

Public administration as transformation agent

Session summary documentation

La Tricoterie, Harp Center

Brussels, 30 May 2017

Three key messages

- Low hanging fruit / capacity building: more support for local solutions and civil society, as well as knowledge integration by *translating* research (two pagers)
- Instead of having everyone come to Brussels all the time, get out in Europe and do roadshows to create exchange and inspiration on how to build capacities.
- Instead of project based approach, set up a programme to build longer lasting impact (i.e. increased capacity for urban transitions).

Background

More and more, cities and urban areas are expected to drive change by measures implemented towards urban sustainable transformations. These measures are often realised on the side of cities' normal operations. Innovation support systems are often geared to support distinct and definite projects. However, in order to realise systemic transitions, it is perceived to be necessary for cities and urban areas to scale up from scattered testbeds, demonstration and innovation projects, to integrate knowledge gained in projects, to realise outcomes and translate into the normal operations and improved business as usual. Many times, this poses a challenge on public innovation governance and capacities to work with change.

By dialogue on workable approaches, good practices developed, and 'dream scenarios', the stakeholder session on *Public administration as transformation agents* will support policy with pertinent materials on challenges from a city governance point of view.

Session

- Jonas Bylund, JPI Urban Europe, introduced the issue and concerns.
Three case presentations:
- Anna-Karin Stoltz Ehn, Rise, Sweden
- Anamarie Vrabie, Urban INC, Romania,
- Ovidiu Campean, Cluj Municipality, Romania



Discussions in three groups, gathering actors from R&I, urban administrations and city officials, EU policy actors (EC), civil society and NGO [?]. On the following questions:

- I. How does your city or office handle innovation? What does everyday work with sustainable transformations look like?
- II. Dream scenario: If public administration is to be a transformation agent, where is the low hanging fruit? How can R&I funding support capacity to this end?

Outcomes

I How does your city or office handle innovation? What does everyday work with sustainable transformations look like?

City size matters when it comes to capacity for innovation and transformative action.

Civil servants are risk managers! We/they enter into panic mode when dealing with uncertainties like public sector innovation or urban transitions. There is a need for an ecosystem to handle risk. Lower barriers to take on risky activities.

Deal with silos and integrated solutions.

There is still a gap between R&I and urban governance, management, and planning practice. Partly because of the different professional languages used.

There is a focus on barriers. And organisation in silos, by procedures.

One approach is to find allies within your organisation/setting, also support from mayors, etc.

Deal with structural issues.

There is a need for a common definition of innovation in the public sector that goes beyond the mere 'tech stuff on a market'. And connected to this need, to showcase what is actually happening!

Resources; money, and political will as well as skills to work with change. Drivers (persons).

Systematising, not just beginning-end-projects and a coordinator for that.

Participatory budgeting in Saragoza (online/offline).

Brussels region on exchange between actors.

II Dream scenario: If public administration is to be a transformation agent, where is the low hanging fruit? How can R&I funding support capacity to this end?

Combine knowledge instruments and civil society.

Support local solutions and civil society.

Translations between R&I and practice is needed, particularly 'two pagers'.

Simplicity of instruments.

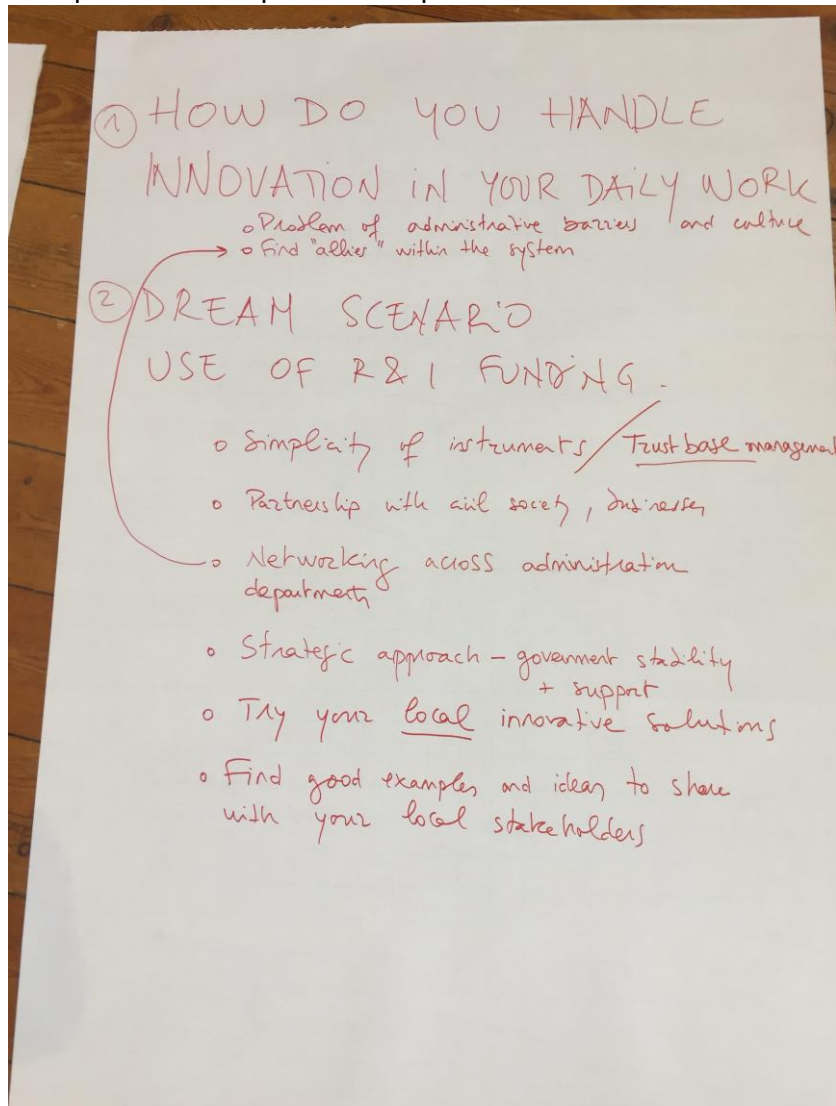
[Savini's thing on expensive/cheap related to risk found support, high initial investment in quality yields lower cost development in the long run]

