

Join us as we take missions beyond policy

Missions face similar challenges as other policy innovations: the **current setup** of governments cannot support their **transformative potential**.

Demos Helsinki is rethinking missions as more than policy tools. Missions are vehicles for governance. This conceptual innovation helps us understand the day-to-day challenges faced by missions practitioners. By doing so, it also points to a clear way forward: addressing these challenges by transforming government.

Demos Helsinki's white paper *Missions for governance: Unleashing missions beyond policy* explores this thinking in depth. [Find out more at demoselsinki.fi](https://www.demoshelsinki.fi).

Do mission-oriented innovation policies (MOIPs) work?

In the 21st century, governments must address grand societal challenges that require:

- Extraordinary degrees of collaboration
- A holistic refocus of resource allocation
- Investments with clear direction
- Experimental and agile methodologies
- Long-term commitment from multiple interest groups

While governments are increasingly exploring mission-oriented innovation policies, the **large majority end up seeing mixed results**.

This is because **MOIPs alone do not present clear solutions for key governance challenges** – namely:

- Short window for impact
- Silos
- Lack of coordination
- Insufficient accountability
- Stakeholders shifting priorities

WHAT DO MOIP PRACTITIONERS SAY?

A 2022 OECD survey shows that:

- Only 1 in 4 practitioners of MOIP had a clearly defined target
- Less than 1 in 6 had a dedicated structure for its governance
- Only 1 in 10 had a clear plan and process for monitoring and evaluation

Source: OECD & Danish Design Centre.

Missions show immense potential for mobilising more than purposeful innovation.

Missions can mobilise transformative governance.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF MISSION-ORIENTED INNOVATION POLICY

TRAITS	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
1. Directionality	→ Clarity: Devising a joint direction, and common purpose both within innovation ecosystems and society at large.	→ Persistence: Going beyond policy and electoral cycles. Keeping the momentum and motivation over time. Lack of ambition.
2. Orchestration	→ Effectiveness: More focused, synergistic and complementary use of R&D and innovation policies to address societal challenges.	→ Capabilities: Aligning resources across the whole of government and key agencies. Dealing with silos and changing structures if needed.
3. Collaboration	→ Openness: Opportunities for networking, knowledge and resource sharing, as well as citizens' engagement.	→ Coordination: Managing multiple actors across policy fields. Managing conflicts. Lack of apt portfolio tools.
4. Experimentation	→ Agility: Greater flexibility within decision-making, and room to outmanoeuvre disruptions in the operational environment.	→ Accountability: Lack of apt evaluation tools. Allocating mandates. Managing adaptability and change within innovation portfolios overtime.
5. Cross-	→ Legitimacy: Gaining political & societal trust and fostering support to lead societal transformations.	→ Commitment: Lack of strategic alignment and actual actions pursued from the stakeholders involved.

Source: Demos Helsinki

TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES, THESE ARE QUESTIONS MISSIONS COULD ANSWER:

