• Helping public servants work more effectively together
• Improving public servants’ experience of problem solving.

JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

It was the New Labour Government who, on entering office in Britain in 1997, coined the term joined-up government to capture its intent for public sector reform. Key features of the British initiative have included: new structures such as cross-departmental policy development and delivery units within the Cabinet Office, research into how the civil service could better manage cross-cutting issues, and the allocation of cross-cutting portfolios to ministers. Mirroring developments in Britain, similar schemes designed to achieve greater joined-up government have been undertaken in other states.

In New Zealand, the government’s 2001 Review of the Centre report found that there was a need for greater focus on outcomes; greater citizen and community involvement in the policy process; and more emphasis on public service culture and leadership. In response, circuit-breaker teams were created to tackle apparently intractable problems, and a greater emphasis was placed on better integration of policy and operational issues. Also, standardised governance arrangements for public service agencies were introduced.

In Canada, considerable emphasis was placed on e-government, as evidenced by the Government On-Line initiative. Running parallel to the e-government programme was a related initiative known as Modernizing Services for Canadians (MSC) which sought to create a new foundation for delivering citizen-centred services by electronic means. Following the MSC initiative, Service Canada was officially launched in 2005 which seeks to improve the interface between the federal government and the public through more integrated and innovative service offerings. Similar initiatives have taken place at the provincial or state level.

In Australia, a number of one-stop-shops were created at both federal and state level to provide easier citizen access to services. This was supported by the government identifying whole-of-government priorities and policies and developing guidelines for working across boundaries in government. Also, initiatives to develop integrated and coordinated responses to particular issues were created, as well as guidelines for public servants engaged in projects involving different public service agencies.

In Finland, new structural arrangements have been employed at the most senior political level to achieve more joined-up government. The Finnish government identifies and agrees annually a small number of priority areas which require a horizontal or cross-ministerial approach. Each horizontal programme area has a responsible minister who coordinates a group of relevant ministers while a programme director manages a network of civil servants from these ministries. This approach also requires matching the horizontal programmes
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

with the budgetary process and establishing relevant indicators of success.

In Ireland, in response to increased public service fragmentation, the government commissioned the OECD to prepare a report that would benchmark its public service and make recommendations as to the future direction of public service reform. The final report – Ireland: Towards an Integrated Public Service – was published in 2008 and identifies a number of challenges facing the service. For each of these, a number of recommendations are identified to promote greater integration across the public service, including the creation of a Senior Executive Service. In response, the Irish government established a task force to identify the best means of implementing the recommendations of the OECD report and achieve improvements across government, including better coordination and integration of service providers and the development of a whole-of-government ethos.

In Singapore, a government reform programme known as PS21 – Public Service for the 21st Century – has been in progress for over a decade. As part of this programme, since 2000 a number of successive e-government action plans have provided the basis of greater service integration and accessibility. Through its use of standards-based infrastructure, application services and supporting processes and procedures, Singapore has emerged as one of the world leaders in e-services. The slogan ‘many agencies, one government’ has captured the nature of these reforms, and cross-agency project teams are now commonly used to tackle inter-agency matters.

JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT: MAKING IT WORK

Joined-up government should not be a one-off event but an ongoing series of interactions. In order to achieve this, it is common to create new structures and processes to oversee and account for the delivery of outcomes. In those states where joined-up government initiatives have been introduced, such arrangements are developed both at the political level (such as cabinet sub-committees or horizontal ministerial portfolios) and within the administrative system (such as cross-departmental working groups or inter-agency task forces). In some cases, local or bottom-up attempts at achieving joined-up government are more innovative and successful than those at national level and have lessons to offer for any joined-up government initiative.

Changing the culture and mindsets of participants to engage in collaborative working is an issue commonly worked on in successful joined-up government initiatives. It takes energy and leadership to get participants to put common goals first rather than simply taking their own organisational perspective. Reward systems and the use of incentives can be helpful here, as they can be used more generally in encouraging better coordination and cooperation. Joint funding applications, pooled budgets and linking remuneration to joined-up targets are examples of the type of
reward interventions used. Particular posts may also be created which are designed to act as boundary-spanners: linking the work of different organisations which share common goals.

Equally, it must be recognised that there are many examples of failures in joined-up government initiatives, particularly in the area of e-government and the use of IT to integrate services. Some of the most common reasons for such failures include stakeholders holding different views as to how best problems requiring a joined-up approach should be addressed, the creation of unrealistic timeframes for project development and delivery, the existence of many bodies with overlapping functions, and a propensity to group-think leading to adverse outcomes.

**ACHIEVING JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS**

Based on international experiences, a number of common critical success factors towards achieving joined-up government can be identified. These include the identification of clear objectives and political commitment, the existence of viable structures (particularly at lower levels of government), the allocation of an appropriate budget and the alignment of that budget with joined-up goals and clear accountability lines.

As with any successful project, strong leadership and the articulation of a clear common purpose are also strongly correlated with success in joined-up government. Furthermore, for public servants used to working in discrete parts of the public sector, engaging in substantive joined-up government work requires greater emphasis on particular values including collaboration, integration, innovation, risk-taking and flexibility. Organisational flexibility also assists joined-up government as does the ability of staff to think and act across organisational boundaries. A final key ingredient in the pursuit of successful joined-up government is political engagement and commitment.

Barriers to joined-up government include budget protection and the safeguarding by individuals or institutions of their area of influence. Bureaucratic politics can also inhibit joined-up government, as will technical issues (particularly in relation to IT). The non-recognition of other stakeholders’ perspectives is inimical to the development of common goals as is the absence of a culture of support for joined-up activity. There should also be a means to recognise shared outcomes and responsibilities, such as shared performance indicators. Finally, when a joined-up government approach is used to tackle cross-cutting issues, a number of steps to improve the evaluation of the approach can be made. These include the selection of a limited number of topics for evaluation, linking the evaluation to the wider budgetary process, achieving political engagement and oversight, and adequately resourcing such evaluations. These steps will help measure the success or otherwise of the joined-up approach adopted.
1. Why joined-up government?

Public administration involves dealing with a myriad of tasks. Some of these tasks are straightforward and easily attended to, while others are more complex or ‘cross-cutting’. Such issues tend to outstrip conventional patterns of thought and organisation, and require supports that transcend institutionally defined policy fields. Also, as the apparatus of state in developed economies has continued to grow in recent years, it has become common to hear of persistent social and economic problems being blamed on a lack of ‘joined-up policy’ or ‘joined-up thinking’. This has given rise to the familiar theme in much public management literature that the traditional hierarchical ‘command and control’ arrangement of government, while providing for clear lines of delegation and accountability, is insufficient to deal with issues or tasks that do not fit easily within one segment of the state’s governing machinery. Instead, it is proposed that new methods and forms of organisation and action are required in order for these matters to be successfully addressed.

Furthermore, citizen expectations of service quality in the public sector have increased dramatically as a consequence of developments in the private sector, where service quality has improved as the competitive advantage it brings to business is recognised. Public services are expected to be efficient and effective, and citizens are less and less tolerant of having to deal with multiple service providers, excessive paperwork or geographically dispersed government offices in their pursuit of services.

By way of response to these problems, governments across the globe are seeking to create more responsive and flexible administrative systems which transcend traditional structures and ‘silos’, and encourage new behaviours to meet persistent and emerging challenges. Joined-up government is one term that has come into common usage to capture this contemporary approach to governing. As with all such terms, however, joined-up government denotes a wide range of activities and developments. An examination of the term’s origins provides a useful starting point for a more detailed examination.

**ORIGINS OF JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT**

Achieving coherent administration is not a new goal of governments. Traditionally, several methods have been used by states seeking to achieve consistent and well-organised processes of governing. For example, the development of a common identity or culture within the system of public administration led some states to create an elite within their public service who were trained and shared common values and approaches to governing. Other states placed an emphasis on managerial skills and instruments, while others still have relied on structural changes such as mergers and reorganisation within and across the public service. However, achieving excellence in joined-up government has re-emerged in recent years as a central goal of governments internationally.
WHY JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT?

