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MOBILISING LOCAL ACTION TO ADDRESS 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES: CONSIDERATIONS FOR MISSION-ORIENTED INNOVATION IN CITIES

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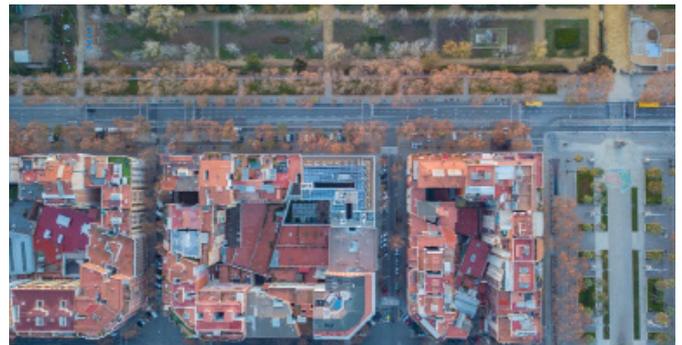
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Introduction

Cities are the economic engine of the global economy. They are home to more than half of the global population, making them critical geographic spaces where social, political and economic relationships connect and evolve.

The lattice of systems that make up a city are dynamic and constantly transforming. Over several decades, local political leaders and urban policy makers have developed various forms of 'strategic urban planning policies' that serve as the foundation for a city's growth pathway at an urban level, guiding medium- and long-term economic development and place-making towards specific objectives. Without designing and establishing a clear overarching strategic direction for urban development, the complex systems that constitute a city can become misaligned from one another over time, leading to widening schisms and breakdowns between a city's human, economic and ecological systems.

Strategic urban planning is a foundational tool within a local government's administrative arsenal to harness the potential of urbanisation to advance social and economic goods through a coordinated framework. An entire local



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government typically develops these strategic urban planning policies with feedback and input from a broad range of public sector actors and key stakeholders from the private sector, community organisations and citizens.

Developing a comprehensive, clear and actionable strategic urban planning policy requires significant capabilities, as these strategies seek to structure the relationships between a city's public and private sectors with wider civil society. Achieving this demands an urban government be able to define and reflect on the capacities of local actors, so that the strategic urban planning policy can help produce symbiotic relationships between sectors and organisations, creating public value effectively.

While strategic urban planning has the potential to be a lynchpin that advances a city's long-term development goals, in practice, it often falls short of its intended



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ambition. Numerous challenges make designing strategic urban planning policies complicated. The siloed structure of local government organisations (Bai et al. 2016) and the tension between conforming ‘places’ in the built environment with ‘flows’ (Castells 1996) of capital and resources are two critical challenges commonly faced by cities embarking on strategic urban planning processes, ultimately diminishing their effectiveness.



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Local governments – and public sector organisations generally – have become increasingly siloed institutions over the past 40 years. Throughout this period, public institutions have focused on developing private sector-like professional management structures and processes to maximise their ability to produce economic efficiencies rather than create public value. This approach to governance has incentivised local government organisations to design administrative structures characterised by segmented departments where sectoral divided expertise can undertake streamlined activities as individual nodes. However, this organisational form is ill-suited to addressing broader societal and environmental challenges that require strong collaboration across departments to design holistic, systemic, resilient solutions rather than sector-specific policy.

Relatedly, this 40-year reshaping of the public sector has weakened local government's capacity to govern the relationship between physical development in the built environment with flows of capital and social change in a coordinated direction towards equitable, inclusive and environmentally balanced outcomes. These places and flows within a city consist of many public, private and

civic actors. Coordinating these diffuse actors towards a shared direction demands a strong convening body with good connections to the array of organisations and an understanding of each's interests that can be leveraged to bring them to the proverbial table. This type of governing capability has not been perceived as supporting short-term economic efficiency and thus has been deprioritised by many local governments.

Furthermore, due to local governments' diminished capabilities, the intended ambitions within a city's strategic urban planning policy are often not realised in the process of translating urban policy into administrative operational practices. Actions get stuck in ineffective bureaucratic planning processes or large-scale initiatives aren't designed to incorporate the complexity of urban practices. This weakness that impedes urban transformation can be exemplified through large-scale built infrastructure projects or resource-intensive programmes that fail to produce their intended benefits and instead create a high cost on a city's balance sheet. As the capacity of local governments has become increasingly limited, it has also become more critical than ever for them to build the capability to take risks and scale actions progressively, by working in an agile and iterative manner that enables ‘failing fast to learn quickly.’

