

ReNewing Public Sector Implementation: capability, accountability and ”making stuff happen”

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“studies of implementation have revealed over three hundred variables that are thought to be of importance (O’Toole, 1986)... Indeed, Meier (1999, p. 6) went as far as to recommend that “any policy implementation scholar who adds a new variable or a new interaction should be required to eliminate two existing variables”! (Moon, Dickinson and Blackman, 2017, p.9).

Evidence and experience indicate that a policy is only as good as its implementation (Hill and Hupe, 2009). However, implementation remains a vexed issue in the literature lacking clarity around fundamental issues such as what is meant by effective implementation, who should be involved in this process and what are the specific capabilities needed by “implementation architects”. Despite many identified variables and “how to lists”, there is little agreement across the academic literature in terms of developing a core disciplinary focus. Papers in this panel will contribute to the implementation body of knowledge by considering: the skills needed to be an effective implementer, how do organisational arrangements affect the capacity to implement, and what contingent aspects need to be addressed when designing policy implementations to “make stuff happen”.

The panel seeks papers concerned with public sector implementation challenges at cross-jurisdictional, national or local government levels. Areas of interest include: consideration of implementation as a system; specific organisational and individual capabilities required to become an effective implementation architect; and how new ways of working within government impact implementation plans and processes. The panel designers aim to create a more informed discussion between academics interested in implementation and practitioners working to make policy effective. Papers are particularly sought that address:

- the new skills and/or capabilities required to support policy and program implementation;
- what are current core practitioner concerns and why;
- the strategic environment in which policy practitioners operate and the relationships they develop to deliver complex public policy outcomes;
- interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing local, national, regional, and global factors that impact on public service delivery ;
- how increased contestability is changing public sector implementation systems;
- how evaluation and implementation could/should work together for outcomes attainment;
- potential consequences of explicit and implicit assumptions pertaining to implementation accountability; and
- experiences in implementation and lessons learned along the way.

References

Moon, K., Dickinson, H. Blackman, D. (2017). Not Another Review About Implementation? Reframing the Research Agenda. *Public Service Research Group*, Issues Paper 1: www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/public-service-research-group/sites/cpsr/files/uploads/172279%20Paper%20Series%20Publication%20Issue%201%20Implementation%20171128.pdf

Hill, M. and Hupe, P. (2009). *Implementing Public Policy*, Second Edition. Sage, London.