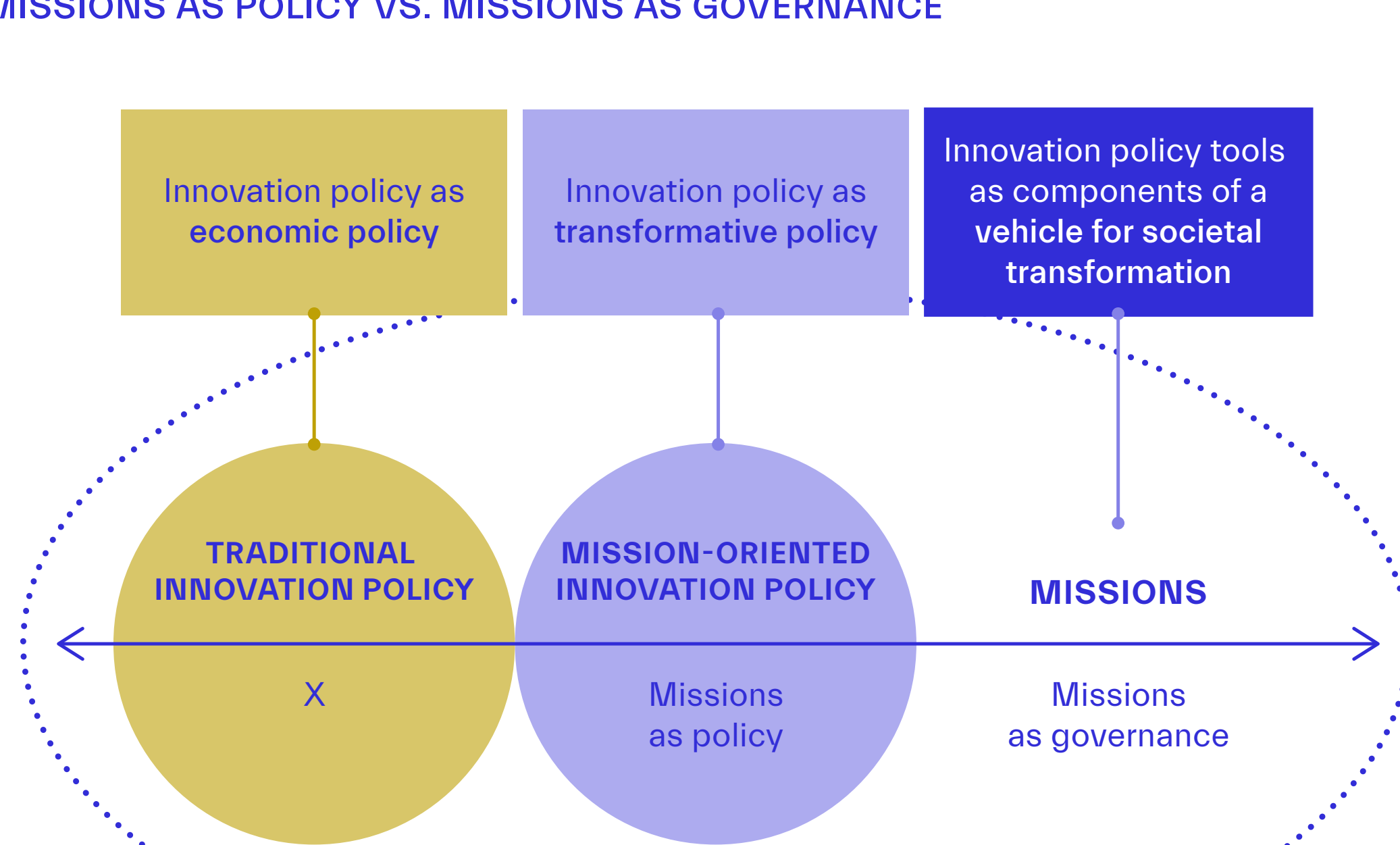
1. What is the rationale behind the mandate and organisation of a given ministry?
2. How do we create room for effective cross-ministerial collaboration?
3. How do we enable a long-term approach to budgeting?
4. How do we connect ambitious political goals with private actors' agendas?

As long as MOIP is accommodated within the strict boundaries of the existing mechanisms of governments, its impact will likely be limited or, in the best-case scenario, incrementally improving pre-existing policy performance.

How can we unleash missions beyond policy?

Missions can only serve broad societal goals if they are treated not as standard policy tools but as vehicles for governing collective action.

MISSIONS AS POLICY VS. MISSIONS AS GOVERNANCE



Source: Demos Helsinki

To build transformative mission-oriented innovation, governments must rethink how their branches operate with each other and with external actors: how governance is planned and implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

1. Designing effective missions

Nurture a broad consensus and agenda on grand societal challenges: who should have a say in defining them (i.e., stakeholders, citizens, etc.)? And how should they be engaged?

Recommendations

- Define, specify and prioritise clear-cut societal objectives
- Ensure collective ownership by including public, private and civic stakeholders
- Create powerful and inclusive narratives that provide the right incentives

2. Organising effective missions

Develop a strategic overview of how your government can meet such an agenda: who should lead transformative change? How should public actors coordinate to make it happen?

Recommendations

- Set clear responsibilities, accountabilities and ownership
- Create mission-oriented teams and processes
- Ensure coordination among public actors

3. Governing effective missions

Ensure that your government has the resources and instruments to get the ball rolling. What capabilities would be needed to help civil servants accomplish transformative objectives? And what policy tools – old and new – should be leveraged to ensure their ability to do so?

Recommendations

- Build collaborative and experimental capacities in the civil service
- Provide front-line managers with decision-making autonomy
- Develop ways to facilitate knowledge sharing

If you want to know more, Demos Helsinki's white paper *Missions for governance: Unleashing missions beyond policy* explores this thinking in detail.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US DIRECTLY TO DISCUSS HOW WE CAN IGNITE MISSIONS' POTENTIAL FOR A 21ST-CENTURY GOVERNANCE. CONTACT US VIA [DEMOSHESINKI.FI](https://www.demoshelsinki.fi).

* Demos Helsinki is leading a consortium consisting of the IPP BIOS and AFont in developing Finland's mission-orientation framework, as part of the Finnish Government's analysis, assessment, and research activities 2022. The project is funded by the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities and commissioned by the Finnish Prime Minister's Office. The final reports of this effort will be published on tietokayttoon.fi in 2023. For more information, please visit www.demoshelsinki.fi.