To address the critical urban challenges of the 21st century, from housing affordability to resilient mobility systems to climate adaptation, local governments must develop the dynamic capabilities needed to shape their economic development towards societal goals and overcome the institutional shortcomings that have traditionally stymied strategic urban planning.

Mission-oriented innovation for cities: assessing the landscape

The fundamental purpose of strategic urban planning is to define and articulate the desired goals for a city's development, and coordinate public and private activities around that trajectory. Mission-oriented innovation is a framework that shares many commonalities with strategic urban planning, but builds from a different starting point. Mission-oriented innovation is a form of challenge-led policy — an approach used to mobilise and direct innovation activities towards a specific challenge that holds broad societal relevance and where no solutions already exist (Wesseling and Meijerhof 2021). Missions aim to facilitate action by identifying a ‘grand challenge’ and defining a bold yet measurable goal, using the mission as the starting point for creating a long-term policy landscape where a portfolio of multiple small-scale innovation projects can be developed and scaled over time (Mazzucato and Dibb 2019).

Recently, a growing number of cities, local governments and place-based public sector organisations have begun

experimenting with mission-oriented innovation policy as a means to stimulate and drive systemic change. The approach appears, in part, to be gaining influence for its potential to overcome the barriers of coordinated system-wide action that have often inhibited strategic urban planning efforts.

While mission-oriented innovation is being tested in a range of urban settings, from Valencia in Spain (Missions València 2022), to the London Borough of Camden in the UK (Mazzucato and Gould 2021), the approach's inspiration comes from national-level innovation policies that addressed science and technological challenges, such as NASA's Apollo Mission in the 1960s that sought to put a man on the moon in a decade.

It's important to highlight that the origins of mission-oriented innovation and its initial contemporary applications, such as the EU's Horizon programme for European science and R&D funding (Mazzucato 2018), were policy initiatives that developed at the national and international levels of authority. However, the core principles of the approach appear broadly applicable, and are being translated and experimented with at the subnational and local levels of decision-making.

This policy brief sets out five key areas for research and policy to investigate mission-oriented innovation at the urban scale, based on emergent analysis from pioneering cities and local governments that have begun utilising the approach. Through exploring and evaluating these critical areas, local government organisations will be better equipped to operationalise mission-oriented innovation within their particular policy constraints and navigate the challenges that have impacted strategic planning processes.

Key research and policy agendas to explore

Every city has unique geographic, cultural, economic and political characteristics that makes it challenging to generalise best practices, demanding context-specific nuance and place-based knowledge and awareness. While it appears from our early experimentation with mission-oriented innovation that the approach has broad relevance across cities with different characteristics, at least five areas should be explored by research and policy to enable robust usage of the framework at the city level.

Utilising the financial resources they conventionally access and allocate through annual budgeting processes, cities of all sizes in the Global South and North consistently struggle to deliver on their priorities and implement their core services to a satisfactory standard. It is widely

regarded that existing urban finance flows have created ever-increasing funding obstacles to fulfilling core services, let alone achieving the more systemic investments that are needed to, for example, decarbonise transportation systems or keep up with demand for affordable housing.

In many countries, local government finance is highly centralised, with rigid legal structures that dictate financial decision-making, limiting the autonomous revenue-raising potential for local-level administrations. Missions encourage cities to navigate this complicated and constraining local government funding system by positioning local government organisations as market-shaping institutions. However, the political economy in many contexts is such that taxation powers are highly centralised at the national level, forcing local governments to explore opportunities for fiscal devolution or shifting macroeconomic financial flows through enhanced multi-level governance structures that can enable urban transformation (King 1989). Missions should be used to help cities reimagine the short-term annual budgeting process that statically balances revenue with loss and instead create a long-term asset-based investment mindset. To this end, further research is required to explore how a local government mission could generate city-led finance vehicles for holistic change at the city level. Table 1 sets out six potential local government-led finance approaches aligned with mission-oriented innovation theory that could be explored through future research.