While similar initiatives exist around the world, joined-up government is principally associated as a term coined to describe a key objective of the New Labour government (New Labour) which came to power in Britain in 1997. Writing on the British experience, Ling argues that it is ‘best viewed as a group of responses to the perception that services had become fragmented and that this fragmentation was preventing the achievement of important goals of public policy’ (Ling 2002: 616). He continues, ‘joined-up working aims to coordinate activities across organisational boundaries without removing the boundaries themselves’. Joined-up government was also regarded as a response to the perceived weaknesses of ‘conventional’ public administration.

Also writing on the New Labour initiative, Mulgan proposes that the concern with joined-up government stems primarily from two issues. Firstly, the problem of coordination between public bodies. Secondly, the problem of organisation and integration, i.e. how to align incentives, structures and cultures of authority in order to fit critical tasks that cross boundaries between organisations (Mulgan 2005: 175–6). Significantly, for both Ling and Mulgan, joined-up government does not imply replacing departmental or other organisational structures – rather it seeks to complement and enhance their work.

Enthusiasm for joined-up government is also a reaction to the effects of managerialism in the public sector which has been ongoing since the early 1980s. Inspired by ideas of economic rationalism, New Public Management (NPM) seeks to import market ideas concerning efficiency and effectiveness into the implementation of public policy in order to tackle a perceived lack of performance and weak policy capacity. While NPM has inspired new modes of working within public services, it has also led to claims that the public service has become more institutionally fragmented. Fragmentation has occurred due to devolution, decentralisation, outsourcing, privatisation and even delegation of functions (Pollitt and Talbot, 2004; Verhoest et al 2007: 327). By way of response to this pattern, there is evidence that many states are now moving towards addressing this disaggregation by initiating joined-up (or whole-of-government) approaches in order to rejoin seemingly disparate parts of the public service (Perri 6 et al 2002; Christensen, Amund and Laegrid, 2007).

Other dynamics inspiring the emergence of joined-up government include:

- A public that is unsympathetic to the fragmented nature of government and increasingly expects a range of diverse services to be obtainable at a single point of contact – either physically or via electronic means
- A desire amongst politicians for greater involvement in the service delivery and implementation process
- A perceived decline in common culture or shared values in the public service.
WHY JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT?

As later sections will identify, for many states the pursuit of joined-up government has been spearheaded by innovation in information and communication technology (ICT), and in particular the use of web-based services to allow citizens greater ease of access and flexibility in service delivery. It is common to find e-government strategies being developed across the globe as public administrations seek to maximise the benefits of ICT. It must be noted, however, that while it is an important development in itself, e-government alone is not sufficient for a meaningful system of joined-up government.

OBJECTIVES OF JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT

Governments across the globe are seeking to engage with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in new ways to solve problems. Nambisan proposes that there are four ‘distinct collaborative innovation and problem-solving contexts’ which government agencies are likely to face in the 21st century (Nambisan 2008: 9). These are:

- Government-led collaborative efforts with external partners to solve well-defined problems related to existing services provided by the agency (e.g. developing a new community employment scheme)
- Government-led collaborative efforts to solve emergent or ill-defined problems that complement the agency’s work (e.g. reforming an education system)
- Community-led effort to solve emergent or ill-defined problems that are related to the agency’s services but the solutions to which lie outside of the agency’s control (e.g. disaster management)
- Community-led effort to solve well-defined problems that complement the agency’s work (e.g. developing innovative, citizen-based, crime prevention programmes).

In this context, Nambisan proposes that governments must adopt different roles (Figure 1.1):

- Innovation integrator: bringing together external partners to innovate based on defined innovation architecture, and facilitating the integration of those contributions (see for example Case Study 2.3).
- Innovation seeker: public agencies seek out innovative ideas from a diverse network of citizens, volunteer scientists and researchers, and non-profit organisations for use in new services and programmes (see for example Case Study 2.2).
- Innovation champion: bringing together a relevant set of partners and championing or steering them toward innovative solutions that create significant public good (see for example Case Study 2.1).
- Innovation catalyst: public agencies help define problems and share with the community the information that would be instrumental for solving them (see for example Case Study 3.3).
WHAT JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT?

Figure 1.1 Four roles for the government in collaborative innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NETWORK LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>Government-led (centralised; formal structure/linkages)</th>
<th>Community-led (diffused; informal structure / linkages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Space</td>
<td>Government as Innovation Seeker</td>
<td>Government as Innovation Champion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent (new services/programmes; unstructured problem space)</td>
<td>Government as Innovation Integrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined (existing services/programmes; structured problem space)</td>
<td>Government as Innovation Catalyst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To adopt these roles requires government to engage in new forms of collaboration and joined-up working, both within government and with other NGOs. Of course, joined-up government may seek to resolve a number of problems at once, and as Table 1.1 identifies, there are several different approaches (or levels) to joined-up government, each of which requires different infrastructures to support it.

As demonstrated above, joined-up government has multiple origins and seeks to address many issues. Equally, different understandings of how joined-up government can work in practice exist, ranging from simply coordinating information provision, to inter-agency cooperation in service delivery, or even further to the integration of service by joining service providers in a single building or office. As Table 1.2 identifies, different interpretations can be made of joined-up government according to what the objective or focus of joined-up government is.
WHY JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT?

Table 1.1 Approaches to joined-up government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole-of-government</td>
<td>This approach seeks to join up government agencies at a high level in identifying and pursuing solutions to shared problems. They are characterised by mission and goals statements, and are accompanied by an agreed strategic approach. (See for example Case Studies 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery integration</td>
<td>This approach is characterised by the collection and delivery of services or information relating to one issue or one type of customer. Service-level contracts are often used in this context. (See for example Case Studies 2.3 and 2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme-based integration</td>
<td>Based on a customer-oriented approach, this form of joined-up government seeks to join up the resources of organisations that share similar concerns and multi-faceted problems. (See for example Case Study 2.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.2 Focus of joined-up government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Joined-up Government</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organsational level</td>
<td>Joined-up government may seek to overcome boundaries not only between organisations such as ministries, but also within them. Similarly, it can involve transcending boundaries between levels of government and between the state and civil society or the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social / client group</td>
<td>Joined-up government may seek to focus services around a particular social or client group who require a number of services from different parts of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy issue/sector</td>
<td>Joined-up government can refer to better interconnections between service providers in similar policy sectors, e.g. rail and bus services in the transport sector, training and employment agencies in the education sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Joined-up government can apply to focusing on services in a particular geographical area, such as a socially disadvantaged neighbourhood or a region requiring environmental protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of service delivery</td>
<td>Finally, joined-up government is used to indicate a mode of service delivery whereby the citizen need not be unnecessarily disadvantaged in seeking services due to the fragmented nature of the public service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organisations**
- Intra-departmental, cross-departmental, National-local (See for example Case Study 2.1)
- Pensioners, immigrants, etc. (See for example Case Study 2.2)
- Public transport, education, healthcare (See for example Case Study 2.6)
- Regional/state government, neighbourhood (See for example Case Studies 3.2 and 3.3)
- One-stop-shop, e-government portal, telephone-based information/advice service, etc. (See for example Case Study 2.3)
WHY JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT?

It must also be noted that as the nature and structure of the modern state has evolved, the boundaries between public, private and the ‘third’ (or civil society) sectors have become more fluid. In this regard, and in order to enhance the popular legitimacy and chances of success with policy implementation, governments have developed new means of engaging with stakeholders such as NGOs, business groups and trade unions. In response, governance has rapidly emerged as the term used to describe both the multi-faceted nature and the structure of the modern decision-making process (Rhodes 1997; Pierre and Peters 2000; Kooiman 2003). As a consequence, it is now common for major government initiatives to have elements of partnership between the public and other sectors, and this trend is often referred to as ‘joined-up governance’ (Pollitt 2003). This reflects the idea that many services are no longer delivered by individual public entities but by multiple organisations.

Based on these interpretations, we can therefore say that joined-up government is those policies and practices which overcome traditional boundaries in order to improve services to particular social or population groups, and which enhance government and sectoral coherence.

BENEFITS OF JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT

By offering new means of delivering services, joined-up government has advantages over traditional hierarchical or stove-piped forms of delivery, as Case Study 1.1 illustrates.