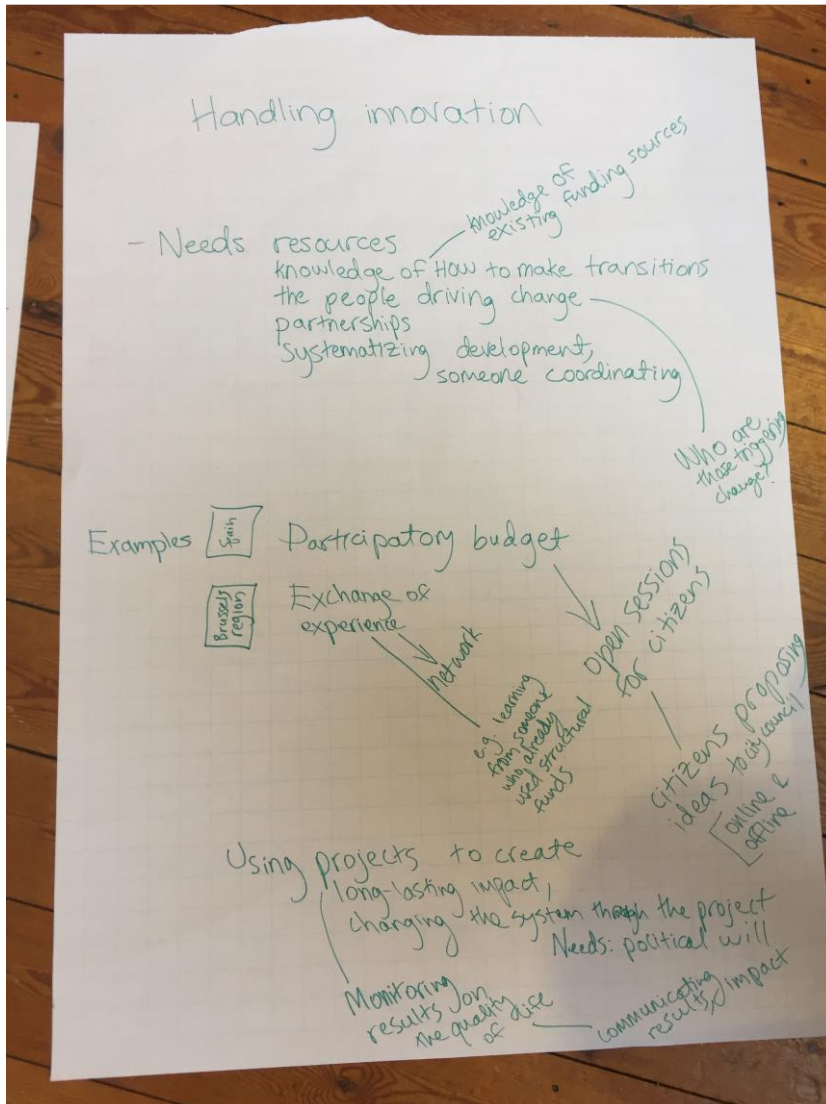
Roadshows on good practices in public sector innovation.

Not just a project, but a project-programme to create long lasting impact!

Annex: Flipcharts from the session

Groups wrote on flipcharts and presented to each other.





1. RISK TAKING & MANAGEMENT

- COMMUNICATION BETW. SILOS
- DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SMALLER TOWNS AND CITIES IN CAPACITY
- GAP BETWEEN R&I + PRACTICE
- URBAN INN. ACTION - LOWER BARRIER - TO TAKE MORE RISK

2. COMBINING KNOWLEDGE INST. AND CIVIL SERVANTS

STUDENTS
CIVIL UNIVERSITY

- MAKING USE OF LOCAL SOLUTIONS
CITIZENS' INITIATIVES - NON-EXPERT KNOWLEDGE
- TRANSLATIONS - "TWO PAGES"