Breaking down administrative silos

The highly siloed design of local government organisations is an impediment to urban innovation that is widely recognised in research and practice alike — and a barrier that mission-oriented innovation is designed to help overcome. However, using mission-oriented innovation as a framework to overcome this barrier demands a local government organisation develops significant capabilities, particular organisational cultures, practices and processes, as well as new institutional designs.

There are a number of questions surrounding how these organisational and institutional silos can be dissolved in practice to enable mission-oriented innovation to fully catalyse a local government organisation's transformation into the type of 'dynamic bureaucracy' that can address policy challenges holistically, based upon cross-departmental collaboration. There are three initial areas practitioners and researchers alike could explore to examine how local government organisations might use mission-oriented innovation to dismantle their institutional silos:

- **Institutional design:** Local governments conventionally organise their technical expertise within specialised departments that efficiently operate independently from one another. This

Table 1: Local government-led finance approaches aligned with mission-oriented innovation

<p>Urban Wealth Funds</p>	<p>Urban wealth funds are a type of public wealth fund created to add fiscal capabilities and bolster the balance sheet of city-level public finances. There are international examples of urban wealth funds operating as effective vehicles to support a range of activities, such as paying for infrastructure or housing without the need for new taxation.</p> <p>In many contexts, local governments hold assets such as land or buildings which could be managed differently to provide long-term public value by helping create businesses, develop new markets or provide communities with social goods that would not otherwise come into being. The city of Hamburg, Germany, successfully undertook one of the largest European urban development projects of the last 50 years, which was financed and managed through an urban wealth fund — HafenCity Hamburg GmbH (Hafen City 2022).</p>
<p>Mission-level funding and budget experiments</p>	<p>By their very nature, city-level missions cannot be achieved with a narrow 'mission budget' alone. As missions seek to promote transformative change, mission activities need to leverage funding and influence financial flows from across an entire city-system.</p> <p>Therefore, local governments could consider the potential of flexible funding strategies for their missions, to encourage innovation and learning. For example, one approach is challenge prizes, which use a mission budget to reward innovators who develop new solutions that further a mission's aim and incentivise that innovation to be scaled around new markets.</p>
<p>Value-sharing mechanisms</p>	<p>In order for public value to be created and distributed effectively within a mission's approach, governments should not be in the position of socialising the risks of investment while privatising the rewards, as has been done in recent decades. To both help finance a mission and capture the public value it creates, local governments could explore value-sharing mechanisms, such as securing equity stakes in the innovative activities they support.</p> <p>This approach would ensure local governments capture a share of the potential value their risk-taking produces, funding the subsequent rounds of innovation activities and districting the newly generated value to the local community. Some governments have already developed value-sharing mechanisms through equity investments at a national level, for example the UK Government-owned British Business Bank's Future Fund investment programme (UK Government 2020) is a model that could be explored as a local finance solution.</p>

Local government borrowing is one way cities can make long-term investments in a variety of infrastructures, from waste treatment facilities to renewable energy generation capacity, flood defence systems and even education systems. Municipal bonds give local governments a new source to borrow from and potentially at lower rates than they can borrow from their national governments.

Municipal bonds

Municipal bonds may also be an effective instrument for accelerating the creation of new markets by giving investors a signal of future actions and confidence in long-term actions, creating the environment for external actors to crowd in additional financing. For instance, San Francisco, California (San Francisco Public Utilities Commission 2020) and Asheville, North Carolina (McDaniel 2015), are amongst a growing number of cities in the United States and beyond that have successfully used green bonds to finance sustainability-related infrastructure investments.

Outcomes-oriented procurement

Cities procure a great number of services depending on their particular context. While these services are often understood as the only outcome of importance, the money used to procure these services could be an outcome in and of itself.

Instead of perceiving this procurement as passive spending on a generic service, local governments and their partners could view this as an investment opportunity to incentivise the local economy to skew in specific directions. For instance, a local government organisation could consider adjusting its procurement guidelines to weight them towards vendors that help promote the outcomes of the mission through, for example, supply chain or wage standards, turning procurement into an investment opportunity in addition to the acquired service. Community wealth building is one version of this form of finance that has been pioneered globally, from Cleveland, Ohio (Community Wealth 2014), to Preston, UK (Preston City Council 2022).