CASE STUDY 1.1 BENEFITS OF JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT

A study by the State Government of Queensland, Australia (2004: 11), identified the principal benefits of joined-up government as:

- Improved outcomes for a particular group or location
- Addressing complex social or economic issues by designing integrated programmes which are mutually supportive and focused on achieving a more significant and sustained common goal or outcome
- Exploiting economies of scale, for example: sharing data and information; minimising overlap and duplication of services; pooling resources; and streamlining services
- Improving service delivery by delivering services through alternative means, for example ‘one-stop shops’
- Promoting thinking about new ways of doing things by bringing together people from a range of backgrounds and perspectives
- Helping public servants work more effectively together, gain an understanding of the government’s priorities and their place in delivering on those priorities
- Improving public servants’ experience of problem solving in a broader context and enhancing their networks.

2. Recent international developments

As noted in Section 1, while the term joined-up government is principally associated with the reform agenda of New Labour in Britain, similar schemes have been put in place in many states across the globe. What these programmes have in common is an impetus to encourage and place an increased emphasis on means of collaborating, coordinating and integrating service delivery. In this section, we consider the objectives and form taken by joined-up government initiatives that have occurred in recent years in Britain, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Finland, Ireland and Singapore.

**BRITAIN**

During the 1980s and first half of the 1990s, the British administration became increasingly fragmented as a result of the decoupling of various stages in the policy cycle, but also because of the creation of single-purpose and autonomous executive agencies. Market-based instruments such as privatisation and competitive tendering and contractualisation were used more extensively which led to greater segmentation of the public service. On coming to power in 1997, the New Labour government set out an ambitious plan for public sector reform which sought to reverse this trend. It was to be achieved by pursuing a number of tasks:

- Reforming the way money was allocated, with the use of joined-up delivery budgets
- Reshaping career trajectories, rewarding those who worked across boundaries
- Designing targets that would be shared across agencies
- Tackling culture in organisations to encourage cross-boundary behaviour
- Better information sharing
- Clear leadership and responsibility for joined-up tasks.

(Mulgan 2005: 181)

Political engagement was recognised as being vital in the process so ministers were given horizontal (cross-cutting) as well as vertical (sectoral) responsibilities. A much greater emphasis was placed on consolidation and cross-organisation performance (Verhoest et al 2007: 336). Policy-making units were established to look at problems and offer solutions that would be free of departmental interests, as well as to assist in cross-cutting policy reviews. One such unit, the Performance and Innovation Unit, produced an influential report, *Wiring it up*, which dealt with the question of how the civil service could better manage cross-cutting issues (http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/coiwire.pdf). Its recommendations included stronger leadership from ministers and senior civil servants, flexible use of budgets and greater use of audit and external scrutiny.

In order to provide a central coordinating facility, the power of the prime minister was enhanced through the creation of several coordination and joined-up delivery units within the Cabinet Office (see Case Study 2.1) to pursue implementation of cross-departmental policy. A similar process of consolidation took place at the local level.
CASE STUDY 2.1 AN ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL APPROACH: THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT IN BRITAIN

The Social Exclusion Unit was one of several joined-up delivery units created in 1997 by the New Labour administration which adopted a whole-of-government approach to tackling social exclusion. The task of this Unit was to promote joint action between Whitehall departments by breaking down bureaucratic barriers, therefore working at the most senior organisational level. As well as encouraging joint working, the Unit emphasised working towards the prevention of problems, reintegration into society of those already experiencing social exclusion, achieving minimum standards for everyone, and the use of evidence-based policy-making. The Unit reported directly to the prime minister and was staffed by civil servants from across government departments and secondees from local authorities, voluntary bodies and other key agencies.

The Unit initiated and oversaw a number of schemes to tackle aspects of poverty and marginalisation of social groups. In a review of its work in 2001, the Unit claimed success in reducing teenage pregnancies and rough sleeping; but less success in tackling school truancy. A subsequent report in 2004 found that while progress continued to be made in reducing child poverty, a number of key issues remained which were driving social exclusion: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/breaking_report.pdf.

The Unit increasingly recognised that many of its initiatives were long-term in character and could take over 10 years to yield results. Continued emphasis needed to be placed on cooperation across government. The Unit called for more user involvement in the design and delivery of services, and closer working with voluntary and community groups in order to make services more relevant. The report praised the use of ‘personal advisers’ who helped individuals understand what services and benefits are available and who could negotiate access to a range of options across government agencies. It suggested that this client-centred approach be maintained and the personal advisers develop increased flexibility to meet the complex needs of service users.

To renew efforts to address these deep-seated issues of social exclusion, the Social Exclusion Unit was transformed in 2006 into the Social Exclusion Task Force: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx. The Task Force is guided by five principles: early intervention; systematically identifying what works; personal rights and responsibilities; intolerance of poor performance; and better coordination of the many separate agencies.
The UK National Audit Office’s review of joined-up government services found that the approach also improved cost-effectiveness, through the identification of duplication and the realisation of economies of scale (National Audit Office 2001: 7).

NEW ZEALAND

During the 1980s New Zealand undertook radical and systemic reform of its public sector based around the concept of introducing market-based management practices to its public administration. After a decade of reforms underpinned by legislative changes (and a reduction in the number of public servants), concerns emerged about fragmentation in the public service as well as a weakening of central coordinating mechanisms such as cabinet committees. In response, the government commissioned a report entitled Review of the Centre which was published in 2001. The report found that there was a need for greater focus on outcomes; greater citizen and community involvement in the policy process; and more emphasis on public service culture and leadership (New Zealand State Services Commission 2002; see also Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004: 277–81). It also expressed concern that with over 170 agencies the administrative system had become too fragmented. The report emphasised the need for greater uniformity and cross-unit cooperation. In response to this, the New Zealand government decided in 2003 to embark on a programme to improve coordination within the administrative system (Gregory 2003). One key aspect of the programme was the use of ‘circuit-breaker’ teams to tackle cross-cutting issues – see Case Study 2.2.

In 2005, the State Services Commission introduced Development Goals (http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?DocID=6545) in order to create a system of world-class professional state services serving the government of the day and meeting the needs of New Zealanders. It identified six goals to achieve this aim: employer of choice; excellent state servants; and networked, coordinated, accessible and trusted state services. Several initiatives have since been introduced to improve public service performance at both sector and system levels, including new arrangements to coordinate policy and delivery in some regions. One prominent example of this was the creation of the Government Economic and Urban Development Office, which joined-up the work of the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry for the Environment, and the Departments of Labour and Transport (http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/Page_3421.aspx).
RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

CASE STUDY 2.2 POLICY ISSUES: CIRCUIT-BREAKING TEAMS IN NEW ZEALAND

The Review of the Centre report recommended the creation of ‘circuit-breaker teams’ to tackle apparently intractable problems, e.g. truancy, domestic violence and settling of skilled migrants around the country, by joining-up various service agencies and strategies. It sought to provide programme-based forms of integration for particular client groups. An example was the Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker (FVFCB) project: http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work/preventing-violence/circuit-breaker.html.

The role of this project was to improve coordination and alignment of government funding of family violence prevention services. Its success lay in the sixteen regional circuit-breaker teams which worked with local funding bodies and service providers to identify family violence service gaps and find solutions to funding problems. Through the use of pilot projects, it was discovered that service providers were competing for small amounts of funding from a range of government and non-government sources. Inter-agency arrangements were confused and there was little collaboration and poor communication at both national and regional levels. The circuit-breaker teams solution was to engage in a funding process re-design, and to create a mechanism for accountability whereby funding providers were required to work through collaborative processes and be jointly responsible for the production of a cohesive and financially sustainable community service.

To implement this, the circuit-breaker network worked to reduce the compliance requirements by bringing together the common statutory and non-statutory requirements for agencies involved in family violence issues. Also, regional managers from the affected government agencies and community representatives established regional planning groups. One of the successes of circuit breaking was framing problems through the eyes of those who face the problem rather than through those who generate policy in Wellington. The teams also improved the coordination of government funding for tackling family violence, and a particular innovation of the FVFCB project was the development of a joint audit process that aligned the approval standards and audit requirements of the Child Youth and Family Unit of the Department of Social Development and the Ministry of Justice.