Mission-aligned taxation policy

Missions are a market-shaping approach to systemic change and tax policy is a key public sector fiscal tool, not just for 'levelling the playing field' but for actively tilting in the direction of objectives that have public value. While in many contexts the decisions surrounding urban taxation policy is only partially controlled at the local level, in most instances cities do have some autonomy over key aspects of their tax systems.

Using the limited discretion they have over their taxation structures, cities could centre themselves as strategic market-shaping institutions by aligning their tax policies with a mission to incentivise activity in a particular direction. Furthermore, this approach could create financial and social rewards for contributions that support the city's mission. Urban decision-makers could look to the regional government of Biscay, Spain, as an example of how this funding approach could be applied (Mazzucato et al. 2021).

form of institutional design is effective for solving complicated technical challenges, but is ill-suited for addressing complex social challenges, which, by their nature, demand holistic understandings of a system or systems, unknowable by any one set of actors. Therefore, local government organisations should use mission-oriented innovation to imagine the institutional structure and form that is required to meet the objective of the mission. Each city should consider what configuration is correct for its unique context and mission, but it is highly likely that reconstructing the institutional design of the local government organisation will help foster cross-silo collaboration.

- **Professional assessment criteria:** The saying 'what gets measured, gets done' is a popular idiom in management circles. The standards by which an individual is assessed shapes their performance. Many local government officials have their professional activities evaluated based on relatively linear criteria, for example, advancement of their particular programmatic objectives, contribution to their department's overall performance, progress against a key performance indicator etc. Missions should encourage local government administrators to collaborate in cross-departmental teams, be empowered to lead decentralised activities and experiment with bottom-up solutions. To enable this, local government leaders could reconsider the criteria that their professional staff are assessed against to encourage this form of collaborative activity.
- **Organisational culture:** Bridging the organisational silos that exist between departments and directorates requires significant coordination capacities. While evading these silos is, in part, a function of an organisation's design and internal governance structures, it is also heavily impacted by an organisation's culture. Breaking down these silos requires administrators and officials to have flexibility and time to develop relationships with their colleagues in areas of the organisation they would not encounter through the ordinary functions of their role. Furthermore, these individuals need to be empowered to cultivate new dialogues and forums that span these silos, where they identify opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration and coordination to overcome the barriers of addressing a given challenge in isolation. Being encouraged to develop these relationships that can then be formalised into new operational dialogues demands an organisation adopt a culture which promotes openness, making cross-team collaboration a default approach to decision-making.

Negotiating the multi-level politics of challenge-led policymaking

For nearly every policy challenge that local governments seek to address, they cannot do so at just the local level alone. There are complicated legal and administrative rules set at the regional and national levels of government that cities must navigate to take action locally. Furthermore, much of local government finance flows from these higher levels of authority, creating additional intertwined dependencies. Further analysis from both practice and research into mission-oriented innovation is required to identify how the approach can be utilised to navigate these multi-level governance complexities.

Contested politics, misalignment of longer-term goals, ideologically divergent constituencies and disputes over limited resources are some of the many barriers that obstruct cities from working collaboratively with higher levels of authority, and ultimately impede local action. Theoretically, mission-oriented innovation is an approach which may be able to effectively negotiate around these tensions and governance bottlenecks to enable cities to unlock their potential for action. In setting a clear direction that has broad societal relevance, a city-led mission should be framed in a way that doesn't place the local government at the centre of authority, but rather sets out an ecosystem which is pertinent to a diverse range of actors — including regional and national government bodies. To unlock this potential for navigating the multi-level politics that influences urban action, policy and research should analyse the potential of the following three areas:

- **New governance spaces:** Effective communication and collaboration between public sector organisations operating across multiple scales of authority and in complex bureaucratic environments requires robust, integrated coordination structures. Oftentimes, these governance spaces are inadequate for the challenges multi-level cooperation seeks to address or are nonexistent. From their initial design, city-led missions should map the resources and authorities of public sector organisations operating at the local, regional and national levels that could have a role to play within the mission. This analysis could then help enable the design of new integrated governance frameworks that bring these organisations together within purpose-built governance spaces.
- **Rearranging the relationship between 'problem holding' and power structures:** There is often a mismatch or unproductive relationship between the public sector organisation that is a 'problem- or risk-holder' and the public sector organisation that holds the delegated power to address the challenge, a phenomenon that can impede a city-led mission.