The success of the circuit-breaker teams in reducing family violence has led to the establishment of Family Violence Funding Coordination networks, which have also adopted the audit process initiated by the circuit-breaker teams.
CANADA

Over the last ten years, Canadian government at the federal and provincial levels has undertaken a number of programmes in order to improve service delivery and integrate services for citizens. As in many other countries, considerable emphasis was initially placed on e-government, and a government strategy called Connecting Canadians led to the Government On-Line initiative. However, as Roy and Langford (2008) note, success in achieving its initial goals was limited. Running parallel to the e-government programme was a related initiative during 2002–4 known as Modernizing Services for Canadians (MSC) which sought to create a new basis for delivering citizen-centred services. The transformation under the MSC initiative included bringing 170 different government websites together under one roof. Following the MSC initiative, Service Canada was officially launched in 2005 – see Case Study 2.3.

Also, in order to develop communications between professionals at different levels of government, a number of coordinating councils and support organisations have been established. These include the Institute of Citizen-Centred Service (http://www.iccs-iscac.org/) which undertakes research and promotes best practice in service delivery.

Complementing the work of Service Canada at the federal level, all of the ten provincial governments have launched similar initiatives to provide more joined-up service delivery networks for their citizens. A variety of governance and organisational approaches have been taken in each case, including the use of a new ministry, a division of a ministry or even a new independent agency (Roy and Langford 2008: 21–3). See for example:

- **Service Nova Scotia** [www.gov.ns.ca/spsm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/spsm): This website is run by the Ministry of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, and each year the Ministry sets out targets for the website services as well as an accountability report for the state legislature.
- **Service British Columbia** [www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca): As well as its website, Service BC has 59 drop-in centres located throughout British Colombia which allows citizens to access over 700 services. It has achieved a 97 per cent citizen satisfaction rating.
- **Service New Brunswick** [www.snb.ca](http://www.snb.ca): This initiative offers approximately 200 services to the public through a network of office locations, online services, and a call centre. It provides federal as well as regional and municipal services.
CASE STUDY 2.3 SERVICE DELIVERY: THE CASE OF SERVICE CANADA

Service Canada seeks to improve the interface between the federal government and the public through more integrated and innovative service offerings across a multi-channel environment (Roy and Langford 2008: 19). As a new mode of service delivery, it emerged as a result of the Government On-Line and Modernizing Services for Canadians initiatives. According to the government of Canada, its aim is to provide a one-stop point of access for Canadians with respect to all federal programmes and services. Implementing the Service Canada initiative led to massive public sector reorganisation and today approximately 22,000 staff work within it, conducting nearly 1 million transactions daily. Other than an online portal, Service Canada is accessible by a single telephone number, from which staff can either provide assistance or redirect the caller to the relevant government office.

In order for Service Canada to achieve its service delivery integration objectives, it faced the challenge of convincing government agencies to join-up their services with its infrastructure. Many of these agencies had their own IT infrastructure and methods of dealing with the public that had developed independently of other government agencies. Service Canada achieved this by demonstrating the benefits to collaboration which could be achieved by using networked rather than hierarchical governance processes, which would allow greater flexibility for the agencies involved and greater ease of access to the citizen. The creators of the project also pointed out that pooling services would allow agencies to identify overlap and duplication of such services and address the real needs of Canadians. The use of a more advanced and comprehensive service platform would also enhance the integrity of their service programmes. Roy and Langford found that the initiative better enables the federal government to design an integrated set of service strategies for specific groups of people, such as the elderly or youth, and thus provides citizens with greater access to government services.

RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

AUSTRALIA

In 2002, the Australian government announced a range of whole-of-government priorities, and sought to use a forum of secretaries and agency heads of the Australian Government known as the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) to implement this. One of the more prominent initiatives at the federal level was the creation of Centrelink, which is a government-owned statutory corporation created to secure contracts for the delivery of a wide range of public services (http://www.centrelink.gov.au/). Also, in various Australian states, a number of joined-up government initiatives have occurred, including the establishment of one-stop-shops, such as Canberra Connect (http://www.canberracconnect.act.gov.au/CAP/accesspoint/cc?action=menuHome) and Service Tasmania (http://www.service.tas.gov.au/). Service delivery units have also been created in state governments; for example the Social Policy Unit in Western Australia (http://www.socialpolicy.dpc.wa.gov.au/) and a Social Inclusion Unit in South Australia (http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/), both of which have responsibility for leading, coordinating and monitoring initiatives around social issues.

In order to coordinate and promote the coherent development of joined-up government initiatives, the Australian government places particular emphasis on providing clear guidance and guidelines (see Case Study 2.4). The aim is to ensure all participants in joined-up initiatives have a common understanding of the process.

CASE STUDY 2.4 PROVIDING GUIDANCE: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Of particular importance for developing joined-up government in Australia has been the development of guidelines for working across boundaries in government. A report by a group of ministry secretaries and the heads of state agencies known as the MAC identified that devolving authority from central government to agencies could make collaboration across organisational boundaries more difficult. Providing guidelines was recognised as a necessary first step. In this respect, it sought to improve the quality of whole-of-government approaches in Australia. Based on their experiences, the MAC identified a number of key dimensions for whole-of-government approaches and a related set of obstacles and critical success factors for each:

Structures and Processes

- The cabinet should be the principal whole-of-government coordinating forum and the source for spreading good practice.
- Whole-of-government issues should be discussed at annual high-level retreats for secretaries and agency heads.
- Opportunities should be provided for civil servants to observe secretary-level committees in action.
RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- There is a need for careful choice of the appropriate structures to support whole-of-government work. For coordination and producing policy options, the existing interdepartmental committees are effective. However, dedicated taskforces are more appropriate in dealing with difficult whole-of-government policy issues where there is deep contention between portfolios, or in the community, and tight time limits. Also, choosing the appropriate model will be reflective of the timeframe over which services are to be delivered, the policy roles of the principal partners, and the scale of the task.

Culture and Capability
- Where issues transcend traditional boundaries, a horizontal overlay is required which ensures a focus on the bigger picture within the context of the government’s overall policy agenda and priorities. This overlay should also encourage an orientation to collaboration rather than a silo mentality and ensure that decision making takes account of different perspectives.
- Public services managers should provide explicit and consistent support for collegiate and horizontal approaches both within their agencies and across the service as a whole, complementing their line responsibilities.
- Civil servants should be encouraged to network in order to broaden the exposure of Australian Public Service (APS) employees to different organisational cultures and ways of working.
- There should be reward and recognition arrangements for whole-of-government achievements.

Information Management and Infrastructure
- Agencies should identify information management needs early in the development of project plans, and where there is a common policy approach, processes and clients, establish ‘information clusters’ to further information-sharing objectives.

Budget and Accountability Framework
- Early consideration of budget and accountability arrangements is the key to maximising the flexibilities within a whole-of-government framework.
- Financial disciplines which are very useful for prioritising within portfolio proposals, such as requiring fully offsetting savings, may be counterproductive for cross-portfolio priorities.

Making Connections outside the APS
- In whole-of-government work, the issues involved are frequently complex and there are often different perspectives and interests among the external players involved. Therefore the public service should identify the widest possible range of views, represent those views fairly but also analyse those views when presenting recommendations to government.
- In the case of coordinated community service delivery, it is essential to have employees with sufficient experience, skills and authority to interact with local communities and to take the necessary decisions.
- The importance of seeking external views needs to be balanced against political constraints, and will vary with the nature of the whole-of-government task.
- The style of engagement used should look to maximise commitment and minimise complexity.

FINLAND

One of the main reasons why states adopt a joined-up approach is that certain problems require attention by more than one ministry. The organisation of many governments is such that ministers tend to focus on the work of their department as there is little incentive to work across cabinet lines. Furthermore, civil servants tend to advise ministers individually rather than collectively. Finland provides a good example of how new structural arrangements have been employed at the most senior political and administrative levels to achieve joined-up government. Since 2003, the Finnish government has engaged in a practice whereby it identifies and agrees on a small number of priority areas which it believes require a horizontal or cross-ministerial approach. A Government Strategic Document is also published which sets targets and establishes the means of achieving the goals of the horizontal programme areas. As Figure 2.1 details, each horizontal programme area has a responsible minister who coordinates a group of ministers with portfolios relevant to the policy in question. On the administrative side, a programme director manages a network of civil servants from the various ministries. This approach also requires matching the horizontal programmes with the budgetary process and establishing relevant indicators of success (Kekkonen and Harrinvirta 2004).