For example, if a city adopts a mission to eliminate homelessness, the local government leading that mission would generally be regarded as holding the problem of the lack of affordable housing, yet would have limited legal powers or finance instruments to take action on its own — in many contexts, local planning law is constricted by regional or national regulations and funding for public housing is provided by the national government through grants. By convening all the public sector stakeholders across the multi-levels of government that both ‘hold problems’ and have delegated authority, missions could be an approach that bridges this critical divide in urban governance.

- **Relationship-building:** A regularly overlooked factor that can curb multi-level collaboration for urban policy action is the particular relationships between administrators and officials in public sector institutions at different levels of government. In general, these individuals are given limited incentive to collaborate with officials from authorities that operate at a higher or lower political level — unless there is an explicit programme, legal process or funding call that requires cross-boundary coordination. These public servants, as with workers in every sector, are time constrained, pressured against balancing multiple responsibilities and given limited flexibility to undertake activities that sit beyond their direct job duties. From initial mission practice in city contexts, the approach appears to have the potential to be used as an effective political and narrative tool to generate collective understanding and buy-in, catalysing new relationships between administrators and officials in government agencies at different levels of authority. However, more research and policy experimentation are required to explore how these nascent relationships could be developed more strategically to foster multi-level coordination.

Models of citizen engagement for co-designing and co-implementing missions

Transformational inclusive urban change requires meaningful citizen engagement to inform action, harness public trust and foster democratic transparency. Local governments are ‘close’ to the citizens and constituencies they serve, providing ample opportunities for public engagement mechanisms to mobilise the public’s energy, knowledge and interests throughout a mission’s design and implementation process. Robust public engagement at the stages throughout a mission’s design, implementation and evaluation process will not only encourage its design to be broad and societally relevant, but will also ensure the



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public value it seeks to create is collectively shared as it creates impact.

Local governments in many contexts have extensive experience of using a variety of different public engagement methods. For certain policy and planning processes, local governments are legally required to facilitate public engagement within decision-making processes. For example, land use planning regulation setting is devolved to the state level in the United States, with nearly every state requiring citizen participation in decision-making, as exemplified by the state of Oregon’s Department of Land Conservation and Development’s 19 Land Use Planning Goals, with goal 1 mandating that citizens have ample opportunity to be involved in all phases of the planning process (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development 2019). Similarly, planning authorities in England are required to consult the community on local plans for future development under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021). While local governments are practised in facilitating public engagement, these processes are frequently criticised for placating the interests of participants and having limited opportunity for meaningful inclusivity.

Local governments create public participation pathways that are utilised during decision-making processes, where it is both legally required as highlighted in the examples above, but also in voluntary circumstances when policy makers believe civic engagement will improve the initiatives they are designing or implementing. In circumstances where a public participation activity will take place — whether mandatory or voluntary — local governments are most often able to exercise their discretion to determine what particular civic engagement method they will utilise. This raises several important questions that local governments should consider when embarking on determining how best to engage the public within the

context of a mission:

- **Mission design:** Missions seek to set a clear, long-term direction for urban change. Political cycles are often short at the city level, leaving strategic policy priorities subject to frequent changes. To avoid this potential pitfall and to ensure a mission has broad societal significance, meaningful public participation throughout the mission's design process can help ensure a wide range of stakeholders beyond the local government buy into its success, as has been the case in the city-region of Greater Manchester and the design of its distributed mission ownership and governance model (Bellinson et al. 2021).

Local governments should consider how different public engagement mechanisms can be used to design a mission through collective, bottom-up processes. There are a range of possible approaches that could achieve this outcome. For example, missions could be co-designed first with a small group of stakeholders, before consulting a representative sample of the public through a citizens' jury process or through design charrettes with a fully open process deriving from a relatively ambiguous starting point.

- **Mission implementation:** Once a mission has been set, a variety of stakeholders and citizens will be required to participate in its delivery activities, because transformational change demands action from the range of actors within the system. Furthermore, as described above, local governments have relatively limited finance levers and legislative authorities for enacting urban action. A mission needs to be operationalised by the local government convening the process once it moves into the implementation phase. However, if that process leads to the operational activities becoming professionally restricted to technical experts within the bureaucracy of the local government organisation, it is highly likely the systemic impacts of the mission will not materialise and that the public's energy, mobilised during the mission's design phase, will ultimately dissipate.

There are numerous public participation methods that could be effective during a mission's implementation phase, including establishing citizen advisory groups to enable ongoing public dialogue that can identify barriers to intended actions and devise solutions in real time. Additionally, there are more radical forms of participation, such as co-production, where all the actors involved in a delivery activity can work together as equal partners, striving towards collective outcomes.

- **Mission evaluation:** To capture the dynamic

potential of mission-oriented innovation to produce systemic change, local governments require alternative analytical frameworks for monitoring and evaluation policy action (UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2020). Conventional approaches to urban policy evaluation traditionally use static tools, such as key performance indicators or cost-benefit analyses, that are effective at monitoring linear progress, but not the forms of dynamic change missions seek to produce, where actions increase in scale and momentum over time. Another challenge of conventional policy evaluation frameworks is that they are relatively exclusive — they predominantly rely on gathering quantitative data and are communicated through highly technical means that are inaccessible to non-experts.

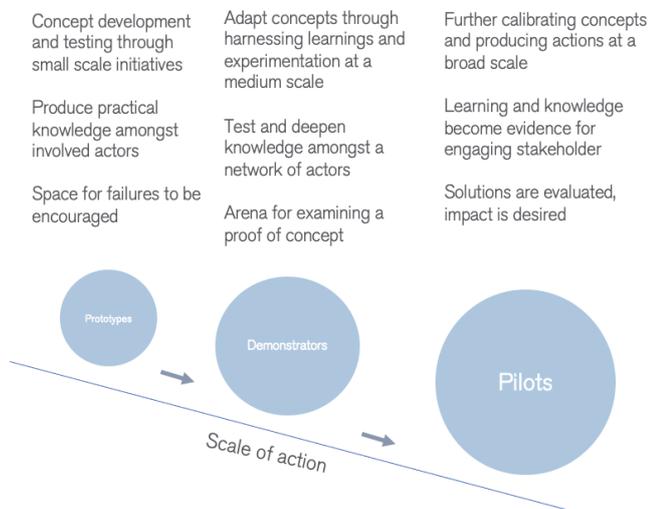
Local governments that are implementing a mission should design their evaluation frameworks to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data, so that they can analyse the dynamic spillovers and public value their mission produces, as well as communicate those findings in a format that is transparent and accessible to the public. These alternative 'mission metrics' that a local government might design could analyse data gathered by citizen scientists and utilise participative evaluation approaches such as community appraisals or deliberative mapping.

Developing design capabilities to nimbly scale action

As highlighted earlier, urban initiatives can be obstructed or be impaired by untenable delays if a social programme, infrastructure project, service or policy is intended to be established at too large of a scale, beyond the limited capacity of a local government organisation delegated to lead action. Extensive, sizable initiatives require enormous capacity to design and manage, and can inadvertently create more insidious problems than they seek to resolve if not administered effectively (Hall 1982). To reframing this conundrum differently, in the words of former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, 'We are taking 21st century challenges, evaluating them with 20th century ideas and responding with 19th century tools.'

Large policy initiatives and intensive pilot projects require a great deal of time and capacity to design before initial activity can begin, and, once action does commence, these types of undertakings can be difficult to modify or change. As a policy or project moves from the design to the delivery phase, it almost always manifests differently than envisioned or faces unanticipated barriers. In many instances, these large initiatives are intrinsically bulky,