The initial policy areas to which these new structures were applied were citizen participation, information society, entrepreneurship and employment. Based on the experiences in these sectors, an evaluation conducted and published in summer 2005 stated that the experiences of the programme management system to date were to a large extent positive, but that modifications were necessary. In particular, the report noted that a major difficulty that had yet to be resolved was the reluctance of ministers to participate in bilateral budgetary processes due to a tradition of not interfering in other ministers’ budgets. Overall, the evaluation proved that the horizontal policy programmes had provided better opportunities to put issues that require potentially painful political solutions on the political agenda, and had accelerated processes and progress on various policy issues. However, it found that programme management had not changed political preparation to a remarkable extent, but that the cooperation and coordination of civil servants in the preparatory work had significantly improved http://www.vnk.fi/julkaisukansio/2007/i12-programme-management/pdf/en.pdf.

RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Joined-up Government
Figure 2.1 Managing horizontal programmes across government in Finland

**Prime Minister’s Office (PMO)**
- Coordinates programmes
- Coordination of and analytical support for evaluation of programmes

**Prime Minister**

**Coordinating Minister**
- Directs horizontal programmes

**Strategic Ministerial Group**
- Prepares decisions within programmes for the whole government

**Programme Director**
- Positioned either in the Ministry of the coordinating Minister or in PMO

Civil servants in participating ministries
RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

IRELAND

In 2007, the Irish government commissioned the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to prepare a report that would benchmark its public service against other comparable countries and also make recommendations as to future directions for public service reform. The final report – *Ireland: Towards an Integrated Public Service* – was published in 2008 ([http://www.bettergov.ie/attached_files/upload/IRELAND-Towards%20An%20Integrated%20Public%20Service.pdf](http://www.bettergov.ie/attached_files/upload/IRELAND-Towards%20An%20Integrated%20Public%20Service.pdf)). While the report noted that the public service had created ‘structures and systems to enable horizontal coordination’, it also identified that ‘the public service remains segmented overall, leading to sub-optimal coherence in policy development, implementation and service delivery’ (OECD 2008: 12).

The report identified a number of challenges facing the service – those of ensuring capacity, motivating performance, moving towards a citizen-centred approach, and strengthening governance. For each of these, a number of recommendations were identified to promote greater integration across the public service (see Table 2.1). Case Study 2.5 gives details of the joined-up government implications of the ‘ensuring capacity’ recommendations.

Following the publication of this report, the Irish government established a task force to identify the best means of implementing the recommendations of the OECD. The task force report, *Transforming Public Services: Citizen Centred – Performance focused*, identifies the steps to be taken to achieve improvements across government, including improved coordination and joining-up of service providers ([http://www.bettergov.ie/attached_files/upload/publications/PDF/TPSy2.pdf](http://www.bettergov.ie/attached_files/upload/publications/PDF/TPSy2.pdf)).
Table 2.1 Joined-up government across government in Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGE</th>
<th>KEY RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring capacity</strong></td>
<td>• Greater integration of human resources management (HRM) systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater labour mobility between different parts of the public service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of a Senior Public Service which would contribute to greater whole-of-government approaches and ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivating performance</strong></td>
<td>• Greater links between financial allocation and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater performance-oriented management and budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Performance dialogues between different parts of public service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizen-centred approach</strong></td>
<td>• Greater emphasis on service quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater use of e-government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More integrated online services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthening governance</strong></td>
<td>• Greater integration of public service to enhance policy coherence and focus on longer-term policy needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Centre’ to set strategic agenda for public service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Network approach to problem solving</td>
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</table>
CASE STUDY 2.5  HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND LEADERSHIP: THE CASE OF IRELAND

One of the key findings of the OECD review of the Irish public service was that the centralisation of HRM practice in relation to numbers, processes and conditions had major implications for the Irish public service. In particular, it noted that such centralisation limited public service mobility and career development opportunities; inhibited the autonomy of local level management; and limited the development and sharing of skills and competencies. It also prevented the development of a whole-of-government approach to public service delivery.

In preparing its report, the OECD team found that public service reforms, including the creation of many new state agencies, had led to multiple management systems across the public service that undermined the clarity of values and created silo management systems. They also discovered that while limited opportunities existed for movement between parts of the public service (civil service, state agencies, local government) they were seldom used and there were too many small labour markets within the public service which were closed to outside entry.

The OECD recommended that in order to overcome this fragmentation and provide for more sharing of skills and common values, a HRM strategy needed to be created that is informed by ‘explicit choices about the direction and values that should underlie the public service.’ It called for much greater mobility of staff between parts of the public service, as well as between the public service and private sector, thus providing for more whole-of-government based approaches to service delivery at the organisation level.

The report also recommended the development of a new Senior Public Service that would draw on leaders from across the public service and not just the civil service alone. This body would facilitate the development of specific opportunities for careers across the different parts of the public service, reinforce and develop skill-sets among the senior cohort of the public service and deepen coherence within the system and would provide opportunities for ensuring the development and embedding of a strong ‘whole-of-government/whole-of-public-service’ ethos throughout the public service, with emphasis on providing leadership and direction.’

RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

SINGAPORE

In 1995, the Government of Singapore launched PS21 – Public Service for the 21st Century. The initiative had four elements to it: staff wellbeing, ExCEL (Excellence Through Continuous Enterprise and Learning), organisational review and service quality. Each of these elements is directed by a steering committee chaired by a permanent secretary with representatives of all ministries as members. Also, every public agency has its own internal PS21 Committee. A PS21 Office was established within the Prime Minister’s Office to coordinate these efforts.

The government of Singapore has sought to decentralise greater responsibility to public agencies while at the same time maintain whole-of-government goals and shared values (integrity, service and excellence are quoted in many government publications). In 2008 the deputy prime minister noted that experience in Singapore showed that ‘a whole-of-government approach … is not without inherent tensions’. He suggested that the need for specialisations and competencies from each agency and ministry must be balanced with the capacity to be seen acting in a coordinated manner beyond individual areas of responsibilities. Furthermore, he stated that ‘a whole-of-government approach is not aimed at homogenising the diversity of agencies that make up government … it is about harnessing this diversity as a source of strength, which otherwise can threaten to compartmentalise government into deep and narrow silos.’ He also drew attention to the increased use of cross-agency project teams to deal with inter-agency issues, and the bringing together of officers from various agencies and backgrounds in training programmes and seminars in order to share collective experience. [http://app.psd.gov.sg/data/Admin%20Service%20Dinner%202008%20Speech%20-%2019%20March%202008.pdf]

Singapore has made considerable efforts at joining-up government by putting services online and facilitating greater citizen interaction with a wide variety of public bodies under the banner of ‘many agencies, one government’. Citizens are presented with user-friendly interfaces between linked services and public agencies. For example, in 2000 over 450 services were put online and a further 1,000 were added to this, so that by 2003, 9 out of 10 government services suitable for electronic delivery were available in that format. Over the last decade, three successive e-government action plans have been launched, the most recent being iGov2010 (http://www.igov.gov.sg/Strategic_Plans/iGov_2010/). Considerable emphasis has also been placed on unifying government in order to strengthen national security as Case Study 2.6 identifies.

The success of Singapore in becoming one of the world leaders in e-services is related to its use of standards-based infrastructure, application services and supporting processes and procedures. (Indeed the development of the RAHS system has been called the largest data mining exercise in the world.)
The development of new public service infrastructure (PSi) has also allowed for a shared technical infrastructure which allows for ease of communication between service providers (http://www.igov.gov.sg/Programmes/eGAP/ KP_eGAPI_PublicServiceInfrastructure.htm). Citizens in Singapore can now access a wide range of services via their eCitizen portal (http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg/). The development of the PSi has been carried out by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore under the direction of the Singapore Ministry of Finance which owns the infrastructure and sets the policies, practices and goals of the PSi.