Figure 1: Snowballing approach to mission project



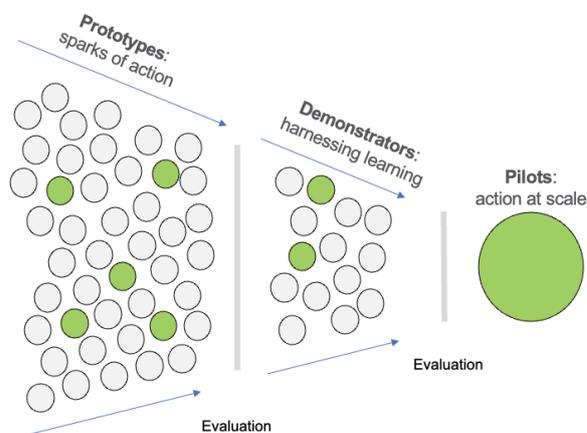
Source: Vinnova | Designing Missions

cumbersome and demanding to change, similar to the way in which it requires a huge amount of energy to shift the course of a large ship. In dynamic urban contexts where change is constant, uncertainty is ever present and complexity is ubiquitous, it is important for policy initiatives and local government organisations to have the capabilities to support agile forms of thinking and action.

A mission, by its very nature, seeks to mobilise and shape action on a systemic level. A key challenge for cities seeking to adopt mission-oriented innovation is therefore developing capabilities and practices to undertake actions that can eventually lead to a mission’s intended goal, without falling victim to the pitfalls that can sabotage an ambitious urban policy agenda. This requires design approaches which encourage a large variety of small actions to begin quickly, enabling ‘fast failures’ to generate knowledge which can be quickly applied to a next iteration of further actions, which can then grow in scale over time.

Once a city-led mission is set it must be operationalised by the local government organisation convening the action. This is a process that demands agile design-led tools. One way cities can conceptualise this type of process comes from the experience of the Swedish Government’s innovation agency, Vinnova, and its design approach to missions (Hill 2022). As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, the series of mission projects that accumulate action, which ultimately contributes towards addressing a mission, can be broken down further into smaller pieces, encouraging action to begin quickly and nimbly scale over time, as it generates failures and learnings for adaptive iteration.

Figure 2: Innovation portfolio of mission project



Source: Vinnova | Designing Missions

This design-led approach to delivering a mission once it has been established is a substantively different way to operationalise action and it is not how many local government organisations conventionally work. This requires cities to develop design-thinking capabilities and new organisational practices, such as incorporating triple loop learning feedback cycles into operational processes or integrating action research methods within decision-making. Building these particular capabilities within local government organisations will require intentionality and demand mapping of the particular skills needed to foster dynamic change across a collaborative assemblage of city actors.

Conclusion

Mission-oriented innovation remains a relatively novel approach to urban policy and governance, but it is continuing to gain increasing attention and interest. For example, the European Union has launched a mission to support and promote at least a hundred climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 — a mission which more than 375 cities across Europe have applied to participate in. Despite deep empirical analysis of the approach at the local level due to its limited usage to date, there are many reasons to be optimistic that mission-oriented innovation could be an important framework to address longstanding urban challenges.

In this policy brief, I have highlighted finance gaps,

administrative silos and multi-level politics as key barriers to urban action where mission-oriented policies may have significant potential to support innovation, based on our practice-based theorising activities with a few pioneering cities that have begun utilising the missions approach. However, if mission-oriented innovation is to fully enable cities to address their grand challenges in systemic and transformative ways, there is a need for further investigation from both research and policy into these three areas.

As I have explored, conventional strategic urban planning approaches that dominated late 20th and early 21st century urban governance practices have been insufficient for addressing cities' core challenges. Mission-oriented innovation appears to be an approach that can circumvent some of the weaknesses of strategic urban planning. Local leaders recognise the need for alternative frameworks and are yearning to experiment with innovative approaches to directing urban change. Missions present that catalytic opportunity and further targeted systematic inquiry into the approach will help cities accelerate their productive uptake and implementation of mission-oriented innovation.

Work with IIPP on missions

We are working on mission-oriented policies at different levels (locally, regionally, nationally and transnationally) in different places around the globe and on different themes.

For more information on how IIPP is working with cities and place-based organisations on missions around the world, please contact Ryan Bellinson, Senior Research Fellow in Cities, Climate and Innovation: rbellinson@ucl.ac.uk.

For more information on IIPP's Mission Oriented Innovation Network (MOIN), where we work with public sector organisations globally that are experimenting with mission-oriented policy at a variety of scales, please contact Nora Clinton, Network Engagement Manager for MOIN: n.clinton@ucl.ac.uk.

About this brief

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