CASE STUDY 2.6 POLICY ISSUES: THE SINGAPORE NATIONAL SECURITY COORDINATION CENTRE (NSCC)

In the aftermath of 9/11, the Government of Singapore sought to develop its counter-terrorism capacity in order to meet the changing nature and speed of terrorism. Previously, different agencies had worked independently in respect of aviation security, maritime security and internal security. The Government announced that a new whole-of-government approach was needed as the earlier approach of dividing national security tasks into watertight compartments to be dealt with by separate ministries was no longer seen as effective.

The approach of the NSCC is based on service delivery integration and is informed by the belief that ‘by strengthening the coordination and integration of government agencies into a cohesive network, and encouraging the bonds of unity among the people, Singapore will become a nation that is holistically resilient’. The NSCC works closely with the Joint Counter Terrorism Centre and together they report to a Permanent Secretary and a Coordinating Minister.

As a coordinating body, the NSCC ensures that government agencies complement each other, rather than perform duplicating and competing tasks. In this regard, it provides a good example of how a policy issue can be joined-up by service providers. Within the NSCC, one of the key divisions is the Risk Assessment & Horizon Scanning (RAHS) unit. Through extensive use of IT and data-mining software, the RAHS unit is involved with ensuring that public agencies share intelligence and information, and pool their resources.

Source: http://www.nscc.gov.sg/
3. Making it work

A number of countries have initiated programmes to provide more joined-up service formulation and implementation. These initiatives have all emphasised that, ideally, joined-up government should not be a one-off event but an ongoing series of interactions. Not only does this provide incentives for participants to achieve long-term gains and to develop relationships (which in turn helps to form and embed networks), but it prevents one-off engagement in which individual participants will seek to maximise their gain and not cooperate at a later stage. In this section, general lessons learned as to issues for managers to focus on when implementing joined-up government are outlined. Also, some of the reasons for and cases of failures of joined-up government are examined for the insights they display.

LESSONS FROM PRACTICE

From the country-based experiences outlined in Section 2 a number of general lessons emerge that managers should be aware of when implementing joined-up government initiatives. These can be summarised under a number of headings: structures and processes; culture and mindsets; rewards; and boundary-spanning posts.

Structures and processes

Many joined-up government initiatives have seen new developments and arrangements within the political executive to support the pursuit of greater cooperation and coordination across government. Some of the more common approaches are identified in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1  Joined-up government structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developments in political sphere</th>
<th>Cabinet sub-committees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horizontal ministerial portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developments in administrative sphere</td>
<td>Cross-departmental working groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-agency task forces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study 3.1 identifies how such new political and administrative arrangements, developed for the purposes of better joined-up government in the Australian state of Victoria, were designed to work together.

The report also noted that joined-up initiatives may include the use of advisory groups, including external experts or organisations, in order to provide input into projects as they develop. Joined-up initiatives may also include statutory governance approaches (State Services Authority 2007: 21). Table 3.2 identifies the relationship between these elements.

Often, innovation in joined-up government emerges in response to crises or emergencies that require the involvement of multiple agencies from different levels of government. In these circumstances, managing coordination is vital, and putting in place the best processes and structures possible is key to success. In Case Study 3.2, Moynihan (2005) identifies how a network of public and private actors combined to develop new procedures and norms in tackling a disease outbreak, and the vital role played by the managers in developing an incident command system. The lessons learned from this experience go beyond that of emergency situations and may be of general assistance to joined-up government initiatives.

While the centre of government plays an important role in encouraging and providing goals and incentives for joined-up problem-solving, it is important to remember that attempts to impose uniform joined-up government approaches at local level from the centre often fail due to under-appreciation of local relationships and circumstances. Many successful joined-up government initiatives are bottom-up activities which emerge at local level between local service providers (see Case Study 3.3). Such initiatives tend to focus on place rather than solely the enhanced integration of services.

**CASE STUDY 3.1 NEW POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

A report on joined-up government by the state of Victoria noted that for the majority of its joined-up projects, new governance structures have been established. These structures were multi-tiered and included the following elements:

- A coordinating group or forum of the lead and associated ministers
- A high level leadership group or interdepartmental committee
- Associated working groups and project teams
- Structures for coordination and delivery at the regional and/or local level

# Table 3.2 Governance structures used in joined-up government initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministers coordinating forum</strong></td>
<td>Ministers with relevant portfolios, including a lead or coordinating Minister</td>
<td>Set the strategic direction and monitor implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High level project leadership group</strong></td>
<td>Departmental secretaries or senior officers</td>
<td>Provide advice to Ministerial group, coordinate and oversee implementation of policies and programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-departmental working groups or project teams</strong></td>
<td>Staff from policy or programme areas</td>
<td>Collaborate with partners to implement policies and programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional cross-departmental groups</strong></td>
<td>Staff from policy or programme areas</td>
<td>Oversee integrated delivery in regional location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE STUDY 3.2 EMERGENCY SITUATION

Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) is a disease that affects poultry. An outbreak of the disease occurred in California and a number of other states in western America in 2002–2003. The disease was tracked, contained, and ultimately eradicated by a task force that involved a range of federal agencies, state agencies and private sector organisations. Moynihan (2005: 19) notes that a number of key network challenges quickly arose: uncertainties concerning tasks, management principles, and operations; the unanticipated aspects of the emergency; and the rotation of employees by agencies.

A key success factor was the ability to adapt and apply a command and control structure – the Incident Command System (ICS) – to the disease outbreak. An ICS essentially creates a simple command and control system within which staff from different agencies should be placed. Structurally, the ICS organises functions by critical management systems: planning, operations, logistics, and administration/finance. Each function reports to a single commander who has decision-making power for the ICS. Commanders are expected to set up at least one incident command post. If multiple incident command posts are necessary, they should be overseen by a single area command. Both incident command posts and area commands are expected to follow the ICS format.

The ICS model brings clarity to the questions of structure and authority by imposing a hierarchy on a network. As different agencies come to work together, they first have to decide how they will organise to cooperate. The ICS provides a basic model that these agencies can take and use rather than spending time developing a wholly new structure. The agencies still have to decide who fills in the boxes that make up the ICS structure, but the structure itself is established. The ICS also establishes a clear line of command. Public networks tend to be characterised by a search for consensus. In an emergency situation, rapid response is more vital than consensus, and so clear lines of authority must be established. The positions of incident commanders and area commanders in the ICS model make clear who the key decision makers are.

Source: Moynihan 2005
CASE STUDY 3.3 FROM THE BOTTOM-UP – THE CAROLINE SPRINGS PARTNERSHIP

The Caroline Springs partnership is an example of doing government differently – building communities from the bottom up in a particular geographical area. Caroline Springs is a new township being built in the growing area of Melton Shire in Australia. By 2013, it is expected to have 24,000 residents. Rather than developing services in an ad-hoc and un-coordinated manner, the growth of this new township provided the opportunity to trial new ways of planning and delivering infrastructure and services for the community. The partnership involves the Department for Victorian Communities, Shire of Melton and Delfin Lend Lease working together. Other state government departments involved include the departments of Justice, Education and Human Services. The partnership supports the residents to identify community facility needs (such as schools, libraries and swimming pools) and have input into facility location and utilisation. Working with the residents in Caroline Springs has achieved a positive feeling among residents about their area and has given government a better understanding of what matters to residents in creating stronger communities. In addition, the partnership has brought other organisations and a range of education providers together to support and invest in the community.

Source: Government of Victoria State Services Authority 2007: 13

Culture and mindsets

Cultural change refers to the need to break down bureaucratic and hierarchical mindsets and values to encourage cooperative values. As Clarke (1998: 12) notes, structural inhibitions to the management of joined-up government are often compounded and reinforced by cultural inhibitions: ‘Separate organisations and their boundaries become the limits within which people define the way their organisations are, how they do things and in which accepted behaviour is defined. Collective views of the world, aspirations and all the soft parts of organisational life reinforce the harder-edged realities. Culture needs to change.’

A particular challenge with regard to managing culture and mindset issues is how to deal with staff transfers, movements and departures in the participating organisations. Trust may have been built up between participants, and knowledge held of importance to the joined-up initiative can be lost. New staff have to re-learn the collaborative way of doing things. The emergency management case examined by Moynihan (2005) and outlined in Case Study 3.2 provides a good example of how staff rotation issues can be managed to best maintain trust and a good working relationship between agencies – see Case Study 3.4.
CASE STUDY 3.4 USE OF STAFF ROTATION IN TASK FORCE

The task force set up to manage the END gradually became better at dealing with staff rotation and developed some basic strategies that lessened the impact of turnover:

- **Ensure continuity in senior positions:** Some key individuals, including the joint area commanders, stayed with the task force throughout the bulk, if not all, of the outbreak. This ensured some measure of continuity in key decision situations. The hiring of temporary employees not affiliated with any of the public agencies involved also provided another form of continuity for frontline activities.

- **Rotate employees back into the same position:** The rotation schedule and staff process were structured to allow individuals to return to the same position they held previously. This allowed them to develop familiarity with a specific set of tasks, areas, and coworkers.

- **Create overlap and information exchange between different occupants of the same position:** As staff rotated in and out of the same position, they made contact with the employee filling that position in their absence, and were often kept up-to-date on major events via e-mails, phone conversations, or even debriefing memos. Most helpful of all was creating a three-day overlap between the departure of employees and the arrival of their replacements.

- **Rotate in and out entire teams:** By spring of 2003, the task force realised the benefits of rotating in and out entire emergency response teams. This meant that employees not only had experience in their role, they also knew and had previously worked with their colleagues.

- **Use standard operating procedures (SOPs):** Since the task force could not rely on continuity among its personnel, it sought to codify the accumulation of knowledge in formal standard operating procedures. The task force became more formalised as it grew in size, and all employees had to be familiar with SOPs relevant to their duties. Even employees rotating back into the same position they had before were required to reread the SOPs to ensure they were aware of any recent changes and sign a form acknowledging they had done so.

Source: Moynihan 2005
Rewards

Financial incentives can be particularly influential in promoting or diminishing the chances of joined-up government working, given the strong signals that financial allocations send to individuals and agencies. For example, using budgets in a manner that encourages joined-up behaviour is frequently suggested as a means to escape a segmented approach. Governments may also determine that reward structures be based around joined-up work and initiatives. Case Study 3.5 identifies such an initiative in Canada, where the term horizontal management has been used to describe the process of joining-up government.

Other uses of budgets to overcome barriers and encourage joined-up working include the requirement for joint funding applications or the use of pooled budgets for joined-up initiatives. Similarly, staff members may be seconded to work solely on joined-up initiatives or to undertake a placement with another agency with which their organisation is undertaking a joined-up initiative. This can greatly enhance sharing of skills and organisational perspectives, and encourages the development of common values between organisations.

CASE STUDY 3.5 INCENTIVES

In Alberta, Canada, officials agreed that getting departments to work together is the biggest challenge for the public service and that achieving this depends on the behaviours of senior officials in the departments. The most effective incentive for joining-up has been to explicitly link the performance pay of senior officials to horizontal policy initiatives.

For deputy ministers, the heads of the departments, 20 per cent of their remuneration package is based on performance, and 75 per cent of this is based on their performance on horizontal issues. For the assistant deputy minister, 50 per cent of their performance pay is based on horizontal initiatives. Performance on these issues is assessed in part by central agencies.

This has created a meaningful incentive to focus on the success of the government’s horizontal initiatives, even if it requires reallocation of resources away from achieving the goals in the department’s business plan.

Source: Government of Victoria State Services Authority 2007: 34

Joined-up Government
**Boundary-spanning posts**

A common issue is the challenges of boundaries, within and between organisations. Even if the initiative is successful in overcoming existing boundaries, new boundary issues may emerge. For example, boundaries around authority – who is in charge of what? And boundaries around the task – who does what? In such situations, it is often helpful to create or designate specific posts: individuals who are specifically identified and associated with facilitating cooperation and coordination. Case Study 3.6 provides an example.

**FAILURES**

Naturally, not all attempts to develop networks to deliver joined-up government are successful. We consider here some examples of failures at local and national level to achieve joined-up services.

**CASE STUDY 3.6  BOUNDARY-SPANNING POSTS**

Los Angeles County faced an issue of bringing together child support, child welfare and Temporary Assistance to Needy Family programmes to better serve the needs of children.

A key outcome of the collaboration efforts was the designation of special workers to serve as liaisons with the other agencies. The goal is to facilitate communication between agencies by identifying workers to field calls from all programmes, answer questions, and troubleshoot specific case problems. Liaison duties are added to the regular duties handled by workers. One liaison explained her job this way: I see what I do as a handshake out to the other agencies.

In their study of service delivery to children experiencing multifaceted problems in Britain, interviews by Easen et al identified that education, health, community and social work professionals had different conceptualisations of the problems and how they might be addressed. For example, health visitors sought to provide child-rearing skills to parents while community workers were more concerned with broader issues of community empowerment and meeting challenges. Similarly, while education specialists attempted to address the needs of individual children with learning difficulties, social workers had longer-term expectations of working with families rather than children alone.

Interviews suggested that inter-professional collaboration was facilitated where there were good communications, defined understandings of the problems to be addressed, and shared values and purposes between the professionals involved. Another important factor for successful joint work is an agreed timescale, not least in order to have continuity of personnel over time (Easen et al 2000).

While innovative ideas for joining-up and integrating services are always sought in the public service, experience shows the importance of having pre-event and comprehensive feasibility assessments, as well as the creation of realistic timeframes for project development and delivery. Otherwise, expectations can be unrealistic and implementation carried out over a protracted period. One common failure of joined-up initiatives around the globe is the significant cost overruns and failures in delivering joined-up services in relation to virtual ‘one-stop-shop’ projects. Case Study 3.8 provides a case in point.

Failure can also occur where joining-up occurs because it is seen as ‘fashionable’ or the thing to do, rather than being rigorously justified. Case Study 3.9 gives the views of Professor Colin Talbot of Manchester Business School that the Baby P case (a case where a baby died as a result of injuries received over an eight-month period, during which he was regularly seen by social services) may in part have arisen due to a misguided joined-up approach and subsequent ‘group think’ failures.
CASE STUDY 3.8 INTEGRATED IT SERVICES IN IRELAND

The Reach project was established in 1999 as a unit within the Department of Social and Family Affairs, with a mandate to develop an integrated social services system (ISSS). The objective of the system was to bring greater coherence to the provision of social services by making them better coordinated, easier to understand, more accessible and user-friendly, and more efficient and easier to manage. As part of the initiative, the concept of an electronic public services broker was developed to integrate public services, share data and establish links between all the services associated with or affected by significant events for website users (the death of a relative; setting up a new business).

Government approval for the development of the broker was given in May 2000, but neither a budget nor a timetable for the project was set at that time. Following initial scoping of the project, an invitation to find a partner to build, deploy and operate the broker was issued in July 2002 but was subsequently revised and re-issued in 2003, with an estimated budget of €14 million.

A contract to develop and service the broker was signed in February 2004, but delays led to the project being finally completed in December 2005, at a cost of €37 million. Ongoing costs were expected to be in the region of €14-15 million a year.

The final ICT system is complex, and while it has a number of successful aspects (e.g. a messaging service between departments and agencies), it has not delivered an ISSS, and only a small number of services are currently available to the public via the broker.

CASE STUDY 3.9 GROUP-THINK FAILURE

Baby P was a 17-month-old child who died in London as a result of injuries received over an eight-month period, during which he was repeatedly seen by social services. The head of children’s services was subsequently sacked.

Professor Colin Talbot of Manchester Business School notes that the sacked head was an education manager by trade, not a social worker. She was one of many education staff who became heads of children’s services when the latter were created – in the name of joined-up government – by the merger of local educational departments and the much smaller children’s social services function. He further notes that what tends to happen when two or more organisations with very different tasks and functions merge is that the dominant one sets the agenda, gets most of the top jobs, allocates resources and sets policies which favour its preoccupations – in this case education. The other function, unless huge efforts are made, tends to get neglected. He asks, was the merger of education and children’s social services – with their very different sizes, cultures, professional standards and knowledge – a mistake?

He also identifies a propensity to ‘group-think’ in the handling of the case, noting that from the evidence he has seen it appears that the police had very strong reservations about the course of action taken, but they went along with it in order to protect consensus and joined-up working.

Source: http://www.publicservice.co.uk/feature_story.asp?id=11369
In this section, the critical success factors to achieving joined-up government are identified, as are the common barriers encountered in this process.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

Successful joined-up working requires management of a number of relationships and work processes. Ling identifies four key dimensions of such management, as Table 4.1 identifies.

Experiences from around the globe also suggest there are a number of key factors that can facilitate the development and practice of joined-up government. The Victorian State Services Authority argues that achieving joined-up government requires ‘having organisational cultures, skills, capabilities, and management systems and structures that support collaborative and integrated ways of working’ (State Services Authority 2007: 5). It develops this by proposing a number of critical success factors for achieving joined-up government:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION</th>
<th>ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing inwards</td>
<td>Managing the internal life of organisations (culture, values, information management and training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing outwards</td>
<td>Managing inter-organisational relationships (shared leadership, pooled budgets, merged structures, joint teams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing downwards</td>
<td>Managing joint service delivery processes (joint client consultations, one-stop-shops)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing upwards</td>
<td>Managing joint accountability and target setting (shared outcome targets and performance measures)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ling 2002
CONCLUSIONS: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND COMMON BARRIERS

• Working towards shared goals that are clearly defined and mutually agreed
• Measuring and evaluating progress towards the goals
• Having sufficient and appropriate resources available
• Having strong leadership, directing the team and initiative towards the goal.

Building on this, the Authority has identified a range of better practices for implementing joined-up government projects, which are presented in Figure 4.1.

Common to all successful joined-up government initiatives is adherence to shared values by all involved in such work. For public servants accustomed to working in discrete parts of the public sector subject to hierarchical delegation and autonomy, engaging in substantive joined-up government work requires greater emphasis on particular values as well as the adoption of values not traditionally associated with core public service work (see Table 4.2).

Drawing on these values, the development of a culture which supports and rewards collaborative joined-up approaches is required. Features of such a culture include not only thinking across boundaries and in new ways, but also allowing for mistakes. Other factors which encourage and are conducive to joined-up government include:

- **Leadership** – career development for future public sector leaders should be more closely linked to leading and managing complex whole-of-government projects

- **Strategic planning** – government and departmental strategic planning should include cross-cutting issues or identifying major cross-cutting projects which require a joined-up approach

- **Resource allocation** – a balance must be struck between departmental responsibility for funds over which it has direct control with funding for joined-up initiatives which may be the shared responsibility of several departments

- **Performance management** – accountability for joined-up initiatives and for the management of cross-cutting issues should form part of the performance management process.

Of course, as already noted there is a political dimension to joined-up government. Public sector coordination is inherently a political manner (Peters 1998: 300), and successful joined-up government at an administrative level requires political engagement and commitment. Indeed politicians are often the best placed to identify gaps in service delivery and ways of improving service quality based on their engagement with the public. A joined-up government project is more likely to succeed if strongly supported by a minister; equally the absence of ministerial support can reduce the chances of a project’s success.

Joined-up Government
CONCLUSIONS: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND COMMON BARRIERS

Figure 4.1 Better practices in joined-up government

**Culture and philosophy**
- Incorporating whole-of-government values into portfolio cultures
- Information sharing and cooperative knowledge management
- Effective alignment of top-down policies with bottom-up issues
- Relevant skills development including negotiation
- Recognition of differences

**New ways of working**
- Shared leadership
- Focus on expertise
- Cooperative resourcing
- Flexible team processes and outcomes
- Agreed conflict resolution mechanisms
- Established decision-making processes
- Comprehensive shared strategic plan
- Shared roles and responsibilities
- Joint communication strategy
- Shared skills development
- Clear and agreed goals

**New accountabilities and incentives**
- Shared customers and reporting
- Flexibilities around service outcomes
- Performance measures that encourage collegiate behaviour
- Reward and recognition for horizontal management
- Agreed terms of reference and timeframes
- Effective evaluation and review mechanisms
- Benefits for all participants

**New ways of developing policies, designing programmes and delivering services**
- Colligate approach
- Focus on whole-of-government outcomes
- Consultation and engagement with clients and users
- Shared customer interface
- Joint budget allocations
- Compatible information technology

Source: Victoria State Services Authority 2007: 8
CONCLUSIONS: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND COMMON BARRIERS

Table 4.2  Joined-up government values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL VALUES CENTRAL TO JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>NEW JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality</td>
<td>Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Risk-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMON BARRIERS

There are a number of factors which can inhibit joined-up government. Chief among these is the observation that the departmental attitude, as well as the related incentive and reward structures, is inimical to collaboration and integration across the public service. However, the division of public services into segments or silos may in fact be inevitable due to the need for some form of division of labour. In the context of such segmentation, successful joined-up government is inhibited by a number of issues, as Table 4.3 demonstrates.

Other problems commonly encountered in developing meaningful joined-up approaches include: the non-recognition of other stakeholders’ perspectives; the absence of a culture of support for joined-up activity; and the marginalisation of champions of joined-up approaches.

Collaborative approaches between public servants and different public service agencies may not always achieve the desired results. Ling (2002: 638) argues that the UK experience of joined-up government found practical difficulties in securing consent through partnerships while still providing some central direction and financial control. This demonstrates the need for clear guidance from central government as to what the goals of the public service should be.

Other barriers to joined-up government include a lack of means to recognise shared outcomes and responsibilities, and a lack of shared performance indicators. Creating new organisational entities to cut across perceived silos also brings its own perils – not least the increased complexity and blurring of accountability lines which can reduce effectiveness and efficiency.

A common problem is that individual organisations evaluate their own part of a problem tackled by joined-up government,
CONCLUSIONS: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND COMMON BARRIERS

with the result that the sum of the parts does not equal the whole. An incomplete picture is arrived at, and possibilities to address issues such as overlap or poor coordination are missed. Lessons from international experience would suggest a number of steps to improve the evaluation of cross-cutting issues (Boyle 2006):

• **Selection of a limited number of topics for evaluation** – the identification and inclusion in an evaluation programme of a limited number of evaluations specifically established to address cross-cutting issues

• **Political engagement/oversight** – ministerial involvement or parliamentary scrutiny can give prioritisation to the reviews

• **Link to the wider budgetary process** – it is helpful if the cross-cutting evaluations are clearly linked to expenditure decisions made as part of the budgetary process

• **Resourcing the evaluations** – cross-cutting evaluations, by their nature, are often large scale and tend to need significant resources, both in terms of personnel and budget

• **Clear terms of reference** – while each evaluation will have its own specifics, there are a number of issues common to most cross-cutting evaluations:
  • Identify common agreed objectives, results and strategies
  • Map the existing expenditure levels and trends in expenditure

• Outline the structures and processes used to manage and report on expenditure

• Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of contributory programmes and the extent to which information is being used to track and improve performance

• Make recommendations as to the development of future performance indicators and information requirements

• Make recommendations as to absolute and relative shifts in expenditure in order to achieve desired outcomes.
## Table 4.3 Barriers to successful joined-up government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS TO JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>WHY</th>
<th>CONFLICT POTENTIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turf</td>
<td>The parties involved wish to maintain or extend the range of responsibility of their department or section</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget protection</td>
<td>The parties involved seek to retain total control of the department/unit’s finances</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic politics</td>
<td>Different departments/units view the same problem from different perspectives, i.e. what you see depends on where you view from</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td>There is a lack of awareness that another department/unit has an interest in an issue with which you are involved</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical reasons</td>
<td>The formal aspects of an issue may determine that they are handled in particular ways. This is especially true in the case of ICT issues, where compatibility is a requirement</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Page 2005
barriers to successful joined-up government

Source: Page 2005

Why conflict

Potential

Turf

The parties involved wish to maintain or extend the range of responsibility of their department or section

Budget protection

The parties involved seek to retain total control of the department/unit’s finances

Bureaucratic politics

Different departments/units view the same problem from different perspectives, i.e. what you see depends on where you view from

Ignorance

There is a lack of awareness that another department/unit has an interest in an issue with which you are involved

Technical reasons

The formal aspects of an issue may determine that they are handled in particular ways. This is especially true in the case of ICT issues, where compatibility is a requirement

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